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75 CENTS

WEEKEND CARNAGE

Police Destroy Marijuana Fields

BY LICEC BASTIAN
 Journal Staff Writer

A major drug bust on the island of Andros last week has resulted in police uncovering eight marijuana fields in San Andros.

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BY LICEC BASTIAN
 Journal Staff Writer

For the second consecutive weekend in New Providence, there have been multiple homicides. This past weekend four persons were killed in separate incidents. Yesterday, three young men were shot and killed. Early Sunday two men were killed one hour apart and on parallel streets and later Sunday evening a young man was shot and killed at Potter's Cay.

These shootings follow a shooting in a Haitian Village, off Cowpen Road Saturday morning.

According to police reports the first shooting

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MITCHELL CALLS FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY BILL "RUBBISH"

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

"Rubbish" is Progressive Liberal Party Chairman Fred Mitchell thinks about the Government's Fiscal Responsibility Bill appearing as a guest yesterday on Love 97's Radio programme Jones and Company, Mr. Mitchell said the legislation is not worth the paper that it is written on.

Finance Minister Peter Turnquest has gone on record on numerous



PLP Chairman, Fred Mitchell (File photo)

occasions stating his intention to balance the country's budget, which

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BISHOP HALL CALLS FOR LONG-TERM AID FOR HAITI

Outspoken Baptist Cleric, Bishop Simeon Hall says the death of the Haitian migrants "desperately seeking to better their conditions and those of their families, brings into focus the urgent need for regional and international long term aid, directed in a strategic and efficient matter, which would directly benefit the least, the lost and the left out in the Republic of Haiti."

He was one of a number of local pastors speaking at the memorial service prior to the burial

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Baptist Cleric, Bishop Simeon Hall (File photo)

HENFIELD ENDORSES BAHAMIAN INVESTMENT IN HAITI

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

The idea of Bahamians investing in Haiti to aid in its stability has been tossed around for years and according to Foreign Affairs Minister Darren Henfield, anything The Bahamas can do to keep Haitians at home is worth pursuing.

"If there are good commercial opportunities for

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BUSAWU THREATENS STRIKE ACTION

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

The Water and Sewerage Corporation union is at odds with the corporation's management over a number of grievances that if left unaddressed could lead to industrial action.

The Bahamas Utilities Services and Allied Workers Union spoke out on what it said is blatant disrespect on the part of WSC executives, who are accused of unilaterally rolling back four benefits.

Addressing reporters outside The Department of Labour on Friday, BUSAWU President Dwayne Woods said the corporation is in breach

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THE BAHAMAS & LENNY KRAVITZ LAUNCH FLY AWAY CAMPAIGN



Bahamas Minister of Tourism Dionisio D'Aguilar, Lenny Kravitz, Joy Jibrilu and Deputy Director General Tommy Thompson arrive at The Bahamas x Lenny Kravitz Fly Away Campaign Launch on February 7, 2019 in New York City. (Photo by Bennett Raglin/Getty Images)



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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

Tourism's New Marketing Campaign FEATURES LENNY KRAVITZ

A new, multi-channel creative campaign featuring Bahamian-American rock legend Lenny Kravitz reveals the authentic spirit of The Bahamas as a destination of adventure and discovery. Set to the lyrics of Kravitz's hit song Fly Away, the television commercial and supporting marketing campaign capture his deep personal connection to The Bahamas, as well as the pure adrenaline rush of exploring the archipelago's 100,000 square miles by boat and plane.

Written in The Bahamas, Fly Away was inspired by the islands' white sand beaches, crystal-clear waters and countless summers the singer spent with his grandparents and mother, the Bahamian-American actress Roxie Roker. Behind-the-scenes video follows Kravitz around his home base of Eleuthera, where he records music, embraces island time and appreciates "this gift we were given. 'Take your time' is our call to arms," he said.

The commercial underscores The Bahamas' powerful appeal as a destination that inspires adventure and exudes a rock 'n roll vibe. "The music represents not only the edgy independence of the Bahamian people, but also speaks to those who travel here for deep-sea fishing, shark diving and opportunities to embrace new discoveries," said Mia Weech-Lange, Senior Director of Global Communications for The Bahamas Ministry of

Tourism & Aviation.

In January, out-of-home advertising began with billboards in New York City, Atlanta, Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando and Houston. The OOH tactics also include a subway station domination of Columbus Circle in New York City and a presence at Sawgrass Mall in Florida, as well as aboard Brightline passenger trains in South Florida. The media buy includes a mix of television, search, social, programmatic and display targeting prospective visitors where they consume news, entertainment and information.

Supporting digital content at www.bahamas.com/fly-away will allow The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation to raise awareness of the destination's many islands, which include Freeport, The Abacos, The Exumas, Andros, Bimini, The Berry Islands, Cat Island, Harbour Island and Eleuthera, Long Island, San Salvador, Rum Cay, Mayaguana, Inagua, Acklins, Nassau-Paradise Island and Crooked Island. The new hub draws visitors into island-specific microsites delivering inspiring vertical market video content on topics ranging from island hopping and boating to culture and cuisine, while simultaneously highlighting uniquely Bahamian experiences, places and personalities, such as Lady Di (aka Eleuthera's "Pineapple

Lady"), Junkanoo and the popular People-to-People program that matches visitors with local hosts.

"We are excited by this campaign and honored to partner with Lenny Kravitz. Our islands and his song fit perfectly together, allowing us to reach a broad new audience, especially digital content consumers, through authentic storytelling," said Minister of Tourism Dionisio D'Aguilar.

"The Bahamas is absolutely inspirational. We know that and we believe this campaign demonstrates that to consumers in a true, direct way by sharing many of our people, their islands and their stories with the world. Setting it all to perfect music is icing on the cake," said Director General Joy Jibrilu.

The Bahamas has been on a healthy, upward trend in international arrivals since October 2017 and closed 2018 strong. International arrivals increased 13 percent in October 2018 year-over-year, and future bookings continue to outpace the previous year. International air capacity grew by nearly 16 percent in October and scheduled direct flights have increased 15 percent since November. American Airlines, Delta, Silver Airways and Bahamasair have all expanded service from gateways including New York, Miami, Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago and Houston. New and re-

talized hotels, including Baha Mar, Atlantis Paradise Island, Lighthouse Pointe on Freeport, and Peace & Plenty on Great Exuma, among others, are con-

tributing to the growing demand.

The campaign was created by Tambourine, a communications firm with specialization in destinations and hotel e-com-

merce. The 60 second spot, 30 second spot and behind-the-scenes interview with Lenny Kravitz on Eleuthera can be viewed on YouTube.com/VisitTheBahamas.



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD (USCG) ACADEMY 4 YEAR MILITARY DEGREE PROGRAM

The Bahamian Government in collaboration with the United States Embassy (Nassau) invites all qualified persons who are interested in applying for a four-year degree scholarship at the United States Coast Guard Academy in Connecticut, United States, to submit their applications to the Royal Bahamas Defence Force Headquarters, Coral Harbour Base by 31st January, 2019.

To qualify, applicants must:

- Be a Bahamian citizen
- Be between the ages of 17-22 years old
- Be unmarried and with no dependents
- Be willing to serve in the Royal Bahamas Defence Force for a minimum of five years on completion.
- Must be physically fit
- Must be able to swim
- Have SAT scores of 600 in both Math and English (or ACT minimum of 26 in Mathematics and 27 in English).
- Have a high school diploma
- Possess excellent English skills

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- Marine and Environmental Sciences
- Government
- Mechanical Engineering
- Management

Deadline for submission of application is 31st January, 2019.

Deadline for registration for SAT examination is 8th February, 2019 for the 9th March, 2019 test date (results from March test are only accepted if results from previous test are received by 1st March, 2019).

Students may register at:

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/international>

The USCGA code number for the SAT exam is 5807.

Deadline for ACT registration is 11th January, 2019 for 8th February, 2019 test date.

Students can register at <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act-non-us.html>

The USCGA code number for the ACT exam is 0600.

Applicants can make application to sit the SAT/ACT at local SAT Centers in New Providence as follows: Aquinas College, St. Andrew's School, St. Anne's School, The University of The Bahamas, Government High School and Queen's College.

For further information, please contact the Royal Bahamas Defence Force Human Resource Officer, Lieutenant Commander Michael Hanna at telephone 362-3705 or 362-3711 or via email at michaelhanna@rbdf.gov.bs or visit the website www.rbdf.gov.bs

WEEKEND CARNAGE

Continued from / PAGE 1...

took place on Balfour Avenue around 9am and then an hour later another shooting on Robinson road.

Police are now investigating these incidents, which they cannot confirm are connected.

In the first incident, according to reports, shortly after 9:00am, a man was sitting in front of a business establishment on Washington Street and Balfour Avenue, when he was approached by a male armed with a firearm, who shot him, before getting into a silver vehicle and speeding away.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) were called to the scene and transported the victim to hospital where he later succumbed to his injuries, according to police.

One hour later police

were again called to Robinson Road, where they met the victim of another shooting.

Shortly after 10:00am, a male was standing in front of a business establishment on Robinson Road and Miami Street, when he was approached by a man armed with a firearm, who shot him before running away.

EMS again were called to the scene, attempted to revive the victim, but were unsuccessful. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Later yesterday evening another young man from Sunset park was shot and killed at Potter's Cay. Circumstances surrounding that shooting were unknown up to press time.

These separate incidents follow the shooting of two Haitian nationals in a Haitian Village, which left one of the

males dead.

Police say that shortly before 1:00am on Saturday, a group of Haitian Nationals were hosting a social event in the Haitian Village off Cowpen Road, when two men emerged from bushes both armed with firearms and opened fired on the persons, resulting in two males being shot to the body.

Paramedics were called to the scene, where one male was pronounced dead. The other injured man was transported to Princess Margaret Hospital, where he is listed in serious condition.

Police are appealing to members of the public, who may have any information that can assist with investigations into any of these incidents, to contact the Central Detective Unit.

Investigations continue in all of these matters.

Royal Fidelity To Host Economic Outlook conference

BY JAMEELHA MISSICK
Journal Staff Writer

Royal Fidelity will host its 5th annual Bahamas Economic Outlook (BEO) Conference, under the theme: "Dynamic New World: Braving the Turmoil."

The full day conference aims to bring together a premier line up of leading thinkers to explore the local impact of global influences.

"We believe it's key role is to make Bahamians aware of key global issues that are taking place outside of The

Bahamas, which will have an impact locally and for people to be able to understand what those issues are and how to adapt to them," said Royal Fidelity President, Michael Anderson.

"It doesn't cover just economics or just finance, it covers a range

of different issues including health care, technology, the environment, geopolitical issues, the economy."

Mr. Anderson said whether you're a student, house wife, or a businessman everyone can learn something from the conference's five dynam-

ic speakers.

Royal Fidelity has partnered with Aliv, Royal Bank, REV, The Tribune, PWC, J.S. Johnson and Glinton Sweeting O'Brien Attorneys at Law. However Mr. Anderson said other sponsors are welcomed to join.

The BEO conference will take place on February 26 at the Baha Mar Convention Centre beginning at 8am.

The registration fee is pegged at \$400 per person inclusive of breakfast, lunch, cocktail session and speaker presentations.

MITCHELL CALLS FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY BILL "RUBBISH"

Continued from / PAGE 1...

involved raising taxes and implementing quite a number of cutbacks this fiscal year.

When asked how he felt about this move, Mr. Mitchell said one must have a "feel for people" in order to be Minister of Finance.

He said, "when Perry Christie was Prime Minister, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) came and said that we had to raise taxes. He said that he wasn't going to do it because he didn't want to inflict any more taxes on the Bahamian people."

He added, "he said that he is going to deal with

deficit and he's going to deal with expansion by simply growing this economy. Now, unfortunately, others are reaping from 'the big project' which they described as a mirage and a bad deal.

"Now, they're crowing to the rafters, talking about how great it is and so on and so forth," he said.

Senator Mitchell also said that there is a list of things the country ought to be doing in terms of its investment in infrastructure and investment in small businesses.

He said, "my view is that \$250 million should be set aside for venture capital from the government. My view is that the Lynden Pindling

International Airport needs to be expanded again because it is too small for what it does. My view is that the airports in the Family Islands must be completed because it's ridiculous what you see happening in North Eleuthera when New Year's comes."

"My view is the digital platform of which we are

operating is falling apart. Telephone calls are dropping. No one is looking into telecommunications and data in this country. Its time now to move to 5G, and there's no talk of investment in that," he added.

"All of these things will make this country competitive and grow in the future," he said.

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BUSAWU THREATENS STRIKE ACTION

of a number of articles outlined in the industrial agreement.

"We have four concerns that are beneficial to these members of the union, one is the rolling back of the administrative leave which the President has, it's a three-year leave and we have had this leave for 13 years, which makes it customary under the industrial agreement.

"This leave was given to the union members, which states that any president elected would be off from work with pay in order to run the union.

"It is a benefit under the industrial agreement, it is ours and we want to keep it," he said.

Mr. Woods further claims that the corporation is demanding rent for the use of office space to hold meetings.

On one occasion,



► BUSAWU President, Dwayne Woods speaking to reporters regarding union concerns (File photo)

WCS's board reportedly called the police during a union meeting that led to Mr. Woods receiving a

letter threatening eviction and the rescindment of his administrative leave.

According to Mr.

Woods, the corporation has also forced employees to take accrued vacation leave and that the

union is ready to have these issues resolved.

Mr. Woods said, "we will do whatever it takes

to get the matter resolved, but as it stands, all we have to do is withdraw our enthusiasm and it will take care of itself."

BUSAWU added that they are always open to talking with the WCS and The Department of Labour.

"Well, we are never closing the door to conciliation. We will never do that, we will leave the door open for conciliation, but enough is enough; everyone gets tired at some point.

"We are headed towards the strike vote whenever that comes about.

"The union will always keep the strike vote as a back-pocket item, so whenever we need to pull that, we know just how to do that," he added.

The union is calling on the Minister of Labour to step in.

Labour Director Unaware Of BUSAWU'S CONCERNS

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
Journal Staff Writer

Labour Director John Pinder said he is unaware of the Bahamas Utilities Services and Allied Workers Union's issues.

The real issue, he said, is the fact that the union president has been offered a promotion, should he accept, he must relinquish his position as BUSAWU President.

"I think he has asked the Water and Sewage Corporation to postpone that promotion until he has finished his term as president of the union.

"However, my information is that there are some benefits that the former president enjoyed that the corporation said that they can no longer foot that bill."

As a result, the issue is before us as it relates to whether or not he wants to proceed with a trade dispute that was filed, because he simultaneously filed an injunction on the Water and Sewage

Corporation at the Supreme Court," he said.

As a result of a court injunction being filed, the Labour Director said the Department is not allowed to intervene. As for the union's other concerns, Mr. Pinder said he has dealt with them.

"It was agreed after meeting with HR at Water and Sewage that he would have access to his members, but they wanted him to advise them as to when you would want to have a meeting and not just have an impromptu meeting.

"That was what was communicated to us and we agreed that once he gave them notice as to when he will have his meetings, which I think was a 24-hour notice as to when he will have his meeting, so that they can arrange for them to have a meeting in the right area and that sort of thing, or so they will know that the staff will be in a meeting, that was the only issue on that.

"As it relates to the rent, I understood the former administration of the Water and Sewage Corporation, according to Mr. Woods allowed them to not pay any rent.

"I don't know if that is so or not, but if the trailers on the premises belong to the employer and you wish to use those trailers, there is nothing in the law that says the employer must give you free rental," he said.

When asked if the union's issues are grounds for industrial action, the Labour Director responded said, "as it relates to those other things, some of those things are stuff that a union has to negotiate in its industrial agreement."

"The only way I can see grounds for industrial action is if the employer refuses to allow the president access to its membership, then that's an issue. That will be a violation of the Industrial Relations Act," he said.

WSC CHAIRMAN URGES UNION PRESIDENT TO RETURN TO WORK

BY LEAH COOPER
Journal Staff Writer

The board and management of The Water and Sewage Corporation (WSC) are "taken aback" by comments made by Bahamas Utilities Services and Allied Workers Union President (BUSAWU) Dwayne Woods last week. Mr. Woods has accused the Corporation of rolling back benefits agreed in the Industrial Agreement.

WSC Board Chairman Adrian Gibson said that after consultation with Works Minister Desmond Bannister, they intend to set the record straight.

He said, "frankly, much of the rabble-rousing seen is simply due to one man not wanting to return to work.

"Nothing can be further from the truth. At no point has WCS's management sought to vary or aggravate its agreement with the union.

"We are guided by the Industrial Relations Act, and as an attorney, I can tell you that strict adherence to the agreement is consistently and persistently emphasized by me," he said.

Mr. Gibson added that unlike any other union president in The

Bahamas, Mr. Woods has been on administrative leave which has come at a great cost to the Bahamian taxpayer.

The chairman also shared that Mr. Woods draws a salary of approximately \$60,000 per year, coupled with accrued vacation leave, accrued sick leave, and enjoys all of the benefits without ever coming to work.

He said, "Mr. Woods has not performed a day's work for WCS in years. In addition to drawing his free salary from WCS, Mr. Woods pays himself an addition \$2,000 or so as the union president."

He added, "the union also pays for other perks such as cell phone, airfare whenever and wherever he travels, and we are told gasoline for his vehicle."

The Chairman said, "Mr. Woods was even paid a proficiency pay by WCS. He was astoundingly paid a partial increment in 2013, and has requested increments and additional benefits. He's also requested promotions and upward mobility. This is all while having no job description," he said.

This was brought to the union president's attention in a letter dated May 9th, 2016.

The chairman added

that Mr. Woods responded to that letter on June 16th, 2016, saying that he should get increments on the promotion of industrial harmony, supporting a five-year industrial agreement, conducting the process of the collective bargaining on behalf of the union, and minimizing strike action in five years.

These were among 21 reasons that Mr. Woods listed.

Mr. Gibson said, "the then GM wrote him on the 25th June 2016 stating that the significant majority of the activities outlined in the letter to justify and enhance increments are associated with his position as union president."

For which, he added, that WCS already granted Mr. Woods the benefit of leave.

Mr. Woods was then told that management cannot support or supply additional increment.

Mr. Gibson also said that the board has consulted their attorneys to strike out the union's writ of summons to the matters stated.

He also reemphasized that WCS does not intend to impede Mr. Woods in performing his union duties. However, he says he is to return to the job.

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THE MUSIC PROJECT-HIGH SCHOOL BAND COMPETITION GROUP PAID COURTESY CALL ON THE GOVERNOR GENERAL



► Governor General, Her Excellency the Most Hon. Dame Marguerite Pindling (seated centre) welcomed members of the Executive Board, Teachers and Students, of the Music Project/High School Band Competition during a courtesy call at Government House, February 8, 2019. (BIS Photo/Patrick Hanna)

WARNING SHOT



By Jerry Hutchinson

Blacklisted Again: Time To Go To The UN?

By Jerry Hutchinson

“The difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion is the thickness of a prison wall”.

-- **Dennis Healey, Former UK Chancellor of the Exchequer.**

As sure as bills follow excessive Christmas spending, The Bahamas is once more on a blacklist, this time from the Netherlands. No matter how cleverly the government crafts financial and commercial legislation; or, how much national sovereignty is foregone; how much we complain about the inequity of it all; how many formerly highly paid Bahamians are now unemployed, nothing seems to change. Like the proverbial deer in the head lamps, Bahamians are always waiting to be hit from some quarter, usually by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). I know that complaining about the actions of the OECD and organizations who enforce their rules is one of our national pastimes. Many have contributed ideas on how to relieve The Bahamas of the threat of Blacklisting from the OECD. However, I propose to take another route. I want to know what's bugging the OECD and if their irritation with The Bahamas and other Blacklisted nations is justified and its rules fairly applied. Also, how can an intergovernmental economic organization continually attack the very economic existence of a member of the United Nations?

According to the OECD website: “it is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade. It is a forum of countries describing themselves as committed to democracy and the market economy, providing a platform to compare policy experiences, seeking answers to common problems, identify good practices and coordinate domestic and international policies of its members. Most OECD members are high-income economies with a very high Human Development Index (HDI) and are regarded as developed countries.

As of 2017, the OECD member states collectively comprised 62.2% of global nominal GDP (US\$49.6 trillion) and 42.8% of global GDP (Int.\$54.2 trillion) at purchasing power parity. And, like all fully developed countries the OECD countries have large and expensive social benefits programmes which need to be funded. These benefits include but are not limited to: unemployment benefits, family benefits, social assistance benefits, housing benefits, covering old age, survivors, and incapacity-related benefits; health, family, and active labour market programmes; and unemployment, housing benefits; pensions. Funding would normally come from taxes paid by its citizens. However, many of their wealthier citizens and businesses seek to reduce their tax liability through various legal investment schemes some of which reduce tax liability and, in some cases, evade all tax liability”.

The OECD represents in part, many of the richest nations in Europe. Some of whom were colonial powers and had colonies across the globe. These nations plundered the wealth of their colonies in Africa and Latin America; and, repatriated vast amounts of gold and diamonds to their national coffers. This explains why they were able to create these massive economies especially as there are no diamond mines in Europe and very little gold mining. Yet, these countries remain major players in the markets for precious metals and minerals. Having plundered the natural resources of its colonies to build vibrant, affluent and expansive and expensive social security programmes for their citizens, these historical colonialists are now asking their former colonies to collect their taxes for them! To assist them in spreading their false narrative, the OECD cynically conflates tax avoidance which is legal and tax evasion which is illegal. They have a lot at stake. The OECD estimates that there is between 50 Billion and 70 Billion Euros in taxable funds held in offshore jurisdictions pejoratively called “tax havens,” which they seek to collect by any means.

If that means destroying another nation's economy while its own members regularly engage in the same alleged facilitation then, so be it! These actions are nothing less than neo-colonialism and economic warfare which is defined as: “the use of, or the threat to use, economic means against a country in order to weaken its economy and thereby reduce its political and military power. Economic warfare also includes the use of economic means to compel an adversary to change its policies or behaviour or to undermine its ability to conduct normal relations with other countries.

“Some common means of economic warfare are trade embargoes, boycotts, sanctions, tariff discrimination, the freezing of capital assets, the suspension of aid, the prohibition of investment and other capital flows, and expropriation”. Encyclopaedia Britannica.

How unfair and arbitrary OECD actions are especially as regards to alleged money laundering was highlighted in the Guardian (UK) of 20th March 2017 which stated: “According to the newspaper, these documents show that between 2010 and 2014, British registered companies and British-based banks helped move out of Russia at least \$20bn of the proceeds of criminal activities.

This should come as no surprise. In 2016, the Home Affairs Select Committee concluded that the London property market was the primary avenue for the laundering of £100bn of illicit money a year. The investigative journalist Roberto Saviano has said of the international drugs trade: “Mexico is its heart and London is its head”. So, the recent Blacklisting of the Bahamas by the Netherlands was both surprising and troubling. Surprising because the OECD usually hunts in a pack and a country's legislators can partially rely on their findings. Puzzling because as an Oxfam report concluded: “Blacklist or Whitewash? Oxfam applied the criteria the EU is using to draw up the blacklist to 92 countries screened by the union and its 28-member states. The criteria exclude EU member states, but if they did not, Oxfam concluded that four countries should be blacklisted: Ireland; Luxembourg; The Netherlands; Malta.

The Cayman government also weighed in and articulated the lurking suspicion of many blacklisted countries when it was reported: “The Cayman Islands government has accused The Netherlands of including the British territory on its separate blacklist as a way of diverting criticisms of its own tax practices by attacking legitimate tax regimes” Caribbean News Now 29 January 2019. Imagine that: blacklisted by the Netherlands and all we wanted was a slice of the “Dutch Sandwich”! The implications of this are far-reaching and troubling. EU countries, many of whom are members of the OECD, do not appear to apply the criteria it uses to black list The Bahamas on its members. That's my problem. The Bahamas and other Caribbean nations are singled out for blacklisting while notorious money laundering and terrorist financing facilitators are being given a free pass. In The Bahamas especially, unfair and arbitrary demands by the OECD has cost us dearly. As an example, the Central Bank of the Bahamas in a December 2018 industry briefing revealed that: “Combined domestic and “offshore” banking assets declined by 35.2 % falling from \$657.9bn to \$426.2bn between 2012 and last September”; a banking industry shrinkage of \$200bn.

The briefing also examined the job losses in the banking sector which declined by 113 jobs or 2.5% of the financial services industry's work force mainly through a “shift in business strategy and de-risking”. These grim statistics confirm my suspicions that despite the numerous bills and legislation passed by successive administrations, the OECD, s policies are not to seek compliance as they define it but, rather, to subjugate us. We can add to this sad litany the flight of major European banks from our jurisdiction because of the actions of the OECD. Our appeasement of an organization who applies unfair and economically devastating requirements on the Bahamas yet, allows its member countries to go away scot free is not and never has been in the best interests of the Bahamas. My view parallels that of Cayman Government officials who complained that the OECD backlisting policies were: “unjustified” and “wholly lacking in fairness and credibility”.

The discriminatory way the OECD and EU applies its rules especially as it relates to it UK overseas territories has not gone unnoticed. Molly Scott Cato, a Green MEP and a member of the European Parliament's Panama Papers committee, said: “Once again, the UK and its offshore territories are at the heart of things. “She said Britain had to “clean up its act” and regulate the “legal limbo” of its overseas territories if it wanted a positive trading relationship with the EU after Brexit” The Financial Times. Indeed, no missive or sanction issued can be fair, balanced, or non-discriminatory if members of the decision-making body of the OECD are themselves not compliant with the rules they seek to enforce. The Bahamas has been made to virtually destroy its financial services through OECD driven legislation with nothing to show but economic pain and job losses. As a member of the United Nations (UN) our country finds itself being relentlessly attacked by economic means by other UN members through its surrogate, the OECD, a non-member but with Observer Status. We are accused of many transgressions and while we may sometimes fall short, we are not criminals! In their rush to destroy, the OECD conveniently ignores the research by imminent scholars on the offshore banking industry.

They also ignore the fact that as regards the “offshore” banking industry, we are approaching a state of diminishing returns. Its just not worth the time and effort to comply when, the OECD continually moves the goalposts. By “we” I mean the Bahamian people. The ones who are suffering daily inconvenience because of oppressive banking requirements driven by OECD policy. Not the “nattering” class who make fortunes from offshore banking.

No matter how this ends, they have amassed fortunes in fees to insulate themselves from the fallout. Fortunes which probably far exceed the corporate taxes collected by the public treasury although we foot the bill and bear the shame of

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The Bahama
Journal
Quo Vadis, Bahamas?

Wendall K. Jones
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E D I T O R I A L

A NATION OFF COURSE

Throughout the Bahamas, commentators across the board who are truly aware of the trajectory of the nation are concluding that as a nation, we are off course. This can be justified socially, politically and economically.

However, since the nation's most precious resource is its human capital, the area of social development is most worrisome. The level of carnage in our heartland communities will confirm that there is an epidemic of violence, rooted in what is clearly a culture of violence that has caused the deaths of more than a thousand young men and women in the last decade. It is as if the Bahamas is engaged in a continuous civil war.

In addition, a few hundred have been maimed. Due to shootings that have occurred, some young men are blinded, some in wheelchair, others are paralyzed. Yet the level of debauchery continues.

This high level of violence is all a part of a corrupt society, where our leaders across the nation have not been focusing on the essential- what kind of society we are building and the quality of education being provided. We contend that people must be educated for life; they must know how to live in a well ordered society.

While the Bahamas is called “ a Christian nation” by the majority of Bahamians, the lifestyle of the citizenry is generally far removed from Christianity. The Christian lifestyle is one that follows the example of Jesus The Christ, who as is recorded in the book of Luke, called on his disciples to become Fishers of men. This means that Christians must “rescue the perishing,

care for the dying and snatch them from sin and the grave. Weep over the erring ones, lift up the falling and tell them that Jesus is mighty to save.” That is the hymn that practicing Christians know.

In communities around the Bahamas, young men and women are miseducated, poorly socialized and as a consequence, have adopted a lifestyle which is new to their grandparents. They are seemingly caught-up in a new morality and this is responsible for the early demise of many. The children of the 1990s are following a new social order and have fallen prey to imported deviant cultures . What we see is what former Governor General Sir Arthur Foulkes calls, “a coarsening of our society.”

Sadly, far too many of our leaders are uncaring about this state of affairs and they fail to address it. Many of the church leaders are so compromised that they are only concerned about “feathering their own nests” financially and have reduced some churches to nothing more than social clubs.

We ignore this state of affairs to our peril. The dilemma now is how should we as a nation address the problems when values are being shaped by the vulgarization on social media.

While many of our youth are chasing false hopes, there are many in the government who apparently do not understand good governance. Beyond this, we have a country that cannot meet the expectations of its citizens. The people have been given false hopes and promises for years. Now we pay the price with social deterioration and a people drifting without direction.

Blacklisted Again: Time To Go To The UN?

CONT'D.

reputational damage. They know the futility of trying to resolve our differences with the OECD by legislation but, remain silent. The more legal band aids, the longer it takes for the victims to die; while the victims die the death of a thousand cuts the fees keep rolling in. In the end, OECD actions is all about politics. They select where and upon whom they will inflict torment. The Caribbean Offshore banking industry is an easy target because of our self-doubt.

Sovereign countries have allowed themselves to be convinced that their financial services activity which is fully legal is somehow non-compliant. A study by Findley, Nielson and Sharman stated: “They were never able to set up a shell company in Caymans, Bahamas or the Seychelles. The politicisation of the blacklists has enabled London to become the global centre of money laundering”. It is time for The Bahamas to resist implementing endless financial legislation which appears to be futile. We need to accept that the world view of OECD members is informed by their mistaken belief that the real threat of money laundering and tax evasion lies on the small, palm-fringed islands of their former colonies and not in London or the money markets or banking sectors of its members. And as the saying goes “Once a false idea becomes fixed in a person's mind, he will twist facts or probability to accommodate it rather than question it”.

This is a political fight which requires a fair hearing in the proper forum. OECD actions are biased, discriminatory, wrongheaded and selective in who must comply. The Bahamas and other Caribbean nations must fight this clear

attempt to usurp the sovereignty of our countries through the deliberate and pre-meditated undermining of their financial systems. The Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 3281 (XXIX). Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States December 1974 gives a partial list of members rights and obligations which may assist in this. These are:

Article 10

All States are juridically equal and, as equal members of the international community, have the right to participate fully and effectively in the international decision-making process in the solution of world economic, financial and monetary problems, inter alia, through the appropriate international organizations in accordance with their existing and evolving rules, and to share in the benefits resulting therefrom.

Article 24

All States have the duty to conduct their mutual economic relations in a manner which takes into account the interest of other countries. In particular, all States should avoid prejudicing the interests of developing countries.

Article 32

No State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights.

So, lets get on with it!

Union Still In The Dark About WSC VSEP'S

BY LICEC BASTIAN
Journal Staff Writer

The Water and Sewerage Corporation (WSC) has yet to address the Voluntary Separation Packages (VSEPS) with the corporation's union heads, but instead presented employees "a cake with all kind of cherry on top" according to

Bahamas Utilities Services and allied Workers Union (BUSAWU) President, Dwayne Woods.

Talks of right-sizing several government agencies, began in earnest in 2018, and the WSC's Executive Chairman, Adrian Gibson, just last July announced that the corporation wanted to "boost

efficiency and streamline operations", and planned to reduce staff by offering VSEPS to between 80-100 of its 420 employees.

But BUSAWU president says no such offer has come to the union.

"Management has not come to the union to talk anything about a VSEP package. But what they did was they went to the

membership without coming through the union and told them they have a cake with all kind of cherry on the top and they must individually come to the office for this cake with cherry icing on the top which is nonsense," Mr. Woods said.

"That was very frivolous and vexatious and that's how the union sees

it.

"We don't want to get into no contention, but we beg them to be apprehensive about this whole thing and let's get to the bottom of what we trying to do.

"Whatever they want to do with the VSEP package, the union is here to negotiate it," Mr. Woods said.

When asked what

members should do about the offer by WSC management, Mr. Woods opined that union members understand the negotiation process.

"Our members know that the union is the sole bargaining agent on their behalf and I don't think they're fool enough to venture into that port, small craft must stay in port," Mr. Woods said.

Dames encourages young men to succeed academically

BY JAMEELHA MISSICK
Journal Staff Writer

Top performers of the AF Adderley Junior High have been encouraged to work hard to succeed academically.

Addressing the school's awards recognition ceremony Friday

morning, Minister of National Security Marvin Dames reminded the youngsters that success comes through hard work and perseverance.

"You're not going to be successful if you're lazy, this is one impediment to success," he said.

"Laziness is an impedi-

ment to success," he reiterated.

"You're not going to be successful if you're lazy, you're not going to be successful if you're disruptive in class, you're not going to be successful if you fail to do your classwork and your homework, you're not

going to be successful if you feel that you're the big boy on campus and you don't have to do your homework, so those are all impediments to success."

Speaking specifically to the young men, the minister added that success is not gender neutral.

"I say to many of the young men or all of the young men this morning, who are not sitting here, that you can be here as well, you have to determine your pathway, you have to determine that, you can be here," he said.

"I remember as a kid every time I failed, I

always went and reflect and said what did I do wrong, how can I do better, how can I succeed, and that's what every one of you ought to be saying today."

Fifty-one students made the honour roll while six made the principal's list.

Police Destroy Marijuana Fields

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Following a joint operation by Drug Enforcement Unit, US Drug Enforcement Agency and officers from the North Andros District, in two separate incidents last week, police recovered in excess of 90,000 marijuana plants.

In the first discovery, according to police reports, shortly before 7:00am Thursday, 7th February, OPBAT officers, while on air patrol over San Andros, North Andros, discovered four marijuana fields.

Following the discovery and with the assistance of Andros Division Officers, they

uprooted a total of 9,700 marijuana plants ranging from 6 inches to 3 feet in height, before destroying the fields with fire.

A day later, Friday 8th February, shortly after 8:00am, officers from Andros Division, Drug Enforcement Unit and US Drug Enforcement Agency,

went to a bushy area in San Andros, North Andros, where they uncovered another four marijuana fields and uprooted a total of 84,810 marijuana plants.

These fields were also later destroyed by fire.

Investigations are ongoing into these incidents.

In a separate incident, police here in the capital also recovered a quantity of marijuana that allegedly originated out of Exuma.

According to reports, shortly before 10:00am, Friday, Central Division Officers, acting on information went to a vessel at Potters Cay Dock, which had arrived

from Exuma and recovered two boxes, containing 17 packages of suspected marijuana.

No arrest was made in these incident. Investigations are ongoing.

The weight of the drugs 100 pounds with an estimated street value of \$100,000.

BISHOP HALL CALLS FOR LONG-TERM AID FOR HAITI

Continued from / PAGE 1...

of the victims of the shipwrecked migrants yesterday at the Enoch Beckford Auditorium.

Bishop Hall said, "what France did to Haiti, albeit centuries ago, has left an indelible stain on the country decades later, so much so that some has deemed France's actions "an unpardonable sin.

"Most right-thinking, progressive people would call on France and other developed countries and powerhouses to step up its assistance to Haiti. It is somewhat duplicitous that other countries in need, with citizens with lighter hues and complexions, seem to receive donor aid quicker and with less strings attached.

"And yet this tragedy also brings into focus the urgent need for the political and economic leaders of the Island Republic of Haiti to take a deep, introspective look at themselves," said Bishop Hall.

"I have visited Haiti on four (4) different occasions. Haiti is indeed a beautiful nation, but the vast division between its rich and it's poor is far too wide.

"Affluent and well-off Haitians living in Haiti, as well the Haitian Diaspora living in comfort abroad, must be the first to step up and care for their own sisters and brothers," he said.

He called on those Haitian nationals living

comfortably in The Bahamas to also lead the way in assisting to ameliorate Haiti's social, economic, and political problems.

"I call on each of you to urge your family members in Haiti to follow the laws of The Bahamas. We are a welcoming people, but a country of laws.

"You must implore them to refrain from taking such dangerous voyages on the open seas. Indeed to be poor and destitute is still far better than to be dead and gone.

"Let us then, even as we grieve, learn from this tragedy. And assist in any way that to help our brothers and sisters in Christ," said Bishop Hall.



NOTICE

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) was established on 1 August 2009, as a corporate body, under the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority Act, 2009.

As the independent regulator, URCA's regulatory remit of the Electronic Communications Sector (ECS) covers radio and television broadcasting, radio spectrum, internet and data, pay-TV and voice telephony; and oversight of Electricity (ES) Sector which includes entities or persons who generate, transmit, distribute or supply electricity throughout The Bahamas.

URCA wishes to advise that a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the provision of Internal Audit Services has been uploaded to our website at www.urcabahamas.bs.

Interested parties should submit responses to the RFP by 4:00 pm on 28 February 2019.

Henfield Endorses Bahamian Investment

Bahamians in Haiti to take advantage of, then it would be great.

"I mean the cost of labour is cheaper, Haiti is known for its agricultural efforts, so I think it will be a great idea.

"I think anything that we can do to keep Haitians at home, because these are economics migrants that we're seeing. So, anything we can do to keep them at home to find means of employment is

a great idea," he said.

Minister Henfield's comments follow those of Haitian League of Pastors President Dr. Jean Paul Charles, who this week suggested that the wider community should invest in Haiti as an incentive for its residents to stay home.

This, as opposed to sacrificing everything and boarding dangerously overcrowded vessels to start a life elsewhere, as the case on two

Saturdays ago.

Over people were perished when their 40-foot vessel ran aground near Man-O-War Cay, Abaco.

83 people were said to be on board. Meantime, talks between The Bahamas and Haitian governments continue.

"We have to signed agreements with the Haitian government, but you know since we had this high-level delegation meeting in Haiti lead by our Prime Minister

where we met with President Moise, things have been kind of disruptive in Haiti.

"As you know there is ongoing unrest in Haiti as we speak and so we have not been able to gain any real traction, but this was always on our radar," Minister Henfield said.

The Minister accepts that until such time, The Bahamas will continue to shoulder this problem.

"It is a perennial prob-

lem that we've been experiencing through many years now.

"We're hopeful that this event will cause people to have cognizance of the danger of this perilous journey that people take to find a better way of living in The Bahamas and elsewhere.

"So, we hope that the Haitian government would continue to partner with us as we send the message forward to Haiti and communicate

wide and far across the country that this journey is not worth it, because you can lose your life and that needs to be communicated throughout Haiti to people who are potential migrants trying to find a better life in The Bahamas," he said.

The victims who died in the boating disaster were buried after services on Sunday at the Enoch Beckford Auditorium, Carmichael Road.

RBDF Marines Graduate from Close Range Combative System Training

Twelve (12) marines from the Royal Bahamas Defence Force's (RBDF) Military Police and Force Protection (MPFP) Department recently completed a three-week Close Range Combative Systems (CRCS) training course at the Coral Harbour Base.

The rigorous program was in keeping with the

Commander Defence Force's intent to transform members of the RBDF into a professional body of leaders, who set the standard of excellence in guarding our heritage.

The course offered participants additional non-lethal combative options to gain control of combative situations while carrying out their regular

duties. These newly acquired maneuvers and systems not only assist in developing marines physically, but also mentally as they learn new skills and techniques.

The CRCS training is comprised of 5 levels which include: tan, grey, green, brown and black. During the graduation ceremony, 10 Marines

completed their grey belts and 2 others were awarded tan belts. The training mixes boxing, grappling, armed and unarmed fight training.

Marine Seaman Marcian Tucker was the lead instructor for the training along with 8 other instructors. In Marine Seaman Tucker's words, the training makes

for 'a more fit fighting force.'

Captain Coral Harbour (Acting) Captain Adrian Chriswell, in his remarks, congratulated the graduates and assured them that continual support will always be given by the organization for training which would better equip marines.

Commander Frederick

Brown, the Commanding Officer of MPFP commended Chief Petty Officer Carlos Sturupp, the Department's Training Supervisor, and his team for hosting the course, and congratulated the participants on successfully completing their intensive training as defenders of our country's heritage.



► RBDF Marines taking part in the Close Range Combative Systems (CRCS) training course at the Coral Harbour Base. (Photo: Marine Seaman Michael Turner)



► Marines and instructors from the Royal Bahamas Defence Force's (RBDF) Military Police and Force Protection (MPFP) Department during the graduation ceremony of the Close Range Combative Systems (CRCS) training course at the Coral Harbour Base. Also shown are Captain Adrian Chriswell, Captain Coral Harbour (Acting) and Lieutenant Commander Natasha Miller, Executive Officer MPFP. (Photo: Marine Seaman Michael Turner)