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The Bahama Journal

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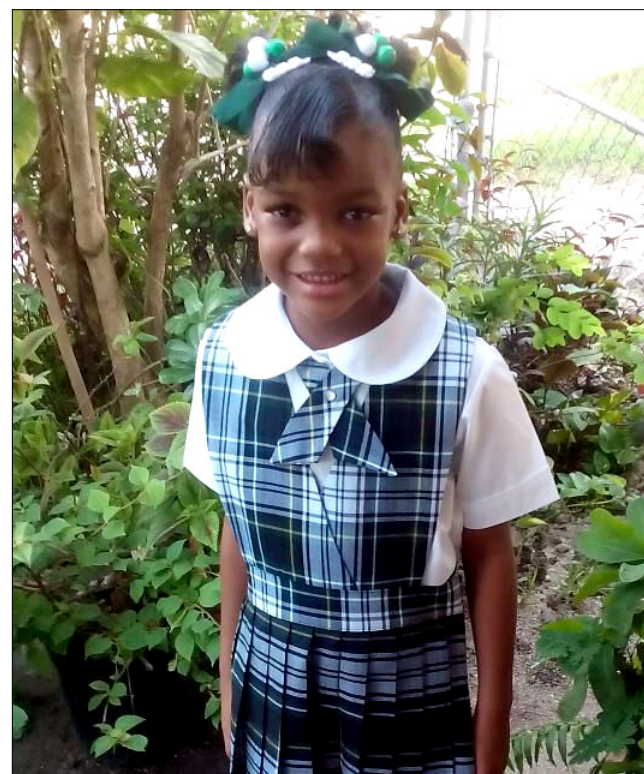
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VOL. 30 - NO. 22

MONDAY - OCTOBER 16TH, 2017

75 CENTS

Bahamian Girl Killed In Cruise Ship



► Zion Smith

BY AMAJAH L KNOWLES
Journal Staff Writer

A Bahamian family is devastated after an eight year old girl was killed in a Cruise Ship docked in Miami, Florida.

Family and friends are mourning the loss of Zion Smith, as the Bahamian child killed after a tragic fall on the cruise liner while on a family vacation.

Miami Department of Fire-Rescue Captain Ignatious Carroll said the 8-year-old girl fell about two stories inside the Carnival Cruise Line's Glory ship.

The ship had just arrived and everyone was disembarking after a week-long trip when the girl fell about 8:15 a.m.

A few hours later, Miami-Dade police reported the girl dead.

Miami police in a statement investigators said they were working closely with Carnival Cruise Lines personnel "to determine the details surrounding this incident."

■ See GIRL KILLED / page 2...

DIPLOMATIC WEEK 2017 BEGINS WITH CHURCH SERVICE



► **Dame Marguerite at Diplomatic Week Opening** – Governor General H.E. Dame Marguerite Pindling is shown with Foreign Minister Darren Henfield, Mrs. Henfield, Ambassador Reuben Rahming, Mrs. Rahming and Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary (Actg.) Rhoda Jackson with guests attending the official opening church service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diplomatic Week 2017 at Christ Church Cathedral Sunday 15th October 2017. (Bahamas Information Services photo; Peter Ramsay)

"Health Minister Violated Code of Ethics," Says Roberts

BY AMAJAH L KNOWLES
Journal Staff Writer

Progressive Liberal Party Chairman Bradley Roberts has lambasted Health Minister Dr. Duane Sands for allegedly violating the Cabinet Code of Ethics and

is calling on Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis to clarify what he calls a blatant conflict of interest.

In a statement issued yesterday Mr. Roberts said Dr. Minnis has looked the other way while the Health Minister violated the code. "I am advised from multiple

sources that Health Minister Dr. Duane Sands performed several surgical procedures at the Princess Margaret Hospital after his appointment as a Cabinet Minister.

■ See CODE OF ETHICS / page 2...

Mitchell Considers PLP Chairmanship

BY AMAJAH L KNOWLES
Journal Staff Writer

Pressure is being brought to bear on former Minister of Foreign Affairs Fred Mitchell to offer himself for the position of chairman in the upcoming convention of the Progressive Liberal Party.

The Bahama Journal understands that members of the Young Liberals and other National General Counsel members of the party have suggested that Mr. Mitchell would be the best person to chair the PLP for the foreseeable future.

The former Fox Hill MP who was touring several constituencies in recent weeks with PLP Interim Leader Phillip "Brave" Davis, did not dismiss the idea that he would run for the chairmanship when contacted.

■ See MITCHELL / page 2...



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► Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Fred Mitchell (Journal file photo)

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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

INTERNATIONAL FOOD FESTIVAL OPENS



► Diplomats, Heads of Mission and Honorary Consuls accredited to The Bahamas are shown together with members of the International Food Festival Committee and other senior Government officials at the opening of the International Food Festival Saturday 14th October, 2017 at the Botanical Gardens. **(Bahamas Information Services photo; Derek)**

“Health Minister Violated Code of Ethics,” Says Roberts

Continued from / PAGE 1...

“If these reports are true, Dr. Sands in the capacity of Health Minister is in direct violation of established and longstanding cabinet code of ethics and procedures

for its Ministers as the Health Minister would have placed himself in a fundamental conflict between his private business interests and his public duty.

“Certainly the Health Minister as regulator can-

not self-regulate; it is called self-dealing, an unacceptable and corrupt practice that Dr. Minnis vowed to stamp out of government.

“Under these established Code of Ethics, Cabinet Ministers would

be required to discontinue all private work on assumption of office. Further, they are required to resign from any other public office or as director and/or officer of any and all public or private companies or associa-

tions.

“Contractual relationships with the government must be terminated, with interest in any company holding such contractual relationships divested or, as appropriate, placed in a blind trust,” Mr. Roberts said.


Mr. Roberts in his statement referred to comments delivered by Prime Minister Minnis at Government House during the swearing-in ceremonies of his cabinet ministers just five short months ago:

“Good and open government demands transparency and accountabili-

ty. Good governance demands being responsible for our actions.

“Accordingly, I will hold my ministers to the highest standards of ethical conduct in the performance of their public duties.”

Mr. Roberts added Dr. Sands’ behavior is a clear breach of public trust and is not representative of good governance, humility, personal sacrifice, responsibility, honesty or ethical conduct, and he has compromised the integrity of his high office and this demands immediate accountability for his actions.



FORM B
Notice of Intended Marriage
(Section 7(3))

The persons named and described hereunder have given notice to me of their intended marriage, namely –


Daniel Joseph Boehm, Divorced,
of 6330 Stockwell Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46237, United States of America

and


Cheryl Anne Vaughn, Divorced,
of 6330 Stockwell Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46237, United States of America

Any person knowing any just cause or impediment why this marriage should not be allowed should enter caveat forthwith in the office of the Registrar of Marriages.

Dated this 12th day of October, 2017.



Registrar of Marriages



FORM B
Notice of Intended Marriage
(Section 7(3))

The persons named and described hereunder have given notice to me of their intended marriage, namely –


Eric Donald Frank, Single,
of 3921 NE 24th Avenue, Lighthouse Point, FL 33064, United States of America

and


Jessica Marie Hill, Single,
of 3921 NE 24th Avenue, Lighthouse Point, FL 33064, United States of America

Any person knowing any just cause or impediment why this marriage should not be allowed should enter caveat forthwith in the office of the Registrar of Marriages.

Dated this 12th day of October, 2017.



Registrar of Marriages



FORM B
Notice of Intended Marriage
(Section 7(3))

The persons named and described hereunder have given notice to me of their intended marriage, namely –


Stephen Anthony Brannon, Single,
of 2511 Brown Noddy Lane, Apt 201, Tampla, FL 33619, United States of America

and


Ashley Brienne Dupree, Single,
of 2511 Brown Noddy Lane, Apt 201, Tampla, FL 33619, United States of America

Any person knowing any just cause or impediment why this marriage should not be allowed should enter caveat forthwith in the office of the Registrar of Marriages.

Dated this 2nd day of October, 2017.



Registrar of Marriages



FORM B
Notice of Intended Marriage
(Section 7(3))

The persons named and described hereunder have given notice to me of their intended marriage, namely –


Christian Rodrigo Foncillas, Divorced,
of San Jose De La Sierra 93, DPTO 117A, Las Condes, Santiago, Chile

and

Anyia Loreto Araya, Single,
of San Jose De La Sierra 93, DPTO 117A, Las Condes, Santiago, Chile

Any person knowing any just cause or impediment why this marriage should not be allowed should enter caveat forthwith in the office of the Registrar of Marriages.

Dated this 12th day of October, 2017.



Registrar of Marriages

Mitchell Considers PLP Chairmanship

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Mr. Mitchell said yesterday, “The developments on the officers in the PLP are internal matters.” He chose not to comment further at this time.

It has been brought to The Journal’s attention that the other persons suggested for the chairmanship have not been able to garner the support of leading stalwart councilors and have gotten a “lukewarm” reception from many of the delegates that will be attending the convention.

Mr. Mitchell is thought to be an attractive candidate as he is seen to be a prolific writer and has been proactive in recent times, in assessing the performance of the government and responding to many government pronouncements and initiatives.

Glendon Rolle, an attorney who ran as the Progressive Liberal Party’s candidate in Long Island in the general election, announced last week that he will run for chairman of the party at its October convention.

Thus far, Rolle, former West Grand Bahama and Bimini MP Obie Wilchcombe and Senator Alex Storr have announced they will run for chairman of the party.

Attorneys Wayne Munroe, QC, and Damian Gomez, QC, have said they are considering running for the post.

BAHAMIAN GIRL KILLED IN CRUISE SHIP

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Carnival Cruise Lines’ Jennifer de la Cruz, the Vice President of Corporate Communications, released a statement saying, “our most heartfelt care and concern is with the family at this very difficult time.”

The Journal spoke with

the cousin of the deceased child Elizabeth Knowles who said the family was devastated by the loss and said the immediate family including the child’s mother was heartbroken.

She also revealed that the child’s grandmother had travelled to Miami to console the child’s grieving mother.

Diplomatic Week 2017 Begins with Church Service

Under theme 'Innovative Approaches to A Changing World', the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially began its 4th Annual Diplomatic Week, Sunday 15th October, with an official church service at Christ Church Cathedral. The Governor General, Dame Marguerite Pindling, attended the official opening service.

The Diplomatic Week opening service, and the week's events are being attended by the entire accredited Diplomatic Corps of The Bahamas, both resident and non-resident.

The formal opening ceremony for Diplomatic Week will take place Monday morning 16th October at the Melia Hotel and continue throughout the week with various addresses by sen-

ior Government Ministers and other officials at the Melia Resort until Wednesday, when the Diplomatic Corps and other international guests will tour Freeport, Grand Bahama.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs first began Diplomatic Week in 2014 as an exercise to liaise directly with all international diplomats accredited to The Bahamas and to share important goals with the country's international friends and allies.

Diplomatic Week also serves as an opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations, promote cultural, social and economic exchanges between The Bahamas, International and Regional Organizations facilitated through working sessions and activities.



► **Minister Henfield Addresses Diplomatic Week Church Service** – Hon. Darren Henfield, Minister of Foreign Affairs is pictured addressing the church service at Christ Church Cathedral marking the official opening of the Ministry's 4th annual Diplomatic Week in The Bahamas. The Ministry stages the exercise to liaise directly with all international diplomats accredited to The Bahamas and to share important goals with the country's international friends and allies. (Bahamas Information Services photo; Peter Ramsay)

Galanis: FNM's Immigration Policy "Unchristian"

BY AMAJAHN KNOWLES
Journal Staff Writer

Former Progressive Liberal Party MP Phillip Galanis has heavily criticized the government's deadline threat for all irregular migrants to leave the country by year-end.

His statements came while appearing as a guest on the Love 97 Radio Program "On Point".

"First of all it is unchristian, bad policy and it really does not make a whole lot of sense and the Prime Minister needs to clarify what he meant by that, there has to be more to come.

"If you're saying come January 1st we're going to get rid of all the

illegal persons that are here, how many families are we going to dislodge, how many people are stateless in this country?"

"As far as those persons that have applied we need to clear the deck and close the files, either you accept or deny them," said Galanis.

His statements came in response to Dr. Minnis' ultimatum that people living in the country illegally must get out by December 31 or be arrested and deported.

On Friday Immigration Minister Brent Symonette insisted that the deadline threat for all irregular migrants to leave the country by year-end only sounded "draconian," but will be carried

out as "humanely and caring" as possible.

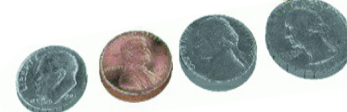
However, the Immigration minister did clarify that Dr. Hubert Minnis' deadline did not represent an amnesty for persons seeking to enter the country illegally – a point raised by Opposition senator Fred Mitchell yesterday.

Mr. Symonette said officials were still in talks over how they would tackle the backlog of applications for citizenship and permanent residency in the department of immigration.

He noted that application renewals "may suffer" as the department prioritizes the processing of new applications ahead of the December 31 deadline.

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Man Killed In GB

BY AMAJAHN KNOWLES
Journal Staff Writer

Weddel Avenue in Freeport.

Police are investigating yet another homicide, as a man was killed in Grand Bahama over the week-end.

Reports are that shortly after 9:00 pm on Saturday, police in Grand Bahama responded to reports of a lifeless body of a male in a vacant yard in the vicinity of Forbisher Drive and

On arrival at the scene, a male found from with gunshot injury to the head and body. The The police have launched an investigation into this matter and are appealing to anyone with information to come forward or contact the nearest police station.

According to The Journal this is the 109th homicide for the year.

The Bahamas Agriculture & Marine Science Institute

WEEKLY PRICE REPORT

WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 25th, 2017

Wholesale Crop	Weight	Size	BAMSI Price	USDA-AMS		Retail Weight	BAMSI Price	USDA-AMS	
				HIGH	LOW			HIGH	LOW
Banana	40lbs		18.00	20.00	20.00	1lb.	0.49	0.72	0.49
Papaya	10lbs		14.00	18.00	16.00	each	1.59	1.57	1.57
Habanero Green	8lbs		16.00	15.00	12.00	1lb.	2.50	1.88	1.50
Habanero Orange	8lbs		40.00	15.00	12.00	1lb.	5.50	1.88	1.50
Okra						1lb.	3.00	N/A	N/A

Abaco Big Bird
Whole Chicken
Leg Quarters
Wings

Wholesale Prices
Weight

Per lb. 2.14
40lbs 28.36
40lbs 66.04

Retail Prices
Weight

1 lb 2.39
10lbs 8.49
10lbs 19.24

Source: USDA-AMS Miami
United States Department of Agriculture Market Service



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SEARCH CALLED OFF FOR THE MISSING NEWLYWEDS

SMITH Calls FNM "Two Faced" Over Spy Bill

BY AMAJAHN KNOWLES
Journal Staff Writer

Noted Queens Counsel and Rights Bahamas President Fred Smith has called the Free National Movement government "hypocritical" and "two faced" in regards to their position on the proposed "Spy Bill".

It was revealed on Friday that the government will be moving forward with the proposed Interception of Communications Bill with the only amendment being to ensure the minister of national security does not have the power to authorize use of listening devices.

The government also recently revealed that it would not allow Rights Bahamas to take lead on the consultation in regards to the proposed legislation.

In an interview with The Journal Mr. Smith said that he was genuinely shocked that the government that was so critical of this bill while in opposition has seemed to have an about face.

"I am shocked that a government that came in on such a wave of popularity and on the heels of a defeat against the PLP, with one of the primary reasons being the attempt to rape our privacy under the spy bill, should under their first legislative term decide to present the legislation in an even worse form.

"I can't as a citizen of The Bahamas wrap my head around how disrespectful, two faced and hypocritical this FNM government is," Mr. Smith said.

Smith added that little consultation was done and he refuses to do so under limited time constraints.

"I have no issue with a sensible public consultation on the proposal for the content of the spy bill, but good faith consultation doesn't happen by a government tabling a bill and telling the people to consult in a crisis fashion.

"I am not going to participate in a consultation with the government with a legislative gun pointed at my head," Mr. Smith said.

He added that as a government that campaigned on transparency and consultation, this bill seems to be presenting the total opposite.

The FNM's proposed "Spy Bill" encompasses the provisions of the listening devices act, the controversial law that would be repealed if the interception of communication bill passes through Parliament.

BY ONIKE ARCHER
Journal Staff Writer

The search efforts for the missing American newlyweds have been called off. The Royal Bahamas Defense (RBDF) will not continue their search until they find more "concrete evidence", Commander Tellis Bethel told the relatives of Forrest and Donna Sanco.

The US Coast Guard have also ended their search efforts as they cannot proceed further unless invited by the RBDF, as the Bahamas is not in their jurisdiction. They have to be invited or requested by the RBDF to continue.

The RBDF has been working arduously with the US Coast Guard since news broke a week ago that the Sanco's, who were scheduled to arrive by a small Cessna plane to Rum Cay on September 26th, for their honeymoon, never arrived and declared missing.

Donna Sanco's son and daughter in law, Brandon and Erin Simmons travelled to the Bahamas for the first time last week to file an official missing persons report with the Central Detective Unit (CDU) under the instructions of Donovan Rolle.

Without such filings, the RBDF could not commence the search which made it impossible for the US Coast Guard to truly assist.

Unaware of this protocol initially, the relatives of Donna Sanco hired private chartered planes through a "Gofundme account" to fly over the area of Old Bight, Cat Island and Rum Cay with hopes of

any findings relating to their loved ones.

To date, the only promising evidence which maintained hope for the Sanco's family members was a tire which was found on October 7th, but not reported to the relatives until last week Thursday.

Coincidentally, this tire was the exact make and model Forrest Sanco bought for his plane in August. Moreover, Mr. Sanco purchased the Cessna 150-N3214X in August for the purpose of the newlyweds honeymoon.

The Journal conducted an interview with Donna Sanco's son and daughter who went into great detail about the knowledge of his mother's honeymoon plans.

"On the 26th, I received a text message that they made it to Freeport and they were leaving that morning. She didn't say anything

about any other stops. She just said they were heading to Rum Cay. I said well let me know when you get there. I never heard anything back; this was at 7:48 in the morning." Mr. Simmons said.

He continued, "We didn't think anything of it because it wasn't uncommon for her not to text for a few days and I understand that the services were not that great in Rum Cay since Hurricane Irma."

On October 5th, Forrest Sanco's employer had contacted his family members inquiring as to his whereabouts. Mr. Sanco was scheduled to return to work after his honeymoon on Tuesday October 3rd and return back to the United States Monday October 2nd.

A very concerned Sue McDaniel, sister of Forrest Sanco contacted Donna Sanco's children to inquire of her brother's where-

abouts which raised red flags. Brandon Simmons then tried contacting his mother on her cell phone to no avail.

Through a mutual friend of Donna Sanco, Andrew Wilkinson was contacted and informed about the missing couple. Mr. Wilkinson then contacted Sargent Pyfrom on Rum Cay from the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF) to get the ball rolling on search efforts for the missing newlyweds.

Sargent Pyfrom then dispatched local police on Rum Cay to look for the Sanco's after contacting the caretaker of the Bed and Breakfast facility where the Sanco's were scheduled to stay during their honeymoon. The police found no sign of them.

The relatives of the Sanco's continue to maintain hope that the couple is still alive.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE'S PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING PROJECT PUBLIC FORUM HELD AT UB



► **Forum Presenters** -- Matthew Aubry, Executive Director, Organization for Responsible Governance, moderated the Public Financial Management and Performance Monitoring Reform Forum at The University of The Bahamas in the Performing Arts Centre, Thursday, October 12, 2017. Presenters for the evening from the Ministry of Finance seated from left are: Tonya Adderley, Project Manager; Daniel Ferguson; Cedric Collie; Terrance Fountain; Denise Hinds Jordan and Karen Moss-Timothy. (BIS Photo/Raymond A. Bethel Sr.)

New Crime Initiative Launched

BY AMAJAHN KNOWLES
Journal Staff Writer

Labour Minister Dion Foulkes revealed on Friday that a scheme has been created by the Cabinet's sub-committee on crime, which calls for immediate action by the Royal Bahamas Police Force.

Senator Foulkes, who is a member of the sub-committee, said the committee has devised a holistic approach to alleviating crime called the National Community Empowerment Initiative (NCEI).

While addressing the Senate, he said the sub-committee is focusing on four major areas: social upliftment, economic empowerment, prevention and enforcement.

Senator Foulkes said major parts of the social upliftment initiative include a national mentorship program, volunteerism, faith-based partnerships and community youth activities.

The economic empowerment component will encompass training schools, apprenticeship and employment initiatives, and youth enterprise

programs.

As it relates to the prevention component, Mr. Foulkes said it will include "CCTV, neighborhood crime watch, conflict resolution programs and urgent action by the Royal Bahamas Police Force".

The enforcement component includes several new initiatives already announced by National Security Minister Marvin Dames, who is also a member of the committee.

Last month, Mr. Dames said despite governments spending millions of dollars on anti-crime programs and acquiring modern crime fighting tools, based on an ongoing review, "we have done a poor job of oversight and maintenance", and though well-intentioned "they were not having the intended impact on crime".

He said the government is exploring means to ensure individuals charged with multiple, similar offenses do not get bail. Additionally, he said, the government is looking at introducing curfew and zoning restrictions for offenders being monitored electronically.

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What's Good for The Goose Is Good For The Gander STB

We covered the start of this war with articles describing the battle over easement rights, the mysterious burning of a home, the blocks to rebuilding, and countless questionable court filings. This series of articles asks the needed questions and presents the arguments in full.

You cannot call yourself a political organization, attack the political party in power—as seen in its numerous political ads and other actions—then call “FOUL” when they strike back and demand that you account for your actions.

Director and attorney for Save The Bays, Fred Smith, admitted that Save The Bays is a political organization—which is obvious from its constant political attacks. Yet Save The Bays wants protection from being attacked. What gives them authority to attack who they want and then be exempt from being called into question?

Save The Bays and its Director and attorney, Fred Smith, are finally getting push back for their years of attacks on others and now Fred Smith says that certain individuals “abused their power to lambast, to vilify and seek to destroy the reputation and good work, sterling work being performed by Save The Bays.”

Well, who has been abusing what power, and sterling work with respect to whom?

When it was established, Save The Bays described themselves as an environmental organization and even has a United States 501c3 status. Yet, they admit that they are a political organization. Seems to me that they are the ones abusing power and misleading the public, especially when it's obvious that the only people in their scopes are Fashion Mogul Peter Nygard and the Progressive Liberal Party Government.

Here's exhibit 1: Fred Smith stated in his argument before the court, “All that Save The Bays does is try to promote enforcement of the laws passed by parliament against the executive who continue to have their incestuous relationship with Mr. Nygard not only a detriment to the environment but the rule of law in The Bahamas.”

Well where were Save The Bays and Fred Smith when hedge-fund billionaire,

THE CLIFTON REVIEW

By P. J. Malone

The Clifton Review is a bi-weekly column that examines the question of the Clifton project along with the evolution of the war between two billionaires, the links to unsavory characters, the use of the courts for personal agendas, the involvement of the Government opposition party (the FNM), and the attacks on the Government of The Bahamas.

Louis Bacon, allegedly broke the law dredging sand in front of his property out at Clifton to build a marina and boat basin without authority or permits?

Did Save The Bays and Fred Smith try to enforce the laws when the FNM government gave Bacon his approvals after the fact? Did Save The Bays and Fred Smith attack the FNM Government for rewarding such a flagrant disregard for the Bahamian law?

How about attacking Louis Bacon for dredging out at Clifton and his detriment to the environment? Maybe I was out of the country and missed it when Save The Bays and Fred Smith attacked Louis Bacon for that.

It doesn't take private emails to prove that Save The Bays is misleading the public.

Since Fred Smith's admission that Save The Bays is a political organization, it explains its myopic biased actions and one-sided attacks on the PLP Government and Peter Nygard.

As one reporter wrote, “Smith also said that the Executive is doing everything in their power to taint the minds of the average Bahamian and defame the organization in the court of public opinion.” Seems to me that Save The Bays is doing a good job of this all by itself.

Smith's specific complaint was, “The Executive Branch effectively launched what I can call a political indictment of Save The Bays and its directors to affect and poison the mind of the public and abuse Save The Bays in the court of public opinion.”

Well, what's good for the goose is good for the gander!

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The Bahama
Journal
Quo Vadis, Bahamas?

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E D I T O R I A L

LET US AGREE

And so today we beg as follows: Let us agree with the proposition that the problems we face today – especially with our fiscal affairs and with the challenges we face with the undocumented ones in our midst and on our job-sites are the direct result of mistakes and down-right errors of both policy and policy implementation WE made in times past.

But yet again, do also permit agreement with the proposition that neither the Progressive Liberal Party nor its Opposite in the guise of the Free National Movement can claim to have any monopoly on intelligence or wisdom.

And as evident is the fact that: To err is human!

This we know as truth-spoken and also as truth written from that time in the distant past when we heard as much uttered by men and women who had to admit that they were either wrong or mistaken when they did this or that action—this even when that had the best of intentions.

That is and remains – as they say—life on this lee-side side of Jordan's chilly river; and so it behooves that we do as best we can to do the best we can—and this always in a spirit of love, concern and compassion to not only our fellow-Bahamians but also with how we treat with the stranger in our gates; the disabled and with all who wish to keep body and soul together in this deeply challenging times.

Of current necessity, therefore, it on this note of rights and compassion we now wish to directly address that continuously vexing issue of the so-called horde of so-called ‘illegals’ now residing and working in our beloved Bahamas.

If the truth be known: These hard-working people who routinely put life and limb on the line will continue to come so long as there is demand for their labor; and then, there is also that other ‘small’ matter that now so complicates their story where – as some among us know with both concern and alarm – very many Bahamians and very many of these so-called ‘illegals’ are family.

We dare say that these people Haitians-Haitian-Bahamians and their raw-boned Bahamian brothers and sisters shall – if

they must – protect their kith and kin.

Let us therefore [as a people who would be fair, loving and caring of our own] agree to face these facts head-on- and with that as realization of the core issue involved with this so-called issue- agree that we must find a solution that is sound, good, mutually satisfactory and therefore one that helps us all.

We are today absolutely certain that – With God's help – we can find a way forward where justice and common sense will help us rid ourselves of meanness, fear and contempt for so very many of the Almighty's ever-suffering children- some of them our Haitian cousins!

Clearly, then: What we see today is as result of apathy and could-care-less attitude of our elders which has now been passed on to our generation and this current generation. The vast majority of Bahamians do not care about their fellow man, do not care about our nation....many are selfish and only things which matter concern themselves and their family. Most of us will complain, complain, complain but don't see themselves as part of any solution.

Agreed and understood!

It therefore also follows that: That we live in times that threaten to upset and disturb us is but one more truism that has become fodder for no end of chat and idle bluster.

Evidently, this is good for absolutely nothing in today's deeply troubled land; and for sure making things even worse has to do with that dawning realization that the mess we are in can and shall be dealt with us and with us alone.

And yet again, there is no doubt that what we do about our current problems and circumstances hinges on the extent to which we can and will understand that when it comes to our politics that: We must – and this for heaven's sake – do away with that nasty strain of political tribalism which now threatens to turn Bahamian against Bahamian.

Not only is this wrong; but also let it be known that this type of doge-at-dog mentality now sits and now finds itself rooted canker-like at the heart of so many matters that now require all-party consensus, generosity and service above self.

Letter to the Editor

GLENYS HANNA-MARTIN IS THE STATUS QUO

As the race for leader of the PLP heats up it is comical that Glenys Hanna-Martin would claim that she is uprooting the status quo. In my opinion, more than the other three PLP Members of Parliament she definitely represents the status quo. I am not fully sold on Philip “Brave” Davis but Ms. Martin is surely not the answer if the PLP intends to move in a new direction.

Firstly, Ms. Hanna-Martin is the only present PLP parliamentarian who has been a member of two Christie cabinets. Both times she held the same portfolio and her performance and impact was average at best.

She is a former Chairman of the PLP and was not effective in that role. In fact many seem to forget why the Party leadership had to rid of her and call for the return of Bradley Roberts as Chairman because the party was falling apart under Ms. Martin's leadership. She

was not an effective Chairman. In fact, she was a liability and it was widely agreed that she had to go. She held power as Chairman for over 2 years to change the way the PLP operated but failed to do anything. There is nothing that anyone can point to during her time as Chairman that was progressive or served to better the PLP!

Also, it's as if she and her team have failed to realize why the PLP lost the last election so badly. She is travelling with and has several campaign posters with many of the personalities whose actions and behavior contributed significantly to the fall of the PLP. They represent everything that is wrong with the status quo in the PLP. Their old style bully politics is outdated and a turn off.

Many people also believe that Ms. Hanna-Martin is only fronting for the leadership ambitions of Obie Wilchcombe. Had Mr.

Wilchcombe won his seat there is no doubt that he would be running for leader and she would not even be in the race. That is not a sign of true leadership on her part. Wilchcombe is no longer popular. The Bahamian people are not interested in him leading the PLP or the country either directly or through Hanna-Martin. Mr. Wilchcombe seems stuck in the past and continues to talk about the UBP etc. He does not realize that the Bahamas has moved on and there are new challenges facing the country and his party. He represents the old guard. Ms. Hanna-Martin's closeness to Wilchcombe and his perceived influence over her signals that the status quo would remain under her leadership.

Ms. Hanna-Martin has failed to outline any real plans to move the PLP forward and rescue the party from this low point. Her campaign

seems more focused on Philip Brave Davis and that “it's time for a woman to lead” than anything substantive. Emotive politics is very much the politics of the past. Does Ms. Hanna-Martin have any plans or does she just want to be leader?

Her aunt, Ms. Barbara Pierre, is the Secretary General of the PLP. She has served the party well but many believe it is time for her to move on in the interest of renewing and rebuilding the PLP. This position of Secretary General is appointed by the Party Leader. It would seem likely that Barbara Pierre would remain as Secretary General should Ms. Hanna-Martin be elected PLP leader. How is that uprooting the status quo?

What is most amazing is that at the last PLP convention in January of this year, when Alfred Sears offered for Leader, that Ms. Hanna-Martin was one of the biggest cheerleaders for maintaining the

status quo and re-electing Perry Christie. Several of the persons who are now included in her social media ads were very vocal and vicious as they jeered Alfred Sears and his quest to change the status quo in the PLP. Now these people want to uproot it? Yeah right! Many PLPs have not forgotten those ugly scenes. She did not defend Sears nor his right to run for the top post. Where was principle and conviction when it counted?

To me, Glenys Hanna Martin is the status quo in the PLP. She represents and is too close to all that needs to be uprooted and changed. She is not the answer. Philip Brave Davis is not necessarily the long term solution for the PLP, however at this time by default he appears to be the only real option!

Signed,
Concerned PLP

Ragged Island Rebuild "SLOW," Says MP

BY AMAJAHL KNOWLES
Journal Staff Writer

After being devastated by monster storm Hurricane Irma last month, the rebuilding efforts over in Ragged Island are not moving along as swiftly as they should, according to the

island's MP I Chester Cooper.

Ragged Island sustained the brunt of the destruction caused by Hurricane Irma in The Bahamas. Most of the homes there were destroyed or severely damaged. Power lines are down, utilities are non-

functioning. Public buildings, including the government-operated school, the clinic and other public facilities are severely damaged or destroyed.

Mr. Cooper appearing as a guest on the JCN/Love97 Program "Jones and Company" expressed his frustration with the government as far as the rebuilding efforts in Ragged Island.

"The government has got on the ground, but not fast enough in my estimation and in the estimation of the residents of Ragged island.

"Police are present on the island, but they are not involved in the reconstruction process. There aren't any medical professionals yet on the ground to provide the kind of support residents need.

"We recognize rebuilding takes time, but the devastation that took place was unimaginable and heartbreaking. So we're not unrealistic, but there are some needs that have to be met.

"We're in active dialogue with the Prime Minister and the Ragged Island Association to see

how we can turn this into a success story and make this a model for recovery and rebuilding.

Last month Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis said Ragged Island can emerge from the destruction and devastation caused by Hurricane Irma as a new model for sustainable communities throughout the region and The Bahamas.

He also vowed to transform Ragged Island into a model for sustainable community by rebuilding it into the first "fully

green island in the region."

The Prime Minister said the Government of The Bahamas will accomplish this objective through the use renewable energy and smart technologies from solar energy, to sustainable water purification systems.

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► Ragged Island MP
I Chester Cooper
(Journal file photo)

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'NATIONAL DRUG FREE SCHOOLS DAY' BEGINS TODAY

BY ONIKE ARCHER
Journal Staff Writer

"Any successful strategy to effectively combat the drug problem must include not only supply reduction, but demand reduction efforts, as well as those most at risk of using drugs," National Security Minister, Marvin Dames stated last week during the launch of National Drug Free Schools Day which starts today.

School age children possess the most vulnerability to drug use and abuse. The program is being conducted in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, the National Drug Anti-Secretariat (NADS), the school based policing program of the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF) and The Bahamas Drug Council. The theme is "I'm loving me drug free". The day begins with a balloons released in the air.

Going forward, this day will not only educate school age children about the negative effects of illicit drugs, but it will hopefully strengthen students resolve to stay away from drugs and be cautious of peer pressure.

Dr. Willard Barr, representing Ministry of Education expressed his gratitude for this educational platform and endeavour. He said, "the Ministry of Education is very proud to be a part of this partnership ensuring that our schools are drug free."

He also stated that communication has been sent to fourteen districts in the country informing the administrators of National Drug Free Schools Day.

Emphasizing that this unprecedented endeavour is a step in the right direction, Dr. Barr said "we believe that drugs are a serious concern for many young people."

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Bahamas Immigration Reform

BY FREDERICK R M SMITH QC

• An Enlightened and Progressive Approach

• Crafting Reform for the 21st Century

The Immigration Policy followed by successive governments has failed to produce the desired results.

The domestic economy has not flourished as a result of strict control of the labor force. Undocumented migrants, primarily from northern Haiti, continue to arrive on Bahamian shores in significant numbers.

Meanwhile, "Immigration enforcement" has devolved into little more than a vehicle for systemic corruption and exploitation; a political tool for the incitement of hatred, anti-foreign sentiment and nationalistic fervor.

The consequences of this ill-conceived approach include the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in annual revenue, the establishment of an entrenched culture of official corruption, the creation of a sub-class of marginalized citizens with all the attendant social challenges, and a myopic, stagnant economy. The time has come to accept that The Bahamas must make radical changes to its regressive Immigration Policy, learn from international trends and best practices, and begin to approach migration as not just a challenge but also an opportunity – a chance to effect positive social, economic, political and cultural change.

Standardization

The Immigration Act should be amended to outline detailed, explicit and non-arbitrary procedures for processing all applications, appeals and Review Board petitions; as well as firm deadlines for the consideration of citizenship, permanent residency, work permit and other status applications.

In particular, everyone who is entitled to be registered as a citizen in accordance with the Bahamas Constitution should receive their certificate of citizenship within three months of application.

Such an approach would accord with the provisions of the United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, which names facilitating "orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people" as one of the 10 goals for reducing global inequality.

From Bahamianization to a thriving Bahamian economy

The policy known as 'Bahamianization', in place for more than four decades, is in urgent need of replacement.

Whereas once, a lack of access to basic education and the presence of skilled foreign workers were considered the main obstacles to citizens achieving prosperity, today the key challenges are overregulation, a shortage of cutting-edge skills in emerging industries and a stagnant domestic economy.

While continuing to encourage and facilitate Bahamian access to domestic employment opportunities, the government should aggressively pursue policies that attract cutting-edge minds from around the world to live and work in The Bahamas.

Possible target industries include:

- *Renewal energies and alternative fuels*
- *Information technology and software development*
- *Robotics and artificial intelligence*
- *Data services*
- *Public sector technology*

The benefits in terms of skills transfer and economic growth are well documented and various models for achieving this outcome already exist.

In addition, a skills boost to industries such as renewable energy and public sector technology could help address some of the key development issues facing the Bahamas today.

Such an approach would also accord with Article 29 of the 2030 Agenda, which recognizes the "positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth" and the "multi-dimensional reality" of migration.

Respect for Human Rights

The Bahamas Immigration Act must be revised to explicitly provide for Due Process in all enforcement and punitive procedures in accordance with the provisions of Article 19 of The Bahamas Constitution and the standards established by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

In cases where migrants must be detained, the conditions of detention and transportation should be drastically improved in every regard – living standards, hygiene, food quality, access to legal representation, etc. – to reflect a commitment to at least the minimum standards of basic human dignity as outlined by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Attorneys and human rights advocates must be granted regular access to detained migrants and a clear, transparent and easily accessible process for identifying asylum seekers and swiftly processing their claims must be created.

De-politicization

Successive governments have employed Immigration 'crackdowns' with the clear aim of appealing to xenophobic tendencies in certain sectors of the population. It has also been the practice to withhold the grant of citizenship to those who qualify until politically strategic moments – i.e. the run-up to a general election.

Standardizing the time frame for consideration of status applications would remedy this problem to some extent, however a great deal more needs to be done to rehabilitate the attitudes that both give rise to and are fed by the politicization of immigration.

This includes:

- *The establishment of a permanent information and resource center for refugees and asylum seekers*
- *Involvement of civil society in the caring for, housing and processing of migrants*
- *Public education campaigns to alleviate fears about the presence of migrants in society / debunk myths about their social impact*
- *Further research into impact of migrants on society in terms of health-care, education, crime and employment.*

In the face of changing global migration trends, many countries today are struggling to combat the tendency to politicize immigration and stigmatize migrants. International cases could prove instructive for The Bahamas, for example this policy paper presented to the government of France by the advocacy group Humanity in Action.

De-Criminalization

Undocumented migration must be decriminalized and re-conceptualized as an administrative challenge rather than a law and order issue, in accordance with trends across the developed world.

Offenses under the Immigration Act must remain in place, however these should be brought before an Immigration Tribunal which includes at least one member of the judiciary, as well as a qualified expert on asylum issues. Decriminalization of undocumented migration is an approach advocated by the OHCHR.

All cases of alleged undocumented migration should be brought before The Tribunal as soon as is practicable for the setting of a hearing date. The Tribunal should also decide on the status and circumstances of the individual in the meantime, with detention considered a last resort in only the most extreme cases.

More serious offenses, for example obtaining citizenship or other form of status by means of fraud, should continue



to be adjudicated by the Courts.

Of utmost importance is bringing an end to the long delays in processing of naturalization cases because of the presumption of fraud with regard to each application. It is inhuman and degrading to keep thousands of people waiting in limbo, unable to seek employment or even open a bank account.

Alternatives to detention

In order to avoid huge unnecessary expenses and the dehumanization of individuals,

migrants suspected of arriving in the country without permission should be paroled into the general population and monitored by Immigration authorities.

It has been repeatedly shown that detention; does not deter undocumented migration; is a continual drain on government resources; and poses a constant threat to a country's international reputation through allegations of inhuman conditions, abuse and lengthy detention periods.

At its most basic, an alternative system could involve:

- *The use of ankle bracelet monitoring*
- *Release on bond with sureties from friends or family members*

More sophisticated alternatives to detention (ATD) are becoming increasingly popular around the world. The trend is based on a growing recognition that human liberty should be the norm and should only be violated when absolutely necessary.

Several countries have developed a number of fair, progressive and effective alternatives to incarceration for people who lack regular status. The Bahamas could learn from these examples and become a leader in the region and an example to other small nations around the world.

Today there is some form of alternative to detention in more than 60 countries around the world and many are extremely successful with compliance rates well above 90% and voluntary participation by migrants across the board.

Among the instructive examples for The Bahamas are:

- *Spain - Open reception centers for migrants with incentives to remain registered while being processed. A particularly progressive example is being set by the local government of the City of Madrid.*
- *Turkey - Freedom of movement for migrants with regular reporting duties*
- *Chile - Temporary legal status granted to migrants with monitoring*

Renewed focus on border control

The politicization of immigration has led to exaggerated focus on the use of roadblocks and nighttime raids on existing migrant communities. Both practices contravene the law to the extent that they deprive those targeted of their constitutional right to freedom of movement, due process and protection from arbitrary arrest and detention.

Many of those whose rights are abused in these illegal exercises qualify for or already enjoy some form of status in The Bahamas, yet thousands of these individuals are deported each year, or else held unlawfully in detention for extended periods of time.

The victims of these exercises are in most cases migrants who have been in the country for some time, have put down roots and are active members of their community. They can be said to pose a negligible threat in terms of either national security or health risks, the two most urgent concerns regarding migrant populations in The Bahamas today.

Immigration Enforcement strategies must therefore be updated to focus pre-

ponderantly on interdiction at the maritime border, where the reality of security and communicable disease risks is tangible, and far less on members of established communities who have long been domesticated.

Certainly, all deportations of longtime residents and their children should cease until the considerable backlog of status applications has been cleared.

Revocation of the November 2014 Immigration Policy

The immigration policy imposed by Fred Mitchell and adopted by the former Christie Administration was unlawful, regressive and counterproductive, as detailed above. Along with the policy of aggressive raids and roadblocks, the government should immediately repeal two further provisions of this policy:

1. THE BELONGER'S PERMIT

This instrument was to have replaced the Certificate of Identification, which for decades was relied upon by individuals born in The Bahamas who have a right to apply for Citizenship at age 18. It served both as an official form of identification and a valid travel document and was issued upon application with relatively little red tape.

The Belonger's Permit, on the other hand, is virtually impossible to qualify for, requiring a host of supporting documents which are often prohibitively expensive and very difficult to obtain. Nor does it qualify as a valid travel document. Indeed, it required children of migrants, born in The Bahamas and entitled to citizenship, to obtain passports of the countries of origin of the parents, even though they had no other connection to such country. This change in policy has left many children in the Bahamas without an official form of identification and placed some of danger of becoming stateless persons.

2. MANDATORY PROOF OF STATUS FOR CHILDREN

The provision that children produce proof of their parent's immigration status before being allowed to register for school is a clear violation of the Education Act and the Constitutional right to be protected from discrimination. It is also contravenes the spirit of Goal 4 of the UN's 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, which calls for access to lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Benefits of reform

A progressive and inclusive Immigration policy would greatly ease the many social challenges created by the alienation of migrant groups and their descendants living in The Bahamas.

As it stands, marginalized populations are unable to contribute effectively to the social and economic life of The Bahamas; they exist as virtual outlaws in a system that is unwilling or unable to accommodate them.

The efficient and timely regularization of these groups in accordance with the Constitution would allow them to open bank accounts, complete their education, buy property, open businesses, contribute to government revenue through taxes and the National Insurance Fund, and represent The Bahamas internationally in sports and academics.

Meanwhile, creating a welcoming immigration atmosphere for top foreign professionals in emerging industries through the strategic liberalization of the Work Permit regime would do much more than simply create domestic jobs; it would also expand and diversify the basis of the economy while facilitating the transfer of invaluable skills and experience to the next generation of Bahamians. This effect has been thoroughly documented by the IMF, the OECD, and others.

The FNM government, with its overwhelming mandate, is today in an ideal position to bring about a paradigm shift in the country's approach to Immigration, thereby turning what has been a notorious source of internal division, a vehicle for corruption and a fiscal drain on the nation, into a key contributor to social cohesion and economic prosperity for the future.