

House of Representatives meets for last time in 2022



BELMOPAN, Mon. Dec. 12, 2022 Building on Independence Hill in Belmopan on December 12, to discuss the workings of government over the

past months, and plans for the future. The Speaker of the House, Hon. Valerie Woods, opened the session calling for a moment of silence in recognition of former House member and Minister of Government, Sylvia Flores, who passed recently. The Prime Minister, Hon. John Briceño, on his rising also spoke about Hon. Sylvia, and her contributions to

her party (the PUP) and country, as a mayor of Dangriga, a senator, a Speaker of the House, and Minister of Government. He said Hon. Sylvia was a leader who never sought personal wealth, and that her mission was to serve her country and people.

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Guatemala submits its Reply to Belize's Counter-Memorial

by Marco Lopez

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Dec. 12, 2022 Representatives from the Guatemalan Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted their Reply to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in response to the counter-memorial submitted by Belize in June of this year. Earlier this month the Latin American nation suggested that Belize's submission of Honduras' claim to the Sapodilla Cayes to the ICJ for adjudication somehow blindsided them.



They claimed that the submission, which they described as "deplorable," was made just weeks before the deadline for their final written submission, which has since been handed to the ICJ.

Ambassador Mario Flores, Agent

Guatemala claims lands south of the Sibun in its claim

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Faber will run independent if UDP refuses his candidacy



Hon. Patrick Faber, area representative for Collet Division

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Dec. 12, 2022

Hon. Patrick Faber stated in an interview today that he is willing to run as an independent candidate if the UDP continues to deny him the opportunity to represent the party in his political stronghold, the Collet division, in the next general elections. A former subordinate of Faber, Ian Jones, has instead been endorsed as UDP Collet

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Orange Walk man gunned down

ORANGE WALK, Sat. Dec. 10, 2022

Police are investigating the killing of 27-year-old Byron Herrera, a laborer and a well-known resident of San Francisco Street, Orange Walk Town, whose body was found lying beside a black motorcycle on Saturday night with multiple gunshot wounds.

Initial reports are indicating that sometime before 11:00 p.m. that night, the sound of gunshots could be heard



Byron Herrera, deceased

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Media protests secrecy of new business registry

News directors of several media organizations, as well as members of the Bar Association, believe the new Online Business Registry System will result in reduced access to important company data.

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Dec. 12, 2022

A little over two weeks ago, the Online Business Registry System (OBRS) was officially launched in Belize. The new online platform, by means of which the public can access the Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry, is the mechanism through which the registration of all



companies in Belize will now be taking place. That includes 250 local companies, and International Business

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During the meeting that followed, the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow, enquired about what steps the Ministry of Immigration is taking to prevent corruption in the department, in particular human trafficking and the illegal sale of passports to foreigners. Responding to that, the PM said that the US State Department Trafficking in Persons Report puts Belize in the Tier II Category because we had made significant efforts to stop human trafficking. He said that one of the department’s initiatives was to recruit 15 new officers, the aim there being to form an elite squad, one that is trained in identifying document forgeries, drafting of charges, interviewing and investigating techniques, and prosecution. He said we have been actively pursuing cases of migrant smuggling and have charged over 30 people for transporting 280 migrants illegally.

Another initiative is Statutory Instrument # 82 of 2022, which reinstates visa restrictions on nationals of Venezuela, Dominican Republic, and Ecuador, some of whom had entered Belize with the intent to travel through Mexico to the US. Among other initiatives there is also a multi-agency operation to combat all illicit activities, including migrant smuggling, human and drug trafficking, illegal firearms, and contraband.

The Prime Minister subsequently spoke during the House meeting about the recent visit of a team led by himself to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The PM made reference to the 40 years of diplomatic relations between Belize and Venezuela and noted that Belize has benefited tremendously from the Alba Petro Caribe, a program of the late Venezuelan leader, Comandante Hugo Chavez. Under this program Belize was able to import fuel at extremely concessionary terms, paying half the cost up front and the remainder as a long-term loan at low interest. The program came to an end in 2016 because of a geopolitical dispute between Venezuela and the US.

Presently, Belize owes Venezuela between BZ\$449 million and BZ\$547

million, with an audit pending. The Belize delegation was able to restructure the debt, effectively reducing it to between BZ\$267 million and BZ\$327 million. He said that Belize owes enduring gratitude to Venezuela’s president, Nicolas Maduro, and the other leaders of that country, and its people. He said President Maduro also promised to restart the Petro Caribe program as soon as it is practicable, and this time it will also include fertilizers.

The PM said the deal with Venezuela was “incredible”, and said that when it was all added up, in 2 years his government had shaved approximately US\$517 million from the national debt. He said that by the end of 2022 Belize’s debt to GDP ratio will be down to 63%, less than half what it was when his government took office.

The Minister of Human Development, Hon. Dolores Balderamos-Garcia, spoke on the recently celebrated Disabilities Week. She said the government is giving increased attention to differently abled persons, but said a lot more needs to be done to increase their access. She praised the young people who participated in the recent Youth Parliament, and spoke on the importance of the 16 days of activism geared toward ending violence against girls and women. Minister Balderamos-Garcia also called on the rich countries to increase the access of people in countries like ours to expensive pharmaceuticals which she said can help to end the scourge of AIDS.

During the House meeting the PM also introduced a loan agreement between the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Development Finance Corporation (DFC) for US\$6 million to support tertiary level education in Belize.

The Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses Barrow, later called for the government to accommodate, help students from financially challenged households so that they are better able to access DFC funds for tertiary education. The Minister of Education, Hon. Francis Fonseca, responded that his ministry was working all the time to address that issue, that the DFC had visited with Cabinet, with one of the aims being targeting funding for persons in need. Minister Fonseca said the DFC had promised to look at options to ease the burden of students. He mentioned that at some schools students were being heavily subsidized, pay no fees, and that in addition to the subvention of \$8.5million UB gets each year, GOB provides almost \$4million for scholarships for students who need financial assistance.

Collet area representative, Hon. Patrick Faber, who is a former Minister of Education in previous UDP governments, rose in support of the new funding from the CDB for tertiary level students. Hon. Faber said that successive governments have invested heavily in education, and one thing he’d like to see is counseling for tertiary level students, for them to get advice on how best to finance their education. He said tertiary level education is very costly, and it would be good if the government made more programs affordable and available in Belize, so students could get their first degree at home.

The PM further announced a US\$5million loan coupled with a US\$500,000 grant, support from Taiwan

for MSMEs, especially those owned by women and those involved in green projects. The interest rate for this loan is 2% and the repayment is over 20 years, following a 5-year grace period.

The PM also announced a supplementary appropriations bill, Supplementary Bill #4. He explained that the cost of running government has increased substantially because of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The cost of fertilizers, fuel, all imported materials and goods, have increased. Belize also experienced severe flooding in the central and northern districts because of Hurricane Julia, and Hurricane Lisa severely impacted Belize and the Cayo Districts, with the damage to our roads and other infrastructure estimated to be at around \$100million, he said. The PM said we also need funds to support the grocery bag program, NEMO supplies, the BDF, materials for damaged homes, repair of Price Barracks, home construction, bus contractors who provide services for schools, fuel and supplies for the police, the amnesty program, vehicle requirements, support for the FIU, and Municipal Councils. The supplementary also called for an additional BZ\$4million for KMHM.

Hon. Barrow said the cost of fuel had gone down, and that in some places it was below what it was in the period prior to the pandemic. He said the GOB’s need for another supplementary budget shows that our leaders are either incompetent or that they deliberately misled the nation when they presented the budget for this fiscal year. Barrow said there was no proper breakdown of the funds. He criticized the size of the houses the Ministry of Infrastructure Development & Housing (MIDH) has been building, and said no one from his area had received the keys to a government house. He said if there has been such a notable increase in tax revenues, as the government claims, it should give public servants their increments. He said the public health system is in shambles, and there should be no expenditure on Covid-19, because that has passed.

The Minister of Housing and Infrastructural Development, Hon. Julius Espot, explained that apart from repairing houses damaged by Hurricane Lisa, the supplementary will go toward building houses for people who are in dire need of proper housing. He said that part of the supplementary was being allocated to enable the government to meet its

commitments with the Sarteneja Road Project, and that houses had been approved for the Leader of the Opposition’s constituency, but they had encountered problems because in some cases the land wasn’t suitable, and in others the land wasn’t easily accessed.

Hon. Kevin Bernard, Minister of Health, explained that part of the supplementary would go to satisfying a number of outstanding debts, some that have been there for some time, some to the employees of the ministry. He said his ministry is responding to the recommendations of the management and the staff of the hospitals, and that his ministry is working on increasing the human capacity of personnel. He stated that Covid-19 is still here and impacting us.

The Minister of Transportation, Hon. Rodwell Ferguson, promised that by the end of the year improvement would be coming to the buses that are used to move commuters across the country.

Hon. Tracy Panton, of the Opposition UDP, said she estimated that the GOB had brought 4 supplementary appropriation bills to the House in the last 6 months, and that while she understood that expenditure was needed to remedy the damages done by Hurricane Lisa, 200 plus million dollars in supplementary budgets, above what was approved for this fiscal year, showed incompetence, negligence, or lack of prudent fiscal planning. She said we hear a lot from the government about expenditures, but we don’t hear anything about revenues, about how much of the outstanding land taxes and GST has been collected.

Hon. Panton said the general supplementary appropriation bill did nothing for our many households that have been pushed to the margins of poverty, unable to meet many of their basic human needs. She said greater resources are needed for social protection programs for families living on the margins, and it would be far easier for her to support the supplementary if greater resources were directed to those in need, those on the margins.

Responding to Hon. Panton, PM Briceño said that his government had spent almost 25million dollars on social programs, and he wished it could do more. Speaking on revenue collection, he said much of the taxes owed to government can’t be collected because they are statute-barred.

Orange Walk man gunned...

Continued from Page 1

near San Narciso Street, and when police arrived on the scene, they found Herrera on that Street lying near his scooter according the police report.

Unconfirmed reports are that he was shot approximately 20 times, but we understand that information may be inaccurate. Police searched the scene and found several expended shells and bullet fragments.

Herrera’s motionless body was transported to the Northern Regional Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

So far there have been no reported arrests in connection with the incident, However, police are investigating and are scheduled to give an update on the matter later this week. Herrera is the son of well-known drummer, Wilbert Herrera.

Amandala will be providing an update in Friday’s issue.

Caretaker beaten up by thieves

by Charles Gladden

AMBERGRIS CAYE, Mon. Dec. 12, 2022

A 68-year-old caretaker of Tranquillity Bay located 13 miles north of San Pedro Town was awakened by three men demanding drugs and was taken out at sea, where he was beaten and thrown overboard.

According to reports, the caretaker was awakened by a flash of light directly being shone in his face and realized he was surrounded by three men. He wasn’t able to identify any of the culprits; but he told police that one of them was Hispanic and the other two

were dark-complexioned.

The three robbers reportedly questioned the elderly man about the location of some drugs, but he denied knowing anything about it. One of the men then placed a knife at his throat.

Later on, the elderly man was forcefully taken onto a nearby boat on which there was a high-powered rifle. He was reportedly taken about a mile out at sea and was beaten and thrown overboard.

Luckily, the caretaker was able to swim to shore and returned to his residence, where he discovered that his power saw valued at \$650 was missing.

Police are investigating.

Belize assumes presidency of SICA



Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona, president of the Dominican Republic, hands over the SICA presidency to Hon. John Briceño, Prime Minister of Belize

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Dec. 12, 2022

On Friday, December 9, the Prime Minister of Belize, Hon. John Briceño, assumed the presidency Pro-Tempore (PPT) of the Central American Integration System (SICA) from the outgoing SICA president, Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona, president of the Dominican Republic, at the LVI Meeting of Heads of State and Government of SICA held in Santiago de Caballeros, Dominican Republic.

Belize will be steering the regional integration process based on the five priority pillars of SICA integration, which are economic and social integration,

institutional strengthening, democratic security, climate change, and sustainable development. Additionally, Belize will also be focusing on issues on its national development agenda such as climate change, food security, migration, and deeper engagement with CARICOM and SICA.

Prime Minister Briceño congratulated the Dominican Republic for its accomplishments during the term of its presidency and pledged Belize's full commitment to advancing the implementation of SICA's regional agenda.

Belize will hold the presidency for the first six months of 2023, and last held the position in 2018.

Woman dies in Stann Creek RTA

by Charles Gladden

STANN CREEK DISTRICT, Mon. Dec. 12, 2022

A fatal road traffic accident at the junction of Savannah Road and Thomas Vincent Ramos Highway claimed the life of Diana Cus, 21, of Independence Village, Stann Creek, on Saturday, December 10. Cus had been traveling with her friend, Yuly Salinas, 23, on a motorcycle when the incident occurred.

According to reports, Salinas was driving her motorcycle, with Cus riding pillion, when Salinas lost control of the motorbike upon reaching the junction of Savannah Road and Thomas Vincent Ramos Highway. The motorcycle then crashed into the middle of a concrete divider, which caused both women to be flung onto the road.

When police arrived at the scene, they found Cus motionless on the right side of the highway and Salinas with abrasions on her body.

The two women were transported to the Southern Regional Hospital, where Cus was pronounced dead on



Diana Cus, deceased

arrival. Salinas was treated for her injuries and was later released.

Since then, Salinas has been detained and served with a NIP (Notice of Intended Prosecution). Police are investigating.

NOTICE

Our sellers, readers and advertisers are advised that for the holidays, our Friday printed issue will hit the streets as normal on Friday mornings. The Tuesday online issues for December 27 and January 3 will not be published due to the holidays.

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Happy Holidays

From the management and staff of **Kremandala**

Killers of Oscar Rosado, Sr., found guilty

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Dec. 11, 2022

Jose Gomez and Brandon Hughes, who were accused of fatally shooting the owner of Rosado's Construction Supplies, Oscar Rosado, Sr., 75, appeared in the Supreme Court on Friday, December 9, before Justice Susan Lamb, who ruled that Gomez and Hughes were guilty of the murder.

Gomez and Hughes were reportedly two of the three men who had entered Rosado's establishment on Cemetery Road in Belize City and reportedly purchased two pounds of nails before leaving. Minutes later, Gomez and Hughes reportedly returned, brandishing handguns, and held Rosado's wife at gunpoint.

At the time of the robbery, Rosado was outside of the store preparing a delivery for a customer when he became aware that his wife was being held at gunpoint. He then began to struggle with the gunman. During the struggle, Rosado was shot once at point-blank range in the forehead in the presence of his son, Oscar Rosado, Jr., and other employees working on the compound. Before fleeing the scene, the men searched the motionless



Oscar Rosado, Sr., deceased

body of Rosado and took his wallet.

Gomez and Hughes were represented by attorney Leeroy Banner when they appeared in court and were found guilty. The trial of Hughes and Gomez started in June and ended in July 2022. Senior Crown Counsel Sheneiza Smith, who represented the Crown, called in ten witnesses to testify before closing her case.

The men's sentencing is set for Tuesday, December 13.

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Angelfish LLC development EIA sent back for improvement

The project will require dredging for reclamation of over one acre of land currently located in a marine area.



Angelfish Caye, proposed development area

by Marco Lopez

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Dec. 9, 2022

The Department of the Environment (DOE) informed the public last Thursday that the National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC) has recommended that the developers of a proposed resort on Angelfish Caye improve and resubmit its EIA before an informed recommendation is provided to the DOE. The release states that during the November 24 deliberation, “the NEAC highlighted numerous issues with the overall quality and information gaps of the EIA report.”

The company, incorporated in Texas, is named Angelfish Caye LLC, and is proposing to build an “eco-resort” on 2.27 acres of Angelfish Caye, an island located in the South Water Caye Marine Reserve, about 10½ miles from Hopkins Village. The development will require the reclamation of over 1 acre of land currently located within a marine area, and the developers propose in the EIA that they submitted, to fill the area with dredged material. The project would also involve the construction of six buildings and two other structures, along with the installation of sewage and solar energy systems.

To carry out the landfilling, small portions of the seagrass bed would have to be removed, but the EIA for the project notes that no existing mangrove vegetation will be removed and claims that no live coral is within the vicinity of the project site. The site, they note, is devoid of solid land mass but has a significant deposit of marine sand that will be dredged and used as fill material for the beach and land reclamation.

“The development proposes to dredge an area of approximately 150 meters long by 50 meters wide by 4.5 meters in depth, to obtain an estimated 44,000 cubic yards of material for beach and for land reclamation of portions of the cayes in between mangrove patches and around the perimeter of the property”, the supplementary

information submitted by the developers in September states.

The EIA acknowledges the sedimentation that would result and the potential impact on the aquatic environment and seafarers and states that the developers will “include the placement of navigational aids such as buoys and lights to alert and ward off mariners,” as a mitigation effort. Of note, they have also suggested the use of sedimentation curtains to contain the sediment plume, a similar suggestion made by the developers of the Waterloo project, which would have involved the dumping of over 3.5 million cubic feet of dredged material at a nearshore location—a dredging project of unprecedented size that the NEAC and DOE deemed to be too risky.

In September, the developers of the resort were asked to answer questions on the potential direct or indirect on the Outstanding Universal Value under the World Heritage Designation within the BBRRS, and they claimed that, “In relation to retaining the Integrity of the BBRRS World Heritage Site, the Project is not expected to cause additional loss to any whole OUV element (Wholeness Criterion) II. While there will be a reduction in the size of the BBRRS property by 0.0008%, with the proposed mitigation the Project is not expected to reduce the BBRRS’ outstanding value.”

They added, though, that “some adverse effects are predicted, namely turbidity and sedimentation impacts to sparse seagrass and patch coral which are expected to be minor, temporary and localized as a result of the proposed dredging.”

The developers are recommending that the DOE and government of Belize put in place “clear policies and guidelines for carrying out environmental impact assessments and for assessments of impacts of projects in the BBRRS World Heritage Site.

For now, they are required to make adjustments to their own EIA document before the NEAC is able to forward an informed recommendation to the DOE.

Three Belize City primary schools get laptops



Mukiya Post, founder of Pass the Ball Foundation, donated laptops on the left

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. Dec. 8, 2022

On Thursday, December 8, three primary schools in Belize City were gifted with laptops courtesy of Pass the Ball Foundation, a non-profit organization that was founded 10 years ago by Mukiya Post, to empower youths through sports.

The mission of the foundation is to inspire today’s youth by passing on to them valuable methods and tools and giving them opportunities for character development through education and athletics.

At the handing-over ceremony, which was held at the Ephesus SDA Primary School, Post remarked, “It’s a great feeling. I grew up a lot of my childhood in the Caribbean, mainly in Jamaica, so I understand being in a country where opportunities just might be limited, and in some regards, resources are sometimes limited. It’s a little bit more challenging in that regard, so for me to come back and offer some type of help and support and an opportunity to give back. It’s a fulfilling feeling for me.”

He went on to state, “We understand the importance of access to the internet and a laptop, and we’re able to facilitate this project, which includes almost 100

computers to ten different schools ... We reached out to the Ministry of Education and we went through a needs analysis of schools which they recommended and we went based [on] that,” Post added.

The three schools that received the donation were Wesley Upper, St. Mary’s Anglican, and Ephesus SDA.

“What this does for us is to allow us to reintroduce Information Technology back into the primary school system. It will jumpstart us by getting back the computer lab up and running so when we return to school in January, our children will be able to use the laptop provided by the foundation,” said Patrick Henry, a Wesley Upper School teacher.

“This is a huge help to our school. At this present moment, we are changing from distance learning to face to face, and with the new curriculum this will finally aid us with the help that we need,” said Rae Garay, principal of St. Mary’s Anglican Primary School.

Post and his team also donated laptops to Biscayne Government School, St. Agnes Anglican School, and Pilgrim Fellowship School, and Our Lady Lourdes R.C in Maskall, Zion Park Methodist, and Lucky Strike will also receive laptops.

Haulover Bridge patched up

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Dec. 12, 2022

Over the weekend, the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing warned drivers of heavy vehicles to consider using the John Smith Road rather than the Haulover Bridge, after a portion of the old bridge was compromised and required some patchwork. A solid steel slab has since been placed over the crumbling section of the bridge, the ministry said, and it posted on its social media page a photo of the slab which had been placed over the hole.

Construction of a new bridge—a new “multiple-span reinforced concrete structure designed to AASHTO Standards”—is currently ongoing, according to the MIDH.



Condition of Haulover Bridge





Congratulations! and caution.

Sun. Dec. 11, 2022, Mon. Dec. 12, 2022

Nobody is perfect, and all things considered, from where they have taken our country since coming into office in November of 2020 to where we are today in December of 2022, with practically no effective Opposition watchdog “snarling at their feet” due to being totally occupied with their own internal issues, it would only be fair to say that this current John Briceño-led PUP government, with their PlanBelize slogan, is well deserving of hearty congratulations from a grateful populace. In the absence of an agile and aggressive Opposition, much more of the watchdog task falls on the “fourth estate”, the independent media. But, while the media has its job to do, it is also timely in this festive season of giving, to afford the current administration its due, and say congratulations for doing a very good job so far; and wish that they do even better in the New Year. Big up, the Plan Belize PUP government! But, just a little caution, lest overconfidence leads to slippage.

Our nation’s hopes and dreams of crushing corruption, when the new UDP administration took office in 2008, all seemed to come crashing down by the time they were finally booted from office in 2020, and it was a very dismal picture facing the incoming PUP administration and their PlanBelize manifesto, in which they declared “everybody fi win.” The outgoing UDP prime minister, Dean Barrow, lamented publicly that our economy was in a dire state, Covid-19 still had its clutches on our daily lives and commercial activity, and the humongous Super Bond hovered above our collective heads like an ominous dark cloud inviting in a deluge of tears from impending IMF austerity measures.

But, as the song says, there is always “sunshine behind a clouded sky;” and soon there was increasing hope for a better tomorrow. The dreaded Delta variant eventually gave way to the less virulent Omicron, and the Covid-19 restrictions were gradually lifted, allowing life and the economy to begin returning to normal.

Government signed the Blue Bond deal with the Nature Conservancy, and all of a sudden the Super Bond was not “super” anymore. Our public servants valiantly answered the government’s call to sacrifice some of their salaries for a while, and that kept the sharp claws of the IMF from digging into our backs. There were sacrifices all around, for the general citizenry have endured the painfully high fuel prices without resorting to demonstrations and civil disobedience, understanding that it was due to the impact of international events. But their faith was a bit shaken when top level technocrats were first rewarded with reinstatement of their “fat” allowances.

Nevertheless, the strides have been many and noteworthy over the past two years of this PUP administration, and their party organ, *The Belize Times*, has weekly chronicled the many steps along the way of fulfilling their PlanBelize manifesto. In agriculture, there is the surging cattle industry, a number of small-farmers training and assistance programs, the new Taiwan-assisted sheep and goat production industry, major farm road improvements in the northern sugar belt, and mediation efforts to keep the sugar industry going forward, etc. Just last week they bragged about the Blue Economy ministry co-

hosting a “Climate Resilience Forum and Booth Fair” focussing on “enhancing adaptation planning and increasing climate resistance in the coastal zone and fisheries sector.” It’s a long list of accomplishments, too numerous to list here, and they are worthy of appreciation by Belizean citizens.

Neither will we go into great detail on the few stumbles along the way, because, as we said at the start, nobody’s perfect. The campaign pledge, once elected to office “to immediately release the findings of the Senate Select Committee on the hustle at the Department of Immigration,” was soon forgotten. Likewise, there has been some serious foot-dragging on their commitment to “not only implement UNCAC, but ... also enact Campaign Finance Legislation.” There had been a pledge that “In the first 100 days, the new PUP government will direct the Office of the Attorney General to draft Campaign Finance legislation which will be subject to national consultations and review before a final bill is tabled and passed into law.” And there are others; but political parties are about winning elections, and we have come to accept that some things are said in the heat of campaigns, even sincerely, but reality sets in and then we see what they can really deliver. And, though times remain hard due to the global economic upheavals, and crime remains a big problem, the current party in government has still delivered much in the way of furthering the development of infrastructure and the economy and improving living conditions for the Belizean people.

But there is one pass that we just cannot afford to give this or any government. Corruption has been the battle cry of citizens for decades now, and both major parties have campaigned on promises to root out corruption as a major plank in their manifestos. Regardless of how many good deeds the government may seem to be doing, Belizeans are wary of any signs that they may be slipping down that terrible road, intentionally or otherwise.

One of our revered and highly respected elders in the citrus arena once cautioned that, “Secrecy is the realm of scoundrels.”

P.M. Briceño was quick to reassure Oceana’s foreign head office of his government’s full commitment to abide by the moratorium on offshore oil exploration, including seismic testing, after Oceana’s Belize vice-president Janelle Chanona had launched a petition to trigger a referendum because she had become seriously concerned about a lack of such commitment during private discussions with the P.M., which he thought should have been kept secret.

There was an uproar of sorts in local media circles this past Friday, and from the various reports it all revolves around the matter of “secrecy” in regards to the Belize companies registry system. There are some big corporate fish swimming in our little shallow financial waters in Belize. And while Belizeans had come to accept the uncomfortable fact that the “offshore” international business companies (IBCs) registered in Belize enjoyed a lot of secrecy where their directors and shareholders are concerned, at least we were comforted in the knowledge that no such secrecy abided with our local business companies.

But now it seems that some agent of this government, in the name of electronic progress and doing things online, has gone and drafted a new “Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry (BCCAR)”, that confers the same secrecy to local companies as the law once did to IBCs only. And that is a problem, a big problem. According to the *7News* report on Friday, the directors of three news stations – *7News*, *Krem TV* and *Plus TV* – “all called for government to remove the secrecy firewall that has now been placed in front of the business registry. On November 28, that was merged with the IBC registry to create the BCCAR - which transposes the secrecy inherent to IBC’s unto the regular companies register.”

If we are serious about anti-corruption in Belize, then what we need is more transparency in government, not less. How else can citizens be assured that elected politicians have no “conflict of interests” with the private “business companies” that government is dealing with? Two lawyer ministers of government, Hon. Kareem Musa and Hon. Francis Fonseca, have already voiced their disapproval of this new arrangement; and so has the National Trade Union Congress of Belize (NTUCB) president, Luke Martinez.

Somebody slipped up big time on this one. And we would hope for some decisive corrective action quickly by P.M. Briceño, before this little brush fire becomes a raging inferno, and all the good works of his government get smeared with the dirty rag of suspicion.



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Katia Montenegro-Hoare, president

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Dec. 9, 2022

A gathering of the Network Internacional de Mujeres Empresarias (NIME), which, when translated into English, is known as the International Network of Women in Business, was held in Belize City on Friday, December 9.

Formally registered in September, the organization has encouraged businesswomen from throughout the entire country to participate in the launching of NIME in collaboration with the Chamber of Businesswomen and

Network of Belizean and Guatemalan businesswomen launched on Friday

Entrepreneurs of Guatemala with the goal of creating a system that allows female entrepreneurs from both countries networking opportunities and enables business growth.

“What objectives we want to achieve with NIME is to be part of the region, to create more opportunities for growth, empowerment, and definitely for societal change. We want to be actors that contribute to the community and improvement of Belize as well,” president of NIME, Katia Montenegro-Hoare, said.

“The work started years and years ago. I was a working mom, like many of the women there. NIME is exactly that. NIME is not myself, it is the ladies that are in there with the vision to also empower other women ... even though the association became formal two months ago, we started working years ago, connecting with people, finding the right persons, aligning with women that

have the same vision and passion,” she added.

Hon. Kareem Musa, Minister of Home Affairs & New Growth Industries, was present at the NIME launching and stated that as the Minister of New Growth Industries, he needs to support the female entrepreneurs

“These women have done something extremely innovative and creative and passionately, so they’ve actually formed an association of all very talented, brilliant, and, like I said, passionate women, who have a unique skill in whatever craft that they are doing or coming up with, and they don’t want to just limit that to Belize. As you know, we have a very small population, and so they are breaking boundaries and going

across borders – not just to Guatemala, but looking beyond – expanding their tentacles across the world. As Minister of New Growth Industries, I have to do my part. I have to stand beside them to help them – whether it is to establish incentives and policies that could help them to get their products outside, to make sure that they have representation on trade committees, because as you know whenever the trade committees between countries, bilateral trade committees come together it is always to discuss the big products, but we are not looking at these very unique products that our women are producing,” he said.

Eight countries have been registered in the organization, including the Dominican Republic.

Letters to the editor

Use of words related to African enslavement in the Americas:

Dear Sir or Madam:

I would be grateful if you could print the letter below in your newspaper.

In an effort to diminish the heinousness of the crime against humanity represented by slavery, white supremacists have propagated the false narrative that the Africans who were transported across the Atlantic between 1500 and 1850 had already been slaves in Africa; therefore no one should have a problem with slavery in the Americas.

We Africans, both in the Americas and in Africa, need to be careful regarding the language we use, lest we unwittingly subscribe to and promulgate that false narrative.

Take the use of the terms “slave trade”, “slave traders”, and “slave ships” to refer to the trafficking of kidnapped Africans across the Atlantic, the persons who engaged in that horrific endeavor and the ships that transported the kidnap victims. We need to characterize the whole system correctly.

The Africans were not slaves in Africa. They were captured in inter-tribal wars instigated by the Europeans either through threats or bribery. Therefore, the persons transporting these kidnap victims/prisoners of war across the Atlantic were not ‘slave traders’; they were human traffickers. The ships were human trafficking vessels, and the trade was human trafficking, not ‘slave trading’. Our ancestors did not become enslaved until they were sold in the ‘slave markets’ after landing in the Americas, at which point they became enslaved Africans.

We never talk about ‘Irish indentures’ or ‘the indentures’ when speaking about the indentured Irish, so why don’t we accord Africans the same respect and refrain from using the terms ‘African slaves’ or ‘the slaves’ to refer to the enslaved Africans?

Similarly, we should never use the

terms ‘slave revolt’ or ‘slave uprising’ to refer to their attempts to gain their freedom. Rather those were revolts or uprisings by enslaved Africans.

Another example of the way in which whites use language to influence our thinking about slavery is when they use the term “running away” to describe marronage, as if they were unhappy or disgruntled children running away from home.

We wouldn’t say that Papillon “ran away” from Devil’s Island or that prisoners of war “ran away” from POW camps. Enslaved Africans did not “run away” from plantations or mines; they escaped. Escaping or even planning an escape required tremendous courage, determination, and fortitude. The dangers included being tracked by Black Miskito/Miskito Zambo trackers and being torn apart by Cuban “bloodhounds”, which were not actually bloodhounds but were attack dogs (Dogo Cubano) bred specifically to hunt Africans.

Similarly, we should never say that “slaves were imported into country X”. This information should be rendered as “kidnapped Africans were trafficked to country X and sold into slavery”

I emphasize these points when I teach the online course “Freedom Fighters of the Caribbean”.

So, to sum it up, we need to think carefully about the message we are conveying when we use the words racist whites have deliberately associated with slavery.

Follow me on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/desmondbollers2>

Thank you,

Desmond Bollers
Presenter: Freedom Fighters of the Caribbean
<https://www.caribfree.net>

Great expectations!

We are once again getting ready to say goodbye to the old year, and welcome in the new, with hopes and dreams of unfulfilled promises finally becoming reality. We have seen the Jewel slowly transforming itself into a more mature member of the community of nations. We have said no, to those trying to destroy our fragile environment through unconscionable demands on our government and citizens, to make sacrifices that would be detrimental to the character of this blossoming democracy. We have denied one of our more aggressive economic oppressors the right to have his way, something he has grown accustomed to! We have stymied his efforts, at least for the time being. We have been at the forefront of a universal drive to protect the planet from extinction! We have witnessed a government trying to find its footing, while at the same time giving us hope that things can get better! They haven’t always succeeded, but in my humble opinion, they are really trying!

We have seen some of our neighbors attempt to encroach on parts of our slice of paradise, seemingly careless of our sovereignty, totally disrespecting us! Guatemala especially, invading our sovereignty and removing our flag, from inside our borders! We have seen the Jewel put on a watchlist by the most powerful nation on earth, mindlessly unaware of her own shortcomings. We have seen the disintegration of a disloyal opposition, crumbling and embarrassing itself into irrelevancy, with no one to throw it a lifeline! We have seen criminals become more aggressive in their zeal to get something for nothing. We have seen a police force that sometimes seems insensitive to the plight, to the fears of the citizens of this still innocent land! We have seen our porous borders infiltrated by “men of grosser blood,” who would take advantage of our innocence!

We have seen it all, yet here we stand, hopefully still the masters of our fate, of our destiny, thanks in large part to a very aggressive press, that will leave no stone unturned! To root out corruption and abuse of power when they rear their ugly heads. The Fourth Estate in Belize is very aggressive and

effective, thanks to the freedom that it is afforded by its citizens and successive governments! I am so proud of the fact that they speak truth to power, unbowed, unapologetic. They call a spade a spade, no special operations here! They deal in reality.

And to the citizens of this, this most special, this most beautiful, this most magical place on this confused planet, we hope that the new year will bring us respite from the worst that ails the world we live in. That we will thrive in spite of all the odds against us. That we will receive proper justice from those in whom we have put our fate, our faith, our desires to keep, and live with our sovereignty intact, once and for always! Tigo small but e caca taari!

Glen



NOTICE: I, Neil Allen, state that I have lost my original Vessel Registration Certificate. Vessel number: BZ-2597. Vessel name: DONZI ZF



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POSITION TITLE: Administrative Officer
ANTICIPATED START DATE: 3 January 2023
REPORTS TO: Technical Officer
LOCATION: Orange Walk

Administrative Officer (AO) is responsible for the administrative and clerical services. He/She will be working under the supervision of the Technical Officer. He/She will be required to take direction and work intuitively to support the completion of the regional office goals and objectives in a professionally manner.

Description:

The position of Administrative Officer of the Orange Walk Football Association (OWFA) is a full-time position which will define and lead the Regional Administrative Programme under the authority of the Football Federation of Belize (FFB) and in compliance with the aims, objectives and values of the Federation. The position will require working closely with all staff members across all areas including but not limited to, finance, revenue, marketing, communications, operations and strategy.

Key Responsibilities

The Administrative Officer shall hold the following responsibilities:

- 1. Coordinate the administrative activities in an effective, up to date, and accurate manner by:**
 - Actively participates in the regional department’s strategic planning sessions;
 - Works cooperatively with all team members to support the achievement of work plan activities designed to achieve identified goals and objectives;
 - Operates office equipment such as computers, fax machines, photocopiers, voice mail messaging systems and computer scanning equipment to complete officetasks;
 - Performs clerical functions such as preparing correspondence, receiving visitors, arranging conference calls, and scheduling meetings for the technical officer or designate;
 - Coordinates and organizes meetings and conferences including meeting venue bookings, catering requirements, sets up the room with audio-visual equipment and flip charts;
 - Prepares meeting agendas, records and distributes meeting minutes;
 - Coordinates any required repairs to office equipment;
 - Maintains adequate office supply.
- 2. Administrative and clerical support to the Technical Officer in accomplishing their roles and responsibilities. This includes:**
 - Assists in the development and distribution of schools, clubs, and academies trainingschedules;
 - Produces forms and correspondence as required;
 - Produces and/or assists in the production of all required internal and external reports;
 - Coordinates activities with the technical officer;
 - Assists in the development of the regional office budget and ensures spending remains within acceptable variances.
- 3. Coordinator of the regional office’s information, reporting, and communication strategies and activities. This includes:**
 - Develops or maintains an accurate and up to date records management system (electronic and hardcopy files);
 - Stores, retrieves and disseminates information for schools, clubs and academies;
 - Prepares detailed presentations and reports as required by the Technical Officer;
 - Ensures the safeguarding of all confidential files;
 - Provides regional website updates to the Football Federation of Belize IT department to ensure up to date department information is posted on the intranet/website; Keeps the OWFA Facebook page up-to-date.
 - Creates databases and/or processes to accomplish tasks.
- 4. Other duties as may be assigned from time-to-time.**

Experience & Knowledge Requirements:

- Minimum high school diploma or higher education;
- Minimum 2 years’ experiencein the field of administrative / business;
- Must possess strong organization, evaluation and problem solving skills;
- Must be able to communicate effectively in writing and verbally;
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Office, Excel and PowerPoint;
- Must be able to work flexible hours;
- Organization skills and the ability to effectively manage resources;
- A team player, with an ability to build consensus and collaborate with the Football Federation of Belize.

Remuneration:

Based on qualifications

Applications:

1. To apply, candidates should send a Cover Letter and Curriculum Vitae, Copies of certificates, diplomas, and/or university degrees
2. Copy of valid Belize Social Security Card
3. Recent Police record issued within the last six months
4. Three letters of recommendation one of which must be from last employer

to the Assistant General Secretary of the Football Federation of Belize Headquarters by 4:00 p.m. December 16, 2022 to: Email: luis_pena@footballfederationbelize.bz



Position Title: Human Resource Manager
Anticipated Start date: January 3, 2023
Reports to: Assistant General Secretary\
 General Secretary
Location: Belmopan

Human Resources Manager (HRM) is responsible for the administrative tasks and services to support efficient operations of the Human Resources department. He/she will be tasked with the responsibility of performing at a high standard in the day-to-day operations of the federation. He\She will be required to take direction and work intuitively to support the completion of the Federation’s goals and objectives in a professional manner.

Experience and knowledge requirements:

1. A Bachelor’s or Master’s degree in Human Resources Management (HRM) with a strong background in business administration.
2. Three to five years working experience in HRM in a supervisory role with experience in creating Job descriptions in line with the organizations Strategic Plans covering performance management, employee retention programs and succession planning.
3. Strong knowledge of Belize’s Labor Laws and Corporate Policies and Procedures
4. Must be able to work flexible hours

Skills/Abilities:

1. Good command of the English Language both written and Oral, and with strong presentation skills
2. Ability to multi-task with excellent planning and organizational skills
3. Skills in the application of HRM Best Practices and Industrial Relations
4. Must possess strong organizational and problem-solving skills.
5. Must possess strong Customer Service skills
6. Knowledge of Football Administration
7. Must be a Team Player, with the ability to build consensus and collaborate with the Football Federation of Belize stakeholders
8. Able to maintain a high level of confidentiality

Responsibilities:

1. Oversee the day-to-day operations of the HR department
2. Oversee the recruiting of new employees
3. Oversee the enforcement and execution of performance management systems, targets, and indicators
4. Provide inhouse training forstaff in areas whereperformance targets are not met
5. Oversee the performance evaluations for staff and improve on the job descriptions
6. Act as theliaison between staff and office of the AGS & GS in solving staff concerns
7. Be able to problem solve and manage effective relationships at all levels within the organization.
8. Be able to address disputes, disciplinary matters and implement a reward and recognition system

Applications:

To apply for the post applicants must submit:

1. Cover Letter and Curriculum Vitae
2. Copies of certificates, diplomas, and/or university degrees
3. Copy of valid Belize Social Security Card
4. Recent Police record issued within the lastsix months
5. Three letters of recommendation one of which must be from last employer

to the Assistant General Secretary of the Football Federation of Belize Headquarters by 4:00 p.m. December 16, 2022 to: email: luis_pena@footballfederationbelize.bz

Remuneration: Based on qualifications



¡Felicidades! y precaución.

Domingo 11 de diciembre de 2022, lun. 12 de diciembre de 2022

Nadie es perfecto, y considerando todas las cosas, de donde han llevado a nuestro país desde que asumieron el cargo en noviembre de 2020 a donde estamos hoy en diciembre de 2022, prácticamente sin una Oposición vigilante "gruñendo a sus pies" debido a que están totalmente ocupados con sus propios asuntos internos, sería justo decir que este actual gobierno del PUP dirigido por John Briceño, con su lema PlanBelize, bien merece las felicitaciones calurosas de una población agradecida. En ausencia de una Oposición ágil y agresiva, gran parte de la tarea de vigilancia recae en el "cuarto poder", los medios independientes. Pero, si bien los medios de comunicación tienen su trabajo que hacer, también es oportuno en esta temporada festiva de generosidad, brindarle a la administración actual lo que le corresponde y felicitarlo por hacer un muy buen trabajo hasta ahora; y desear que hagan aún mejor en el Año Nuevo. ¡Aplausos para el gobierno PUP del Plan Belize! Pero, solo un poco de precaución, no sea que el exceso de confianza conduzca al desliz.

Las esperanzas y los sueños de nuestra nación de aplastar la corrupción, cuando la nueva administración UDP asumió el cargo en 2008, todas parecían venirse abajo cuando finalmente fueron expulsados de su cargo en 2020, y era una imagen muy sombría la que enfrentaba la entrante administración PUP y su manifiesto PlanBelize, en el que declararon "todos ganamos". El saliente primer ministro UDP, Dean Barrow, lamentó públicamente que nuestra economía se encontraba en un estado desesperado, el Covid-19 todavía tenía sus garras en nuestra vida diaria y actividad comercial, y el gigantesco Súper Bono se cernía sobre nuestras cabezas colectivas como una siniestra nube oscura que invitaba a un diluvio de lágrimas por las inminentes medidas de austeridad del FMI.

Pero, como dice la canción, siempre hay "sol detrás de un cielo nublado"; y pronto aumentó la esperanza de un mañana mejor. La temida variante Delta finalmente dio paso a la menos virulenta Omicron, y las restricciones de Covid-19 se levantaron gradualmente, permitiendo que la vida y la economía comenzaran a volver a la normalidad. El gobierno firmó el acuerdo del Bono Azul con Nature Conservancy y, de repente, el Súper Bono ya no era "súper". Nuestros servidores públicos respondieron valientemente al llamado del gobierno a sacrificar parte de sus salarios por un tiempo, y eso evitó que las afiladas garras del FMI se clavaran en nuestras espaldas. Hubo sacrificios por doquier, pues la ciudadanía en general ha soportado los precios dolorosamente elevados de los combustibles sin recurrir a manifestaciones y desobediencia civil, entendiendo que era por el impacto de acontecimientos internacionales. Pero su fe se vio un poco sacudida cuando los tecnócratas de alto nivel fueron recompensados por primera vez con el restablecimiento de sus prestaciones "gordas".

Sin embargo, los avances han sido muchos y notables en los últimos dos años de esta administración PUP, y el órgano de su partido, The Belize Times, ha hecho una crónica semanal de los muchos pasos en el camino hacia el cumplimiento de su manifiesto PlanBelize. En la agricultura, está la creciente industria ganadera, una serie de programas de asistencia y capacitación para pequeños agricultores, la nueva industria de producción de ovejas y cabras asistida por Taiwán, importantes mejoras en las calles agrícolas en el cinturón azucarero del norte y esfuerzos de mediación para mantener la industria azucarera forjando adelante, etc. Justamente la semana pasada se jactaron de que el Ministerio de Economía Azul copatrocinó un "Foro de Resiliencia Climática y Feria de Stands" centrado en "mejorar la planificación de la adaptación y aumentar la resistencia climática en la zona costera y el sector pesquero". Es una larga lista de logros, demasiado numerosos para enumerarlos aquí, y son dignos de ser apreciados por los ciudadanos beliceños.

Tampoco vamos a entrar en muchos detalles sobre los pocos tropiezos a lo largo del camino, porque, como decíamos al principio, nadie es perfecto. La promesa de campaña, una vez elegido para el cargo de "publicar de inmediato los hallazgos del Comité Selecto del Senado sobre el timo en el Departamento de Inmigración", pronto se olvidó. Del mismo modo, ha habido algunos retrasos serios en su compromiso de "no solo implementar la CNUCC, sino... también promulgar la Legislación de

Financiamiento de Campañas". Hubo una promesa de que "En los primeros 100 días, el nuevo gobierno del PUP ordenará a la Oficina del Fiscal General que redacte una legislación de Financiamiento de Campañas que estará sujeta a consultas y revisión nacionales antes de que se presente un proyecto de ley final y se apruebe como ley." Y hay otros; pero los partidos políticos se tratan de ganar elecciones, y hemos llegado a aceptar que algunas cosas se dicen en el ardor de las campañas, incluso con sinceridad, pero la realidad se establece y luego vemos lo que realmente pueden entregar. Y, aunque los tiempos siguen siendo difíciles debido a los trastornos económicos mundiales, y el crimen sigue siendo un gran problema, el actual partido en el gobierno aún ha logrado mucho a manera de promover el desarrollo de la infraestructura y la economía y mejorar las condiciones de vida del pueblo beliceño.

Pero hay un pase que simplemente no podemos darnos el lujo de dar a este ni a ningún otro gobierno. La corrupción ha sido el grito de batalla de los ciudadanos durante décadas, y los dos partidos principales han hecho campaña con la promesa de erradicar la corrupción como un elemento importante de sus manifiestos. Independientemente de cuántas buenas acciones parezcan estar haciendo el gobierno, los beliceños desconfían de cualquier señal de que puedan estar deslizándose por ese terrible camino, intencionalmente o no.

Uno de nuestros ancianos venerados y muy respetados en el campo de los críticos advirtió una vez que "el secreto es el reino de los malandrines".

El P.M. Briceño se apresuró a tranquilizar a la oficina central de Oceana en el exterior sobre el pleno compromiso de su gobierno de cumplir con la moratoria sobre la exploración petrolera en alta mar, incluidas las pruebas sísmicas, después de que la vicepresidenta de Oceana en Belize, Janelle Chanona, lanzara una petición para un referéndum porque se había vuelto seriamente preocupada por la falta de dicho compromiso durante conversaciones privadas con el primer ministro, que él pensó que deberían haberse mantenido en secreto.

Hubo una especie de alboroto en los círculos de los medios locales el viernes pasado, y según los diversos informes, todo gira en torno al asunto del "secretismo" con respecto al sistema de registro de empresas de Belize. Hay algunos grandes peces corporativos nadando en nuestras pequeñas aguas financieras poco profundas en Belize. Y si bien los beliceños habían llegado a aceptar el hecho incómodo de que las compañías comerciales internacionales (IBC, por sus siglas en inglés) "offshore" registradas en Belize disfrutaban de mucho secreto en lo que respecta a sus directores y accionistas, al menos nos consolaba saber que no existía tal secretismo con nuestras empresas comerciales locales.

Pero ahora parece que algún agente de este gobierno, en nombre del progreso electrónico y hacer las cosas en línea, ha ido y ha redactado un nuevo "Registro de Empresas y Asuntos Corporativos de Belize (BCCAR por sus siglas en inglés)", que confiere el mismo secretismo a las empresas locales que la ley alguna vez daba solo a las IBC. Y eso es un problema, un gran problema. Según el informe de 7News del viernes, los directores de tres estaciones de noticias, 7News, Krem TV y Plus TV, "pidieron al gobierno que elimine el cortafuegos de secretismo que ahora se ha colocado frente al registro comercial. El 28 de noviembre, se fusionó con el registro de IBC para crear el BCCAR, que transpone el secretismo inherente a las IBC al registro regular de empresas".

Si nos tomamos en serio la lucha contra la corrupción en Belize, entonces lo que necesitamos es más transparencia en el gobierno, no menos. ¿De qué otra manera se puede asegurar a los ciudadanos que los políticos electos no tienen "conflicto de intereses" con las "compañías comerciales" privadas con las que trata el gobierno? Dos abogados ministros de gobierno, el Honorable Kareem Musa y el Honorable Francis Fonseca, ya han expresado su desaprobación de este nuevo arreglo; y también lo ha hecho el presidente del Congreso Nacional de Sindicatos de Belize (NTUCB por sus siglas en inglés), Luke Martinez.

Alguien cometió un gran error en este caso. Y esperamos rápidamente alguna acción correctiva decisiva por parte del P.M. Briceño, antes de que este pequeño incendio forestal se convierta en un infierno furioso, y todas las buenas obras de su gobierno se manchen con el sucio trapo de la sospecha.

From the Publisher



Evan X Hyde

Christmas was supposed to be a religious holiday, but the power structure, I guess worldwide, transformed it into a commercial extravaganza.

In Belize, roots people went along with the program because the Christmas holiday coincided with the return to Belize Town of all the men who had been working in the Cayo and Orange Walk forests. These men had been in the bush for five, six months, they had just been paid, and they wanted to let loose. Christmas became a bram.

I met it like this when I was a child. When it started, I don't know. But things have changed somewhat, because the forests are no more.

The religious holiday of Christmas

involved the birth of a Saviour child, who would be crucified when He became an adult in order to redeem us human beings from our sins. The Saviour child was the Son of God, but His mother was human.

When the Christ child became an adult, a descendant of King David of the Jewish people, he was crucified by the same people from whom He had sprung, the Jews, because they had originally thought He was the Messiah who had been prophesied to liberate them from the Roman Empire, which ruled Judea. Disappointed that Christ's kingdom "was not of this world," they told the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, that they preferred for the brigand Barabbas to be freed, instead of the meek and gentle Christ.

Who actually gave the order for Jesus to be crucified? It seems that Pilate dodged responsibility for the order, and that the leaders of the Jewish people were blamed by the early Christians.

The Roman Catholic Church was established around the fourth century, at the Council of Nicea in Constantinople, and it spread all over the European and Eastern European world. A challenge to Roman Catholic hegemony came from Islam, led by the Prophet Muhammad, in the seventh century in an area now referred to as the Middle East.

Then in the sixteenth century a challenge to the Roman Church and the Pope of Rome arose in Europe itself, first in Germany with a monk named Martin

Luther, followed by England, where King Henry VIII retained almost all the rituals and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church, but declared himself and his successors the leaders of this new Church of England, instead of the Pope.

Two brothers, John and Charles Wesley, later led a rebellion against the Church of England, and they established the Methodist Church, which, it seems to me, is quite powerful in the British Caribbean. In the United States, there is an Ethiopian Methodist Church, which is black-conscious.

Then there are the Baptists, who comprise the majority of African-American religious practitioners. That is how it appears to me. African-American Baptist churches are very musical in their worship, and they include dance.

The Roman Catholic Church was staid and stiff in its rituals, which were all using the Latin language until the coming of Pope John XIII in the later 1950s/early 1960s.

Now the vast majority of Belizean practise some Christian religion or the other. So-called Evangelical churches have emerged in our region which are more soulful and roots than the Catholics and the Anglicans.

The bottom line is that all the Christian churches rely on writings which are referred to as the Holy Bible. Islam relies on the Koran, ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad, whereas the Holy Bible, which has an Old Testament and a New Testament, was written by many evangelists, some before the time of Christ, and others who wrote after Christ had been crucified.

There is a question about how areas of Africa fit into the Christian narrative, because, for example, the Old Testament Jewish leader/prophet Moses married an Ethiopian woman, the Jewish King Solomon had a relationship with the Queen of Africa, Sheba, and Jesus Christ Himself spent his first twelve years in Egypt, which was an African kingdom and the country from which Christ apparently gained a great deal of His insights and wisdom.

Islam became very powerful in parts of Africa, especially East Africa, but there are areas of Africa, especially in central and south Africa, where neither Christianity or Islam dominate the religious practices of the people. The problem for Belizeans is that we know nothing of our ancestors' religions before slavery was imposed on us by the Europeans, and it is an undeniable fact that slavery imposed by the Europeans came inextricably tied to Christianity.

Today then, to be a blindly devoted Christian, to my mind, involves some kind of compromise with European slavery. Blindly devoted Christians totally reject any religious beliefs which are African in origin. It is only the Garifuna people who have made a breakthrough in the sense that they have forced the leaders of Christianity in Belize to accept major aspects of the religious beliefs they brought from St. Vincent, religious beliefs which you may describe as Indigenous and/or you may describe as African. But for sure, those religious beliefs are not European.

Power to the people.

FROM THE PUBLISHER en Español

Se supone que la Navidad debía ser un feriado religioso, pero la estructura de poder, supongo que en todo el mundo, la transformó en una extravagancia comercial.

En Belize, la gente de la base siguió la corriente porque las vacaciones de Navidad coincidían con el regreso al municipio de Belize de todos los hombres que habían estado trabajando en los bosques de Cayo y Orange Walk. Estos hombres habían estado en el monte durante cinco, seis meses, les acababan de pagar y querían tirar la casa por la ventana. La Navidad se convirtió en una celebración festiva.

Lo encontré así cuando era un niño. Cuando empezó, no lo sé. Pero las cosas han cambiado un poco, porque los bosques ya no existen.

La festividad religiosa de la Navidad involucraba el nacimiento de un niño Salvador, quien sería crucificado cuando se hiciera adulto para redimirnos a los seres humanos de nuestros pecados. El niño Salvador era el Hijo de Dios, pero Su madre era humana.

Cuando el niño Jesús se hizo adulto, descendiente del rey David del pueblo judío, fue crucificado por el mismo pueblo del que había brotado, los judíos, porque originalmente habían pensado que Él era el Mesías que había sido profetizado para liberarlos del Imperio Romano, que gobernaba Judea. Decepcionados porque el reino de Cristo "no era de este mundo", le dijeron al gobernador romano, Poncio Pilato, que preferían que el bandolero Barrabás fuera liberado, en lugar del manso y amable Cristo.

¿Quién fue el que realmente dio el orden de crucificar a Jesús? Parece que Pilato eludió la responsabilidad de la orden, y que los primeros cristianos culparon a los líderes del pueblo judío.

La Iglesia Católica Romana se estableció alrededor del siglo IV, en el

Concilio de Nicea en Constantinopla, y se extendió por todo el mundo europeo y del este de Europa. Un desafío a la hegemonía católica romana provino del Islam, dirigido por el profeta Mahoma, en el siglo VII en un área que ahora se conoce como el Medio Oriente.

Luego, en el siglo XVI, surgió un desafío a la Iglesia Romana y al Papa de Roma en la misma Europa, primero en Alemania con un monje llamado Martín Lutero, seguido de Inglaterra, donde el rey Enrique VIII conservó casi todos los rituales y ceremonias de la Iglesia Católica Romana, pero se declaró a sí mismo y a sus sucesores los líderes de esta nueva Iglesia de Inglaterra, en lugar del Papa.

Dos hermanos, John y Charles Wesley, más tarde encabezaron una rebelión contra la Iglesia de Inglaterra y establecieron la Iglesia Metodista, la cual, me parece, es bastante poderosa en el Caribe Británico. En los Estados Unidos, hay una Iglesia Metodista Etíope, que es negro consciente.

Luego están los bautistas, que comprenden la mayoría de los practicantes religiosos afroamericanos. Así es como me parece a mí. Las iglesias bautistas afroamericanas son muy musicales en su adoración e incluyen danza.

La Iglesia Católica Romana era seria y rígida en sus rituales, todos los cuales usaban el idioma latino hasta la llegada del Papa Juan XIII a fines de la década de 1950 y principios de la de 1960.

Ahora la gran mayoría de los beliceños practican alguna religión cristiana u otra. En nuestra región han surgido las llamadas iglesias evangélicas que son más conmovedoras y de la base que las católicas y las anglicanas.

Lo cierto es que todas las iglesias cristianas se basan en escritos a los que se hace referencia como la Santa Biblia. El Islam se basa en el Corán, atribuido al profeta Mahoma, mientras que la Santa

Biblia, que tiene un Antiguo Testamento y un Nuevo Testamento, fue escrita por muchos evangelistas, algunos antes de la época de Cristo y otros que escribieron después de que Cristo fuera crucificado.

Existe una pregunta acerca de cómo áreas de África encajan en la narrativa cristiana porque, por ejemplo, el líder/profeta judío del Antiguo Testamento, Moisés, se casó con una mujer etíope, el rey judío Salomón tuvo una relación con la reina de África, Sheba, y Jesucristo mismo pasó sus primeros doce años en Egipto, que era un reino africano y el país del cual Cristo aparentemente obtuvo gran parte de sus conocimientos y sabiduría.

El Islam se volvió muy poderoso en partes de África, especialmente en África Oriental, pero hay áreas de África, especialmente en el centro y el sur de África, donde ni el cristianismo ni el Islam dominan las prácticas religiosas de la gente. El problema para los beliceños es que no sabemos nada de las religiones de nuestros antepasados antes de que los europeos nos impusieran la esclavitud, y es un hecho innegable que la esclavitud impuesta por los europeos vino indisolublemente ligada al cristianismo.

Hoy entonces, ser un cristiano ciegamente devoto, en mi opinión, implica algún tipo de compromiso con la esclavitud europea. Los cristianos ciegamente devotos rechazan totalmente cualquier creencia religiosa que sea de origen africano. Solo el pueblo garífuna ha hecho un gran avance en el sentido de que ha obligado a los líderes del cristianismo en Belize a aceptar aspectos importantes de las creencias religiosas que trajeron de San Vicente, creencias religiosas que pueden describirse como indígenas y/o como africanas. Pero con certeza, esas creencias religiosas no son europeas.

¡Poder al pueblo!



SPORTS, SIN AND SUBVERSION



Ludwig Lightburn after he defeated New Orleans' Ralph Dupas, the no. 2 lightweight contender in the world, at New York City's Madison Square Garden in 1955. This was Lightburn's first nationally televised fight in the U.S. It was also seen in Mexico and Canada, and broadcast worldwide on shortwave radio. (The ring announcer is Johnny Addie.)

Evan X Hyde

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Evan X Hyde

House Meeting had better deliver Krismos Cheer!

by Colin Hyde

There are many bad things the UDP left behind, things that must be discarded, but nobody's all bad, and you don't have to look deep inside their baggage to find a beautiful pearl, the Annual Krismos Cheer. The UDP knew how to make bad out of a good thing, so maybe my memory isn't wrong when it comes to mind that that party wasn't into equal distribution, that Red reps got more than Blue ones. Well, you can't do anything about the past; it's only to learn from.

Incredibly, some hate-filled persons rained on the ham, turkey and toys parade. I understand the hue and cry about people who didn't need, getting. Maybe it all should go through the Salvation Army. But as for that crowd that said our government should save the money, and spoke about the need to teach people to practice austerity at Krismos, I don't figure them. Where do these types of people come from? We might not all be Christians in Belize, but almost all of us have a Christian upbringing. We all know that Roots Belizean culture is the fathers coming home from Mahogany and Chiclé bush to be with the family for the bram.

How come those bohgaz don't understand the importance of this holiday to our people? Where did they learn to be like Scrooge? You know about him, the father of Christmas

meanness, the villain in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. The owner of the website, baiadellaconoscenza.com, says Scrooge's meanness might be explained by his living through the Napoleonic Wars, which war saw Britain under a trade embargo.

Mark D. Roberts, in the story "Christmas According to Dickens: What Made Scrooge Scrooge?", which can be found at the website patheos.com, says Scrooge had a difficult childhood at boarding school, that on an occasion he is abandoned by the other boys who go home for Christmas, that his father was cruel, and he didn't have a mother. My, in young adulthood the girl he loves leaves him because he loves money/fears poverty too much.

What's the explanation for our Scrooges, I don't know. What I know is that Krismos Cheer is just about the best idea that has come out of the House, and the Blue will get a lot of points if there's more big, fat cheer this year.

Awaiting an African president — Rwanda before the genocide

Reports say the genocide in Rwanda which claimed around a million lives and displaced over 2 million people lasted 100 days in 1994. It's hard to grasp how the country sank into such savagery, but while it happened "overnight," it was a long time building up. In the segment I

excerpted from the Human Rights Watch (HRW) report on Friday, we learned that the Hutu, who led the charge, had been at the bottom of Rwandan society for a long, long time, and the Tutsi, who were slaughtered, were the elites in that country.

Picking up where we left off, we find Rwanda at the end of colonial rule. The Belgians, the colonial power in Rwanda who kept the Tutsis on a higher plane than the Hutus until the 1950s, "began to increase possibilities for Hutu to participate in public life. They named several Hutu to responsible positions in the administration, they began to admit more Hutu into secondary schools, and they conducted limited elections for advisory government councils ... With independence approaching, conservative Tutsi hoped to oust the Belgians before majority rule was installed. Radical Hutu, on the contrary, hoped to gain control of the political system before the colonialists withdrew."

The Wikipedia says Grégoire Kayibanda, an ethnic Hutu, "was the first elected President of Rwanda from 1962 to 1973." He led "the Rwandan Revolution and led Rwanda's struggle for independence from Belgium, replacing the Tutsi monarchy with a republican form of government." Juvénal Habyarimana, an ethnic Hutu, overthrew Kayibanda in 1973 and held the presidency until 1994.

Staying with the Wikipedia, Habyarimana "continued his predecessor's pro-Hutu policies. He was a dictator, and electoral fraud was suspected for his unopposed re-elections: 98.99% of the vote on 24 December 1978, 99.97% of the vote on 19 December 1983, and 99.98% of the vote on 19 December 1988." Clearly, Habyarimana was out of line, and "in 1990 the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) launched the Rwandan Civil War against his government. After three years of war, he signed the 1993 Arusha Accords with the RPF as a peace agreement. The following year, he was killed under mysterious circumstances when his aircraft, also carrying the President Cyprien Ntaryamira of neighboring Burundi, was shot down by a missile near Kigali, Rwanda. His assassination ignited ethnic tensions in the region and helped spark the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi."

Returning to the HRW report, it says Habyarimana appeared to run "an honest and energetic administration" and he was able to attract much foreign investment which enabled the government to construct "impressive infrastructure, particularly of roads and telephone and electric service." During his first decade in office Rwanda was hailed as a model nation in Africa by the foreigners.

But the wealth wasn't being shared justly. "Some Rwandans were indeed getting rich: those who worked for the state directly, those employed by its offshoots, parastatal enterprises, and those who ran economic development projects controlled by state officials. State employees and the military also used access to preferential treatment to build profitable private businesses." But the "mass of the people stayed poor ... local officials appropriated fields for development projects" and members of the urban elite bought out the poor, establishing themselves as absentee landlords. According to a government study done in 1991, the richest 16 percent of landowners held 43 percent of the land, while the poorest households tried to eke out a living on holdings that ranged from one quarter to three-quarters of a hectare, or less than an acre of land.

75% of Rwanda's foreign exchange earnings came from sales of coffee, and when there was a fall in the price of that commodity around the end of the 1980s, the country "found itself among the many debtor nations required to accept strict fiscal measures imposed by the World Bank and the donor nations. The urban elite saw its comfort threatened, but the rural poor suffered even more. A drought beginning in 1989 reduced harvests in the south and left substantial numbers of people short of food. Habyarimana at first refused to acknowledge the gravity of the food shortage, an attitude that exemplified the readiness of the urban elite to ignore suffering out on the hills.

"The imbalance in wealth and power was a question not just of the usual urban-rural disparities but also of increasingly evident discrimination against Tutsi and against Hutu from areas other than the 'blessed region,' that is, the northwest. Habyarimana had established a system of quotas, supposedly to assure

Please turn to Page 15

A Collection of Ideas and Opinions 2007-2012
by C B Hyde

Available at: #3304 Amandala Drive (formerly Partridge Street), Belize City, Belize
Phone: 202-4477

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The U.S. Embassy Belmopan is seeking eligible and qualified applicants for the following position:

Position Name: Administrative Management Assistant (International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs)
Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-22
Closing date: December 23, 2022

Interested applicants must submit their application via the Electronic Recruitment Application (ERA) system, a web-based system. To view and apply for this vacancy, visit the ERA site at: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/blz/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

Please visit the Embassy's website for instructions on how to apply via the ERA system: <https://bz.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>

Note 1: Resumes will not be considered. Candidates must note all work experience when completing the ERA application. Insufficient or incomplete information will result in an ineligible application.

Note 2: Candidates must submit applicable required documentation by the closing date of this announcement. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in an ineligible application.

Vladimir Putin's discourse at the Valdai Foundation (Final Part)



by Clinton Canul Luna

On October 27, 2022, the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, gave a discourse at the Valdai Discussion Club Foundation which I find to be of much interest. Permit me, our dear readers of this column, to present to you the final part of such speech:

We try to establish relations with the main countries of the West and with NATO. The message was the same: let's stop being enemies, let's live together as friends, let's dialogue, build trust and, therefore, peace. We were absolutely honest; I want to underline that. We clearly understood the complexity of this approach, but we accepted it. What did we get as an answer? In short, we got a "no" in all the main areas of possible cooperation. We receive increasing pressure on us and flashpoints near our borders. And what is, if I may ask, the point of this pressure? What is it about? Is it just for practice? Of course not. The goal is to make Russia more vulnerable. The purpose is to turn Russia into a tool to achieve its own geopolitical goals. They try to turn the whole world into a tool, in order to use these tools for their own purposes. And those who do not give in to this pressure, those who do not want to be such a tool, are sanctioned: all kinds of economic restrictions are carried out against them and in relation to them, coups are prepared, or when it is possible carried out, and so on.

In fact, this is a universal rule: they try to turn everyone into a tool, in order to use these tools for their own purposes. And those who do not give in to this pressure, those who do not want to be such a tool, are sanctioned: all kinds of economic restrictions are carried out against them and in relation to them, coups are prepared or when it is possible carry out and so on. And in the end, if nothing can be done, the goal is the same: destroy them, erase them from the political map. But it has not been and will never be possible to work out and implement such a scenario with regard to Russia. What else can I add? Russia is not challenging Western elites. Russia is simply defending its right to exist and develop freely. And what is more important, we will not become a new hegemony ourselves. Russia is not suggesting replacing a unipolar world with a bipolar, tripolar, or any other dominant order, or substituting Eastern, Northern, or Southern domination for Western domination. This would inevitably lead to another impasse.

At this point I would like to quote the words of the great Russian philosopher Nikolai Danilevsky. He believed that progress was not about everyone going in the same direction, as some of our opponents seem to want. This would only stop progress, said Danilevsky. Progress consists of "traversing the field that represents the historical activity of humanity, walking in all directions," he said, adding that no civilization can pride itself on being the pinnacle of development. I am convinced that the dictatorship can only be counteracted through the free development of countries and peoples; the degradation of the individual can be counteracted with love

for the person as creator; primitive simplification and prohibition can be replaced by the burgeoning complexity of culture and tradition. The importance of the current historical moment lies in the opportunities that open up before all civilizations, States and integration associations for the democratic and differentiated development of each one.

We believe above all that the new world order must be based on law and right, and must be free, distinctive and fair. The world economy and trade must also be fairer and more open. Russia considers the creation of new international financial platforms inevitable; this includes international transactions. These platforms must be above national jurisdictions. They must be secure, depoliticized and automated and must not depend on any single control center. Is it possible to do this or not? Of course it's possible. But it will require a lot of effort. Many countries will have to join forces, but it is possible. This rules out the possibility of abuse in a new global financial infrastructure. It would allow effective, beneficial and secure international transactions to be carried out without the dollar or any of the so-called reserve currencies. This is even more important now that the dollar is being used as a weapon. The United States, and the West in general, have discredited the institution of international financial reserves. First they devalued it with inflation in the dollar and Euro zones, and then they took away our gold and foreign exchange reserves. The transition to domestic currency transactions will quickly gain momentum. This is unavoidable. Of course, it depends on the status of the issuers of these currencies and the state of their economies, but they will get stronger, and these transactions are bound to gradually prevail over the others. Such is the logic of a sovereign economic and financial policy in a multipolar world.

Furthermore, the new global development centers are already using unrivaled technology and research in various fields and can successfully compete with Western transnational corporations in many fields. It is clear that we have a common and very pragmatic interest in free and open scientific and technological exchange. United, we can win more than acting alone. The majority should benefit from these exchanges, not individual super-rich corporations. How are things today? If the West sells medicines or crop seeds to other countries, it tells them to kill their national pharmaceutical industries and the national team. In fact, it all boils down to this: Their supplies of machine tools and equipment destroy the local engineering industry. I realized this when I was Prime Minister. Once you open up your market to a certain group of products, the local manufacturer instantly sinks, and is almost impossible to get back on its feet. This is how they build relationships. This is how they take over markets and resources, and countries lose their technological and scientific potential. This is not progress; it is slavery and the reduction of economies to primitive levels.

Technological development should not increase global inequality, but reduce it. This is how Russia has traditionally pursued its foreign technology policy. For example,

when we build nuclear power plants in other countries, we create centers of competence and train local staff. We create an industry. We don't just build a plant, we create an entire industry. In fact, we give other countries the opportunity to open new paths in their scientific and technological development, reduce inequality and take their energy sector to new levels of efficiency and respect for the environment. Let me stress again that sovereignty and the single path of development do not mean isolation or self-sufficiency at all. Rather, it is a vigorous and mutually beneficial cooperation based on the principles of fairness and equality. If liberal globalization consists of depersonalizing and imposing the Western model on the whole world, integration consists, on the contrary, of harnessing the potential of each civilization so that everyone benefits. If globalization is a dictate—which is what it ultimately boils down to—integration is a team effort to develop common strategies from which all can benefit. In this regard, Russia believes that it is important to make greater use of the mechanisms of creating large spaces that are based on interaction between neighboring countries, whose economies and social systems, as well as resource and infrastructure bases, complement each other.

Yes. In fact, these great spaces constitute the economic base of a multipolar world order. Their dialogue gives rise to an authentic unity of humanity, which is much more complex, unique and multidimensional than the simplistic ideas professed by some Western brains. Unity among humanity cannot be created by giving orders such as "do as I do" or "be as we do". It is created with the consideration of everyone's opinion and with a careful approach to the identity of each society and each nation. This is the principle that can underpin long-term cooperation in a multipolar world. In this regard, it may be worth reviewing the structure of the United Nations, including its Security Council, to better reflect the diversity of the world. After all, the world of tomorrow will depend much more on Asia, Africa and Latin America than is believed today, and this increase in their influence is undoubtedly a positive development. Let me remind you that Western civilization is not the only one even in our common Eurasian space. Furthermore, the majority of the population is concentrated in eastern Eurasia, where the centers of the oldest human civilizations arose. The value and importance of Eurasia lies in the fact that it represents a self-sufficient complex that possesses enormous resources of all kinds and tremendous opportunities. The more we work to increase the connectivity of Eurasia and create new ways and forms of cooperation, the more impressive achievements we will achieve. The success of the Eurasian Economic Union, the rapidly growing authority and prestige of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the large-scale "One Belt, One Road" initiatives, the multilateral cooperation plans for the construction of the North-South transport and many other projects, are the

beginning of a new era, a new stage in the development of Eurasia. I'm sure of it.

Integration projects do not contradict each other, but complement each other, of course, if they are carried out by neighboring countries in their own interest and not introduced by external forces with the aim of dividing the Eurasian space and turning it into a zone of confrontation of blocks. Europe, the western extremity of Greater Eurasia, could also become its natural part. But many of its leaders are hampered by the conviction that Europeans are superior to others, that it is beneath them to participate as equals in business with others. This arrogance prevents them from seeing that they themselves have become a foreign periphery and have actually become vassals, often without the right to vote. Colleagues, the collapse of the Soviet Union altered the balance of geopolitical forces. The West felt like a winner and declared a unipolar world agreement, in which only its will, culture and interests had the right to exist.

Now this historical period of unlimited Western dominance in world affairs is coming to an end. The unipolar world is being relegated to the past. We are at a historic crossroads. Probably the most dangerous, unpredictable and at the same time most important decade since the end of the Second World War awaits us. The West is incapable of ruling humanity alone and most nations no longer want to put up with it. This is the main contradiction of the new age. To cite a classic, it is a situation to a certain extent revolutionary: the elites cannot and the people do not want to continue living like this. The unipolar world is being relegated to the past. This state of affairs is plagued by global conflicts or a whole chain of conflicts, posing a threat to humanity, including the West itself. The main historical task today is to resolve this contradiction constructively and positively. The change of time is a painful process, although natural and inevitable. A future global agreement is taking shape before our eyes. In this world arrangement, we must listen to everyone, consider all opinions, all nations, societies, cultures, and all systems of world views, religious ideas and concepts, without imposing a single truth on anyone. Only on this basis, understanding our responsibility for the destinies of nations and our planet, will we create a symphony of human civilization. At this point, I would like to end my remarks by thanking you for your patience in listening to them. Thank you very much.

(The End)

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December 11, 2022
Finca Solana
Corozal Town



Pedal by Pedal - The Marlon Castillo Story



by Santino Castillo

BELIZE CITY, Wed. Dec. 7, 2022

Some stories are harder to write than others. This is one such story. I am sure by now everyone knows of the misfortune of Marlon Castillo on Monday morning, December 5, when he got his hand stuck in a meat grinder at his meat shop.

First, let me give you a brief history of my life with Marlon Castillo.

Chapter 1 – How I met Marlon

Around 2001 at the age of 14, Marlon used to follow Team Santino's on our training rides on an old iron bike. His enthusiasm and brute strength amazed me, and so I nurtured and offered him a good bike and a spot on Team Santino's, who had some of Belize's best riders at the time. Santino's captain and perennial champion, Ernest "JawMeighan" Meighan had just won his second Cross Country. These two immediately bonded, and JawMeighan became Marlon's role model. In a short period of time, Marlon became Belize's best rider with Team Santino's. He won every single race on the calendar except Cross Country, including his first Krem Classic at the tender age of 16 in 2004 while still a Junior. Two years later in the 2006 Krem Classic, he was in a 2-man breakaway with American Scottie Weiss, and in a close nail-biting sprint, Scottie Weiss was declared the winner. Nonetheless, in 2009 Marlon prevailed once again as the undisputed champion.

Chapter 2 – Victory & Tragedy

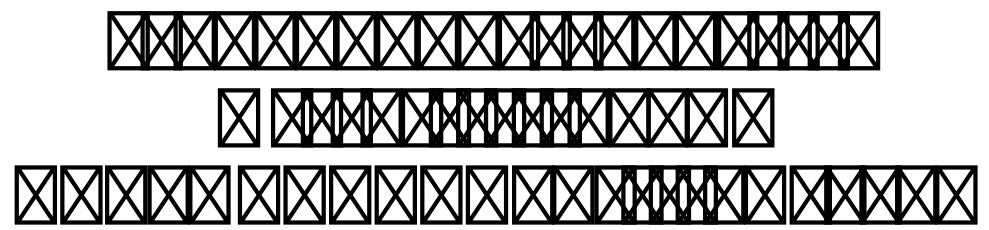
As Marlon matured he kept racking up victories for Team Santino's both in Belize and abroad, including the prestigious UNDER 23 Championship at the Tour of Merida in 2008, while still coming in 2nd overall in the Elite Category to the great Mexican professional, Manolo Hernandez. Having lost his mother at a tender age, he then lost his father to murder during a robbery in Belize City. This was



followed by a fatal car accident in which he was the driver. The result was horrific as he lost his best friend, Ariel Rosado, who was also a member of Team Santino's.

Chapter 3 – The Elusive Cross Country

In 2013 he was Team Santino's Plan-A to win Cross Country, and on the return from Cayo passing through Camalote, Marlon had a bad crash and was badly hurt, ending up in the ambulance, and his dream shattered for another year. That year, Darnell Barrow was our Plan-B rider and ended up winning Cross Country for Team Santino's in a 19-man sprint which many cycling pundits have labeled as the best Cross Country finish to date.



Beast of Belize 2022 winners: (l to r) 5th Immer Lima; 2nd Larry Lisbey; 1st Wilman Mejia; 4th Wallace Chu; 3rd David Fernandez

BELIZE CITY, Tues. Dec. 6, 2022

Wild Dog Food, Tim Banman, Mike's Cue Club and Ruby's Jewelry 2022 Beast of Belize Billiards Tournament, organized by Kenneth Dawson in conjunction with the Belize Billiards Sports Federation (BBSF), was a success. Beast of Belize was held in Belmopan at Mike's Cue Club and saw 56 participants. This was after players had competed at the district level to earn the right to play at the National Individual 8 and 9 Ball Double Elimination Tournament.

A total of 166 players competed, from

Corozal, Orange Walk, Belize, Cayo, Belmopan and San Pedro. National Finals saw 58 players competing for 5 prizes.

The tournament winners are: 1st Place - Wilman Mejia; 2nd Place - Larry Lisbey; 3rd Place - David Fernandez; 4th Place - Wallace Chu; and 5th Place - Immer Lima.

Thanks to the BBSF, District Associations, players, fans, umpires (Inspector Thomas Myers, Alejandro Ico, Ernest Turner, and Floyd Thimbrel), and finally Mr. Edmund Guy (President of Belmopan Billiards Association). Without you guys this would not be possible.

#Biggerandbetter2023BeastofBelize!

Chapter 4 – The First Finale

In 2015, while being in probably the best cycling condition and shape of his life, he simply quit the race when they got to Cayo, riding straight to his grandmother's house and throwing the towel in. His excuse was bad Chinese food he ate the night before; but I believe it was the frustration of having so many cyclists sucking his wheel including some foreigners. After Cross Country he quit cycling and took the lead at the meat shop his father had left behind for him and his twin brother. Yes, he has a fraternal twin brother which many do not know off.

Chapter 5 – The comeback

After 7 years off the bike, Marlon trained for a little over 3 months beginning in January of this year and came in 4th and was the 2nd Belizean in the 2022 Holy Saturday Cross Country. This motivated him and he sought my coaching advice. However, having been off the bike for so long, and now in business, he no longer had the same drive and desire to train the long daily hours needed in such a demanding sport like cycling and more so, a grueling race like Cross Country. I think he felt that with the abundance

of talent given to him by God, he could start training this January and still do well come Cross Country 2023.

Chapter 6 – Tragedy of December 5th 2022

However, God had other plans, as early on the morning of December 5, I got the first call from Quinton Hamilton at 9:28 a.m. telling me Marlon had somehow gotten his right hand caught in his meat grinder at his meat shop, and that they could not get the grinder detached from his hand. In fact, he was transported by ambulance to KMH with the meat grinder still attached to his hand. By the time the doctors got it off, and wheeled him into the operating theatre, there was no doubt his hand would have to be amputated. The question was how high, since a lot of time had passed and infection had set in killing a lot of tendons, ligaments, nerves, veins, you name it. The operation was successful; but he had to be cut almost at the elbow.

Chapter 7 - A spiritual visit with Marlon today Dec. 6

I visited Marlon today and he told me he was feeding the grinder with his



Altitude are national football champs, defeated Verdes in penalty shootout

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Dec. 12, 2022

The recent penalty shootout dramas at the FIFA Qatar World Cup was taken to another level in our own Premier League of Belize (PLB) 2022-2023 Opening Season championship last night at the Isidoro Beaton Stadium in Belmopan, where the penalty shootout, which followed a 1-1 draw in regulation and overtime (it was the same 1-1 score in the 1st leg), ended up with regular season leader Altitude FC prevailing in “sudden death” after each team had taken a total of thirteen (13) penalty kicks. Altitude FC from Mango Creek, Independence, are therefore the new national football champions of Belize, with 3-time champions Verdes FC now being the sub-champions.

After game 1 had ended in a 1-1 draw in San Ignacio on Sunday, November 27, game 2 was scheduled for Altitude’s home town of Independence last week Saturday night, December 3, but torrential rains caused a one-week postponement. And with



Altitude FC celebrate PLB Championship at Isidoro Beaton Stadium

more rains forecasted this past weekend,

FIFA World Cup semifinal matchups set with just four teams remaining



France celebrates after beating England at the 2022 World Cup. Chris Brunskill/Fantasia/Getty Images

Justin Klawans, Staff writer

THE WEEK, Sat. Dec. 10, 2022

Just four teams remain standing at the 2022 FIFA World Cup, with the semifinal matchups finalized Saturday afternoon.

France became the last team to earn a spot in the semifinals, beating England 2-1 after the Three Lions were hampered by a series of penalties throughout the game. This ends the English push to re-reach the semifinals after making it through at the 2018 World Cup.

The French will play Morocco, who became the first African team to ever reach the World Cup semifinals after stunning the mighty Portuguese team 1-0 on Saturday morning, ending the international

run of legendary footballer (Cristiano) Ronaldo.

The other side of the bracket will be filled out by Argentina and Croatia. In a tournament filled with unlikely upsets, Croatia pulled its way into the semifinals by beating another powerhouse South American team, Brazil, on penalty kicks. They will enter the game as underdogs against Argentina, who, under the leadership of Lionel Messi, similarly beat the Netherlands on penalty kicks. The 35-year-old, in perhaps his final World Cup, is now just two games away from potentially lifting the elusive trophy.

Argentina will face Croatia on Dec. 13, while France will play Morocco on Dec. 14.

both teams agreed to transfer the final match to the weather resilient field in Belmopan, where the tournament culminated last night, Sunday, December 11, at the Isidoro Beaton Stadium.

We have not yet received the league’s official report on the match, but on TNC10 last night it showed a 1-1 score in regulation and after the 15-15 overtime period. And the penalty shootout certainly broke some PLB records.

After 10 kicks by each team, they were still tied at 9 goals apiece. (Altitude rookie Jardehl Muschamp’s attempt had been stopped by Verdes’ goalkeeper Woodrow West; and Verdes’ Trimayne “Peppa” Harris had kicked over the cross bar.) Altitude had kicked first, and their 11th kicker, captain Dalton Eiley, with his right knee bandaged and limping slightly, kicked over the goal, and was in obvious physical and emotional pain afterwards. Verdes’ young striker Krisean Lopez had a chance to win it for his team, but his well-placed shot was stopped by a diving Altitude goalkeeper Oscar Palomino. (Both team goalkeepers,

West of Verdes and Palomino of Altitude had successfully converted their kicks from the penalty spot.)

So, with the team rosters exhausted, it was back to the first kickers on each 11-man roster. Baaka (Luis Torres) again converted for Altitude; and so did Verdes’ Christian Ramirez. 10-10 was the score. Then Altitude’s and PLB’s regular season leading goal scorer Andres Orozco made it 11-10 for Altitude; and Verdes’ Trimayne “Peppa” Harris had a chance to make up for his previous missed penalty where he had kicked over the goal to the left side. This time, Peppa went right, but again it was over the cross bar, to his devastation and disappointment, and the tremendous relief and exhilaration of the Altitude team members and many fans who had travelled with them from Mango Creek. Altitude wins on penalties, 11-10.

Team and individual champion and sub-champion trophies were issued immediately following the match; and the individual awards will reportedly be delivered at a season ending PLB “Gala Event” at a date to be announced.

Pedal by Pedal - The Marlon Castillo Story

Continued from ▶ Page 13

right hand while picking up meat from a basin with his left hand, and in a split second, the grinder caught one of his fingers and just sucked in the rest of his right hand. Luckily, Marlon is left handed. He said that doctors told him the meat grinder being attached to his hand actually helped him from bleeding out as it served as a semi-tourniquet. I told him we can’t question God’s will for us, and that God has a special purpose for him in

life with the one good hand. We spoke about the past, future, life and God. I know Marlon will triumph once again, especially being the lion he is and having been able to conquer so much adversity in his short lifetime. As I told him, at 35 he is also relatively young, and with the new technology of prosthetics, I know he will be okay. In the meantime, let us keep praying for Marlon Castillo, a true Belizean champion in every way.

Chapter 8 - Marlon’s future, yet to be written...

Media protests secrecy of new business registry

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Companies or IBCs. However, some prominent media figures are sounding alarm about an apparent firewall in the system that prevents media personnel and other professionals from accessing vital company ownership information which was once openly available. It is a system that has afforded IBCs a large amount of confidentiality, but has now become, within the new online platform, an overarching shutdown in public access to information about the identities of the owners and directors of any company in the country.

“We had access to whatever information was in those folders and that information traces and tracks all the changes in directorship and shareholders, and that information is also necessary for us to know and have access to,” KREM news director, Marisol Amaya, said during a Zoom interview last week.

Jules Vasquez, the news director at 7News, calls the move the most deleterious and retrograde, anti-transparent public maneuver he has ever seen. The government has stated that the OBRS was created to make digital registration services more accessible and “create a registry that is built on proper checks and balances ensuring data security and data privacy.” IBCs, which are vital to the financial services sector in Belize, now fall under the same umbrella as 250 other companies, as a result of the Belize Companies Act 2022, and as such the regulations for free access to information have been changed for local companies who are now able to utilize registered agents to incorporate.

A release issued by the GoB last Friday claims, however, “While the regulations for the free access of information have changed, there are built-in mechanisms that allow limited and extended access to information via lawful channels.”

Two Cabinet ministers, Hon. Kareem Musa and Hon. Francis Fonseca, both attorneys by profession, have told local media that an amendment to the current legislation may be necessary to provide for a greater level of access and public disclosure.

Musa commented, “I think that if there is a necessity for us to allow greater access - because I agree with you. It should be open and transparent as it has been with local companies. I think that legislation will have to be looked at again to see how it could be amended to allow for that access, because I don’t think that should be the intention, to deprive anyone of access. I think that we certainly have to create - as I said - that level of access for you to determine the true, beneficial owners of companies. And so, as I said, when we see it being put into practice, if it is that you are not allowed that type of access, for you to determine true ownership - or beneficial ownership - that is something that we’ll have to look at, because that is something [that] even in the court system, it’s always asked. Who are the true, beneficial owners of these companies?”

Fonseca made a similar point in a text sent to 7News in which he stated, “I am in support of public disclosure of information regarding directors and shareholders of local companies. believe the issue is worthy of further discussion and perhaps an amendment may be necessary to address some of the legitimate concerns that have arisen regarding disclosure and

transparency.”

Prime Minister John Briceño has said, however, that the administration is trying to “salvage the offshore industry” with this move. He said that “developed countries” (possibly a reference to the EU) have been pressuring Belize and other countries with offshore industries to merge IBC registries with local business registries.

Minister of State in the Finance Ministry, Hon. Chis Coye said last week that the legislation was drafted following the establishment of a technical working group comprised of at least 7 attorneys. He said that the steering committee developed the new law, and claims various stakeholders were also involved.

The issue which exists currently is that company searches for local companies will no longer yield the names of directors and shareholders, but simply a short extraction similar to those issued for company searches for IBCs. Only basic information on the registration of the company and a registered agent is provided in that document. Persons seeking information from those registered agents may likely encounter difficulty, since those entities, typically law firms or lawyers, are not required to disclose that information under the law. A legal instrument or the launch of an investigation would be the only sure way of getting the requested information from those companies—thus fettering the free flow of information.

Minister Coye, while he supports the full disclosure of company information to the government, stated, “There is a constitutionally entrenched and protected right of privacy. The European Court of Justice, I think, just a few weeks ago ... [ruled] that government can’t compel the disclosure of beneficial ownership information on the basis of that right of privacy, so there is that, and there are other freedom of expression so you have to have a balancing of those rights and those interest.”

He said that since being removed from the EU tax haven blacklist, the country has been going through a process of complying with a series of new mandates from international bodies that guide the country on how to improve its laws.

“We are in that continuing process. Next year, December of next year, we will be subject once again to a CSATF, EML peer review, that feedback we’ve gotten – and the Financial Services Commission is playing a very important role in this process – the feedback we’ve gotten is of the dozen or so countries that have gone through that peer review, maybe 9 to 10 of those have actually failed. So we have taken it on through the FIU and the overall National Anti-Money Laundering Committee to do whatever it takes to meet compliance, because you know that we have had issues – challenges, major challenges with our correspondent banking,” Hon. Coye said.

He said that opening up those opportunities to expand corresponding banking is tied to the anti-money laundering compliance regime. Hon. Coye further noted that the FIU has begun to work with a consultant to ensure that the country is compliant whenever that review period comes around, which is expected to be sometime in December 2023.

“It’s December 2023, and we are working on that; we are spending on that, we that Belize is put in the best possible position, when we look at the Companies

Faber will run independent if UDP refuses his candidacy

Continued from ▶ Page 1

standard bearer after being selected by the UDP’s nomination committee. Faber has indicated, however, that he plans to run in the Collet Division in the next General Election, and will use whatever political path is available to him to do that.

“Again, I repeat, I am a UDP. I love my party. I am elected on the party’s banner, so I don’t want anybody to say that I am leaving the UDP,” Faber said during the interview.

“I have no problem, for the record, in being an independent candidate. I have tested the water significantly,” Faber went on to say, and he noted that following the landfall of Hurricane Lisa, he was going house to house in his division, and has received reassurance that the people of Collet would go where he goes.

“The word from the Collet residents is that wherever you go, we will go with you, and so I am confident that this might be group breaking if the UDP does not want me to run for them,” Faber said, adding that he is confident of the support from the people within the division.

He said that reasonable minds are not prevailing within the UDP, and as such, he is looking at a possible alternate path to seeking re-election.

“I don’t see how it is going to work, but I am going to run in the Collet area, so if the UDP doesn’t want that to happen, then, I am going to run independently if they don’t want me to run under the UDP banner,” Faber said.

As far as supporting his constituency adequately without the financial backing of the UDP, Faber said that he never depended on the party to provide funds to support his constituents, adding that those monies will come from the monthly constituency fund in place.

Faber’s application to once again represent the UDP in the Collet Division was denied despite the party’s decision that elected area representatives only had to give their indication of a desire to run in the upcoming general elections in order to once again represent their division. The reasoning in some quarters is that Faber did not have to submit an application to the nominations committee and thus, for all intents and purposes, could not be denied.

The decision was reportedly made because Faber had not removed from his social media page posts that were critical of the party and its leadership. He eventually removed the posts, but Ian Jones was nonetheless selected by the nominations committee as the UDP’s new standard bearer.

Guatemala submits its Reply...

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Ambassador Gladys Ruiz de Vielman, and Co-agent Ambassador Rafael Salazar Galvez presented the reply and its annexes of support to the ICJ. A release issued following the submission states, “Guatemala’s Reply reflects all the factual and legal elements that assist the Guatemalan claim maintained throughout the dispute.”

The release adds that the submission is a result of a “meticulous and professional process” by a team of experts.

Within the next 6 months or so, Belize will be required to submit its Rejoinder, a document in response to this Reply submitted by Guatemala, and effectively the last written submission to be made by either party. Following that submission, the case is to begin in earnest, but that date has not yet been decided on.

The Belizean legal team is hoping that the ICJ will allow Honduras’ Sapodilla Cayes claim to be heard in tandem with the substantive matter, in hopes of finally resolving all territorial claims to Belize at the same time.

House Meeting had better deliver Krismos Cheer!

Continued from ▶ Page 11

equitable distribution of resources and opportunities to all Rwandans. In fact, officials used the system to restrict the access of Tutsi to employment and higher education, and increasingly to discriminate against Hutu from regions other than the north. By the mid-1980s, Habyarimana’s home prefecture of Gisenyi, one of ten in the country at the time, had provided the office holders for one-third of the most important jobs in government as well as virtually all the leaders of the army and security service. Gisenyi and the adjacent prefecture of Ruhengeri enjoyed a similarly disproportionate share of national resources, whether measured in terms

of funds for development or places available for higher education.”

So, that’s the background to this terrible tragedy in Rwanda in 1994. I am sure you can see some similarities with Belize, and the number one shared story would be the distribution of wealth. There was extreme poverty in Rwanda, and coupled with deep ethnic divisions they had the ingredients for an explosion.

I am sure our leaders will be quick to point out that there is no dictatorship here. We also don’t have the deep race divide. Well, that is something we have to keep working on. And while our small farmers are under a lot of economic pressure, they aren’t landless. But the cost of accessible land has hit the stratosphere, so it is an area we have to watch.

Law, the consultant will certainly have his second look over that. We have engaged the US Embassy, the UK High Commission for technical assistance and support, to make sure that we meet

compliance. We are not taking this lightly, we are not taking corruption or anti-corruption, we are not taking anti-money laundering and compliance lightly,” Hon. Coye said.

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From the Hondo... to Mahogany!

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Corozal Town - Orange Walk Town - Belize City

New Year's Day

2023



Who will win?

32nd Annual kren FM

CYCLING CLASSIC

New Year's Day 2023!!



1991	Michael Lewis (first) Ernest Meighan (second)	(Ladies)	Lori Harkey (first)
1992	Francisco Flores (first) Fitzgerald Joseph (second)		Shalini Zabaneh (second) Carlos Hernandez (first)
1993	Derrick Mahler (first) Orlando Chavarria (second)	(Ladies)	Carlos Manuel Hernandez (second) Shalini Zabaneh (first)
1994	Douglas Lamb (first) Ronald Sutherland (second)		Anthea Sutherland (second) Marco Salas (first)
1995	Robert Mariano (first) Gustavo Carillo (second)	(Ladies)	Juan Rojas (second) Shalini Zabaneh (first)
1996	Nigel Matus (first) Ian Smith (second)		Patricia Chavarria (second) Geovanni Choto (first)
1997	Fred Usher (first) Michael Lewis (second)	(Ladies)	Byron Pope (second) Kaya Cattouse (first)
1998	Francisco Flores (first) James Frampton (second)		Shalini Zabaneh (second) David Henderson (first)
1999	Ernest Meighan (first) Skip Spangenburg (second)	(Ladies)	Gregory Lovell (second) Shalini Zabaneh (first)
2000	Ariel Rosado (first) Quinton Hamilton (second)		Patricia Chavarria (second) Byron Pope (first)
2001	Miguel Perez (first) Shane Vasquez (second)	(Ladies)	Carlos Lopez (second) Shalini Zabaneh (first)
	(Ladies) Karen Rosito (First)		Gabrielle Lovell (second)
2002	Amlita Knowles (second) Barney Brown (first)	2015	Hector Rangel (first) David Santos (second)
	Hugo Rostrain Monterosa (second)	(Ladies)	Alicia Thompson (first) Kaya Cattouse (second)
(Ladies)	Ann Marie Bennett (first)	2016	Joel Adan Borland (first) Gregory Lovell (second)
2003	Douglas Lamb (first) Frank Cannon (second)	(Ladies)	Alicia Thompson (first) Kaya Cattouse (second)
(Ladies)	Fiona Humes Gonzalez (First)	2017	Ron Vasquez (first) Brandon Cattouse (second)
2004	Marlon Castillo (first) Mateo Cruz (second)	(Ladies)	Alicia Thompson (first) Kaya Cattouse (second)
(Ladies)	Fiona Humes-Gonzalez (first)	2018	John DeLong (second) John DeLong (second)
2005	Claudett Maheia (second) Michael Lewis (first)	(Ladies)	Alicia Thompson (first) Kaya Cattouse (second)
	Shane Vasquez (second)	2019	John DeLong (First) Clayton Travis (Second)
(Ladies)	Marinette Flowers (first)	(Ladies)	Kaya Cattouse (First) Nicole Gallego (Second)
2006	Scottie Weiss (first) Marlon Castillo (second)	2020	Oscar Quiroz, Jr. (First) Joslyn Chavarria, Jr. (Second)
(Ladies)	Alicia Thompson (first)	(Ladies)	Alicia Thompson (First) Nicole Gallego (Second)
	Marinette Flowers (second)	2021	NO RACE (DUE TO COVID)
2007	Shane Vasquez (first) Marlon Castillo (second)	2022	Brandon Cattouse (first) Derrick Chavarria (second)
(Ladies)	Gina Lovell (first) Shalini Zabaneh (second)	(Ladies)	Gabrielle Gabourel (first) Kaya Cattouse (second)
2008	Neo German Camacho Villegas (first) Edward Reyes (second)		
(Ladies)	Shalini Zabaneh (first) Alicia Thompson (second)		
2009	Marlon Castillo (first) Gregory Lovell (second)		