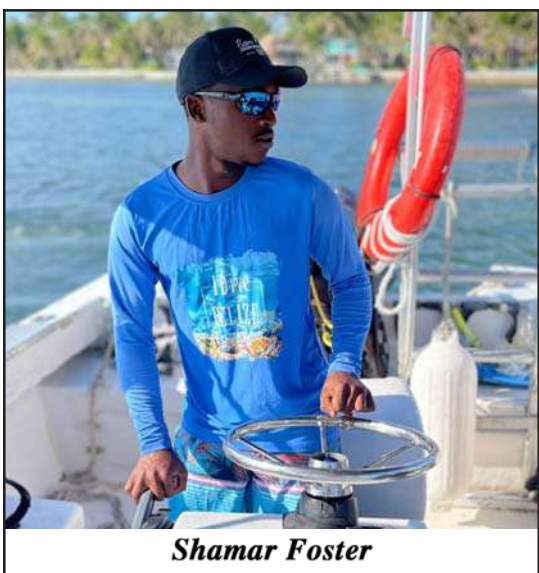


# Police policing Police?

## Young boat captain sues Police Department



BELIZE CITY, Mon. Apr. 24, 2023  
 Young boat captain Shamar Foster of Ambergris Caye is suing over an encounter he had with two members of the Belize Police Department (BPD) on April 1, 2022 at the Belize City Municipal Airport while he was accompanying 18 tourists to the island. Foster, in an affidavit attached to a constitutional claim form dated March 22, 2023, says he was violently and arbitrarily searched resulting in tremendous distress and embarrassment.  
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## Justice for Laddie celebrated



Laddie Gillett's foster family outside of Courthouse following Guilty verdict for former Cpl. Kareem Martinez

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Apr. 21, 2023  
 As High Court Justice Antoinette Moore advanced her meticulous explanation about how the Prosecution had convinced her – without a reasonable doubt - that former police officer Kareem Martinez had been the shooter who killed Laddie Gillett, some relatives of the accused sitting in court grunted. When a GUILTY verdict was finally handed down, one broke out in tears. The former corporal of police – who pleaded not guilty on arraignment - assented when asked if he understood  
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## Man arraigned on double-murder charge for Ladyville victims



by Roy Davis (freelance reporter) and Charleston Gladden  
 BELIZE CITY, Mon. Apr. 24, 2023  
 Miguel Encalada, 39, a barber of Scissors Tail Street, Ladyville, was charged with two counts of murder when he appeared today before Senior Magistrate, Baja Shoman. He was remanded into custody at Belize Central Prison until June 30, 2023.  
 Police are still investigating the circumstances surrounding an incident in the wee hours of Thursday morning  
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## Faber returns to Collet

A leaked internal message from a UDP chat group confirmed that former UDP leader, Hon. Patrick Faber has regained his role as UDP standard bearer for the constituency of Collet; this is following the submission of a resignation letter by endorsed standard bearer, Ian Jones.



BELIZE CITY, Mon. Apr. 24, 2023  
 Many in the UDP are tonight breathing a sigh of relief after it was announced today that 5-time Collet Area representative, and career parliamentarian, Hon. Patrick Faber will once again be representing the party as standard bearer in his beloved Collet constituency. According to Opposition leader Hon. Moses "Shyne" Barrow, the decision was made during an April 21 meeting of the National Party Council.  
 "Brother Jones, who has always  
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## Luchille Dixon crowned the 9th Miss Afrikan Queen 2023

by Kristen Ku  
 BELIZE CITY, Sat. Apr. 22, 2023  
 If you were anywhere in the vicinity of the Bliss Center for Performing Arts in Belize City on Saturday night, consider yourself lucky to have been in the presence of royalty, as seven beautiful women contended to be the next Miss Afrikan Queen 2023.  
 Coordinated by Concerned Belizean Women, the Miss Afrikan Queen pageant finally made its reappearance after a three-year-long hiatus, hosting beautiful Belizean women of African descent as they embraced and displayed their  
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## Ashcroft claims “possible” conflict

**Justice Patricia Farnese was asked to recuse herself as chairperson of the NEAC Appeal Tribunal that is to hear Waterloo’s petition for environmental clearance of its cruise and cargo port expansion project at the Port of Belize. A letter from Ashcroft’s lawyers cites what they are suggesting could be “unconscious bias” that may influence her decision due to her considerable work as an environmental activist and close link to Canada’s Green Party.**

by Marco Lopez

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Apr. 24, 2023

Marine Parade Chambers LLP, the law firm of Senior Counsel Godfrey Smith, wrote a letter to High Court Justice Patricia Farnese last Tuesday requesting her recusal as chairperson of the National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC) Appeal Tribunal. The body has been formed to make a final decision on the twice rejected port proposal submitted by the Ashcroft Alliance. This recent offensive from Waterloo’s local lawyers is being directed at the last member of the originally appointed Tribunal – and is the latest in a series of legal assaults geared towards dismembering that body.

Justice Patricia Farnese was appointed to the Tribunal on March 2, as one of the original members. As mandated by the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, Justice Farnese is the High Court judge selected by Sustainable Development Minister, Hon. Orlando Habet to sit as chairperson. The letter signed by SC Godfrey Smith, however, cites an appearance of bias that Smith suggests may affect the judge’s decision and it refers to past positions she has taken as an environmental expert and activist as evidence of the possible bias.

In particular, the letter mentions her close involvement with Saskatchewan’s Green Party—a political party formed in Canada in 1998 by environmental and social justice activists. A core principle of the party is “Ecological Wisdom”. Ashcroft has directed his attorneys to request her recusal after his attention was brought to involvement with such efforts.

The letter states that Justice Farnese has described herself as “an active Green Party Member for close to a decade serving in various governance roles at both the local and national level.” In 2016 it is on the record that she offered herself as a candidate for the Green Party and jointly presided over the Official Opening of the General Meeting of the Party.

In a 2014 paper published in the *Journal of Law, Property, and Society* she wrote, “planetary boundaries are on the verge of being exceeded such that the earth may no longer be a safe place for humanity. If we ever hope to reconcile the often-competing rights of the extreme poor with environmental conservation goals, the growth imperative and the ethic of more that emerged from it, must be rejected.”

Ashcroft’s lawyers note that an *unconscious* bias may taint her decisions made as chairperson of the tribunal when considering the major dredging required to realize the \$300 million development. The letter states that given her, “impeccable credentials as an environmental activist and expert,”



Justice Patricia Farnese

they are “obliged to respectfully request, notwithstanding some discomfiture, that you recuse yourself as chairperson and member of the Tribunal,” on the ground of the *appearance* of possible bias.

We reached out to Justice Farnese to ask if she will oblige the request made by the Ashcroft Alliance, and whether she considered the appearance of bias when she accepted the appointment but are yet to receive a reply. However, according to a local report, she has sent a reply letter in which she reportedly stated that “the request for recusal requires due consideration” before she can decide to “acquiesce to or reject the request”. According to reports, she further noted, “I cannot overlook the fact, however, that any decision raises broader questions concerning whether a judge’s previous political, academic, and advocacy work ought to preclude them from adjudicating matters on the grounds of an appearance of bias, as opposed to actual bias.”

She then stated, “As an adjudicator in Canada, I am familiar with best practices and dominant perspectives on recusal in that jurisdiction,” and said that she “would like the opportunity to consider Caribbean jurisprudence, practice and commentary on recusal to learn if it differs from Canada...”

We understand that the first meeting for review of the Waterloo petition by the NEAC Appeal Tribunal, which was to have been held tomorrow, Tuesday, April 25 and over which Justice Farnese would have presided, has been adjourned by the judge until she has made a “decision on the request for recusal.” Notably, Paul Hunt, Sr. replaced Lucy Fleming as the private sector representative earlier this month; Fleming was the chosen replacement for Senator Kevin Herrera.

The Ashcroft Alliance has launched a civil claim in our domestic High Court to challenge the amendment of the EIA Regulation which allowed for the change in the tribunal composition. They argued that this was done in bad faith since the appeal mechanism for the Waterloo port proposal was already

## Leon Walford sentenced to 42 years and 3 months for murder of American national

by Roy Davis (freelance reporter)

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Apr. 24, 2023

A sentence of 42 years and 3 months was imposed on Leon Walford, 37, today by Justice Ricardo Sandcroft for the murder of American national Lamont Lipka, which occurred in 2018 in San Pedro Town, Ambergris Caye. The original sentence was 47 years, but Justice Sandcroft subtracted 4 years and 9 months, which was the time Walford had spent on remand.

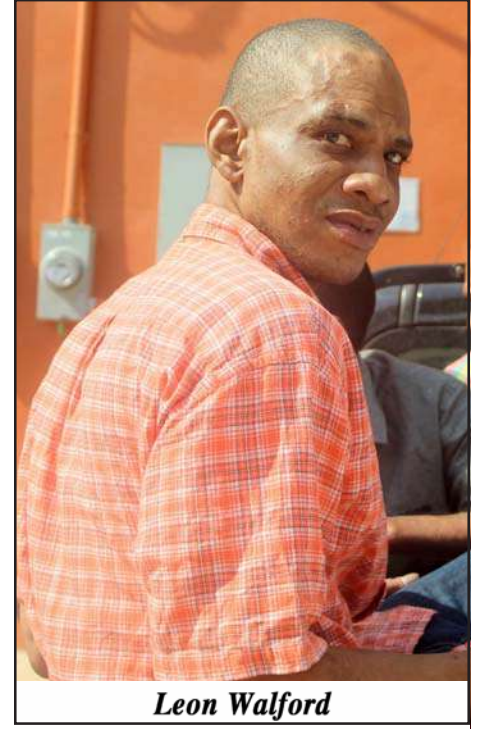
Before he passed sentence, Justice Sandcroft said that the murder was premeditated and that Walford has not shown any remorse.

Lipka, the owner of Tropicana Restaurant in San Pedro, was gunned down while he was near the bar attending to patrons. Footage from the cameras that was admitted into evidence at the trial, showed that Walford entered the restaurant and shot Lipka multiple times before he ran out of the building. Walford’s co-defendant, Tracey Betancourt, was also convicted of Lipka’s murder, but she jumped bail before the date for sentencing and she is currently still at large.

At the trial in June last year, the Crown, represented by Crown Counsel Reese Cattouse, led video evidence to show that Walford and Betancourt, who allegedly hired him to kill Lipka, were going in and out of a hotel room in San Pedro, along with two others.

One of the accomplices, who turned Crown witness, testified that on the night of the murder, he took Walford to Lipka’s restaurant. During the shooting several patrons ran out of the restaurant, leaving their food behind. Walford hid the murder weapon, a gun, in a boatyard nearby after he fled.

Walford returned to Belize City the following day on a plane flight paid for



Leon Walford

him by Betancourt.

Walford testified at the trial and denied that he committed the murder. He gave an alibi testimony in which he claimed that he was with his mother at his mother’s house at the time of the incident. His mother testified and corroborated his alibi testimony.

Cattouse rebutted both of their testimonies, and under cross examination he played video evidence which showed Walford running away from the restaurant with a gun in his hand. Despite the video evidence, Walford’s mother still denied that her son was the perpetrator, and Cattouse pointed out to the court that Walford displayed a distinct limp on one of his legs while he was running.

It was a trial without a jury and Justice Sandcroft found them guilty.

Walford was represented by attorney Darrell Bradley, while Betancourt was represented by attorney Anthony Sylvestre.

## Belizean detained, released after fatal RTA in Chetumal

by Charles Gladden

CHETUMAL, Mexico, Mon. Apr. 24, 2023

Just after midday on Friday, April 21, there was a fatal road traffic accident involving a Belizean taxi driver which claimed the life of a resident of Chetumal, Mexico at the intersection of Independencia and Carmen Ochoa Streets near INGEI. The Belizean taxi driver has been identified as Tulio Armando Rodriguez Oliva of Paraiso, Corozal District.

According to information from Periodismo Urbano, a Mexican media outlet, a Mexican taxi driver, Luis Alfonso Aguilar Salgado, was attempting to make a U-turn at the corner. At the same time, Rodriguez ran a stop sign, but the brakes of his vehicle failed, and his car collided with the vehicle of Salgado, killing him at the scene, and injuring an elderly woman who had been traveling with the driver.

It was reported that Salgado was not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the accident and that, according to residents



Tulio Armando Rodriguez Oliva

of the area, Rodriguez had the right of way. Rodriguez told Mexican media that he was in Chetumal to take someone shopping, and his customer was shopping when the accident occurred.

Rodriguez was detained by Mexican authorities but was released on Monday, April 24, as the judge ruled that he was detained unfairly.



# House engages in extensive legislative business



*Sitting of the House of Representatives, April 21, 2023*

by Marco Lopez

BELMOPAN, Mon. April 24, 2023

A wide range of bills and amendments were passed in last Friday’s Sitting of the House of Representatives. The NPO, Legal Aid, and Senior Court bills were brought back from the Senate and assented to by the Lower House. A loan motion to finance DFC mortgage programs was also introduced and passed. They passed an amendment to

unfreeze increments for Public Service employees effectively on March 31, 2023, and introduced a special prosecutions bill for the case involving the December 2022 triple murder in Belmopan. Along with these, a slew of legislations was passed to prepare Belize for the upcoming Mutual Evaluation by the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) and an amendment to the House Standing Orders to create a joint select committee of women

parliamentarians.

### Bills brought from the Senate

The Senate debated and passed three bills last week: the Non-Profit Organization Amendment Bill, the Legal Aid Bill, and the Senior Court Bill. The NPO and Legal Aid bills were passed with amendments and were sent back to the House for final approval. The NPO bill was the first piece of legislation brought by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño to the House on Friday.

“I know there were a lot of concerns raised by the NGO community – or the Non-Profit community, including the churches, and as we said we are a government that listens to people, we consult, and we did a number of consultations, and I believe that we were able to allay most, if not all of the concerns that different organizations were bringing to our attention,” PM Briceño said during his presentation.

The Senate amendment was considered and passed.

Next up was the Legal Aid Bill, which was also returned to the House from the Senate with amendments. Hon. Francis Fonseca brought those amendments back to the House for consideration. That bill was also passed.

### Increments Unfrozen

The Public Sector Emolument Reduction Amendment Bill 2023 was introduced and taken through all its stages at last Friday’s sitting. This piece of legislation authorizes the reinstatement of increments for public officers and



**PM John Briceño**

teachers following the freezing of those increments which had initially been put into effect by the UDP administration in 2020 and kept in place by the PUP administration under their austerity measures in 2021. In early March the administration had indicated its decision to unfreeze the increments; on Friday, the Prime Minister introduced the bill to repeal the relevant date for the end of the increment freeze, which had been March 31, 2024, and to replace it with a new date: March 31, 2023.

“We have managed to do this in record time, Madam Speaker. Remember we said that the pay cut – the 10% pay cut was for three years – we managed to just do it for one year; and the increment freeze for another three years under our government, and now we are

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## Former Deputy Director of Tax Services deported after 3 years in US jail

**Former Deputy Director of Tax Services deported back to Belize after 3 years in US jail**

by Kristen Ku

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Apr. 21, 2023

After serving three years in a US prison due to extortion charges, the former Deputy Director of Tax Services, Reynaldo Verde, was deported back to Belize.

Four years ago, Chris Williams, an American national and the owner of Orchid Bay in the Corozal District, accused Verde, 46 at the time, of attempting to extort \$350,000 from him in return for a cover-up of the resort’s tax debt.

Verde’s high-profile image would quickly crumble, as FBI officials detained him at Washington Dulles International Airport whilst he was returning from a taxation workshop in Brussels, Belgium on September 7, 2019.

Two days later, the US government released a report which indicated that they had formally arrested Verde for “interference with commerce by means of extortion and attempted extortion.” However, although the act of extortion allegedly took place in Belize, no apparent punitive actions were taken against Verde by the then Barrow administration.

It would take the government of Belize 5 days before it broke its silence on the matter, and issued a public statement in the form of a press release, in which the government indicated that it could not state with any certainty what steps would be taken in response to the



**Reynaldo Verde, Former Deputy Director of Tax Services**

allegations, since the information given by the FBI was limited.

“It is, therefore, not known at this time the nature of the charge or whether it is related to Mr. Verde’s employment with the Government of Belize .... As more information becomes available, Mr. Verde’s employment status with the Government of Belize will be put before the Public Services Commission in accordance with the rules and regulations for the Public Services for consideration and decision,” the statement concluded.

While Verde was in the custody of US law enforcement authorities, however, he was released from his professional duties.

It had been reported by a local news outlet that Verde had had a number of previous run-ins with the law, with the first taking place in November of 2004, when Verde found himself in an altercation inside MJ’s Nightclub in Belize City, with an individual identified as Jose Nuñez.

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*Labour Day*  
**NOTICE**

**Our advertisers, sellers and readers are advised that there will be no online Tuesday issue of the newspaper for May 2.**

**The Friday issue will hit the streets on Friday morning, May 5, 2023**

HAPPY  
*Labour Day*

**From the management and staff of Kremandala**



# Belize attends COP2 in Buenos Aires, Argentina



**Vanessa Figueroa-Wade, Policy Coordinator at MSDCCDRM**

by *Kristen Ku*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Apr. 24, 2023

Belize is participating in the second Conference of the Parties (COP2) of the Escazu Agreement in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The conference for the agreement, which represents the Right to Accessing Information, Public Participation, and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, was held on April 19 to 21, and sent to represent Belize was Mrs. Vanessa Figueroa-Wade, policy coordinator for the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management (MSDCCDRM).

After ratifying the agreement in Belize earlier this year, MSDCCDRM has recognized the significance that this treaty has not only in Belize but in the region itself, as they explained on their Facebook page last Friday.

“The Escazu Agreement is the first binding treaty on environmental matters of the countries of #LatinAmerica and the #Caribbean. It fundamentally upholds the values of democracy in the region, fosters more inclusive community-oriented actions, and lays the foundation for improved policy and decision-making, while preserving the natural heritage of the region and protecting the rights and health of people, now and in the future,” stated the Ministry’s Facebook post.

So far 15 countries have signed onto



**Participants of COP2 of the Escazu Agreement**

the recently drafted Escazu Agreement: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Grenada, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Uruguay.

Notably, Belize, Chile, and Grenada were congratulated and awarded for their recent move to become parties to the agreement.

Amongst this group, there were additional guests, including authorities from the region, representatives of international and regional organizations, and other stakeholders. Approximately 600 were present.

Items on the agenda for the conference included the election of seven members of the Committee to Support the Implementation and Compliance of the Treaty. Among the candidates were persons representing the regions of America and Mexico, the English-speaking Caribbean, and South America.

Ultimately, the seven persons selected were “Guillermo Eduardo Acuña (from Chile); Mariana Blengio Valdés (Uruguay); Rita Leonette Joseph-Olivetti (Grenada); Patricia Madrigal Cordero (Costa Rica); Andrés María Napoli (Argentina); Carole Denise Angela Stephens (Jamaica); and Félix Wing Solís (Panama),” according to a press release issued by the United Nations following the conference.



**Belize's award for recently signing onto the Escazu Agreement**

Unfortunately, according to Hon. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Belize, though present, did not get the privilege of voting.

“Belize signed on or ratified a little bit within the 90 days which was required for us to have ratified the agreement and to be able to vote in the selection of that committee. So, even though we wanted to put in our contribution in selecting the seven members from ten that were selected, that were put out on the board for nomination, ours was not included because we ratified too late,” shared

Minister Habet.

There were additional discussions of the human rights defenders in environmental matters as well as a follow-up on financial arrangements and a report of the Voluntary Fund, to which Mexico and Chile donated a generous contribution.

Speaking towards the closing of the COP2, were a handful of important figures of the countries present, including José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Secretary of ECLAC; Bishnu Tulsie, elected representative of the public from Saint Lucia; and Ambassador Pablo Tetamanti, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs (Deputy Foreign Minister) of Argentina.

Each speaker highlighted the significance, necessity, and relevance of the history-making move embodied by the Escazu Agreement, and acknowledged the countries who are parties to this agreement.

Finally, as the host, Argentina also presented a lengthy declaration, called the “Buenos Aires Declaration,” which participating countries signed to indicate their commitment to enforce the treaty’s rights, and the promotion of human rights and sustainable development.

The third Conference of Parties (COP3) of the Escazu Agreement is scheduled to take place on April 22-24, 2024 in Santiago, Chile.

# BTB holds second BOOM conference introducing Artificial Intelligence to boost tourism

by *Kristen Ku*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Apr. 24, 2023

Ever since the world came to a halt, during the pandemic years, technology has been the only and main source of communication with the outside world. Interestingly enough, technology seeped into different areas of communication and developed great popularity as it has taken over almost every thriving business out there, through marketing.

The tourism decrease seen in our little country has been drastic and the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) has been actively working to get it back to what it used to be pre-Covid-19. The Building on Our Momentum (BOOM) initiative, which started in 2022, was once again held via a forum on Friday, April 21, at the Best Western Belize Biltmore Plaza in Belize City. This time,



**Michelle Bowers Flowers, BTB's Director of Marketing and Industry Relations; Cole Zimmerman, Representative of Zimmerman Agency and Hon. Anthony Mahler, Minister of Tourism**

however, it has expanded, partnering with marketing agencies from the United States (US), Canada, and Europe. The aim is to attract tourists through the use of technology, specifically Artificial Intelligence (AI), using a foreign marketing platform to feature Belize in hopes to build BTB’s momentum.

The forum was held to inform the public of the innovations taking place within the tourism marketing industry online and abroad for 2023 and 2024, as well as introduce the partners of this project. Michelle Bowers Flowers, BTB’s Director of Marketing and Industry Relations, was quite excited

as she explained about BOOM’s initiative to grow Belize’s tourism and how it will affect various other areas.

“At the end of the day, this is a ripple effect. We do the marketing, the Belize Tourism Board’s role is to create awareness and, of course, our private sector closes the sale, so we are very excited. Any marketing efforts that we do at the end of the day will value our stakeholders, and that to us is the end result of increasing arrivals,” said Flowers.

As beneficial and efficient as AI may be, its use can take a while to grasp, considering the vast ways to reach the digital market. However, with the help of the US, which is now handling all of Belize’s marketing, Cole Zimmerman, the Representative of Zimmerman Agency, explained how distinct its use





## Silent trauma; a mother's love

Mon. Apr. 24, 2023

A crazy, mad murder scenario which nobody saw coming, has left a whole community to ponder the circumstances that could have led to this monumental tragedy, the second such occurrence in the Ladyville community in a couple decades. The problem for us in a society that already has strict gun laws, is that screening of individuals who seek to hold gun licenses can hardly account for persons with deep-rooted issues that are not evident. As a society, we may be overlooking a silent crisis among our young men, while focusing a lot of attention on the plight of "women against violence."

Where the behavior of many of our young men is concerned, there seems to be a troubling level of stress, and even trauma, that is very much internalized, so that very few people realize that there is a serious problem brewing, until, unfortunately, there is a breaking point at which the young man has a nervous breakdown, goes "crazy", or exhibits a violent outburst. We are not experts here, but we have seen enough to know that all is not well. And so we throw out these thoughts/ideas and notions to spur the experts and the professionals in the field to weigh in and help our people heal from the trauma they are silently experiencing, especially those whose economic circumstances have made them more vulnerable.

A lot of resources and focus has been directed in recent years to the struggle of "women against violence." The inescapable fact is, that it is our men who are being violent towards our women, most often their own woman partner. There is a saying that "hurt people hurt people." And we propose here that more attention needs to be directed to our men. The source of the problem is there. If our men are relieved of their trauma, they will not be breaking down, and lashing out violently

against the women in their lives.

And where do we begin? That is the 1.4 million dollar question.

Certain cultures and religions make it a top priority for the young mother to remain at home with her child for the first few years of growth and nurturing when the bonds of motherly love and sense of security are cemented. Of course, it is not so simple. And many of our liberated sisters will quickly be up in arms, rejecting the traditional "enslavement" notion that "a woman's place is in the home," when many of them have the urge and the aptitude to excel in various professional and scientific fields. "Women are equal to men" has been the cry, and our women, those so inclined, have entered every arena previously considered a man's domain. Women are now competing in all major sports, even the brutal ones like mixed martial arts; and they are employed in almost every area of work alongside the men.

This is the new age. Bravo! The only problem now is that many of our young men are unskilled, uneducated or emotionally unprepared to maintain stable and fulfilling

relationships without resorting to the use of physical force or other intimidating behavior towards their woman partner. What's going on? When a brother "loses it", and commits violence, even deadly violence in rare cases against a woman partner sparked by jealous love, it sends shivers through all other women in our community, and by extension it unsettles all men who are holding up their heads and maintaining their dignity in treating their female partners with the respect and queenly reverence they deserve.

This problem is more common than most of us know or want to admit, and the solution is inevitably a long road. Traditionally, our old folks always say that a "boy child" is harder to raise than a "girl child." There seems to be a belief that, for whatever reason, male children are generally more adventurous, reckless, and also run into more early health issues than females. Myth or fact? Childhood emotional trauma caused by parental neglect or abandonment for whatever reason or circumstance, can have a long-lasting impact on the emotional stability of the young adult. A girl child who is starved of parental love and validation may be at greater risk as a young adult of becoming a victim of abuse by men. On the other hand, a young man who did not get his share of a mother's love growing up, or who experienced that trauma of absence or neglect for a significant period, may carry that emotional scar and trauma for a very long time. That insecurity in a man, may propel him to unconsciously over-compensate for that shortcoming in situations where his relationship with the woman of his affection is being tested, and can often lead to his eruption, explosion into violence that can even, sadly, become front page news.

Where do we begin?

When a man has a secure job, and his earnings can safely meet the needs of his family, with or without the assistance of a working female partner, we have covered the first step towards a healthy and happy society, where violence against women is not an issue. But whenever there is such trauma and stress in a home situation with children, where, due to male departure or job issues, the woman/mother must leave the side of her young children for extended periods in seeking her own earnings/employment, the seeds may be planted in one or more of her male children, and such insecurity may manifest itself later in their life in the form of violent behavior in their relationships.

Jobs! Jobs! Jobs!

And even jobs now will not automatically heal the scars of emotional trauma being carried by many of our young men, especially the so-called gang members/leaders. As a society, we must find a way to "contain" those brothers who have been emotionally scarred by "the system." But, while everything must be done to engage them in gainful employment, the bigger objective to be aspired to in this endeavor, is that the male children in their homes have a better chance at securing and maintaining a mother's love through their critical formative years.

In some old African village cultures, there was a process called "manhood training," where the young boys at puberty were taken away by the elder males and guided through certain rites of passage to manhood, which for them also included circumcision. But, before those male youth were to embark on that "manhood" process, they had all been already nurtured by a mother's love throughout their years of infancy, so there was not that trauma of insecurity that haunts so many of our youths today. It is conventional to declare that young men need a father's image to make that step into strong adulthood. But we suggest that, without the firm foundation of a mother's love, that journey will often still be perilous later in life.

Our women are indeed the mothers of the nation. Everything depends on them. Therefore, as a community and as a nation, we must do everything we can to ensure that, regardless of work nature or obligations, every mother will get top priority and be afforded the opportunity to spend as much precious time with her young children as possible. Special agreements must be in place for working conditions for mothers, whatever the cost. It is an investment as a nation we cannot afford not to make.

**AMANDALA**  
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# Trying times when tomorrow seems the only hope

by Wallace Ford

Thewallaceford.com, April 17, 2023

On many days the news seems written by denizens of an insane asylum who never seem to run out of material and by not surprising, never fail to surprise. Looking back over the past few days proves the point. Consider the following ....

## Kansas City Blues

The good citizens of Kansas City, Missouri love their Kansas City Chiefs football team, even while knowingly and openly denigrating the culture of the indigenous people who lived there long before Europeans knew of this land. And, certainly the KC fans, in loving their team, are keenly aware of the fact that more than half the players are Black.

So, one of the good white citizens of Kansas City, while loving their team that stars multiple Black players, when he saw a young (16-year-old) Black man ring his doorbell, he shot him twice, once in the head. In doing so, the shooter never bothered to ask/find out that Ralph Yarl, looking to pick up his younger siblings, had come to the wrong address.

To make matters even worse, young Mr. Yarl had to stumble to not one, not two but three houses before anyone called for help.

The takeaway:

1. Incredibly, it appears that Ralph Yarl will recover from his physical injuries. How long he will suffer from PTSD is anybody's guess.
2. While anything is possible, it is hard to believe that a 16-year-old young white man would be shot by a Black homeowner just for ringing his doorbell.
3. Finally, those neighbors who closed their doors and hearts to young Mr. Yarl, it's a good bet that they still love their Kansas City Chiefs.

## Pride Always Goes Before the Fall

There are several reports that, sometime in the second year of his second term, President Barack Obama had a private luncheon with Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and gently inquired as to her considering resigning in the best interest of the causes for which she had dedicated her life. While a delicate matter, it was an important matter, as later events would reveal.

At the time of that fateful luncheon, Justice Ginsburg was in her 80's, had survived multiple cancer illnesses, and was a walking medical miracle. Further, at that point in time President Obama would have welcomed her suggestion of a successor to keep her legacy alive, both of them knowing the existential importance of a liberal majority on the Court.

Justice Ginsburg deferred, presumably wanting to wait for President Hillary Clinton to replace her in a few years. And we all know how that worked out.

Justice Antonin Scalia died, and Senator Mitch McConnell refused to allow President Obama to name a replacement, even though the seat on the Court remained vacant for well over a year – virtually unprecedented in

American history.

There never was a President Hillary Clinton. And President Donald Trump kept one of the few promises that he has ever kept in his entire life of duplicity and diversion by appointing anti-abortion judges all throughout the federal judiciary, including the Supreme Court.

Justice Ginsburg lived long enough to see a Trump-designed conservative, anti-abortion majority and she hoped to survive until Joe Biden became president so that he could name her successor.

Justice Ginsburg almost made it.

But Justice Ginsburg didn't, and now hundreds of millions of American women will spend decades trying to avoid the tyranny of the Court that Trump built (as) her legacy is being dismantled decision by decision.

Her pride went before the fall of her legacy.

Which leads to the situation involving Senator Dianne Feinstein, now 89, who sits on the Senate Judiciary Committee. Her health, clearly failing, has kept her from sitting on the Senate Judiciary Committee for months.

And during these several months, President Biden's federal judiciary nominees are piling up because Senator Feinstein is not present to vote. And while she has indicated that she would go along with Majority Leader Chuck Schumer to name a temporary replacement, it's a pretty good bet that Minority Leader Mitch McConnell will block that move – remember Supreme Court Justice Merrick Garland?

The only viable solution is for Senator Feinstein to retire/resign, and while California Gavin Newsome appoints a temporary replacement (California Senatorial election is in November), Senator Schumer can appoint a replacement to the Judiciary Committee.

It should be clear to anyone paying attention how important the federal judiciary has become as it has been weaponized by the right wing, and especially during the Trump administration during which hundreds of incredibly conservative judges will be making decisions about the lives of Americans for decades (remember that federal judges serve for life, and the majority of the judges appointed by Trump are in their thirties and early to mid-forties).

Senator Feinstein knows this better than anyone. Her legacy is beyond reproach and deserving of praise. Yet she is dooming herself (and this nation) to the fate that she will share with Justice Ginsburg.

Given an opportunity to literally save this country, she is letting her pride go before we all fall with her.

And that is sad and outrageous.

Someone has to say it.

## The United States vs. Haiti – The Battle that Never Ends

CNN broadcast a recent documentary program showing the horrors and terrors endured by refugees coming from South America up through Central America with the hope of gaining refuge, asylum and a home in the United States. One interesting note is that many of the men, women and children are not from South America. Many of the men, women and children are from ... Haiti.

# The Confederate State of Florida!

Sat. Apr. 22, 2023

Florida is the state where most retired people go to spend their final years, and eventually, to die. It is called the Sunshine State, but these days that sunshine has dimmed to partly cloudy and getting cloudier every day! Under Gov. Ron DeSantis, Florida is fast becoming the Alabama of the 1960s and he's the new George Wallace, the governor in those days, a rabid racist. Segregation now, segregation forever, was one of his more famous mantras. In his later years, George repented of his racist past and was re-elected with huge black support! I don't know that his heart was pure, or if it was out of pure political expediency, but he really started to advance programs that helped the inner cities in his state. He died, far less ignobly than he lived.

Ron DeSantis, the thin-skinned governor of Florida, has presidential aspirations, and plans to run on his accomplishments. Let's see what those might be. He passed the don't say gay law, which the Disney company opposed. For that opposition, DeSantis started a campaign against the largest employer in Florida (other than the state itself) to try to bend them to his will. Instead of submitting to the various forms of intimidation and laws he tried to impose through legislation, Mickey Mouse kicked his ass! A colossal failure. He backed the banning of books and renaissance art from libraries, schools and museums. Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Jackie Robinson, Roberto Clemente, even poor exhausted Rosa Parks, the teaching of black history, slavery in public schools, a no no! Signed a 6-week abortion ban, fired "woke" professors and administrators from state schools and state universities. Bullied children wearing masks as being woke, publicly! Kidnapped refugees and sent them to "woke" cities. Loosened gun control laws to the minimum! And people don't believe in time machines?

This idiot doesn't have the slightest chance of ever becoming president, but his arrogance blinds him to reality. Let's say he won the nomination, does anyone think that Donald John Trump

would not run as a third-party candidate, just to spite him and deny him any chance of winning the presidency? But even without Trump's interference, he has no chance, not the slightest, even against old Joe, to become president. Women, minorities, and the young would all have to decide not to participate in the elections for him to win, and that will never happen. As it is right now in this political climate, with all the extreme policies I mentioned above that the Republicans are pushing all over the country, I can't see any possibility of them reclaiming the White House anytime in the near future.

Florida has gone rogue in its oppressive laws and policies, mainly because of no serious opposition in their legislature, republicans rule, to the detriment of the state in my opinion, and to the good fortune of Democrats in the general elections! If they don't temper their enthusiasm for denying the American people their basic rights, Democrats might reach supermajority thresholds in both chambers of congress, changing the landscape for decades to come. 14 Justices on the Supreme Court, 6 conservatives and 8 liberals, all young and progressive, the liberals, that is! Disney leaves Florida, making it a backwater state like Mississippi, after having lost its tax-free status to make up for the economic disaster that move would create. They'd sue, but the liberal Court would side with whomever is being sued by them. Payback is a b\*#ch!

I think I have too much time on my hands, but I really believe that people like DeSantis, with his white boots, will just help to further sink this disjointed, disoriented, disorganized Republican Party into oblivion! I'm rooting for Trump to win in the primaries. Wait, did I really just say that?

Meanwhile ... if you are a minority or a woman or young or gay or an intellectual, Florida is giving you the middle finger!

"Get up, stand up, stand up for your right!" Bob Marley

Glen

One might ask what would motivate these Haitians to leave a Caribbean island to sail to South America and trek through jungles, mountain passes, rivers and of course, gangsters – going thousands of miles on foot? After all, how bad are conditions in Haiti? And why don't the Haitians do something about their country rather than coming to the United States and becoming the burden of the American people?

The answer lies in the history of Haiti and the history of the United States, as the two countries have been intertwined for over two centuries and continue to this very day.

In 1804, the nation of Haiti gained its independence from France, becoming the second independent nation in this hemisphere. Haiti was also the first country to be established as the result of a successful revolt waged by Black people. This bit of news came as a great shock to the American enslavers, including then President Thomas Jefferson.

There was a very real fear that a successful Black revolt was contagious and that this freedom virus would spread to the millions of enslaved Black men, women and children in the United States – men, women and children upon whom the wealth of this nation was based at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The response was to do anything and everything to destabilize Haiti, and that has been the general policy of the United States, even to the extent of occupying that country during the early part of the twentieth century. And, working in collaboration with France, which is still holding the multibillion debt over Haiti as reparations for France's loss of its enslaved assets.

And while there is no doubt that there has been more than a share of dysfunction for which the wealthier (and often lighter) Haitians have responsibility, the United States cannot deny its responsibility for the current state of



# More on a little lesson from Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

by Colin Hyde

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is a fascinating, beloved book filled with beauty and culture and many, many lessons. Fair enough, you can't take it from me; well then, readership is the testament, and there, between 15 and 20 million people have bought copies of the book, and it has been translated into many languages so that people all over can share. I read it when I was a boy, and I've read it a couple times since.

Yap, I'm revisiting the book for "that" little lesson that I believe more of us need to be appreciative of. The big picture in the story is the coming of the European missionaries to the village of the hero, Okonkwo, who grew up poor because instead of plowing his field, his father, Unoka, spent his time fine-tuning his musical skills. Okonkwo disdains his father because he is a notorious malpago and is no bloodthirsty warrior.

Okonkwo becomes wealthy because he disdains poverty. He is a hard worker, produces more of the king of crops, yams, than everyone else. He commands respect in the part of the world where he lives. And then the missionaries came and overturned his life. The new religion attracts a large following, and even Okonkwo's son,

Nwoye is drawn to give up the old way and join them. The hero is humiliated, and in the end he hangs himself, chooses death at his own hands rather than to submit to a colonial court to settle a dispute.

The "little" picture here for me is the misfortune of Unoka, to be born in a place where his music and entertainment skills are appreciated, but not properly remunerated. Unoka is a feature at big events, such as weddings, birthdays, funerals, and parties, but the pittance he gets doesn't pay enough for the upkeep of his family and his supply of cola wine. Ai, his son hates his guts for his poverty.

*Man cannot live by bread alone.* Jesus wasn't only speaking of man's spiritual needs here. Human beings also need music, sports, the arts, and a little drink. It is the Bible that said Jesus turned a barrel of water into the finest wine.

All of us have purpose, all us have special gifts. None of us can star at everything, and none of us is a star at nothing. There are many noble professions that put sufficient food on the table, and the prize in our world goes to people who work in the medical profession. In our part of the world, there is minimal prize for those in the arts. No true Belizean artist can boast of a big account, if money is a prize

they seek. That is largely because our population is very small. We see some of our artists mimicking other cultures, because they are larger, and thus have greater market potential. They should be supported. But the best must be for the ones who sacrifice to preserve our culture.

Life is real. There are youths who have gone astray because they don't fit in, because what they are good at doesn't pay. People at the head of our society need to expand their vision. Understandably, people who are on a daily grind, doing the same daam thing all day, every day, don't have much sympathy for those who have difficulty fitting in. But those at the top should see and widen the net so it catches those which the society isn't caring for. Sure, there are lazy people. Consider catching them and giving them an energy injection. In another world, Mr. Unoka is a little god. In his little village, Umuofia, his son considered him a disgrace.

## Celebrate good drinkers: let them be

The other day Brother Louis Wade shockingly posted a pic of a little bottle of rum and declared it a scourge in our society. Mr. Wade, a good guy in so many things, he must have been under the influence of academic superiority when he so savagely and arrogantly launched that attack. For all who don't know, Wade recently earned some new degree. Ah, we all know that people who win degrees have toxic moments when they think they are better than the rest of us.

Hmm, a fairly recent *Washington Post* story said that a JAMA Psychiatry study found that "one in eight American adults, or 12.7 percent of the U.S. population, now meets diagnostic criteria for alcohol use disorder." Okay, we have to be concerned about drinking, and with women now in the parade there is definitely increased drinking in Belize; but this blanket condemnation, this shaming of the 87.3% responsible drinkers can't be right. Of course, rum can be a bad thing for a man, and of course the evils in the bottle need to be made known, but when there is so much good in something we should not deny that devil its due. There is virtue in that lee bottle, if it is emptied responsibly.

Nobody ever made a jackass of themselves after two drinks. It's all in the dose, and the place. Say no to "say NO to drinking"; emphasize, INSIST on drinking responsibly. The brother (let the women speak for themselves) who can take his tot and scarcely make

a ripple, he is a hero, a man who is deserving of respect.

Fermentation is a natural process. For years and years parents got relief from heartless, restless babies by giving them a spoonful of gripe water. Sweet wine is a known soporific that many old folk depend on to help them make it through the night.

Bah, Commissioner Williams has been one of the worst criminals in this unholy fight against rum. What was behind his decision to take the waterholes so far away from the thirsty visitors at the Agric Show? What lengths that man went to, to ruin that party for adult males. What evidence did he act on? I find him guilty of ugly bigotry and charge him with being a tool for church elements who are consumed with hate for drink. Please, if you look closely at the number of people who have gone to the Show over the past 50 years, and the number of violent incidents there, I bet it is as safe as Sweden.

Well, who said governments are a waste of time, that happy is the country that is run without politicians? Give those devils their due. It was our political leaders, God bless them, who declared that rum can be sold on Good Friday, so all of us could drink like the priests do on the Holy Day. Let me divest you of your innocence. It's not ordinary water in the chalice, and some priests serve multiple masses on Sunday. Hooray for putting that unjust law behind us!

Heck, the enemy is so behind the times. We are soon going to legalize weed, and everyone knows that rum is mild, benign compared to burning bush. Bah, the only reason men smoke weed is to improve bed performance. People who drink do so to ease their mind of terrible tension, to relax after a hard day, to camaraderie with other lonely people, and to get through boring official events.

Of course, go extremely hard after people who drink and drive, and people who drive when they are sleep-deprived. For a first offense, people who fail the breathalyzer test or can barely keep their eyes opened, people who fall asleep in the street, people who can't make it home after too much drinking, should be forced into counseling. And for a second offense they should get counseling and community service. And for a third offense they should get both, plus a whipping or incarceration.

But let good drinkers be. What's wrong with this overzealous, coldhearted temperance crowd? Catholics give their priests all the love in the world. And it's not water in that chalice.



## VACANCIES

The Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission invites applications from suitably qualified applicants for the following positions at the Caribbean Court of Justice:

1. **Multimedia Officer**
2. **Judicial Counsel (on Contract)**

Job Description and Application form are available on the website below:

<https://ccj.org/vacancies/ccj-vacancies/>

Applications may be completed online or delivered to:

The Human Resources Manager  
Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission  
#134 Henry Street, Port of Spain  
Trinidad and Tobago, 101010

no later than **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023 by 4:00 p.m. Atlantic Standard Time.**

Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

The Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission:  
Constituted under the Agreement establishing the Caribbean Court of Justice

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## Trauma silencioso; el amor de una madre

Lun. 24 de abril de 2023

Un disparatado y loco escenario de asesinato que nadie vio venir, ha dejado a toda una comunidad reflexionando sobre las circunstancias que podrían haber llevado a esta tragedia monumental, la segunda ocurrencia de este tipo en la comunidad de Ladyville en un par de décadas. El problema para nosotros en una sociedad que ya tiene leyes de armas estrictas, es que la revisión de personas que buscan tener licencias de armas difícilmente puede dar cuenta de personas con problemas profundamente arraigados que no son evidentes. Como sociedad, podemos estar pasando por alto una crisis silenciosa entre nuestros jóvenes, mientras enfocamos mucha atención a la difícil situación de las “mujeres contra la violencia”.

En lo que respecta al comportamiento de muchos de nuestros jóvenes, parece haber un nivel preocupante de estrés, e incluso de trauma, que está muy internalizado, por lo que muy pocas personas se dan cuenta de que se está gestando un problema grave, hasta que, lamentablemente, hay un punto de quiebre en el que el joven tiene un ataque de nervios, se vuelve “loco”, o exhibe un arrebato violento. No somos expertos aquí, pero hemos visto lo suficiente como para saber que no todo está bien. Por eso emitimos estos pensamientos/ideas y nociones para alentar a los expertos y profesionales en el campo a opinar y ayudar a nuestra gente a sanar del trauma que están experimentando en silencio, especialmente aquellos cuyas circunstancias económicas los han hecho más vulnerables.

Muchos recursos y enfoques se han dirigido en los últimos años a la lucha de las “mujeres contra la violencia”. El hecho ineludible es que son nuestros hombres los que están siendo violentos con nuestras mujeres, la mayoría de las veces con su propia pareja. Hay un dicho que dice que “las personas lastimadas lastiman a las personas”. Y aquí proponemos que se debe prestar más atención a nuestros hombres. El origen del problema está ahí. Si se libera a nuestros hombres de su trauma, no se derrumbarán ni atacarán violentamente a las mujeres en sus vidas.

¿Y por dónde empezamos? Esa es la pregunta de los 1,4 millones de dólares.

Ciertas culturas y religiones hacen que sea una prioridad máxima para la madre joven permanecer en casa con su hijo durante los primeros años de crecimiento y crianza, cuando se cimentan los lazos del amor maternal y la sensación de seguridad. Por supuesto, no es tan simple. Y muchas de nuestras hermanas liberadas rápidamente se levantarán en armas, rechazando la noción tradicional de “esclavitud” de que “el lugar de una mujer está en el hogar”, cuando muchas de ellas tienen el impulso y la aptitud para sobresalir en varios campos profesionales y científicos. “Las mujeres son iguales a los hombres” ha sido el grito, y nuestras mujeres, aquellas inclinadas a ello, han entrado en todos los escenarios que antes se consideraban dominio de un hombre. Las mujeres ahora compiten en todos los deportes principales, incluso en los brutales como las artes marciales mixtas; y están empleadas en casi todas las áreas de trabajo junto con los hombres.

Esta es la nueva era. ¡Bravo! El único problema ahora es que muchos de nuestros jovencitos no tienen habilidades, educación o preparación emocional para mantener relaciones estables y satisfactorias sin recurrir al uso de la fuerza física u otro comportamiento intimidante hacia su pareja femenina. ¿Qué está sucediendo? Cuando un hermano “pierde la cabeza” y comete violencia, incluso violencia mortal en casos raros contra una pareja provocada por un amor celoso, envía escalofríos a todas las demás mujeres de nuestra comunidad y, por extensión, inquieta a todos los hombres que están manteniendo sus cabezas en alto y manteniendo su dignidad al tratar a sus parejas femeninas con el respeto y la reverencia de reina que merecen.

Este problema es más común de lo que la mayoría de nosotros sabemos o queremos admitir, y la solución es inevitablemente un largo

camino. Tradicionalmente, nuestra gente mayor siempre dice que un “niño” es más difícil de criar que una “niña”. Parece existir la creencia de que, por alguna razón, los niños varones son generalmente más aventureros, imprudentes y también tienen más problemas de salud tempranos que las niñas. ¿Mito o realidad? El trauma emocional infantil causado por la negligencia o el abandono de los padres por cualquier motivo o circunstancia puede tener un impacto duradero en la estabilidad emocional del adulto joven. Una niña que está hambrienta del amor y la validación de sus padres puede correr un mayor riesgo cuando sea una adulta joven de convertirse en víctima de abuso por parte de los hombres. Por otro lado, un joven que no recibió su parte del amor de una madre mientras crecía, o que experimentó ese trauma de ausencia o abandono durante un período significativo, puede llevar esa cicatriz emocional y ese trauma durante mucho tiempo. Esa inseguridad en un hombre, puede impulsarlo a sobrecompensar inconscientemente esa carencia en situaciones donde su relación con la mujer de su afecto está siendo puesta a prueba, y muchas veces puede conducir a su erupción, explosión de violencia que puede incluso, lamentablemente, convertirse en noticias de portada.

¿Por dónde empezamos?

Cuando un hombre tiene un trabajo seguro y sus ingresos pueden satisfacer con seguridad las necesidades de su familia, con o sin la ayuda de una pareja con un trabajo, hemos cubierto el primer paso hacia una sociedad saludable y feliz, donde la violencia contra las mujeres no es un problema. Pero cada vez que hay tal trauma y estrés en una situación familiar con niños, donde, debido a la partida del hombre o problemas laborales, la mujer/madre debe dejar a sus hijos pequeños por períodos prolongados en busca de sus propios ingresos/empleo, las semillas pueden ser plantadas en uno o más de sus hijos varones, y tal inseguridad puede manifestarse más tarde en su vida en forma de comportamiento violento en sus relaciones.

¡Trabajos! ¡Trabajos! ¡Trabajos!

E incluso los trabajos ahora no sanarán automáticamente las cicatrices del trauma emocional que llevan muchos de nuestros jóvenes, especialmente los llamados pandilleros/líderes de pandillas. Como sociedad, debemos encontrar una manera de “contener” a esos hermanos que han sido emocionalmente marcados por “el sistema”.

Pero, si bien se debe hacer todo lo posible para involucrarlos en un empleo remunerado, el objetivo más grande al que se aspira en este esfuerzo es que los niños varones en sus hogares tengan una mejor oportunidad de asegurar y mantener el amor de una madre a lo largo de sus críticos años formativos.

En algunas antiguas culturas de aldeas africanas, había un proceso llamado “entrenamiento de hombría”, en el que los varones mayores se llevaban a los jóvenes al llegar la pubertad y los guiaban a través de ciertos ritos de iniciación a la virilidad, que para ellos también incluía la circuncisión. Pero, antes de que esos jóvenes varones se embarcaran en ese proceso de “masculinidad”, ya habían sido nutridos por el amor de una madre a lo largo de sus años de infancia, por lo que no existía ese trauma de inseguridad que acecha a tantos de nuestros jóvenes hoy. Es convencional afirmar que los jóvenes necesitan la imagen de un padre para dar ese paso hacia una adultez fuerte. Pero sugerimos que, sin la base firme del amor de una madre, ese viaje a menudo aun será peligroso más adelante en la vida.

Nuestras mujeres son de hecho las madres de la nación. Todo depende de ellas. Por lo tanto, como comunidad y como nación, debemos hacer todo lo posible para garantizar que, independientemente de la naturaleza del trabajo o las obligaciones, todas las madres tengan la máxima prioridad y tengan la oportunidad de pasar el mayor tiempo posible con sus hijos pequeños. Deben existir acuerdos especiales para las condiciones de trabajo de las madres, cualquiera que sea el costo. Es una inversión que como nación no podemos darnos el lujo de no hacer.



# BRICS: The New World Order



by Clinton Canul Luna

The BRICS group of five major emerging economies, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, has made significant progress in terms of joint policy coordination and is anticipated to have the most impact on the world's economic and geopolitical environment in 2023. Some of its most notable achievements include the establishment of a new development bank and the creation of the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement, or CRA, a mechanism for providing extra liquidity and other assistance to the BRICS countries during an economic crisis. On June 23-24, the five nations issued a 75-point declaration establishing a unified BRICS payment system. Russia and China have already started to implement explicit local currency promotion policies at the expense of the US dollar, and the five BRICS member states are contemplating the creation of a BRICS reserve currency based on a basket of each country's domestic currencies.

China and Russia are expected to increase their efforts to advance the group in 2023, while Brazil is expected to use its status as a BRICS founding member to boost its own development and economic growth. Moreover, the BRICS countries are debating the

possibility of establishing a common single currency based on a basket of BRICS currencies, as well as researching methods for exchanging financial data for a reliable alternative global payment system. Saudi Arabia is one of the most significant new members of the alliance, particularly given the world's fragile geopolitical situation. China is Saudi Arabia's largest trading partner, and Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil company has verified that the security of China's energy supply is its top priority for the next 50 years. Algeria has also applied to join the alliance, demonstrating the possible scope of the coalition's energy interests.

On the other hand, France is experiencing a political shift to the right, with 13,000 police officers deployed in reaction to tens of thousands of people protesting President Emmanuel Macron's pension reform proposal. President Macron has invoked Article 49 of the French Constitution to pass any legislation unilaterally without a vote. This has resulted in ten consecutive days of protests, highlighting the deep schism between the people and the permanent political elite. The National Rally, led by patriot firebrand Marine Le Pen, is surging in

the polls and is now France's most popular party. The *Washington Post* admits that the European continent is about to collapse under the control of the nationalist populist right, and that the globalist left has nothing to do about it. Josh Zieglowsky, co-founder of ERC specialist, has a fantastic payroll protection business that provides an employee retention credit of up to \$26,000 per employee. Nevertheless, just weeks before the Dutch elections, the nationalist populist Coalition of Italy's Lega and Forza Italia brothers gained majorities in both houses of the Italian parliament, appointing Georgia Maloney as prime minister. The nationalist populists in France came within nine votes of destabilizing

President Macron's cross-party coalition and triggering a no-confidence motion in Parliament, but he refuses to budge. This obstinacy is strengthening populist resistance, and Europe as a whole appears to be on the verge of collapsing in terms of the liberal globalist elite.

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 April 2, 2023  
 Finca Solana  
 Corozal Town



## PLB reg. season ends; Top-4 playoffs kick off this weekend

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Apr. 24, 2023

It was high football drama on Saturday when all 4 Week-14 games were played to end regular season in the Premier League of Belize (PLB) 2022-2023 Closing Season. And when it was over, 4 teams had qualified to the playoffs, and it was as close as it could get. With Altitude's 1-0 win over Verdes, a loss by Port Layola to Progresso along with the loss by Police/Benque to San Pedro Pirates, could have sent Altitude to the playoffs by virtue of goal difference over Port Layola. But Port Layola won, thanks to 2 goals from their game hero, Latrell Middleton. Meanwhile, San Pedro Pirates' Howard Avila scored 2 goals to tie Port Layola's Michael Palacio at 8 goals for the goal scoring title. Unfortunately, Avila was reportedly red-carded in the Police/Benque match, and thus may not see action in game 1 of the semifinals.

Ironically, perhaps the most spectacular goal of the tournament, that Palacio scored against Verdes' goalkeeper Woodrow West in Port Layola's 2-1 victory in Week 3, was later written off the books after the game was protested and the FFB Appeal Board awarded the match (3-0) to Verdes. That would have been 9 goals for Mikey and the Golden Boot.

Apologies also to veteran Daniel "Danny" Jimenez who tallied 7 goals total, not 6 as in our table in Friday's issue. We overlooked a brace that Danny scored in Week 5 where we had only allotted him 1 goal.

We'll have the final scoring details in our weekend edition, but the game final scores are: Wagiya SC, 3-2, over Bandits/International FC; San Pedro Pirates FC, 3-2, over Police/Benque United FC; Altitude FC, 1-0, over Verdes FC; and Port Layola FC, 2-1, over Progresso FC. (See final standings below.)

Premier League of Belize 2022-2023 Closing Season Standings at Week 14, Saturday, April 22, 2023								
TEAMS	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Diff	Pts
Verdes FC	14	9	3	2	30	8	22	30
San Pedro Pirates FC	14	7	5	2	33	17	16	26
Port Layola FC	14	7	4	3	25	14	11	25
Progresso FC	14	6	5	3	22	9	13	23
Altitude FC	14	6	4	4	26	15	11	22
Police/Benque United FC	14	6	3	5	19	18	1	21
Wagiya SC	14	2	0	12	13	54	-41	6
Bandits/International FC	14	0	2	12	7	40	-33	2

According to PLB tournament regulations, the semifinal playoffs are home-and-away, with the lower seed team playing at home first.

Therefore, this weekend will see Port Layola FC hosting San Pedro Pirates FC; and Progresso FC hosting Verdes FC.

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

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## U13 Mundialito returns



**(Girls) Royal Fusion**



**(Boys) TutBay Yabra**



**(Girls) Millenium Girls**



**(Boys) Ladyville Rising Stars**



**(Girls) Queen's Square**



**(Boys) Belize United**

*by Charles Gladden*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Apr. 23, 2023

Over the weekend, the BTB (Belize Tourism Board) sponsored U13 Mundialito Football Tournament kicked off its fourteenth season in the old capital with Week 1 games being played on Saturday at the newly renovated Berger Field on Vernon Street.

Throughout the tournament's years of existence, thirteen years to be exact, the MCC Grounds was home for the children from nine to thirteen years of age to play and compete in. This

season will consist of 18 teams - twelve boys teams and six girls teams from Belize city and environs.

The original SMART 13-and-Under Mundialito was the brainchild of then SMART employee Anthony Mahler.

"You know Mundialito is dear to my heart. I was proud the other night when I went to the game to see Guatemala and Belize play, and there are four members of the national team who came through the Mundialito system," said Hon. Anthony Mahler, now Minister of Tourism.

There are no monetary prizes involved for the winners but, like in

the previous seasons, trophies will be distributed to the winning teams, and three of the best players from the tournament, two males and one female, will get to attend a development camp in Florida for several days.

While the renovation of Berger Field isn't quite completed as yet, the tournament was a soft launch of the field, with its official opening to be held a couple of weeks into the season.

In Week 1 games played on Saturday, (Boys) Belize United clipped Reality Youths, 1-0; (Girls) Royal

Fusion won, 7-1, over Unity Presbyterian; (Boys) Ladyville Rising Stars defeated Hattieville United, 4-1; (Girls) Queen's Square prevailed, 2-0, over Salvation United; (Boys) Leaders of Tomorrow and Sampson Academy played to a 0-0 draw; (Girls) Millenium Girls shut out Holy Redeemer, 5-0; (Boys) TutBay Yabra drilled Queen's Square, 7-1; (Boys) Brown Bombers bombed Pickstock United, 6-0; and (Boys) Face of Belize





**Belize Elite Basketball League 2023 Tournament Standings**

Position	TEAM	GP	W	L	Pts	Str
1	Benny's Belize Hurricanes	10	8	2	18	+4
2	Orange Walk Running Rebels	11	7	4	18	+1
3	Belize City Defenders	11	7	4	18	+2
4	Griga Dream Ballers	11	7	4	18	-1
5	Western Ballaz	11	4	7	15	-2
6	San Pedro Tiger Sharks	09	5	4	14	+4
7	Belmopan Red Tigaz	10	3	7	13	-5
8	Punta Gorda Panthers	11	1	10	11	-8

**(Cancelled and possibly postponed):** Fri. Jan 27: San Pedro Tiger Sharks vs Belmopan Red Tigaz; Sat. Mar 25: San Pedro Tiger Sharks vs Benny's Hurricanes (San Pedro High School)

**Results and Schedule**

**Week 11:** Fri. Apr 21: Belize City Defenders 105, Punta Gorda Panthers 60 (Belize City Civic Centre); Belmopan Red Tigaz 93, Orange Walk Running Rebels 99 (UB Gym).

Sat. Apr 22: San Pedro Tiger Sharks 76 Griga Dream Ballers 72 (Angel Nunez Stadium); Western Ballaz 63, Belize Hurricanes 82 (SHC Auditorium).

**Week 12:** Fri. Apr 28: Belize City Defenders vs Belize Hurricanes (Belize City Civic Centre); Western Ballaz vs Belmopan Red Tigaz (SHC Auditorium).

Sat. Apr 29: San Pedro Tiger Sharks vs Orange Walk Running Rebels (San Pedro High School); Punta Gorda Panthers vs Griga Dream Ballers (Toledo Sporting Complex).

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Apr. 24, 2023

Last Saturday night, the Benny's Belize Hurricanes pummeled their host the Western Ballaz 82-63 at the Sacred Heart Auditorium to regain the top spot in the 2023 Belize Elite Basketball League Tournament, having won the most games of any team in the competition.

The Ballaz was led by Mark Gordon's 26 points and 9 rebounds, and Richard Smith III 10 points and 15 boards which were not nearly enough in a game in which none of their teammates scored in double figures.

The Canes cruised behind Kirk Smith, Jr. 19 points and 8 boards, Kris

# BEBL Week 11 review

Frazier's monster double-double 18 points and 17 rebounds, Vince Evans' 8 points, 11 boards, and leading Sixth Man of the Year candidate Tyrice Orosco's 11 rebounds, 14 points.

They took the lead shortly after the game's only tie about halfway through a slow first quarter and was never headed again.

The Ballaz fought desperately because the loss meant their window of opportunity to make the playoffs inched nearer to closing. Their last 3 games include a road date against their playoff rivals Tiger Sharks in San Pedro, and they will host tournament co-leader Griga in their finale.

The Hurricanes faces a showdown with their Belize City rival the Defenders for league supremacy next.

On Saturday night, the San Pedro Tiger Sharks took a definitive step towards a playoff berth contention when they defeated the Griga Dream Ballers 78-72 in a thriller at the Angel Nunez Auditorium on the island. It was a slugfest that saw the host out-rebounding their guest 57-33 but only converted 5 of 8 free throws.

Griga could only shoot a putrid 26-72 from the field, though, and was only whistled for a tournament low 7 fouls. They were never able to recover from a slow start in a game the Tiger Sharks led from the opening tap.

On Friday night, the Belize City Defenders ended lingering tendrils of hope the Punta Gorda Panthers and their fans may have been entertaining

of making the playoffs with a quick 105-60 drubbing.

The host team quickly ran out to a 24-8 lead after scoring the first baskets of the romp, which had turned into a laughter after only a few minutes.

The Panthers unfortunately still have league co-leaders Griga and Orange Walk on their remaining 3-game schedule.

Orange Walk Running Rebels survived the tournament's most competitive game and only overtime game 99-93 by out-scoring their host Belmopan Red Tigaz 12-6 in the extra period.

The desperate young Pan team tied the game 87-87 on a last second 3-pointer by Jaegan Lopez that capped a furious 4th quarter comeback after trailing by 13 points.

The game saw several near ties, ties and lead changes in the first half before the Rebels seemed to take command in the third quarter.

Super sniper James Stanback led the Rebels with 29 points (6 in overtime) and fellow import Bryan Hudson added 24.

Jeremiah Toney was the man for the Red Tigaz with 22 points, whilst Lopez and (the return of) Benjamin Page lit up the scoreboard for 20 apiece.

The Tigaz host the Western Ballaz next in a clash that will definitively determine which of those western teams will have a shot at the playoffs, whilst the Rebels will take on San Pedro on their home court next, where the home team has yet to lose this tournament.

## U13 Mundialito returns

**Continued from** Page 10 won by default over Fairplay Raiders.

The tournament continues with Week 2 games as follows:

Saturday, April 29, all Boys games

9:00 a.m. – (B) Pickstock vs Face of Belize

9:50 a.m. – (B) Smart Brown Bombers vs Queen's Square

10:40 a.m. – (B) Belize United vs Fairplay Raiders

11:30 a.m. – (B) Hattieville vs Sampson Academy

12:20 p.m. – (B) Tutbay Yabra vs Leaders of Tomorrow

1:10 p.m. – (B) Reality Youths vs Ladyville Rising Stars



U13 Mundialito on the New Berger Field

## Trying times when tomorrow seems the only hope

**Continued from** Page 6

affairs in that country.

And for the response of the United States to entail working more closely with Mexico to close the border (to) the Haitians is simply cruel. And ironic.

Ironic because during this past week President Biden was in Ireland where he extolled the long and rich relationship between the United States and Ireland.

Perhaps he could have remembered that the long and rich relationship truly

began with millions of poor, starving and unskilled Irish men, women and children fleeing the oppression and famine imposed on them by England. And that the children of those poor, starving and unskilled Irish men, women and children became presidents, generals, corporate executives and university presidents.

Would that this same hand of hope and hospitality could be offered to Haitian men, women and children who are reaching out to America just now.

American amnesia is certainly not color blind.



(Boys) Brown Bombers



# House engages in extensive legislative business

**Continued from** Page 3

lifting the freeze one year ahead of time,” PM Briceño said.

He shared that the public officers and teachers are to be thanked for their cooperation and work. The bill was taken through all its stages forthwith. We note that the unfreezing of increments was scheduled for the start of this month, April 1, but some public officers have complained of not yet receiving the augmentation in their salaries.

## Last-minute legislating for CFATF

Senator and Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Hon. Chris Coye hinted at last week’s Senate meeting that the government would have to bring a number of legislative amendments to parliament quickly. This is because they are behind on the 40 recommendations issued by the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force to bring Belize’s legislation up to speed with the requirements of the international financial community fighting against terrorism financing and money laundering.

The Anti- Money Laundering (AML), Combating the Finance of terrorism (CFT), and Countering Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (CPF) are measures put in place by the Financial Action Task Force to develop measures to combat terrorist financing and money laundering in the international community. Belize under the past review failed to meet the requisite international standards in all three areas, and the country lost nearly 80% of its corresponding banking relationship, according to PM Briceño.

The government moved for amendments for 7 bills in one breath last week Friday.

“I would like to introduce several bills, all of them together, the following bills which are: The Credit Union’s Amendment Bill 2023, Central Bank Amendment Bill 2023, the Domestic Banks and Financial Institutions Bills 2023, International Banking Amendment Bill 2023, Money-lenders Amendment Bill 2023, Money-laundering and Terrorism Prevention Bill 2023 and the National Payment System Amendment Bill,” PM Briceño read.

He shared that failure to carry out these amendments to meet the standards recommended by the FATF would mean the country could potentially suffer once again from de-risking from the international community. Significant changes were made to all seven legislations and the PM asked for unanimous support from the members of the House, noting the importance of a successful review from the CFATF. The bills are expected to be passed in early May, since the government has a limited time since the legislations need to be in place by June 2, according to the PM.

The bills were referred to the Finance and Economic Development Committee.

## Law Revision and Special Prosecutor

Minister Hon. Francis Fonseca introduced a bill to amend the Law Revision Act to empower the Law Revision Commissioner to create and publish an interim Revised Edition of the Laws of Belize from time to time. Fonseca shared that the Law Revision takes place to consolidate the amendments and new laws enacted by the legislatures but the exercise is time-bounded. This results in outdated consolidated laws which do not reflect the changes made in bills by the legislature.

This amendment will allow for an Interim Revision Edition of the law to be published as necessary by the Commissioner. The last revision of the law took place in 2020 and is not reflective of the current state of the law, Minister Fonseca said.

A bill, Special Prosecutor for the December 2022 Triple Murder was brought to the House by Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Kareem Musa. This appointed Special Prosecutor will have independent status in the investigation and prosecution of that high-profile case.

“It is still very fresh in our collective minds, that very heinous and tragic triple murder that took place on December 31, 2022, right here in our Capital City,” Minister Musa said. “We know, Madam Speaker, that the accused in this particular incident is a Corporal of Police who was in interdiction and it was learned that, of course, he has a familial tie, albeit distant, with the Director of Public Prosecution,” Minister Musa said.

He said, while they believe the DPP could carry out the prosecution in an independent manner, to remove any perception of bias it is necessary to pass the Special Prosecutor’s Bill. He shared that while the Constitution already empowers the DPP to make such an appointment by way of a writ, they would still fall under the guidance of the DPP, giving rise to the need for this new legislation.

## \$20 million loan for DFC

A loan motion for \$20 million dollars was debated in the House last week Friday. The Development Finance Corporation is seeking to borrow the sum from the Social Security Board, and the government brought a loan motion seeking approval. The financing will be used for the Mortgage Finance Program, according to PM Briceño, a DFC facility for housing loans to Belizean families. In his comment, he said that they are creating an environment for affordable lending, noting an expansion in the residential mortgage sector since 2020, attributed, according to PM Briceño, to the We Serve Program, which provided public officers with affordable financing for homes.

The DFC approached the SSB board for financing for its new mortgage program, and as is legislated must receive parliamentary approval to engage in the loan contract. The loan was approved on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2022. The funds are to be disbursed in four tranches of \$5 million dollars each over 2 years. The term of the loan is 25 years with two years grace period, at a rate of interest not to exceed 4.5% per annum.

The Prime Minister said “this is a good loan” for the people of Belize, and Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow said that he was delighted with the



**Hon. Francis Fonseca**



**Hon. Kareem Musa**

move by the government to provide housing solutions. He noted that this path is more realistic than the initial promise under Plan Belize which said 10,000 houses would be built and provided to low-income families.

“The false promise of giving ten thousand houses is certainly nowhere near to be delivered upon. I think they have given out a hundred and fifty houses. Mesopotamia, Collet, Albert, and Corozal North have not gotten any since the last time I checked. But I am a strong proponent of creating a housing solution that allows for Belizeans to have access to financing,” Barrow said.

He said the DFC is going to need much more capitalization to deliver on the opportunity for 10,000 houses to be built and that interest rates would need to be lowered for more Belizean to have a pathway to housing. So far, the government has built around 300 homes, according to PM Briceño.

## Committee for Women Parliamentarians

The concept of a Joint Select Committee for Women Parliamentarians across party lines was introduced in the House on Friday. According to Minister Hon. Dolores Balderamos Garcia, the committee will work to address challenges facing women and include women members from both lower and upper houses of parliament from both parties.

“Time has come to rise above the party politics and to say that, although we are few, the women of this National Assembly have the right and the responsibility to have a bicameral joint select committee so that we can consider matters of gender and development that are so important to Belize,” Minister Balderamos stated.

UDP Albert area representative, Hon. Tracy Panton placed on record her support and noted that it is every intention of the UDP Women’s Caucus to work with their colleagues on the other side of the floor. She shared that they must ensure that the issues are not only heard but also addressed.

## Human Smuggling Crisis in Ministry of Immigration, Shyne claims

At adjournment, Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Shyne Barrow rose to speak on what he referred to as a “crisis” in the Immigration Ministry. He claimed that Haitians have disappeared from the country. Between March 2022 and April of this year, over 2,000 Haitians arrived in Belize; of that number, over 1,900 have vanished without a trace. It is widely believed that these persons entered Mexico illegally en route to the United States. The political turmoil in Haiti has caused many citizens of that country to exile themselves. In late March, the Government invoked Article 226 (a) of the Revised

Treaty of Chaguaramas, allowing the Minister of Immigration to immediately impose visa requirements on Haitians arriving in Belize.

Barrow, in his comments at the close of the House meeting, said that some corruption taking place in the Ministry of Immigration could very well be blamed.

“Two thousand Haitian nationals cannot disappear without some type of corruption taking place in the Ministry of Immigration,” Barrow said. Barrow questioned why the former Minister of State in the Ministry of Immigration, Hon. Ramon Cervantes was



**Hon. Shyne Barrow**

removed, and called for an investigation into the allegation of human smuggling taking place through Belize.

“If you are serious about anti-corruption, where is the investigation? If the government is serious about corruption and the Prime Minister has conceded that 2,000 Haitian nationals have disappeared, that has to involve complicit facilitation from the Ministry of Immigration, and I suggest that is why he moved the member for Orange Walk,” Barrow said.

The record of the full sitting can be found on the Government of Belize’s YouTube page.

## Ashcroft claims “possible” conflict

**Continued from** Page 2

activated. In addition to this, a more looming threat is the International Arbitration which was also invoked by the Ashcroft Alliance under the UK-Belize BIT Treaty.

For now, a host of legal challenges continues to stymie the work of the NEAC Appeals Tribunal. This body is the last legislated step that can be taken by a developer to attain environmental clearance within our laws after being rejected by the Department of the Environment. The Ashcroft Alliance has pulled out all the legal stops to seemingly contort the appeal tribunal to their liking, after the removal of Senator Herrera – brother of their local consultant Allan Herrera.

The company has said that they were satisfied with the original iteration of the tribunal, which included Senator Herrera (affiliated with the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which has expressed unreserved support for the Waterloo project) and Justice Farnese, and is only now requesting that she removes herself from the body. Justice Patricia Farnese joined the High Court of Belize in January 2022 as a new judge.



## Faber returns to Collet

Continued from Page 1

maintained that he was prepared to stand down in the best interest of the Party, spoke to his Executive, family, and advisors, then submitted his resignation letter to make way for the Hon. Faber to be endorsed as UDP Collet Standard Bearer," a statement from Barrow notes.

In March of this year, an indication that Ian Jones, endorsed by the UDP to replace Faber as UDP standard bearer late last year, would step down to make way for Faber, made its way to the public. This is following the apparent ouster of Faber when the UDP nomination committee rejected his application in favor of Jones's.

That decision (to oust Faber) was made amid a more tumultuous time in the UDP after domestic violence allegations against Faber had led to the removal of Faber from his post as leader of the party, following which he had been absent from a number of House meetings. He is back, attending the last two sittings of the House of Representatives and making his usual spirited presentations.

As mentioned, the reports of Faber's reinstatement being circulated are from a purported leaked internal memo from the UDP. According to the message, Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses "Shyne" Barrow, states the decision is, "to make way for Faber to be endorsed as UDP Collet Standard Bearer."

The note shared in the UDP chat group also adds, "I want to thank Hon. Faber for the invaluable contributions he has made to the UDP and welcome his return as the UDP Standard Bearer for Collet."

Faber is the longest-serving UDP member of the House of Representatives at this time. As mentioned, he has delivered the Collet

constituency for the UDP 5 times, and is considered a senior member of that party. His fall from grace created a visible fissure that affected the opposition's effectiveness for months, and still causes challenges. The Friday, April 21 meeting was held specifically to discuss the return of Faber to Collet.

Ian Jones' move to resign from the political seat is a decision he has said that he would make in the best interest of the party. But in a letter dated March 31, Faber accused Hon. Barrow of attempting to coerce him to support a motion in return for his (Barrow's) approval of Ian Jones' resignation as Collet standard bearer. Faber sent a letter to the party chairman, Michael Peyrefitte, expressing his regret that the leader would offer a quid pro quo in exchange for his acceptance of Jones's resignation. While the announcement of Jones's resignation was made almost a month ago, it is until now that it has been submitted and accepted, making way for Faber once again.

Replying today to our request for his reaction to the latest developments in the UDP, Hon. Shyne Barrow stated:

"My commitment as Leader of the United Democratic Party has always been to do everything in my power to unite the Party in order to take back Government. As evidenced by the almost unanimous NPC vote to endorse me as Party Leader at the National Convention, my efforts have not been in vain. Brokering the return of Hon. Faber is a part of my sustained efforts to keep the UDP united and put us in the best position to win the Municipal Elections and General Elections. The people of Belize deserve a better Government than they currently have, and the UDP is ready to serve as the next Government of Belize."

## Luchille Dixon crowned the 9th Miss Afrikan Queen 2023

Continued from Page 1

heritage and beauty to the audience.

The amazing performances were filled with culture, colors, art, and talent as each woman told the story of the African country of their selection.

Among the chosen were South Africa, represented by Kyra Young; Kenya, represented by Vanessa Williams; Uganda, represented by Jasmin Roches; Nigeria, represented by Judia Young; Ethiopia, represented by Crysel Gabourel; Zimbabwe, represented by Shernell Spence; and Ghana, represented by Luchille Dixon.

It was an event that you had to be at to appreciate the dedication and beauty of the women, who left a mark on the audience, making it difficult to narrow it down to one winner. However, only one would over-shine the rest and take the title as this year's new reigning queen.

At the end of the night the title of 9th Miss Afrikan Queen 2023 was awarded to none other than Miss Luchille Dixon of Ghana, and she was crowned by former queen, Chinyeré Wade.

Miss Dixon was closely followed by Miss Crysel Gabourel, the 1st runner-up, and Miss Kyra Young, the 2nd runner-up.

Queen Dixon, a mother, deejay and radio/TV personality, was embraced by her fellow contestants following the win. Amidst the joy she posted on her Facebook page, thanking her supporters.

"Thank you to each and every single soul who clapped, shouted, screamed, watched, texted, posted, tagged, and came to support me. The feeling is so surreal. Biggest congratulations to Kyra and Crysel, you ladies rocked that stage. All seven of us killed that stage."

"As I walk this new journey, I give thanks to God for blessing me with my many talents. I will wear this crown with pride and dignity and fulfill all necessary duties," shared Dixon.

Dixon has since been showered with love and congratulated by a multitude of supporters, friends, family, and even co-workers. Notably, she aspires for all black women to build a strong foundation with the bricks given them, embracing who they are as women.

## Justice for Laddie celebrated



Kareem Martinez is taken into custody after guilty verdict

Continued from Page 1

the verdict, and he was subsequently taken into police custody to await his sentence at a date to be decided by the parties.

Speaking to the media for the first time since the start of the trial, Laddie's foster mother, Bryony Fleming-Bradley, expressed relief that the matter has come to an end and happiness that there has been justice for Laddie. His biological mother, Linda Gillett, who was present for the entirety of the case, likewise expressed happiness that justice has been served.

Justice Moore began reading her judgment before 10:00 a.m. on Friday, April 21, in Belmopan and by a little after 11:00 a.m., she had thoroughly detailed how the Prosecution proved all four elements of manslaughter as per Section 116 of the Belize Criminal Code.

The trial by judge alone for the shooting death of the 14-year-old on the night of July 14, 2021 on a beach in Placencia took place in January, February and March of this year. The Prosecution, led by Senior Crown Counsel Javier Chan, presented 17 witnesses and the Judge ordered a visit to the scene.

Notably, Justice Moore indicated that she only accepted certain aspects of the testimonies of the other two police officers who were on the scene on the night in question because she did not find their narration of events entirely credible. On the other hand, she wholly accepted as truthful the testimony of 19-year-old Thomas Palacio, Laddie's friend, who told the Court they were running from unidentified men in black who were chasing after them as they made their way home to beat the 10:00 p.m. curfew that was in place at the time. Police had responded to a report from a beach club security guard, Devon Castillo, who said he had seen three suspicious persons on the beach near the club. According to Justice Moore, Castillo did not clarify why they appeared suspicious, and she deemed it a gross overreaction on his part which ended tragically. Palacio said that when he heard a gunshot, he threw himself on the ground out of fear and then saw Laddie on the ground motionless. At that point, a gun was placed to his head and he was kicked and subsequently detained and taken to the police station. At the end of her statement, Justice Moore told the Court that police's treatment of

Palacio was potentially criminal, as he was threatened, physically assaulted and falsely imprisoned. On that point, attorney Richard "Dickie" Bradley (who assisted the Prosecution) said that an attorney can extract the sworn testimony and sue on Palacio's behalf. He also noted that the police have so far not taken any action as it relates to those accusations.

The Judge did not believe there was a scuffle or that either Laddie or Palacio had an object in their hand as some of the officers affirmed. Neither did she believe that they identified themselves as law enforcement officers upon arriving at the scene. Additionally, she is of the view they were untruthful regarding the time of the incident to make it seem as if it happened after curfew.

In a scathing rebuke of those tasked with serving and protecting, Justice Moore affirmed that many of the officers who testified in the trial should be able to clearly define basic tenets of policing such as what is a warning shot, when a person may be lawfully detained, and what is justifiable use of force. She highlighted the assertion of the investigating officer Sergeant Holly Vasquez that law enforcement officers cannot stop someone based on general suspicion alone as opposed to reasonable suspicion. In this case, said Justice Moore, there was no reasonable suspicion that the teens had committed or were about to commit a crime. To drive home the 4th element to prove manslaughter, that is, that the use of force was unlawful, Justice Moore pointed to protocols which prohibit police from shooting a fleeing suspect. Because there was no element of self-defense, there was no need for the force that was applied in this case by Martinez, who was the superior on the ground. In his statement to the Court, Martinez said he turned away from the fleeing teens and fired a warning shot. Justice Moore stated, "... I don't believe he fired in the air at all. I believe he fired toward the accused with the tragic outcome of his death." She highlighted that the responding police officers failed in their duty to uphold the rights of a child as enshrined in our Constitution and laws and as affirmed in international conventions to which Belize is a party.

Defense attorney Oscar Selgado has indicated his client's intention to appeal. In response, attorney Bradley commented, "... Justice Moore is seldom disagreed with at the Court of Appeal."



Call us at: 202-4477





## Available at:

### **BELIZE CITY**

- \* Puma Roundabout
- \* Puma, 2 Miles Philip Goldson Hwy.
- \* Shell Service Station, C.A. Boulevard
- \* Community Drug Store
- \* William Supermarket, C.A. Boulevard
- \* Fuel Logistics, Bel-China
- \* Puma Freetown
- \* Cambranes
- \* J & K Supermarket
- \* Twin Supermarket, #5526 St Thomas Street
- \* Tow Tow Grocery Store, Mahogany Street
- \* Julie Wong Store, Belama (by police station)
- \* JB's Store, Mahogany Street
- \* 88 Shopping Center, C.A. Boulevard
- \* Freetown Drug Store
- \* Publics, Philip Goldson Highway
- \* Buca Shell, Philip Goldson Highway
- \* James Brodie & Co. Ltd. - Supermarket, Albert Street and Philip Goldson Highway
- \* 1<sup>st</sup> Choice Pharmacy, Cemetery Road
- \* Save-U Supermarket

### **LADYVILLE**

- \* Puma Service Station
- \* Shell Service Station
- \* Low's Supermarket

### **ORANGE WALK**

- \* One Stop Service Station
- \* People's Store

### **COROZAL**

- \* Aguilar Car Care Products, # 60 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Corozal Town
- \* Xiomara Alcalá c/o Corozal Farmer's Supplies, #99 - 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Corozal Town

### **BELMOPAN**

- \* Dakers Stationery & Books
- \* Hydes Mini Market
- \* First Choice Variety Gift Shop
- \* Shell Service Station

### **CAYO**

- \* Amini Habet c/o Shell Service Station, San Ignacio
- \* Venus Store

### **BENQUE**

- \* Eduard Cambranes, 6 Diaz St., Benque

### **STANN CREEK**

- \* Xaibel Service Station
- \* S & S One Stop c/o Uno Belize
- \* St. Vincent Convenience Store

### **PLACENCIA**

- \* Placencia Office Supplies

### **INDEPENDENCE**

- \* G N J Mart

### **PUNTA GORDA**

- \* King's Texaco
- \* NJV Pharmacy

### **SAN PEDRO**

- \* Rocks Shopping Center

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# Police policing Police?

Continued from Page 1

When he tried to film the encounter for proof that he had done nothing wrong and that he was being treated in an unprofessional and abusive manner, Foster says one officer, whom he later learned was Albert Martinez, became enraged. He narrated that the officer slapped his arm then put his hand on his gun and threatened, “you want this to get f\*\*\*g nasty?” then proceeded to hit him a second time causing his phone to fall to the ground.

Apart from the physical assault and threats, Foster, then a 19-year-old student of Sadie Vernon High School, says he was subjected to insulting, abusive and demeaning language. He outlines that when he asked for the reason behind the search, he was told he thought he was “smart” and should therefore state two more of his rights. When he did, Foster says he was told “You da nuh bad man, u da wa b\*\*ch,” and when he insisted he was a tour guide, another officer whose name he later learned to be Linda Chan said, “me noh know if you dah wah tour guide because of how you dress.”

According to Foster, while filming the search, officer Martinez declared he would charge him for assaulting a police officer and ultimately, never found any illegal item on his person and never provided any reason for the search except to say they were acting on information.

In a letter dated May 6, 2022, Foster’s attorney, Leslie Mendez sought a settlement for \$30,000 on his behalf, and the response of the Police Department’s Legal Advisor, Bartholomew Jones, was that the officers’ version of events conflicted with Foster’s and so they could not accept the offer at that time.

The next month, Foster filed a complaint at the Professional Standards Branch.

Fast forward to December 8, 2022, Foster says he was called in to provide his statement in proceedings against Officer Chan. It was until then that they learned through informal channels that “the process against Officer Martinez had concluded because Officer Martinez pled guilty.” According to Foster, he was not given any information about a sanction against Martinez. The following day, Mendez sent a letter to the Department requesting information about the status and outcome of the disciplinary proceedings, but to this date, has not received a response.

Apart from damages, additionally sought are five declarations including that the search conducted on Foster was



unlawful; that the action of the police to stop him from recording the search was a breach of his fundamental rights to protection of the law and freedom of expression; that the manner in which the search was conducted violated Foster’s right to dignity and respect as guaranteed under Section 3 of the Belize Constitution, and that he has been deprived of an effective remedy because he has not been notified about any disciplinary proceedings. Finally, a declaration is sought that “... the disciplinary proceedings conducted by the Professional Standards Branch under the Belize Police Department fails to meet the requirements to provide an effective remedy to the claimant in that the process lacks transparency, independence and impartiality in contravention to section 6 of the Belize Constitution.”

Mendez today told *Amandala*, “domestically as well as internationally, the standard is that when there is an allegation of a right being breached or violated, you should have access to an effective remedy. For that remedy to be effective, it has to comply with the standards of fairness, with due process with impartiality, with non-bias. So this is, as far as I know, at least in Belize, one of the first times that we’re going to look into whether or not, the proceedings before the Professional Standards Branch, one, has to even comply with those requirements, and two, if so, whether they, in fact, comply with those requirements ... From our view, it really is the police policing the police when it comes to claims of misconduct. And what we’re saying is that considering that this is one of the few mechanisms that exist for citizens to be able to make a complaint with respect to police misconduct, this really shouldn’t be the case...”

The matter has been adjourned to July 5, 2023.

# BTB holds second B00M conference...

Continued from Page 4

will be for Belize.

“The way that the BTB is going to be using it in the US is going to be an AI-developed product that it hones in on marketing, so we could actually predict who’s going to be coming to the US. So, it’s predictive marketing efforts to say

who’s going to come here, how much money they’re going to spend here, and then following along with that look alike audience, to figure out who else we could be targeting,” explained Zimmerman.

Hon. Anthony Mahler, the Minister of Tourism, spoke about how the new technology will help us better use Belize’s limited resources.

# Man arraigned on double-murder charge for Ladyville victims

Continued from Page 1

when they arrived at the scene they found a calm Encalada sitting in the home on a chair consuming a beer, and while police were surveying the area he got up and met them at the entrance and directed them to a licensed firearm on the chair, which led to his detention.



Desiree Gonzalez and George Rochester, deceased

The Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams, told local reporters at a press briefing on Friday that Rowland’s theory is inconsistent with what they observed at the scene. According to Williams, they may have been killed around

last week, April 20, which claimed the lives of Encalada’s common-law wife of three years, Desiree Gonzalez, 50, and his brother, George Rochester, 25. Police detained Encalada after they went to his house and found him with the bodies of Gonzalez and Rochester inside. They were shot and it is believed that it was as a result of a love triangle.

Initial reports suggested that when Encalada arrived at his home on Scissors Tail Street in Ladyville around noon, he allegedly caught Gonzalez and Rochester together and reportedly killed them. However, Gonzalez’s sister, Cindy Rowland soon took to social media and gave her own account of what she believed took place, claiming that her sister was never involved in any romantic relationship with Rochester, and that Gonzalez and Encalada were inseparable.

Rowland expressed her belief that the gruesome act was carried out before dawn, and that Encalada went to retrieve Rochester from his home and then killed him outside the residence. He then killed Gonzalez, placing them together to create an impression that the two had been intimate.

Police have subsequently reported that

2:00 or 3:00 a.m., as rigor mortis had set in.

ComPol Williams further noted that they are relying on information that was provided by the brothers of the accused, which was consistent with what authorities found on the scene.

Police are trying to get a search warrant from the court to access the phone records of Rochester and Gonzalez to determine whether any previous conversations may have occurred that would provide a clearer picture of what took place.

Today, results of a postmortem examination conducted on the bodies of both deceased reportedly revealed that Gonzalez died due to acute Facio-corticospinal Cord traumatic injuries due to a Single penetrating gunshot wound to the body, while Rochester’s cause of death was a result of Acute Cranioencephalic traumatic injuries due to multiple gunshot wounds to the body.

According to reports, Encalada and Gonzalez had been living together for about 3 years and they owned two businesses, a restaurant and a barber shop.

Gonzalez is the mother of 6 children, while Rochester is the father of one.

# Former Deputy Director of Tax Services deported after 3 years...

Continued from Page 3

During that argument, Verde had reportedly pulled out his licensed firearm and shot at Nuñez, hitting him in his left arm.

Verde was subsequently charged with “attempted murder, aggravated assault, use of deadly means of harm, and discharging a firearm in public.”

In 2014, Verde found himself in yet another altercation, this time with Allen Martinez of San Pedro Town. Verde once again pulled out his licensed firearm and shot at Martinez.

In connection with that incident, Verde faced a single charge of ‘Dangerous Harm’ and was briefly sent to the Belize Central Prison before being granted Supreme Court bail.

Today Verdes is once again a free

man. He arrived in Belize on Thursday, April 20, and was met at the Philip Goldson International Airport by family and friends.

Attorney-at-law Michael Peyrefitte was also there to ensure that Verde’s rights as a Belizean citizen were respected.

And, although Peyrefitte claimed to know little about the details of Verde’s case, he did inform local reporters that the next step for Verde as a deportee would include regular check-ins with the Police Department in line with the Deportation Act.

Verde is said to have studied business administration and management, obtaining his Bachelor’s degree from the University of Belize in 2004 and his Master’s degree from the University of the West Indies in 2006.

able to compete neck and neck with some of the bigger budget destinations,” said Mahler.

Other presenters that took the stage covered three different segments, on sustainability as a marketing tool, artificial intelligence and marketing, and also the retention of employees.

“It’s just using our creativity, using the limited resources we have as a small destination and a small budget destination to be able to compete, and how do we do that? By embracing technology. I believe that technology gives us, especially the digital component of it, an opportunity to be





# 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.)

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