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# The Bahama Journal

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VOL. 30 - NO. 28

THURSDAY - OCTOBER 26TH, 2017

75 CENTS

# PHILIP "BRAVE" DAVIS WINS BIG

BY AMAJAHN KNOWLES  
Journal Staff Writer

In a blowout victory, Philip "Brave" Davis last night was elected to lead the Progressive Liberal Party by a three to one margin over his opponent Glenys Hanna-Martin. Mr. Davis, the Member of Parliament for Cat Island and San Salvador, succeeds Perry G. Christie as leader. Mr. Christie resigned the

leadership of the party following the defeat of his government in the May 10th general elections. Since then, Mr. Davis, the former Deputy Prime Minister became the leader of the official opposition in the House of Assembly and interim leader of the PLP. Some 1700 delegates in the 53rd annual Convention of the PLP gave Mr. Davis 1004 votes against 300 for Ms. Hanna-Martin and 3 votes for Troy Garvey. Elected Deputy leader

was I. Chester Cooper, MP for Exuma and Ragged Island. He defeated Ricardo Smith. The new Chairman of the Party is former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fred Mitchell. He polled 627 votes against 419 for Obie Wilchcombe and 216 for Glendon Rolle. The Deputy Chairman of the Party is Robyn Lynes who defeated Doctor Erecia Hepburn 792 to 436.



► Philip "Brave" Davis (Journal file photo)

## CHARGES OF SABOTAGE AT PLP POLLS

BY C. JILLIAN GRAY  
Journal Staff Writer

Among charges of sabotage from some delegates and supporters, chaos and pandemonium broke out at the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) convention, as the voting process for party officers ran eight hours over its scheduled time. Some 1,700 delegates had to vote, which was a 21 per cent increase from the leadership race in January this year.

■ See DAVIS WINS BIG / page 3...

■ See OF SABOTAGE / page 2...

## PLP Voting Chaos

BY LICEC BASTIAN  
Journal Staff Writer

Chalked up to chaos, Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) voting process yesterday, met hundreds of delegates waiting to cast their votes long after the initial scheduled time of the process. Electing the fourth leader of the PLP which was slated to begin at 8 AM and end at 1PM, started almost three hours later. When Journal reporters arrived at the Melia Nassau Beach Resort yesterday morning, they met a packed lobby with persons waiting to make their choice. Former Tall Pines MP, Leslie Miller expressed his disappointment with the process which met delegates waiting in long lines. "It appears to be tedious in there;; looks like they have some problems people are complaining about the process.

■ See VOTING CHAOS on PAGE 2...

## STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM GENERAL EQUIVALENCY DIPLOMA PROGRAMME



► Scenes from the General Equivalency Diploma Graduation Ceremony. (BIS Photos/Raymond A. Bethel Sr.)

## Murder count hits 117

BY RANECHEA ELLIS  
Journal Staff Writer

Tragedy paid another visit on an inner city community after a shooting left a young man dead Tuesday evening. His killer on the loose and detectives with its 117th homicide investigation to solve. The good news is that they are following significant leads into the incident. According to Chief Superintendent Solomon Cash the victim was in the area of Florida Court around 8:00 Tuesday night when two men approached him, opened fire and shot him multiple times, killing him on the spot. Investigators met the victim's lifeless body in the yard of a nearby home. ASP Cash admits he and his team are at this point unclear of a motive, but the two males assisting with investigations may bring more clarity. That community's Member of Parliament

(MP) Glennys Hannah Martin yesterday spoke with The Bahama Journal following this latest murder stating that MPs must get back to the community. "It happened to be someone that I watched grow up from a little boy, I knew his mother very well and it was to me just tremendously heartbreaking, because it part of a larger heartbreak that's happening in our country," she said. "There's so many young men in particular being killed on our streets, the value of life is just being diminished and we have to be careful that we do not become accustomed to the sort of carnage that's shaping on our streets."

**GOT NEWS?**  
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## THREE MALES CHARGED WITH SERIOUS OFFENSES

BY RANECHEA ELLIS  
Journal Staff Writer

Yesterday in the Magistrate's Courts three males were arraigned for murder, possession of unlicensed firearms and ammunition and conspiracy to commit murder respectively. First, a 20 year old male was formally charged for the murder of 15 year old Anthony Wellington Francis Smith. It is alleged that Mark Rolle intentionally caused the death of Smith back on the 17th of October through Prison Lane off East Street.

Appearing before Chief Magistrate Joyann Ferguson Pratt, he was not required to enter a plea and was remanded to prison until he returns for his Voluntary Bill of Indictment (VBI). Also appearing before the magistrate was 27 year old Eugene Campbell. Campbell was charged with 16 offenses; five counts of introducing a firearm into the country on the 20th of October, 2017, six counts of possession of ammunition and five counts of possessions of firearms, to wit four .40 magazine clips and one .9 millimeter

magazine clip. Campbell pleaded guilty to all charges. He was initially charged with 21 offenses, but after having found that several of the charges were duplicitous, the magistrate had those charges withdrawn from the defendants' dockets and the prosecution obliged. Regrettably, Magistrate Pratt said at the time she was unable to hear the prosecutions summary therefore he return to court today at 2:30pm.

■ See MALES CHARGED / page 2...

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# PLP Needs To Be Re-Democratized, Says Former MP

BY LICEC BASTIAN  
Journal Staff Writer

Former Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) Member of Parliament for Exuma, Philip Smith, chastising the party he once represented, stating that the party needs to be re-democratized.

"We need to restructure our branches, we need to re-democratize the entire organization, reconnect on a personal basis with those many thousands of people who still want what we called for in our core values in the organization," Mr. Smith said.

Appearing as a guest on Love 97's Issues of the Day,

yesterday, Mr. Smith made his remarks during the voting process to elect officers to the party.

Mr. Smith told the show's host, Mr. Wendall Jones that the party needs to get back to basics, the foundation on which they were formed on.

"Back to that very simple premise, that politics is about people and everything exists to serve people and not the other way around," he said.

Mr. Smith alluded to the fact that the PLP politicians lost sight of what they were supposed to be doing for the people, but rather putting their own interests first.

"Unfortunately, when peo-

ple are searching for wealth they start to think of people as commodity to serve the growth and development of wealth and not recognizing or failing to recognize or ceasing to recognize that when wealth serves the interest of people it is good, but when it denigrates people, when it forces people to live in poverty it is bad," Mr. Smith said.

When asked if his statement of re-democratizing meant that he was unhappy with the quality of the party's democracy, Mr. Smith emphatically affirmed.

"That is true! Yes! We became, over the recent

years, a centralized organization.

"When we were at our best, we were an organization that existed in its core in our communities throughout the country small and large.

"We had branches all over this country when people had an opportunity to voice their view within their community, believing and in reality that that voice making its way up to the leadership, and the leadership recognizing that they had a responsibility to maintain contact with those many, many organizations out there.

Mr. Smith said that when

you get to the point of bringing anything and everything into the core of the party, perspectives change.

"When you centralize things, when you bring everything into the core you

begin to develop a situation where politicians are talking at people, not listening to what people are saying and responding to that.

"That is what we need to get back to," Mr. Smith said.

## CHARGES OF SABOTAGE AT PLP POLLS

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Convention chairman Micheal Halkitis said the delay was due to a number of factors.

"How the hotel is set up we only have two rooms and this was a keenly contested election so the process was scrutinized very closely. You had to assure everybody that everything was satisfactory and in place, so there was some delays and we apologize for that," Halkitis said.

He added that they had to ensure that the candidates were observing and although it slowed the process down, he's thankful it's over and that everyone got to vote.

Power outages also disrupted the proceedings which caused scores of voters to cry foul play.

Those who cried sabotage were still irate when it was announced that the counting of votes would continue late into the evening, thus cancelling the scheduled programme of speakers for the last night of the convention.

Some delegates were visibly upset and did not hold back words as shouts of "make sure guard the box" and "No foul play" could be heard coming from the crowd.

Police presence was strong on the grounds, especially near the ballot boxes during the power outages.

Outside the polls T-shirts, banners and caps were seen in last minute campaign fashion.

Former MP Hope Strachan said, "it's disheartening that all of the chaos of the night is what people will take away.

"This was an opportunity for us to really showcase our ability to organize, to see if we can try to regain the trust of the Bahamian people. However it is a missed opportunity, because chaos is what people will remember about the convention, as opposed to all of the good things that may have happened before today. It is unfortunate that this is what people will have to take away," Strachan said.

Outgoing Chairman of the PLP, Bradley Roberts said although some persons were annoyed that the process dragged on, this is simply a part of the furthering of the democratic process.

"Sometimes it's painful and slow, but in the end the decision of the majority will rule," Roberts said.

Alex Storr, a longtime party official said the power outages did frustrate the process and his Former MP Alfred Sears said his only word to describe the process is "sad."

## PLP Voting Chaos

Continued from / PAGE 1...

"That room is full of people sitting down and their names have to be called to go into another room to vote. I believe they will have to extend the hours because," Mr. Miller said.

Mr. Miller stated that he had never seen the voting process as chaotic as he was witnessing.

"I am disappointed in what I am seeing. This has never happened before.

"They had sufficient time, but from what I understand,

they have some rookies running the show instead of the regular people," Mr. Miller said.

"They have a lot of young people doing it and this is their first time and that's probably why we have most of these problems," he said.

By the end of the 3:30 PM deadline,, all voters had still not been able to cast their votes.

Vice Chairman Kennan Johnson confirmed with the Journal that the voting time had been extended to 5:30 PM.

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## THREE MALES CHARGED WITH SERIOUS OFFENSES

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Campbell was represented by both Ian Cargill and V. Alfred Gray.

Twenty-seven year old Rashad Laroda was charged with three offenses.

Laroda was charged with one count possession of an unlicensed firearm, one count of being an unlawful gang member and one count conspiracy to commit murder.

It is alleged that he conspired to murder Philanno Williams on Carmichael Road on the 20th of this month.

He was represented by Nathan Smith, was not required to enter a plea and was remanded to prison.



**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 --

Maxwell Duncan Leslie, Single,  
of 620 Lee Street, Blacksburg, VA 24060, United States of America

and

Casey Nicole Heiar, Single,  
of 620 Lee Street, Blacksburg, VA 24060, 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 6th 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 --

Michael Edward Carpenter, Single,  
of 104 Kirpatrick Way Leduc, AB T9E 0Z2, Canada

and

Michelle Lee Stratton, Single,  
of 104 Kirpatrick Way Leduc, AB T9E 0Z2, Canada

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 6th 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 --

Timothy Wade Lindsey, Single,  
of 8721 Escabosa Dr., Austin TX 78748, United States of America

and

Leigh Ann Thompson, Single,  
of 8721 Escabosa Dr., Austin TX 78748, 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 10th 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 --

Lee Quai, Divorced,  
of 4 Red Fold, Aughton,, Ormskirk L39 4TX, United States of America

and

Lynn Marie Alderdice, Divorced,  
of 4 Red Fold, Aughton, Ormskirk L39 4TX, 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 10th day of October, 2017.

  
Registrar of Marriages

# NEMA accepts donation of Mosquito Repellant Wipes

BY ONIKE ARCHER  
Journal Staff Writer

Akiva Mosquito Repellent Wipes brings relief to the mosquito epidemic in the Bahamian southern islands.

During a press conference held at The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) yesterday, NEMA's deputy permanent secretary Crystal Glinton, accepted donations of mosquito repellent

wipes from company, Akiva.

"This will bring some relief. I'm sure persons are quite aware in this country and everywhere else in the Caribbean that we have a mosquito problem. Therefore, this is very helpful." Ms. Glinton said.

Accepting donations of any kind is always helpful, but in this needed case, receiving a tangible donation will go a very long way.

Ms. Glinton expressed, "We like to get donations that the persons can

touch and feel; for this, we are really grateful for it.

"On behalf of those persons who have been affected by Hurricane Irma and the other super storms, we would like to say thank you to the company and to the gentleman who actually created this, as this is such a useful product and we are sure that it will be helpful to those persons."

Director of NEMA, Captain Stephen Russell also shared his gratitude on the donation saying,

"We are very grateful to LivFul which is demonstrating what it means to be a social entrepreneurship enterprise."

Captain Russell also emphasized NEMA's role in preventative measures indicating, "now that we are beginning to re-inhabit the islands and people are returning to their homes, it is important that we tend to some of the needs."

Akiva was started by Hogan Bassey, a man who suffered the

malaria disease three times by the age of ten, according to Akiva's account executive, Sandra Kemp. Mr. Bassey endeavored to produce a product which would prevent children around the world from contracting malaria and other mosquito borne diseases.

Akiva is produced by a company called LivFul, with its headquarters based in Atlanta, Georgia. It was launched in the Bahamas in June this year.

# MCCARTNEY IS OUT OF POLITICS

BY C. JILLIAN GRAY  
Journal Staff Writer

Branville McCartney is officially out of politics as he stepped down from leader of the Democratic National Alliance (DNA) on Tuesday.

In his farewell speech McCartney thanked his party's executives, candidates and constituency supporters as he said they have all made his journey more rewarding.

"I thank you for believing in me when others lost faith. I thank you for forgiving my mistakes, for defending me and for loving me in spite of my shortcomings. You have all made this journey more rewarding than I could have hoped," McCartney said.

He added that he knows that none of the successes the DNA would have even been possible without the hard work, support, criticisms and encouragement of many.

"Perhaps the most important lesson this journey has taught me however, has been humility. While some people may have a hard time believing that, I can safely say that NOTHING is more

humbling than being told NO...not once, but twice," McCartney said.

He passed the baton to Chris Mortimer and said he will still be around to fuel the lighthouse as they chart a course toward a better life for all.

"My stepping aside as leader is not about giving up or throwing in the towel, instead, it is about clearing a path for others so that other bright minds within our ranks have an opportunity to shine and so that our organization can move forward with new and fresh ideas," McCartney said.

He added that while critics may say he is abandoning the party or throwing a tantrum, nothing could be further from the truth.

McCartney said he remains willing and ready to help the party wherever and whenever he can.

"There were some missteps, some bigger than others, but as I step down from the role of leader, I can say without question that the lessons, which I have learned as part of this process, will serve me well into the future," McCartney said.

# PHILIP "BRAVE" DAVIS WINS BIG

Continued from / PAGE 1...

The new leadership team headed by Mr. Davis now affords the PLP the opportunity to reposition the party after its crushing defeat at the polls some five months ago.

Mr. Davis, 66, first elected a member of parliament for his current constituency in 1992.

In his first official address as PLP Leader, Mr. Davis spoke about bringing the idea of change to a reality and the first step is a reform of the party's constitution.

"Our party's original platform called for social and political freedom, and pledged to be a party that "dedicated itself to the service of all Bahamians, not a privileged few.

"Freedom, Justice, Equality, just to name our party's guiding principles is to feel the moral urgency of working to make them real in today's times.

"But to earn the right to stand on the shoulders of our original warriors - we have the honour of fighting for those principles in today's Bahamas; we need a strong, united, reformed,

battle-ready Progressive Liberal Party.

"Here's how we will begin. We're going to reform the PLP's Constitution, so that our internal rules ensure our party is inclusive, transparent, modern and accountable," Mr. Davis said.

In the wake of several 3 former PLP MPs being subject to arrest for corruption related offences, Mr. Davis made it clear that the party would not stand for corruption, but also hit out at the present government for making claims with a lack of evidence.

"I want to say something in particular about the accusations of corruption. Let us be as clear as we can be. We must have zero tolerance in this party for corruption.

"Private gain at the expense of public progress is a terrible kind of sin. Corruption tears at the fabric of our social compact. Where it exists, it must be punished.

"But let me say this, too: false accusations of corruption are surely another kind of sin. They increase cynicism about public life just when we need to encourage participation.

"So those who scorch reputations and families to score cheap and temporary political points, you are hurting our country and neither your neighbours nor history will look upon you kindly," Mr. Davis said.

He added that bringing younger voices toward the forefront of the party is also extremely crucial moving forward.

"And here's the thing: we will have dialogues -- not monologues. There is strength in humility, and there is a lot to be learned by truly listening.

"We will re-establish island and regional councils, so that we can be more responsive to Bahamians across the country.

"How do you inspire young Bahamians to get involved in changing their country? By making sure we once again have a PLP where their voices really matter.

"We will constantly work - and this is joyous work, this is the best reason to be in public life - to recruit and mentor new talent," The new PLP Leader said.

## The Bahamas Agriculture & Marine Science Institute

# WEEKLY PRICE REPORT

WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Wholesale Crop	Weight	Size	BAMSI		USDA-AMS		Retail Weight	BAMSI		USDA-AMS	
			Price	Price	HIGH	LOW		Price	Price	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

Wholesale Prices Weight	Per lb.	Price	Retail Prices Weight	1 lb	Price
Whole Chicken	40lbs	28.36	10lbs	8.49	
Leg Quarters	40lbs	66.04	10lbs	19.24	

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



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► Scenes from the General Equivalency Diploma Graduation Ceremony. (BIS Photos/Raymond A. Bethel Sr.)

# Students Graduate from General Equivalency Diploma Programme

Eighty-seven adults from inner-city communities in New Providence were recognized for successfully completing the General Equivalency Diploma (GED), a series of tests designed to measure proficiency which allows students to earn their high school equivalency credentials.

The graduates received their diplomas during a special service at Salem Union Baptist Church, Taylor Street, on Sunday, October 22, 2017.

The GED programme is a jointly sponsored venture by the Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development along with corporate sponsors including Atlantic College and various churches. The theme for the service was 'Global Competence for an Inter-Connected World'.

In her remarks, the Hon. Lanisha Rolle, Minister of Social Services and Urban Development, said the Government has made a decision to marry the work of Social Services and Urban Renewal to produce an "holistic" empowerment

programme designed to achieve the socio-economic development of its people.

"This marriage, designed in paradise, has a built-in preventative measure and self-help component. While Social Services ensures those in need maintain an acceptable standard of living Urban Renewal executes on one end of its spectrum, programmes that will ensure needed citizens receive skills and competencies necessary to prevent our people from relying solely on the government for assistance, and on the other end of the spectrum, for our clients to be given opportunities to achieve or return to a state of independence."

Minister Rolle said the redefined mission of Urban Renewal is to "Transform the physical environment of our heritage and over-the-hill communities through the delivery of empowerment programmes and social initiatives designed to develop urban environs and revitalize inner-city spaces across the length and breadth of The Bahamas."

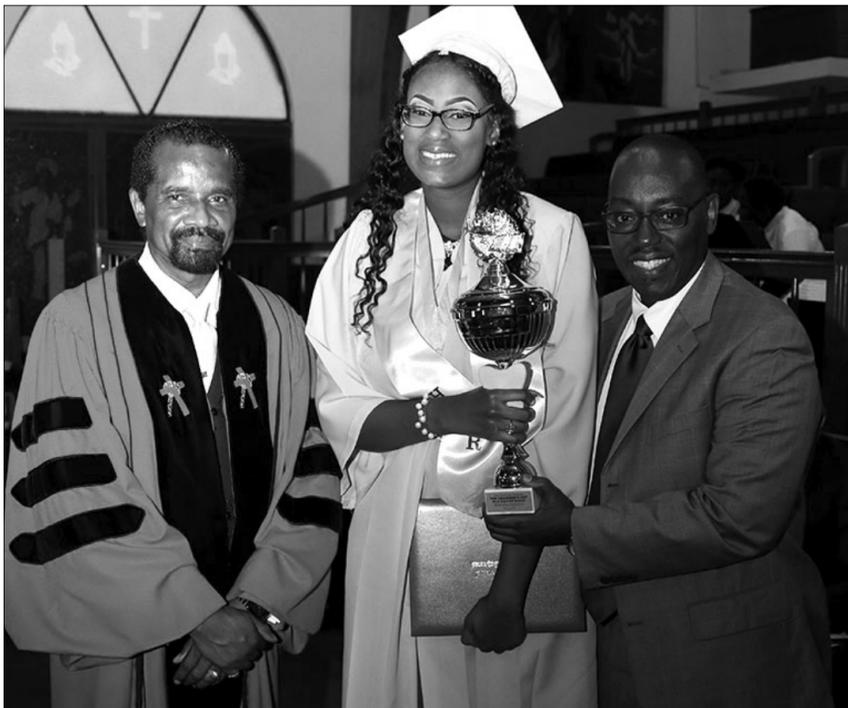
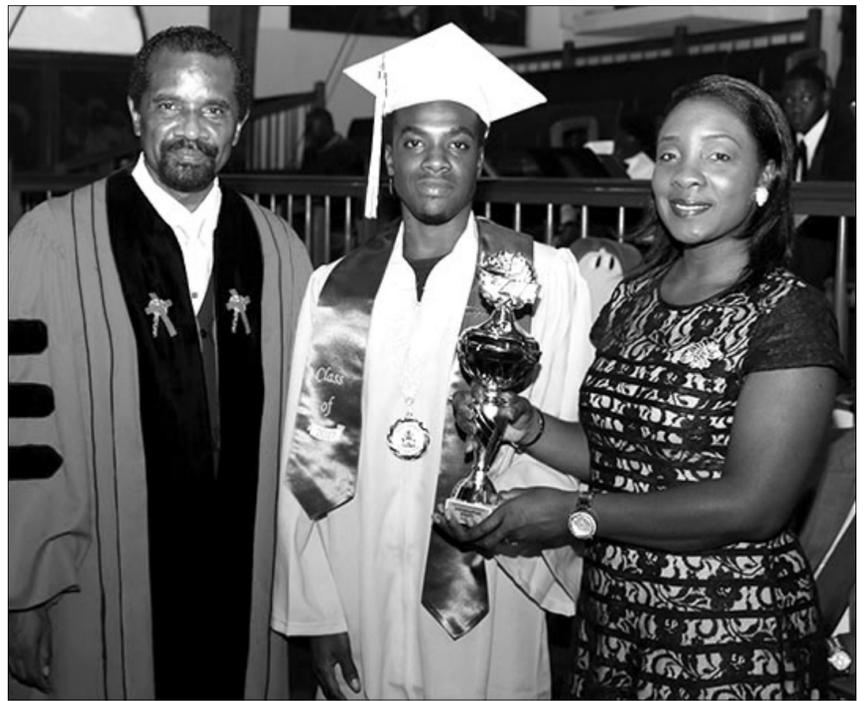
She reminded the graduates that the benefit of edu-

cation has and will always outweigh the burden, and challenged them to go a little further, take their studies a little higher, extend themselves a little longer and make their life a journey of good choices.

"You have attained some of the knowledge and skills needed to enter the competitive world of work and beyond. You have been certified to function as an effective part of the workforce on a national level and, of course, you can choose to continue your studies with the University of the Bahamas, Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute and other private institutions all designed to equip you to excel in your endeavours."

The subjects covered were Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Reading and Writing. The students honed in on topics including life skills, personal development, entrepreneurial studies and effective oral communication.

The students were presented with plaques, trophies and certificates for their achievements.



## PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS**, Sir Durward Knowles, through his involvement with One Bahamas Foundation, has exemplified the mandate of the Foundation by his ability to encourage, love and promote unity among all Bahamians throughout our nation;

**AND WHEREAS**, the One Bahamas Programme, which was established in 1992, was the brain child of the Honourable Algernon Allen, former Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture;

**AND WHEREAS**, in 1993, three outstanding individuals were elevated to the apex of the One Bahamas Foundation, Sir Orville Turnquest, former Governor General, became its Patron, while Sir Durward Knowles and Mr. Obie Ferguson became the organization's Co-Chairpersons;

**AND WHEREAS**, Sir Durward has the distinction of becoming the first Bahamian to win an Olympic Gold Medal in Sailing at the 1964 Olympic in Tokyo, Japan;

**AND WHEREAS**, Sir Durward's lifetime achievements in Sports, Rotary, Philanthropy and National Development are testaments to his legacy as a man for all seasons and a true Bahamian national hero;

**AND WHEREAS**, in celebration of Sir Durward Knowles' 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, which falls on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2017, the One Bahamas Foundation has organize a schedule of events celebrate the life and work of this outstanding centenarian;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Hubert A. Minnis, Prime Minister of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, do hereby proclaim the 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2017, as "SIR DURWARD KNOWLES' DAY".

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this 16<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2017.

HUBERT A. MINNIS  
PRIME MINISTER



# DPM Underscores Need for GB Economy to be Strong



► OPENS BACO CONFERENCE – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Hon. K. Peter Turnquest was the guest speaker to open the 12th Annual Northern Conference of The Bahamas Association of Compliance Officers (BACO) one-day conference, which was held on October 25, 2017 at Pelican Bay Resort. (BIS Photo/Lisa Davis)

**FREEPORT, Grand Bahama** -- Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Hon. K. Peter Turnquest says the government is convinced that the health and strength of Grand Bahama's economy is vital to the nation's overall growth and development.

"I can't stress that enough because people don't necessarily understand how important Grand Bahama is to the entire health of this country, because it is still the second largest economy in the country, never mind that Abaco is gaining on our heels every day and other islands like Exuma are holding their own," added Minister Turnquest, who was the guest speaker at the 12th Annual Northern Conference of The Bahamas Association of Compliance Officers, which was held at Pelican Bay Resort, October 25, 2017.

"If (Grand Bahama's economy) fails, it will cause enormous pressure on the rest of the country," added Minister Turnquest. "So, I can't understate how important it is for us to get Grand Bahama right."

In his address to Compliance Officers, Minister Turnquest said his government feels it has an obligation to do what it can

to ensure that Grand Bahama succeeds.

He said that is just the first step in delivering on the commitments the government has made to the people of Grand Bahama and for the people of The Bahamas.

"The economic transformation of Grand Bahama requires growth," said Minister Thompson. "According to the IMF World outlook, The Bahamas is forecasted to grow by 1.8 percent in 2017 and by 2.5 percent in 2018. However, that growth will not happen and be sustained if the government does not do its part to facilitate economic transformation.

"And again, getting Grand Bahama's economy going is a key, critical component to achieving those goals. In fact, the country cannot progress without undertaking reforms that lead to better business conditions. These reforms are critical to achieve better living standards, moderate inflation, low inflationary concerns and high growth rates."

The Finance Minister noted that The Bahamas fell in its rankings on the "ease of doing business" ladder since last year and to a large extent that fall was not because of something the Bahamian government did, but rather what they did not do.

"In other words, if we continue to stand still, thinking that we are doing okay, we are going to fall further and further behind because the rest of the world is moving forward," Minister Thompson pointed out. "For example, Jamaica has made tremendous strides in its utilization of technology in order to facilitate and make the ease of doing business much better. And they have leap-frogged ahead of us.

"We have an obligation and we have a commitment to make the improvements, to make the changes that we need to make in order to ensure that we keep pace, at a minimum. But I challenge my people every day to make a quantum leap to ensure that we get ahead."

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# Gov't must resist this hostile foreign takeover

• *The proposed GB Power buy-out represents a shameful rip-off of Bahamians and violates both the country's laws and our national sovereignty*

BY FREDERICK SMITH, QC

The attempted forcible buy-out of Grand Bahama Power Company by a 100 per cent foreign-owned entity is nothing less than an aggressive hostile takeover which is clearly not in the best interest of The Bahamas.

The proposed move contravenes Bahamian law on a number of levels and raises serious questions about the strength of our sovereignty and the integrity of our public institutions. All Bahamians who care about their rights and are committed to national self-determination should call on the government resist this ill-conceived plan. We have until November 7 to make our voices heard.

## OPERATING BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Emera has been very secretive about its scheme to compulsorily acquire the roughly 20 per cent of GB Power currently owned by Bahamians. The deal is highly convoluted and difficult to wrap one's head round, but essentially it amounts to a scenario where, depending on the results of a shareholder vote next month, Bahamians will be forced to give up their ownership stake in the company – whether they like it or not.

This deal has been negotiated without any consultation with the citizens and residents who own the shares and without the negotiations even being made a matter of public knowledge. The Minnis administration came to office promising public consultation and transparency. If they are to be true to their word, they must acknowledge that this hostile takeover is no different from the clandestine, cloak-and-dagger maneuvers sanctioned and even encouraged by their PLP predecessors – a practice which, incidentally, helped ensure Christie and Co were comprehensively and unceremoniously booted out of office on May 10.

## A NATION FOR SALE?

If the deal goes through, what sort of precedent will it set in terms of the preservation of our sovereignty and autonomy as a nation? Going forward, can any public utility or BISX-traded company be acquired by a foreign entity that has the buying power to force Bahamians into a corner? Will our government stand by and watch as economic invaders work to undermine Bahamian empowerment and wealth acquisition for their own selfish gain?

Throughout the years since independence, a crucial theme of our public policy has been the promotion and protection of Bahamian ownership in key infrastructure and utilities as a symbol of our nationhood and commitment to self-determina-

tion. It would be most unfortunate if on their watch, the Minnis administration were to allow this principle to be betrayed on behalf of self-interested international bullies with deep pockets.

## NO BASIS IN LAW

Emera has concocted this clandestine deal by applying to the Bahamas Investment Authority (BIA) for approvals, which it appears have indeed been granted. However, as this is not a body that exists by any law, the approvals have no legal basis. Though this practice of foreign entities applying to the BIA for permission to conduct business in The Bahamas is a long-standing one, it is simply not binding in legal terms and would crumble if challenged in the courts.

Furthermore, in tying the hands of shareholders and essentially forcing them to sell their interest in GB Power, the deal contravenes the basic property rights of citizens and residents as outlined in the Constitution. Prime Minister Minnis and his colleagues must not be seen to facilitate and condone a deal what would violate the fundamental rights of Bahamians.

## ABDICATING RESPONSIBILITY

Under the Hawksbill Creek Agreement, the documents which sets out the administrative structure for Freeport, the Grand Bahama Port Authority (GBPA) is responsible for all utilities within the port area. The Agreement states that: "The Port Authority shall have the sole right to construct and operate utilities" including electrical supply. This does not mean that the Port cannot assign another entity to run the day-to-day operations of GB Power, but nowhere in the Agreement is permission given for the GBPA to downright abdicate its responsibilities to the detriment of licensees and the residents of Freeport.

The GBPA must step up and fulfill the role for which it was created – managing the economic and administrative affairs of Freeport for the benefit of those who live and work there. Instead, the Port seems poised to stand aside and allow an external entity to monopolize a key infrastructural asset of the city.

## BREAKING A FINE BALANCE



The entire point of the original arrangement with Emera, was to ensure that the GBPA remained in control of GB Power. The board of directors was to be equally appointed by GBPA and ICD Utilities (ICDU) the parent company of GB Power, and because of the Hawksbill Agreement, the GBPA would retain management control. Most importantly Bahamians, especially residents of Freeport, would be able to benefit from the profits generated from the local power company.

This is how matters stood for nearly two decades. Now, Emera is seeking to turn all of this on its head and create a construct in which Bahamians and residents no longer have any direct or indirect ownership and GB Power. Going forward, the company will no longer be in the control of the GBPA and can ignore its obligations under the Hawksbill Creek Agreement.

## A SHAMELESS RIP OFF

More than anything else, the move represents a shameless rip off and disempowerment of Bahamian citizens. Currently, local shareholders in ICDU own a slice of the company which gave them a 10 per cent return on their investment each year for many years. If the transaction is allowed to go through, after November 8, 2017 Bahamians will own nothing.

Former shareholders will be

given only depository receipts (DRs), will be deprived of receiving profits from our local power company, and may or may not actually get dividends in the future. In fact, quite ominously, the company has made a point of cautioning about the possibility of any future profits from DRs. Henceforth, the fortunes of the company will be governed by the Toronto Stock Exchange and any litigation to assert the rights of Bahamians will have to occur in Canada.

GB Power is the most profitable subsidiary of all of Emera's plethora of Canadian and international companies. But any dividends that are paid out to Bahamians will come from Emera International, which averages out all profits and losses from its corporate galaxy. And, a 25 per cent tax will be deducted on any dividends issued on DRs in Canada, so

Bahamians will get even less, while the tax money siphoned off from us will not go to benefit The Bahamas, but rather Canada.

This move comes at a time when shareholders of ICDU are already frustrated because dividends stopped being paid out a number of years ago. Freeport is hurting and shareholders will be motivated to vote in favor of the move because they need money and haven't been getting their due for some time; especially just before Xmas!

The lack of dividend payments has led – almost certainly intentionally – to a depression of the value of ICDU on BISX. Meanwhile, other power companies both within and outside of Emera's galaxy have seen increases in value. This in turn, has led to auditors valuing the shares as low, but once Emera owns 100 per cent, electricity rates in GB will no doubt increase and residents and businesses of Freeport and Grand Bahama will pay for any power plant upgrades or other infrastructural improvements, without reaping any of the financial benefits.

So, Bahamians, especially residents of Freeport, who invested in their future nearly 20 years ago and actually own part of GB Power and are entitled to accountability from the company, will end up with nothing but an unenforceable promise of less valuable and highly taxed dividends from a foreign entity unrelated to GB Power. There will be no trans-

parency of the financial value of GB Power as it will no longer be listed on the Bahamian stock exchange, so the shareholders will never know if they get what is owed to them. The company will file no financial statements here, and there will be no accountability to our local Securities Commission or any kind of financial scrutiny by The Bahamas government to look after the interests of Bahamian shareholders.

## A FAIR DEAL FOR BAHAMIANS

If Emera would like to acquire the all of ICDU, they could simply trade shareholders one share of GB Power for one share of ICDU. This would be the simplest and most honest process. This is how Emera operates in the Eastern Caribbean, where the citizens of each country where the company operates own direct shares in the local operator, which are traded on the Caribbean Stock Exchange.

Why are they not seeking to repeat the same formula in the Bahamas? For two reasons: 1. Because it is more profitable to Emera, which already makes massive profits out of GB Power, to pay local shareholders a lower dividend based on the average performance of its many companies (or possibly no dividend at all); and 2. Because the Canadians know they are operating in a country with a long history of clandestine deals that unfairly privilege foreign interests.

Nevertheless, we as Bahamians must stand up for our fellow citizens. We must defend our rights and our economic independence from this type of dangerous encroachment. Anything less than a share-for-share swap that leaves local investors with an active stake in GB Power is totally unacceptable and we simply must demand that our government firmly reject the deal currently on the table.

For my part, I strongly urge the Minnis administration to stand up for sovereignty, self-determination, empowerment of Bahamians and a direct piece of our economic pie!. I urge them to use this opportunity to bring an end to the culture of secret deals and the privileged position of wealthy foreign entities in our economy. Through this attempted hostile takeover, Emera has presented the government with a wonderful opportunity to live up to its election promises of promoting transparency, encouraging fairness and ushering in "The People's Time". They must confront Emera and stop this deal in its tracks before it is too late. November 7 is right around the corner. So is May 9, 2022!