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75 CENTS

WSC UNIONS VOTE TO STRIKE

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

Labour woes are intensifying at the Water and Sewerage Corporation where unionized members of staff voted to strike.

This happened in the face of what it has termed turmoil at the government corporation that recently led to a sit out.

The polls opened as early as 9:00AM yesterday, with union members filing towards the rear of the Corporation's University Drive Headquarters to cast their ballots.

At issue were a number of grievances with the corporation's management.

■ See page 3...

EQUIPMENT FAILURE LEADS TO LOAD SHEDDING

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer



There has been another day of electricity load shedding in New Providence yesterday. It happened every two hours, much to the annoyance of residents and business owners.

Addressing the issue at a Chamber of Commerce Power Breakfast at the Hilton hotel yesterday morning was BPL Executive Director Patrick Rollins, who said it's due to an equipment malfunction.

■ See page 3...

PM: STATE-OF-THE-ART COASTAL RADAR TO STRENGTHEN BORDERS



▶ Prime Minister Minnis addressing the audience at the handover ceremony in Matthew Town, Inagua

The handover of the country's first state-of-the-art coastal radar system marks an essential step in the Government's strategy to strengthen the borders of The Bahamas, Prime Minister the Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis said on

Wednesday. The Kelvin Hughes Long-Range Coastal Radar, valued at over \$2 million, will enhance the monitoring and provide

■ See page 2...

JUSTICE ESTELLE GRAY-EVANS SWORN IN AS ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE



▶ The Hon. Madam Justice Estelle Gary-Evans was sworn in as Acting Chief Justice by Her Excellency the Most Hon. Dame Marguerite Pindling, Governor General, during a brief ceremony at Government House on Wednesday, April 17, 2019. At present the Hon. Madam Justice Vera Watkins, Acting Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, is on personal leave. (BIS Photos/Letisha Henderson)




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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

SUPT. MARINO HINDS RESPONDS TO US REPORT

BY LEAH COOPER
Journal Staff Writer

Police traffic division Superintendent Marino Hinds stated yesterday that he has a slightly different view from the United States' Safety and Crime Report, which states that police is slow to respond to traffic acci-

dents.

Mr. Hinds insisted that the police force's response time is consistent with that of all Caribbean islands and the world.

"We believe that there is always room for improvement, but we seek to get better," he said.

On the topic of drinking and driving, the

reported stated that that although against the law, drinking and driving is common.

Mr. Hinds said, "That is a law that has not been passed as yet. We believe that in very short order that will become law."

"If people are keeping up with what is happening, it has already been

passed in the House of Assembly. We're waiting on it to be passed in the Senate, and the obviously it has to be signed and gazetted," he added.

Once the act is signed and presented in an official capacity, he said, that would give them the power to cite drivers.

"As our laws are

presently constituted, it is not an offense to drink alcohol. Now, you have to fall within the parameters of being considered drunk.

The current process for deeming a driver impaired is to have a physician measure the amount of alcohol in their blood under the approval of the

driver or the Magistrate's Court.

Mr. Hinds indicated that there has been talk about implementing breathalyzers, however the force still awaits further instruction.

As for now, police have the liberty to arrest drunk drivers based on suspicion.

PM: STATE-OF-THE-ART COASTAL

better protection against illegal migration, illicit drugs, gun trafficking, poaching, human trafficking and other threats to national security, said the Prime Minister.

Great Inagua is the first island in The Bahamas to receive this state-of-the-art radar system. A second radar will be installed on New Providence. And there are plans for two more radar systems.

Additionally, the Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) continues to decentralize its operations, which is a core element of the Government's national defence strategy.

"The RBDF base here in Inagua will be expanded. And a new base will be constructed at Ragged Island," said the Prime Minister. "Both bases

will be equipped with various detection and tracking technologies."

Last week, Cabinet approved a proposal to implement a Bahamas Unmanned Aerial System that will be managed by the RBDF.

This drone program includes immediate surveillance capabilities, as well as training in drones, the purchasing of drones and the development of a drone academy and workshop.

"This new capability will enhance national security and may be utilized by all of the uniformed branches to combat crime, illegal migration and other national security threats.

The Kelvin Hughes Long-Range Coastal Radar was made available to The Bahamas by the Government of the

United States of America through the US Embassy in The Bahamas.

The Prime Minister thanked the US Embassy, for helping The Bahamas to secure this vital technology, and the US Department of Defense Officials for their assistance in this critical project.

"It is a tremendous challenge to monitor the approximately 100,000 square miles of our extensive maritime domain," noted Prime Minister Minnis.

The installation of technically-advanced long-range coastal radars is an essential component in enhancing the monitoring and better protection of the borders of the country's far-flung island-chain, he said.

"Combatting crime and the protection of our

border from multiple threats are two of the most important functions of a government," said the Prime Minister.

"We are making progress on both fronts, but we still have much work to do to better secure the Bahamian people and our borders."

Government agencies must use every instru-

ment at its means to make the Bahamian people feel safer and more secure, which includes innovative and advanced technology, Prime Minister Minnis added.

Prime Minister Minnis expressed the enormous gratitude of the Government, and his personal gratitude, to the leaders and officers of all

of the uniformed branches for their dedication to serving and protecting the citizens, residents and visitors to The Bahamas.

"By making our borders more secure, especially from gun trafficking and illicit drugs, we will make our streets, homes and businesses safer and more secure," said the Prime Minister.

HELP WANTED

Family of four is seeking the services of a female aged 30 years or over to work as a housekeeper at a home on Paradise Island.

Applicants must be bi-lingual and possess the ability to speak Portuguese. The applicant must also have knowledge of preparation of Brazilian cuisine. This housekeeper will also be responsible for the care of an elderly family member and two dogs.

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- 4 Inspection/Copies of License Discs
- 5 Up to Date Insurance Certificates
- 6 Vehicle color and right/left hand drive (for new vehicle)

All Franchise Holders with fleet of five (5) or more vehicles are to submit their packages to Road Traffic Department, Franchise Unit, Section 3, Eastern Side of the National Stadium. All Packages will be processed on first come first serve basis.

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WSC UNIONS VOTE TO STRIKE

Continued from / PAGE 1...

In the case of the managers union is an outstanding industrial agreement that President Ednel Rolle claims WSC Executive Chairman Adrian Gibson simply refuses to sign.

"The last time he had a

press conference he explained those reasons and you know, we have since responded and asked him to put the evidence out there so everybody can judge for themselves."

"There are two sides, so you can put it out there, let everybody see it for themselves, that's all we asked," he said.

For the line staff, the major bone of contention is an alleged breach in union leave.

"It was established that the Corporation unilaterally varied the terms and conditions of the promotional procedure and the Corporation and the Union went and signed on to a new promotional pro-

cedure.

"Since then, the Corporation has breached that procedure more than three times, putting in unorthodox promotional listings and the Labour Board advised them that maybe they should match that list of promotions to the union with deserving persons being afforded

promotions that was not done.

"This was done on maybe two or three occasions," said BUSAWU President Dwayne Woods.

It was expected that some 300 BUSAWU members would participate in the strike poll along with 62 managers.

Both unions have

agreed that pushing ahead with a strike will be a last resort.

As for the results, Labour Director John Pinder confirmed that for New Providence 106 of the line staff members voted yes.

As for the managers union, 21 voted yes while 14 voted no.

EQUIPMENT FAILURE LEADS TO LOAD SHEDDING

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Luckily, new rental generators are said to be on the way.

"On Monday, we had some equipment failure, as a few weeks ago we lost a generator that we can't find the part for.

"We actually have to get some more rental generators for the summer, so we're doing our best to minimize our load shedding and this will be the last summer of these kinds of issues," Mr. Rollins said.

According to Mr. Rollins, the rental generators are set to arrive in the capital next month.

Mr Rollins did not reveal the cost of the generators, but indicated it was that the same company that supplied BPL with generators in the past.

BPL's load shedding began on Monday in two hour increments. Mr. Rollins said the plan's to keep that exercise at a minimum until the rental generators come on stream.

"We won't have load shedding, but it's difficult with our old equipment. If something fails, we may experience some load shedding, but we're trying to keep that to a minimum



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Over \$5,000 cash and prizes to Battle of the Rake-n-Scrape Bands winners

'The Cat Island Rake-n-Scrape Festival is now 20 years old, this annual Bahamian musical festival, held during the Labour Day and Whit Monday holidays weekend, is the signature event for north Cat Island' stated spokesperson for the Cat Island Rake-n-Scrape Festival committee Mrs. Kay Chriswell. 'The signature event for this our 20th annual Cat Island Rake & Scrape festival will be the National Battle of the Rake and Scrape bands. Over \$5,000.00 in cash and prizes is being set aside to find out who is the best Rake n Scrape Band in The Bahamas. Past winners have been Bo Hog and the Rooters, The Long Island Connection as well as the reigning champions Ophie and the Websites'.

Mrs. Chriswell continued, 'the festival showcases the sensuous, rhythmic vibe of the Bahamian Rake and Scrape music, performed by local and national artists. It also features a Gospel music, Battle of the Rake & Scrape Bands, quadrille dancing, a children's corner with games and many more activities for the first time and returning visitors.' During last year's 19th festival opening the former Minister of

Youth, Sports and Culture the Hon. Michael Pintard said that 'his Ministry was committed to collaborating with the Cat Island Rake-n-Scrape Festival committee in ensuring that each year the product improves and enlarges the reach of Bahamian artists, artisans and chefs beyond the boundaries of Cat Island and The Bahamas.'

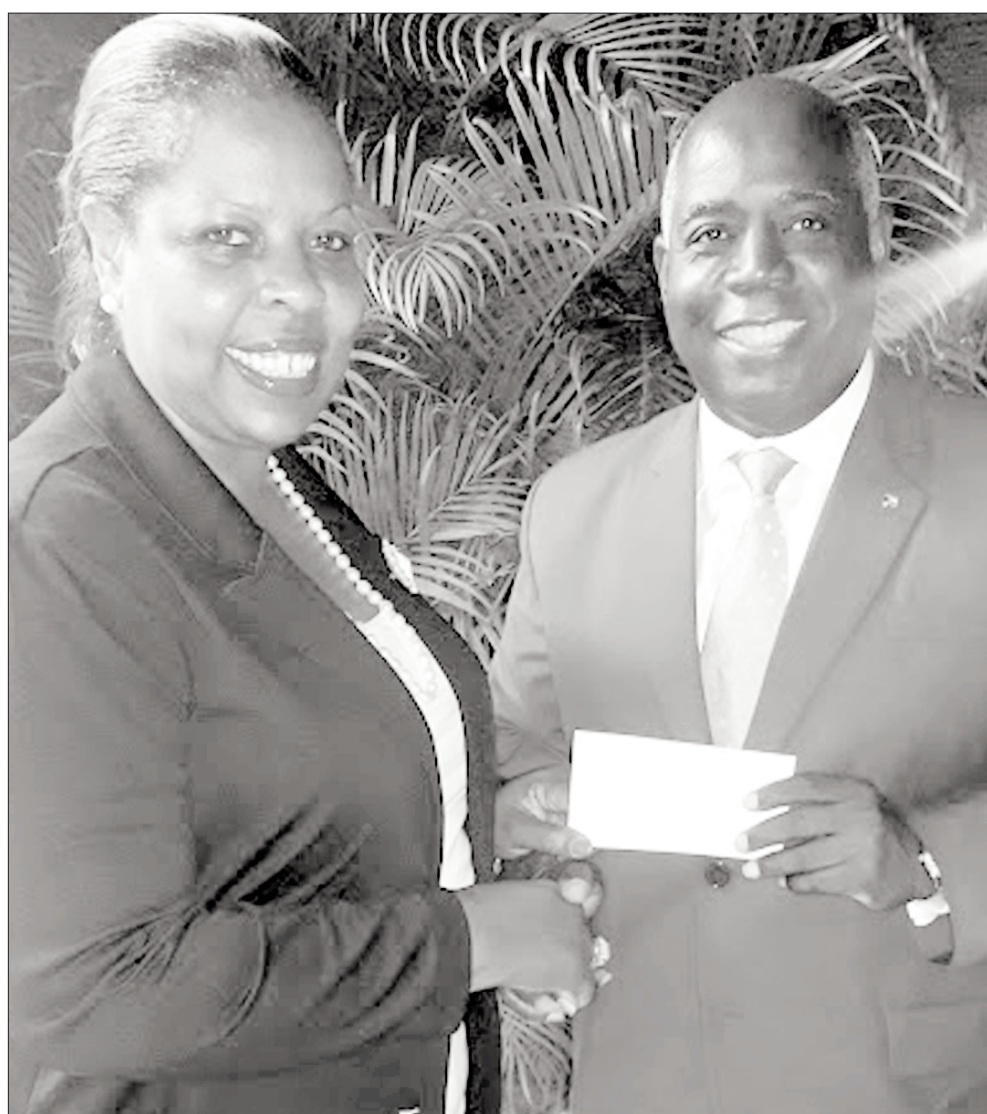
It is the committee's hope that the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture under the new Minister the Hon. Lanisha Rolle will continue the Ministry's commitment in collaborating with the Cat Island Rake-n-Scrape Festival committee in ensuring that vision this year.

"It is our view, said Mrs. Chriswell that Cat Island IS the Rake-N-Scrape capital of the world, the most significant Rake-N-Scrape artists should participate in this festival and emerging from the festival should be a new cadre of Rake-N-Scrape performers. The sights, sounds and tastes of Cat Island will be on full display and packaged for sale Flour cakes, miniatures of Mt. Alvernia, salt packages, artwork of the blue holes or plantations, jams and jellies, fruits, soaps and

candles manufactured on island, baked Cat Island crabs and countless other delights.'

Mrs. Chriswell continues 'that it is a known fact that Cat Island had produced cultural icons, pioneering educators, renowned pastors and a global actor such as Sir Sidney Poitier. Descendant of Cat Island should be proud of their heritage, brilliance and the indomitable spirit of people. The Cat Island Rake-n-Scrape Festival provides the backdrop against which we can explore our heritage and eco-tourism; thereby increasing room inventory, occupancy, sea arrivals and airlift."

The committee also wants to thank the Ministers of Tourism the Honorable Dionisio D'Aguilar and the Hon. Michael Pintard the Minister of Agriculture for their continue support of the Bahamas' indigenous music Rake n Scrape as we look forward to a successful 20th Annual Cat Island Rake-n-Scrape Festival. The festival site opens on Thursday with gospel music all day and night. On Friday and Saturday, the stage comes alive with the national battle of the Jr. & Sr. Rake-n-Scrape bands,



► Mrs. Porcia Armbrister Fernander accepts the Rake n Scrape Festival sponsorship donation from Hon. Philip "Brave" Davis Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition and Member of Parliament for Cat Island.

Quadrille dancing contests plus, Mr. Anderson, Lady E, Lassido and the Boys, Novi, Elon Moxey, Puzzle, Jammin Rahming, Avvy and the Rake n Scrape General Sileet all backed by the sensational sounds of Ira Storr and the Spank Band! On

Sunday all roads lead to Pompey Rock beach for Fun in the Sun with prizes and surprises sponsored by Aliv and Kalik. Western air has committed to providing morning and afternoon flights to accommodate as many persons as possible

For more information go to www.rakenscrape.org Follow us on Facebook and Instagram or contact Kay Chriswell, Secretary of the Rake n Scrape committee at kay-chriswell@hotmail.com

GGYA UPDATES SKILLS OF HIKING SUPERVISORS, ASSESSORS

Their mission is to safeguard the integrity and reputation of the Governor General's Youth Award (GGYA), protecting young persons on hiking expeditions where youths learn some of life's biggest lessons in the least likely locations.

Over the weekend, adventurous journey supervisors and assessors participated in a workshop designed to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver the section of the four-part programme loved and dreaded in equal measure.

"This is the part of the programme that attracts the young people. The aim is to encourage a spirit of adventure and discovery," said Lawson Clarke, the former Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) marine who led the two-day training session.

From training and leading participants to conducting and assessing a qualifying venture, the short course ensures that the standard of the global Award, which operates in more than 130 countries and territories, is maintained locally.

Through developing transferable skills, increasing their fitness levels, volunteering in their communities and cultivating a sense of adventure GGYA helps young people find their purpose, passion and place in the world.

During the adventurous journey component, supervisors are responsi-

ble for the unit's safety. They must shadow groups, which means sticking close enough to prevent any dangerous, or potentially dangerous actions during journeys. Qualifying expeditions last two days, one night for Bronze; three days, two nights for Silver and four days and three nights for a Gold Award.

Supervisors are expected to make contact with their groups at least once a day.

Assessors also observe the group to judge their level of competency. They're the ones to approve that requirements are met.

In some areas, however, standards have been slipping.

"The young people haven't been trained up to the standard that we would like. There are three areas of concern," Mr Clarke advised.

"The main one is footwear. Somehow, overnight people stopped wearing boots. Now you see crocs, slippers, tennis shoes. The next area is food. By one o'clock in the day everybody has crashed."

He added: "The third area is clothing. Short shorts, jean pants and short tights for females have taken over the programme, which leads to injuries. Tight fitting clothes press onto the pulse. As your body temperature rise and you start to exert more, it changes

the rhythm of your heart-beat and that can lead to injuries."

David Thompson came onboard the programme last September as a supervisor for Jack Hayward Senior High School. The hospitality and tourism teacher had noticed participants were not eating a nutritious breakfast.

"They eat snacks before going out," he said. "Moving forward, breakfast will be something I enforce more. I know how to cook outdoors. During their practices I've given them pointers on how to cook over an open fire. It's just a matter of ensuring they execute."

With 32 years of experience under its belt, GGYA knows regular introductory and refresher training opportunities for adult mentors prevent the programme from moving backwards in its development.

"This training ensures that we are all on the same page whether in Andros, New Providence, Guyana or Guatemala," said Earthlyn Pratt, a business studies teacher at Huntley Christie High School in North Andros. In high school, he went as far as his Silver Award.

Fresh off a Bronze practice expedition overseeing 27 young people, the assessor found the weekend refresher course "valuable for us all."

As today's youths set out to find their place in the world, equipping them

with skills and confidence and helping them to find their potential has never been more important.

The idea behind the adventurous journey is to spirit youths away from their comfort zone and, if possible, habitation. All team members must plan and prepare for the trip where youths must fit everything they need for an expedition into a rucksack as they journey in groups of four to seven persons and pass or fail together.

The exception is if a participant was unable to complete the exercise due to sickness or injury.

"The aim is for participants to utilize enterprise and imagination, exercise forethought, undertake preparatory training, practice a sense of shared responsibility, show determination in execution, and in the aftermath produce a reflective report of their experience," said Mr Clarke.

"We want to get away from planning the whole expedition for young people. You have to place them in an environment so they can create an experience and have something to reflect on. They need to

be away from people which provides a certain level of comfort. Every time the group sees you it diminishes the challenge.

They feel more safe and secure and not as they should – that they are in it on their own."

The more developed The Bahamas becomes, isolating the young people on adventurous journeys is proving difficult to do. GGYA is running out of remote, challenging places to explore since some less developed islands have been ruled out due to high transportation costs.

During expeditions, youths must use maps and compass, know how to pitch a tent, pack or prepare lightweight, high energy food and basically be able to survive out in the wilds, thus becoming more self-sufficient.

The course covered planning and implementation of the adventurous journey for participants, mapwork and land navigation, and safety and emergency procedures, among other areas.

In years past, the programme only had to worry about asthma patients, now more youths are afflicted with hyperten-

sion and diabetes, the facilitator said.

"You have to be aware of who has what," Mr Clarke warned. "The office is here to give you confidence that you can manage the risk."

Other safety precautions of the Award programme include hiking along coastline and sandy beaches early in the day, not undertaking unnatural routes, having an alternative route in case of bad weather, starting early in the day, selecting possible escape routes in advance and choosing camp sites with relatively easy access, in case of an emergency.

There's even a strict protocol for tending injuries and fetching help since splitting up a group is considered a drastic step and certain procedures must be followed.

"The training is helping me to better be able to assist the participants in the Royal Bahamas Defence Force's Rangers programme," said Leading Woman Marine Karia Smith, a supervisor for the Rangers involved in GGYA. "It builds their confidence as well as mine."

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