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75 CENTS

# "Spy Bill Regressive"

BY JAMEELHA MISSICK  
 Journal Staff Writer

The Opposition yesterday expressed serious reservations about the government's "improved" Interception of Communication Bill, essentially accusing the Minnis administration of doing an about face.

The contentious bill was first introduced by the Christie administration in 2017.

At the time, the then-Opposition made an uproar about the proposed legislation, even going as far as to dub it a Spy Bill. Months later, the PLP finds that while there is no real difference, the government is now touting its provisions.

Making a case for his party, Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) Leader Philip Davis said during last year's debate, Killarney MP, Dr. Hubert Minnis charged that the bill was rushed and was being rammed down the throats of Bahamians and should not be allowed to stand.

"This is the same bill. The substance of the bill is the same. It is designed to create a fighting tool against crime by intercepting communication by persons including upon the privacy of persons. What is so interesting that those who spoke to this Spy Bill caught the attention of Bahamians," he said.

■ See REGRESSIVE / page 4...



▶ Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) Leader Philip Davis (Journal file photo)

## CRIME DOWN BY 14 Per Cent

First quarter crime results are in and based on the figures the national security minister disclosed in the House of Assembly yesterday, the numbers are trending downwards.

According to Minister Marvin Dames, crimes against person and property have so far dropped by 14 per cent.

"Specifically, armed robberies are down some 31.8 per cent, murders today are down some 45.2 per cent, stolen vehicles down some 13 per cent and the list goes on," legislators heard.

■ See CRIME DOWN BY / page 3...

## GBPA UNVEILS MONUMENT TO THE GOLDEN KNIGHTS



▶ GBPA Vice-Chairman, Sarah St. George (centre) shares a picture with the Golden Knights, Government Reps, Executives of the GBPA and Jacki Boss. Courtesy of Barefoot Marketing by Derek Carroll & GBPA

## Gov't Touts "Improved" Interception Communications Bill

BY JAMEELHA MISSICK  
 Journal Staff Writer

A controversial bill made a return to the House of Assembly yesterday with the government touting the "improvements" made to the proposed law since its introduction last year.

Amidst much criticism, the Christie administration tabled the Interception Communication Bill to repeal the Listening Devices Act of 1972.

Leading off the debate in the Lower Chamber on Wednesday, National Security Minister Marvin Dames lauded the Bill as a comprehensive contemporary law to fight sophisticated technologically savvy criminals and to dismantle their criminal networks.

"This bill is a vital tool to assist in our crime fighting strategies, particularly in combating drug, human, and gun trafficking, gang violence, cybercrimes and other

forms of transnational organized crimes," he said.

"Without legislation such as this one, law enforcement agencies will be severely handicapped and disadvantaged in their attempts to detect, collect, analyze, investigate and prosecute

associated crimes in a world where technology related platforms have become the preferred means of communications across the globe especially for organized crime organizations."

■ See INTERCEPTION / page 2...



▶ Minister of National Security Marvin Dames (Journal file photo)

## Over-the-Hill First Economic Empowerment Zone

### • Businesses To Receive Tax Concessions

BY LICEC BASTIAN  
 Journal Staff Writer

Proposed tax concessions for Over-the-Hill businesses as the community becomes the first Economic Empowerment Zone in the country.

The initiative was a key component of a White Paper Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis yesterday tabled in the House of Assembly for the Over-the-Hill Community Development Partnership Initiative.

The paper outlines tax incentives and nuances of how the initiative will come together to provide economic relief to inner-city residents.

"Through this initiative, the gov-

ernment of The Bahamas is introducing the concept known as the Empowerment Zone. This concept is well known throughout the world and relates to areas designated because of economic hardship for special incentives.

"It is imperative that the zone ensures good corporate social responsibility, and also that there is a sunset clause," he said. The Sunset Clause sees to it that Over-the-Hill does not become a permanent zone."

According to the prime minister, the incentives will apply to residential properties - both owned and rented - as well as commercial and indus-

trial undertakings that have a combined total turnover of \$5 million or under.

It also includes enterprises whose primary income does not come from the sale of alcohol or gambling.

For those qualified residents and business owners, with respect to the redevelopment of land and buildings, the proposal is that there be exemption from real property taxes; customs duties, related to construction, equipping and completing buildings and structures for a specified period, excise taxes and stamp tax imposed on real property.

■ See OVER-THE-HILL FIRST / page 2...

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# "PLP DOES NOT SUPPORT NEW BILL"

BY JAMEELHA MISSICK  
Journal Staff Writer

The Minnis administration can forget about getting the opposition's support on the Interception of Communication 2017 Bill.

In fact, the Progressive Liberal Party is accusing the Free National Movement of doing an about-face on the issue, particularly considering the uproar it made when the bill was introduced by the Christie administration and the accolades it's now getting.

While the government touted that key changes were made to the proposed law to ensure it struck a balance between protecting Bahamians and their privacy, Opposition Leader, Philip Davis, strongly disagreed.

"The criticisms of the bill that emanated from the Privy Council which dealt with the Listening Devices Act, which was what I called a bill which prohibited the use of listening devices for the interception of private conversations etc.

"And I lamented the fact that in a

modern democratic society, it should not be in the hands of politicians to determine whether a person's right to privacy should be so

tampered upon," he said.

"Their bill is regressive because it still remains in the hands of the politicians to intercept communica-

tions for any offence."

Englerston MP, Glennys Hanna-Martin, who also spoke toward the issue, made it clear that the PLP

will not support the bill as is, particularly considering the bill her government brought was more philosophically sound.

## NEW REVERSE OSMOSIS PLANT FOR WESTERN WATER USERS



NPWDCo has completed a new state of the art Reverse Osmosis facility in Western New Providence. The multi-million dollar investment is a project more than 2 years in the making now ensures customers can enjoy a 100% percent improvement in water quality. (Photo courtesy of Mark DaCunha for Barefoot Marketing)

## Gov't Touts "Improved" Interception Communications Bill

Continued from / PAGE 1...

It is estimated that globally, cyber crimes costs approximately \$600 billion dollars annually.

At that figure, it is considered more profitable than the global illegal trade of all drugs combined.

Hoping to stay one step ahead or at least apace with such criminals, the bill seeks to provide a single legal framework within which the interception of all communications on public and private systems would be authorized, inclusive of public telecommunication operators and Internet providers.

"The Bill provides for the interception of communication carried wholly or partly by wireless telegraphy and also covers all mail handling systems including parcel and courier services," he said.

It further provides for the

use of certain devices for listening to private conversations, a contentious provision.

The 1969 version of the Interception of Communications Act applied only to telephone wiretaps for landlines.

Nearly 50 years old, these forms of communication are now antiquated.

Minister Dames then stressed that the Interception of Communication Bill 2017 needs to be passed to provide for the legal interception of email and other forms of communication over the internet as well as other technological devices.

"Without the enactment of this new Bill, law enforcement personnel will not be able to utilize the latest in law enforcement techniques and equipment to match the reach, resources or sophistication of organized criminal

groups.

"This will undoubtedly lead to a major regression in all of the gains made by law enforcement in recent times, thereby exposing our beautiful nation to untold risks such as economic, reputational, and damage to our social fabric etc.

"We cannot and should not send the message to the criminal element that we are not prepared to follow them or match their resources to wherever they go to safeguard our nation's security interests," he said.

Section 26 of the bill removes the power of the minister to simply order a wiretap, but provides for the minister to authorize in writing, a listening device to be used by an individual if it is determined that the use is for defense or national security matters.

But while Minister Dames

contends that the bill provides for accountability, transparency and a paper trail, he stressed that there are absolutely no provisions for personal agenda.

"One cannot act outside of the law to go after political adversaries, spouses, sweethearts, or anyone else as a matter of fact without there being consequences," he said.

"In short, if you are living your life going about your daily business and not threatening the security of others or the national security of this nation, you have absolutely nothing to be concerned about as it relates to this bill. On the other hand, then you should worry."

The Bahamas is not alone in its push for an Interception Communication Bill.

Jamaica, St. Lucia, Saint Kitts & Nevis, The United Kingdom, and Australia

have all used such laws to threats and combat serious counter national security crimes.

## Over-the-Hill First Economic Empowerment Zone

Continued from / PAGE 1...

As for businesses in the community, Dr. Minnis said those in the zone will be given a waiver.

"For all applicable businesses, with the exception of those engaged in the restricted activities, and upon obtaining a trade certificate, which will prove that you are located in the zone, you will be afforded a 100 percent waiver of the assessed business license tax," he said.

"You will also be exempted from customs duties for the purchase of a vehicle for use in your business, with appropriate markings," Dr. Minnis said.

Dr. Minnis added that the programme will also include support for small and medium sized businesses that build financial literacy in the community while creating opportunities for residents to invest.

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# GBPA Unveils Monument to the Golden Knights

● GOLDEN KNIGHTS CIRCLE UNVEILING

Freeport, Grand Bahama – Bahamians everywhere all recall the jubilation that was felt when the 'Golden Knights' won the 2012 Olympic Relay. That same feeling was doubled for residents of Grand Bahama Island, who watched and cheered hometown heroes Demetrius Pinder and Michael Mathieu. Sharing in that moment was Vice President of the Grand Bahama Port Authority, Sarah St. George, who was able to watch from the stands, recalling the rush of adrenaline, the lump in her throat, and the thrill of victory. The win was not only a defining moment for the four amazing athletes but it also made Bahamian Olympic history as the first ever medals in the Men's athletics category.

Recently, the Grand Bahama community, led by St. George herself, welcomed the All-Star team back to Grand Bahama for two days of celebrations geared at recognizing their accomplishments and their impact on track and field in the region. As part of those celebrations, the Grand Bahama Port Authority (GBPA) unveiled the country's first monument to the Golden Knights.

"Today it's a huge honour to have both the four-sided monument and all four actual Golden Knights in our midst," noted St. George. "Two of the four, Demetrius Pinder and Michael Mathieu are actual-

ly from Grand Bahama, so 50% of that team belongs to us!"

During a late afternoon ceremony, all four Olympians, Demetrius Pinder, Chris Brown, Michael Mathieu and Ramon Miller, officially opened the monument roundabout. The striking piece of art was donated by community artist Jacki Boss, with each of the four Champions painted to stand alone yet together like 4 sides of a square, inside a circular running track, enclosed by a larger circle – the roundabout. Boss' art piece is not just a single painting but four pictures, expertly painted on thirteen, fourteen-foot wood beams.

Together for the first time in 6 years, the "Famous Four" are all still competing, and winning. Most recently, Michael Mathieu and Ramon Miller have just returned from the Commonwealth Games in Australia where their Men's 4 x 400 Relay team won Silver. "We have so much athletic talent in The Bahamas and right here on Grand Bahama," noted St. George. "And for a small country with often limited resources, we are remarkable and truly blessed."

Also, speaking at the event was Minister of Sports and Culture, MP Michael Pintard, who was joined by other government representatives as well as other St. George siblings; Caroline, Henry and

his wife Florence along with Rupert Hayward and his wife Mary Louise, and President of the GBPA, Ian Rolle, GBPA Board Members, Executive staff, invited guests in addition to local high school athletes.

Before inviting the "Fantastic Four" to officially

unveil their monument, St. George added "But this is just the beginning. More beautification will follow, because more always needs to be done. And may this Grand Island of Grand Bahama celebrate many more Golden Knights and Golden Days to come!"



► Chris "Fireman" Brown poses by his portrait of the four-sided art-piece at the centre of the Golden Knights Monument. Courtesy of Barefoot Marketing by Derek Carroll & GBPA

## Crime Down By 14 Per Cent

■ Continued from / PAGE 1...

"With reference to firearms, already for the year, law enforcement have been able to take off the streets some 102 firearms and 3, 365 rounds of ammunition."

The minister said the latter number was subject to change due to an operation in New Providence ear.

Mr. Dames attributed the recent successes in part to the police force's short term strategies.

"It's not only the job of the commissioner and his team. This is why our leader and the rest of the members of this house continue to push very progressive legislation to add to the force, to motivate law enforcement throughout

this country, to energize, to show that we support them and to get the people of this nation behind them," he said.

The minister's comments came while leading off debate on the Interception Communication Bill yesterday.

The proposed law, first tabled by the Christie administration in 2017, is touted as an effective crime fighting tool for the police, who must stay apace with rapidly changing technology.

"The Interception Communication Bill is a comprehensive law to fight sophisticated technologically savvy criminals and dismantle their criminal networks," Minister Dames said at the time.

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- An Associate's Degree with a GPA of 3.0 or above, and four (4) BGCSEs with a 'C' grade or above or
- A High School Diploma with a GPA of 2.8 or above, and four (4) BGCSEs with a 'C' grade or above and five (5) years working experience in any capacity

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## "Spy Bill Regressive"

Continued from / PAGE 1...

"It was a dangerous piece of legislation. They're now saying that this bill is different from the one we presented. I want them to show the difference. The very thing they complained about then is the very thing they have now introduced in their bill. That's what you have done. Our bill responded specifically to the criticisms that were leveled against the Listening Devices Act by the Privy Council."

The Council's concern was that the right to intrude in a person's private business ought not to be in the hands of politicians.

"Our bill took it out of the hands of politicians and rest it in the hands of judges," Mr. Davis charged.

"...Their Bill is regressive because it still remains in the hands of the politicians to intercept communications for any offence...They are appealing the Privy Council on one hand by saying 'okay, what we'll do is specify some offenses that will require the judge to deal with and then we'll leave some offenses as they were in the Listening Devices Act. The problem you have here is that any offense could very well include a specified offense because you make no clear distinction between when the commissioner of police decides that an offense has been committed and/or about to be committed."

Mr. Davis went on to ask the government to consider what it is doing.

"If they go through the bill, all they would find they introduced is the Listening Devices Act, provisions that allow the politician and the police to listen in on conversations and intercept communications, said Mr. Davis.

"...I cannot at this time agree and vote for a bill that would allow this. I accept that the timing of our bill may have caused a lot of anxiety, but suffice it to say, our objective and purpose in introducing the bill was to upgrade and modernize the Listening Devices Act and to allow the police, under the authority of the courts, to intercept the planning and execution of serious crime."

Englerston MP, Glenys Hanna-Martin made it equally clear that the PLP will not support the bill as is, particularly considering the proposed legislation her government brought was more philosophically sound.

"There is a high level of hypocrisy at play... You brought less protection than we brought," she charged.

# 20th Atlantic Medical Funwalk Run Attracts More Than 1800

Atlantic Medical's Funwalk Run in Nassau, a premier annual fitness event, attracted an unprecedented and enthusiastic crowd of over 1800 competitive walkers and runners, among whom was none other Health Minister Dr. Duane Sands who also assisted in prize presentations.

The 2018 prizes were so generous they astounded winners and supporters alike.

According to Ladonna Gardiner, when she decided to participate in the 20th Annual Atlantic Medical Insurance (AMI) Funwalk Run on April 21, 2018, she never imagined that she would drive away in a brand new car.

Ms. Gardiner beat out more than 1,000 eligible contestants to win a 2018 Chevy Spark – the most highly anticipated prize of the day. She was among five finalists randomly selected from a spinning barrel filled with tickets. Each finalist was given a Chevy key. The person whose key opened the car was the winner.

Ms. Gardiner was the second contestant to try her luck and got the shock of her life when the doors of the car unlocked.

"I was so happy when I pressed that button and the light lit," she said. "Oh God, thank you. I am so excited. I have never won anything in my life."

The second most anticipated take away was the prize for the social media competition – a new element added to the walk to encourage the participation of youth ages 10-18.

Seventeen-year-old Sierra Donaldson won for having the most Instagram likes

at hashtag: riseandshine after posting photos with her friends and family while on the Walk. The Bahamas Global Academy student was undeniably excited when she won.

"I felt really, really excited because I don't usually win things when it comes to these," Miss Donaldson said, "but I am really happy that I entered."

Other prizes presented included: spa packages; airline tickets; cell phones and gym memberships.

The overall male winner of the competitive 6-mile run was Nicolas Thorpe, clocking in at 36:03. The overall female winner of the competitive run was Roberta Fontana who crossed the finish line at 37:50.

For the overall walkers, Douglas Palacios was the top male finisher at 41:26; while Carol Knowles clocked 44:30 as the first female to complete that race.

AMI's Freeport Branch held a Funwalk Run simultaneously with the one held in Nassau. According to AMI's Executive Vice President and General Manager, Lynda Gibson, this year's Walk was not only special because it reached the milestone of 20 years, but also because it was held in honour of the former President and CEO of Colonial Group International (CGI), Alan Peacock who died suddenly last year.

"We wanted to do something substantial in memory of him because he always loved our Funwalk," she said. "He always used our Walk as an example to other companies in the other jurisdictions."

Anastasia Francis, AMI's Director of Operations admitted that although coordinating this year's Walk took a lot of hard work and long hours, it paid off in a big way.

"We were extremely pleased at the numbers," she said. "We targeted 1500 participants and we registered just over 1800. We are extremely pleased at the turnout."

AMI's slogan "All together better" was this year's theme and showcased in this year's Walk in particular, according to Donovan Ingraham, AMI's Wellness Coordinator.

"We believe it's a community effort," he said.

"We believe in every effort of trying to reverse chronic illnesses and reduce the claims that come into our office as it relates to non-communicable disease. It takes a community to make that change. Today was a proving effort because we brought a whole large group of vendors and a whole large group of companies into one spot for one cause."

Company representatives said AMI will continue promoting health and wellness because doing so is one of its primary commitments to its clients and the community.

For more than half a century, the Bermuda-based insurance Group has spread its network throughout the Caribbean and internationally.

In The Bahamas, three insurance providers fall under the CGI umbrella: Security & General Insurance, Atlantic Medical Insurance and Colonial Pension Services (Bahamas).

## Black Enterprise Partners With Bahamas to Deliver African Groups

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL - President and CEO Earl "Butch" Graves Jr. recently led a delegation from African American media powerhouse, Black Enterprise (BE) on a visit to Nassau, Bahamas and promised potential group movements to the country from his organization, that has a projected value of millions of dollars for the economy of The Bahamas.

The president of the premier business, investing and wealth building media dynasty for African Americans, took the opportunity during his short stay in The Bahamas, to pledge a partnership with the country and expressed that he was encouraged and is hopeful for a continued relationship growth with mutual business opportunities between The Bahamas and BE.

At a meeting with the Tourism and Aviation Minister, Dionisio D'Aguilar, Mr. Graves outlined a number of significant events that

his organization has the potential of hosting in The Bahamas over the next two years.

The groups include the organizations' multi-million dollar Women of Power (WOP) Summit - a four day executive leadership conference; the Women of Power Executive Retreat, and the BE Executive Golf Outing.

Also, as an outgrowth of The Bahamas' association, participation and sponsorship of Black Enterprise events in The United States over the past year, they were able to sign up a few groups that are now scheduled to host meetings in the Islands.

One of the group's, Soul Reborn Conference is scheduled to take place in Bimini at the Hilton Resort, July 12th-15th.

The Soul Reborn Conference is expecting an attendance of about 150 and has been organized by and will feature best selling author, speaker and success

coach, Cheryl Polote-Williamson.

Also, Disney annually hold a retreat for its WOP contingent in an exotic destination, and because of the Bahamas/BE connection, Disney is looking at hosting their 2018/2019 retreat of some 40 women, in Nassau or one of the Out Islands.

Linville Johnson, The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism's Director for the Multicultural Market, hosted the BE group during their Bahamas visit and said that the partnership between Black Enterprise and The Bahamas has been a very long one that began with Mr. Earl Graves Senior.

He said that the visit of Earl Graves Jr., has "cemented the relationship and even taken it to a greater level."

Mr. Johnson said too that he is "looking forward to the proposed groups and to the strong financial impact they will have on The Islands of The Bahamas."

## HEALTH MINISTER PLEDGES TO SUPPORT RE-EXAMINATION OF THE SALARY SCALES OF LAB PROFESSIONALS



Minister of Health, Dr. the Hon. Duane Sands brings remarks at the Public Hospitals Authority "Department of Pathology and Laboratory Services Professionals Week" Opening Ceremony at the Princess Margaret Hospital Critical Care Block, April 23, 2018. (BIS Photo/Raymond A. Bethel, Sr.)

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# The Rough Cut

By Felix F. Bethel

## “...AMEN & AMEN...”

Article 1 of the Declaration of Human Rights states that: --- “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” and Article 2 declares that “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration”.

Ladies and gentlemen, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, fellow Bahamians: ---I have seen first-hand the terrible price of denying human rights to individuals based on their identity. I believe deeply in the dignity and worth of every human being.

And thus – as in the case of the UN big-wig I am quoting by way of word-robbing, please note that: ---Felix Bethel is determined to continue to fight against discrimination in all its manifestations; to work to make good on the promise of human rights for all without distinction or prejudice; and to persuade others to commit to the same ideal.

Today, some 70 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, it is, thankfully, unthinkable to impose criminal sanctions on individuals simply on the basis of their gender or the colour of their skin.

Indeed, to believe in human rights is to believe in equality: equal rights for all people, regardless of who they are or where they are from.

Notwithstanding this clearest of principles, Rd. Myles Munroe who was [arguably] one of our most highly esteemed brothers disagreed with the notion at hand.

As Brother Myles once said: ---“I have with great disappointment stood on the balcony of history and watched with horror and shock the high jacking and raping of what we have come to know as the Civil Rights Movements.

“I think the attempt to equate the historical Civil Rights Movements with the demands for the right to dignify, glorify and accept as normal the practice of a lifestyle that could render the human race for which they sacrificed extinct is illogical, dishonest, and is the abuse of the blood and imprisonment of many...”

This balcony & history stuff is surely the kind of material from which demagoguery is made.

I—Felix Frederick Bethel will have none of this over-the-top porridge of confusions.

The truth of the matter is surely that reference to the

Civil Rights Movement is itself sadly mistaken, precisely because of the fact that a person’s civil rights are but a stone’s throw or heartbeat from that person’s human rights.

And thus, I contend that our esteemed brother, Rd. Myles Munroe was simply wrong when he spoke as he did concerning the so-called gay, lesbian and homosexual agenda.

And thus as fate would have it: --- Rd. Myles Munroe warned that gay activists are appropriating the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s to advance their agenda. Munroe was of the view that:---“...Any comparison of the oppression gays face to the racism blacks faced before the Civil Rights Era is “illogical” and “dishonest. It’s a high jacking of the gains paid for by the blood of honourable men and women for an unnatural human-destroying behaviour...”

Wow---unnatural human-destroying behaviour!

And then, take note of some more of this hyperbolic stuff---[as Munroe would have you all know:---“...In the guise of ‘civil rights’ and ‘human rights’ the LGBT minority community have decided to ‘celebrate’ the civility of their very uniquely chosen lifestyle and sexual preference publicly.”

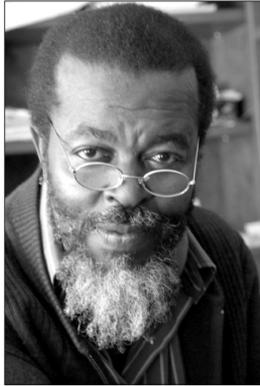
“I am not sure what their mission or goals are in this effort but obviously they have received enough incentive and motivation to attempt something that 90 per cent of the Bahamas and Bahamians consider unacceptable and violates their collective convictions, moral standing and values...”

And as if these exaggerations were not enough, our brother in Christ exclaims: --“... This defiant social act must be addressed from the perspective not from any religious position, but rather from the concern for our very small fragile social fabric being held together by values and moral standards that provide the framework for a healthy Bahamian society.”

Wow---This defiant social act must be addressed from the perspective not from any religious position, but rather from the concern for our very small fragile social fabric being held together by values and moral standards that provide the framework for a healthy Bahamian society.”

Wow---“...provide the framework for a healthy Bahamian society...”

With all our efforts and those of many others, over time let us look forward to a



time when it is equally unthinkable that such sanctions could be imposed on people simply because of their sexual orientation or their gender identity.

The language of the Universal Declaration is also very clear in this respect. The preamble refers in its first line to the “inherent dignity” and the “equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” as the “foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

Article 1 of the Declaration states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” and Article 2 declares that “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration”.

If we are all entitled to the full range of human rights and to equal protection of the law then, I believe, it can never be acceptable to deprive certain individuals of their rights, indeed to impose criminal sanctions on those individuals, not because they have inflicted harm on others or pose a threat to the well-being of others, but simply for being who they are, for being born with a particular sexual orientation or gender identity. To do so is deliberately to exclude a whole lot of people from the protection of international human rights law. It is, in short, an affront to the very principles of human rights and non-discrimination. We should be looking for ways to ensure that everyone enjoys the full protection of international human rights law, not for grounds to justify excluding certain individuals.

In moving forward, the first priority should be, I believe, decriminalization worldwide. For as long as individuals are criminalized purely because of who they are, they will continue to suffer injustice and remain disproportionately vulnerable to other forms of discrimination, persecution and violence.

Amen!  
Amen!

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Publisher/Chief Executive Officer

The Bahama Journal  
Quo Vadis, Bahamas?

Kimaley P. Jones  
Vice President Operations

### E D I T O R I A L

# AFTER THE FACT

We recognise we’ve had a few incidents in the last year...We need to find out what’s causing these incidents and what we need to do to prevent them in the future. We can’t afford to continue having them.” Minister of National Security, the Hon. Marvin Dames.

That we live in an imperfect world and that – as such – accidents will occur and surely, when such is the case, people can and do pay dearly!

And thus, we do not scream bloody murder when cars collide; when drunk drivers drive and when – on occasion – they manage to either hurt, maim or kill others; what we do is this—we buy insurance sufficient for dealing with costs related to damage done.

In this regard, then:-- We take the view that the attentive public should not allow itself to be gulled into believing that Commodore Tellis Bethel and the team under his command should be tagged with blame for damage done three of its recently acquired sea-craft.

Regardless of the spin that might be given remarks made by the nation’s Chief of Commodore Tellis Bethel, the fact remains that what passed between the two men amounts to a rebuff of the first order.

We are of the view that in circumstances where all of the facts are not known, silence is golden; thus our mantra-say nothing to anyone which – on reflection – might shade into threat or demand!

In this regard, take note that:-- According to highly reliable reports, one man addressed and greeted another man as follows:-- “Commodore, I hear y’all still mashing up our boats, hey!”

The first man followed up with some down-home advice: ---“...Your fellas need to know how to navigate...”

Wow---an ex-medical doctor giving technical advice to a trained seaman; to wit Defence Force Commodore Tellis Bethel!

And thus, as we tune into the rest of the story, we learn that:---Commodore Tellis Bethel barely registered a response and appeared flustered while Commissioner of Police Anthony Ferguson, standing next to him, chuckled.

Here we reference – as it were – that story concerning how a Defence Force sea-craft

was damaged; the costs for repair; the reactions demonstrated by the Hon. Dr. Hubert A. Minnis[the first man]; Commodore Tellis Bethel [the second man] and a chuckling third man, Police Commissioner Anthony Ferguson.

But chuckle or no chuckle-damage done to public property is no laughing matter; indeed, the point attendant upon all of this has to do with facts which show that we all lose whenever good money is thrown after bad, especially in situations where untold millions of dollars are wasted.

In truth, then:-- Whether the reference is made to the thousands of cars wrecked by police officers or to recent revelations made concerning damage done to three Defence Force sea-craft, facts reveal what seems a most woeful disregard for the price that is paid by John Q. Public.

And for sure, when we reference but these two blatant cases, we do so in full knowledge that waste, fraud, neglect and other such socially destructive behaviour also attends conduct in most Government run departments.

Indeed, there seems to be a generalized attitude that if something belongs to the Government it therefore belongs to nobody in particular; thus that socially prevalent mind-set where misuse, abuse and sometimes theft piled high upon indolence and lousiness becomes the expensive order of the day.

In the meantime, the word we get confirms that the commanding officers of two vessels involved in recent incidents have been reassigned.

We can also report that:-- Bethel also revealed that the cost of repairing HMBS Arthur Dion Hanna which sustained damage to its port shaft and gear box in November 2017, was \$1.5m.

What is also quite remarkable has to do with how the Commodore has been able to maintain his sang-froid even as an officer of similar rank did chuckle.

As Bethel has explained:-- While officers and marines of the RBDF must be held accountable for the costly maritime assets entrusted to their care, it should be appreciated that the greater the number of patrols at sea, the more likely it is for an incident to occur.

Absolutely!

**THE BAHAMAS**  
Sun, Sand, Sea .... and  
**The Bahama Journal**

NO BETTER READING



# Health Minister Hails PMH's Laboratory Staff and Pledges Incentives to Attract Persons to the Field

Laboratory Professionals Week 2018 got off to a successful start this week as Minister of Health, Dr. Duane E. Sands joined executives and staff of the Princess Margaret Hospital for the commencement of Lab Week.

The week, which is being held under the theme "Laboratory Professionals Get Results," is designed to increase public understanding of, and appreciation for clinical laboratory personnel and the critical role they play in the delivery of health care in the country.

Speaking to the importance of the week during the keynote remarks, Dr. Sands said almost every diagnosis or treatment decision is supported by the results produced in the medical laboratory, making this service an essential but often invisible team player in the patient's care.

Shortages of staff and resources in Laboratory Services Dr. Sands said are

well known to him, and he proposed a solution to meet the obvious need.

"I will, with assistance of those of you in the profession and guidance of relevant experts, seek to implement a medical technology program locally through the University of the Bahamas to facilitate the education, training and certification of new lab professionals up to the Baccalaureate level right here in the Bahamas," he said.

"I am committed to engaging the PHA and Ministry of Health in a dialogue with respect to providing greater incentives to attract and retain laboratory professionals and other allied health professionals."

The minister also pledged his support for a review of salaries across the health system with an eye to addressing health careers where the country is facing critical shortfalls in staffing and recruitment.

Director of PMH Laboratory Services, Dr. George Bruney and Laboratory Quality

Manager, Dr. Ismae Whyms also brought remarks. PMH Hospital Administrator Mary Lightbourne-Walker thanked the laboratory staff for their service and dedication.

Following the Minister's address laboratory staff received awards for years of service, while others received certificates of appreciation for their service.

The main corridor of the Critical Care Block has been decorated with display boards for Lab Week highlighting the many service areas of PMH Medical Laboratory.

The minister, accompanied by hospital administration, toured the various displays which will be judged by an independent panel and the winner announced at a later date.

The event which was held in the hospital's Critical Care Block is observed annually during the month of April.

# Civil Society Groups Express FOIA Concerns

BY LEAH COOPER  
Journal Staff Writer

Tensions rose yesterday as members of civil groups and the public sector expressed their concerns over the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The government has promoted the legislation as one that promotes accountability, transparency, and public participation in national decision making; the "bedrock of any modern democracy".

However, some members of a three-day workshop yesterday expressed the concern that the public will not have access to entities in which the government owns less than 50 per cent.

"The government may only own 49 per cent of something, but that 49 per cent may be millions and millions of our public money, whereas a company that may be exposed may only be \$100,000. I think that when you have public money, it cannot be just 50 per cent. I think that we have a right to information when public money is involved, said Public Relations professional Dianne Phillips.

Mrs. Phillips was not alone.

Bahamas Union of Teachers (BUT) President Belinda Wilson was equally concerned.

"I'm pleased that I've been invited for consultation. I thought; however, the Act has already been 'gazetted.' We also would like to have more participation, more time to participate and to make sure that we are aware and we are clear on what the act seeks to do," she said.

She later told the Bahama Journal that she would like to see the words "trade unions" spelled out under the rights of access section in the Act.

CEO of The Bahamas Chamber of Commerce Edison Summer rated the session as a good one to the degree that it is allowing the business community, civil society, trade unions and others to get first hand education on the Act and to engage with the Office of the Attorney General.

"Really it's a process for us to understand what's written in the Act and also to give us an opportunity to respond, to raise questions, and to be sure that we would be able to properly communicate with our members as well," he said.

Attorney General Carl Bethel has said the Act will be implemented in phases to ensure all the necessary preliminary work and training are in place.

# Foulkes to Meet with Pointe Officials

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT  
Journal Staff Writer

Labour Minister Dion Foulkes along with senior labour officials are expected to meet with officials of the Pointe development in the wake of investigation into the number of Chinese nationals at the \$200 million downtown project.

It was recently reported that loads of Chinese nationals were employed at The Pointe with "not one Bahamian in sight."

The project's Heads of Agreement calls for some 70% of its workforce to be Bahamians, translating into about 200 employees.

In 2017, China Construction America was granted between 400-500 work permits for the \$200m development.

The deal, dated June 18, 2015, also stipulated that Bahamian sub-contractors were to receive "approximately 40% of development work.

At this point, the government cannot say conclusively how many Chinese nationals are actually employed at The Pointe.



## PUBLIC NOTICE

### MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

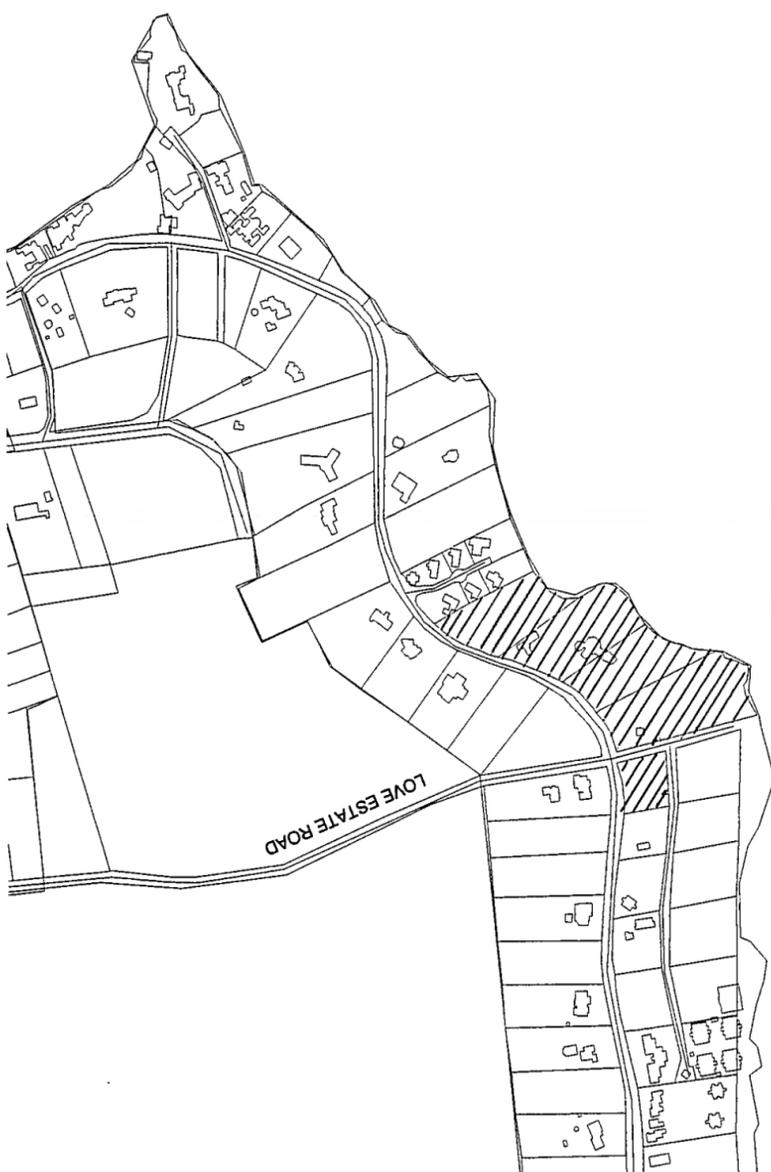
The public is hereby notified that the Town Planning Committee is considering a preliminary application (PSA/55/2018) on behalf of Hucknall Limited and Argon Limited to permit multi-family residential land use on Lots 6,7,8,9 and 10A in Love Estates.

The subject lots are situated on the northern side of West Bay Street and immediately east of Garden of Eden.

The file for the proposed change of land use is available for viewing in the Department of Physical Planning at the Aventura Plaza, John F. Kennedy Drive. Interested persons and organisations are invited to provide written comments to the Acting Director of Physical Planning within twenty-one (21) days of the date of this notice.

Submissions should be made via P.O. Box N-1611, Nassau, The Bahamas, or fax (242)328-3206. Further inquiries should be made to the Acting Director via Tel. (242)322-7550/2 or (242)328-3202 or [CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS](mailto:CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS)

Signed  
Charles B. Zonicle  
Acting Director of Physical Planning



## BAIN TOWN HOME-COMING APRIL 22<sup>ND</sup> – 28<sup>TH</sup>

### SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

#### SUNDAY, APRIL 22<sup>ND</sup> 2018

- \* Thanksgiving Services (Bain Town Churches) 11:00 A. M.
- Any service during the day or week.
- \* Parade of Marching Bands – Meadow Street 4:00 P. M.
- \* Gospel Concert – Mother Butler Park 7:00 P. M.

#### MONDAY, APRIL 23<sup>RD</sup> 2018

- \* Courtesy Call on the Governor General 11:00 A. M.
- \* Official Opening Ceremony 6:00 P. M.
- Mother Butler Park

#### TUESDAY, APRIL 24<sup>TH</sup> 2018

- \* Youth Explosion – Mother Butler Park 6:00 P. M.
- Dancing, singing, exhibitions, plats

#### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup> 2018

- \* Community Social - Mother Butler Park 6:00 P. M.
- Fashion Show, Board Games, Competitions, Story telling, Family tree

#### THURSDAY, APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup> 2018

- \* Poetry Readings – Bain Town Library 3:30 P. M.
- \* History Lecture - Mt. Olive Baptist Church 4:00 P. M.

#### FRIDAY, APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup> 2018

- \* BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT 4:00 P. M.
- George Brown Park, Dumping Ground Corner
- \* CULTURAL FESTIVAL 7:00 P. M.
- Meadow & Augusta Streets

#### SATURDAY, APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup> 2018

- \* Official Closing Ceremony – Meadow Street 6:00 P. M.
- \* Junkanoo Rush – Meadow Street 7:00 P. M.
- \* Basketball Championships 9:00 P. M.

FOOD ON SALE AT ALL EVENTS

ORGANIZED AND SPONSORED BY THE

BAIN & GRANTS TOWN ADVANCEMENT ASSOCIATION

JONES COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK