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MONDAY - MAY 20TH, 2019

75 CENTS

BLEAK OUTLOOK FOR NEW BUDGET

DAVIS: GOVERNMENT LEFT WITH FEW OPTIONS

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

Opposition Leader Philip Davis yesterday expressed concerns coming into the new fiscal year as he feels that the government has missed critical fiscal targets for the last two budgetary cycles and because they have failed to present realistic budget estimates.

These comments come ahead of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Peter Turnquest prepares to give the Budget Communication this month.



▶ Opposition Leader, Philip Davis

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"GOV'T OUT OF TOUCH WITH MILLENNIALS"

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

Progressive Liberal Party Senator Jobeth Coleby-Davis said yesterday that the government seems to be out of touch with millennials.

Senator Davis says that a major concern with this age group is that the country's leaders are not leading with them in mind.

Appearing on the Love



▶ Senator Jobeth Coleby-Davis

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THREE ABACO RESIDENTS RECEIVE KEYS TO NEW HOMES

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

A celebratory moment for residents of Spring City and Crossing Rock, Abaco, who waited years to take possession of their homes and or to receive their conveyance and their deeds.

Paying a visit to the island Friday was Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis who shared this news.

He said, "today, it is my pleasure to inform the residents of Crossing Rock

that the deeds and conveyances to their properties have been prepared and can be collected from the Office of The Prime Minister in March Harbour.

"It is now my great privilege and pleasure to present the keys to the homeowners of Spring City and to present conveyance to the residents of Crossing Rock who are in attendance," Dr. Minnis said.

In the case of Spring

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CORONER PROBES THREE HOMICIDES

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

The police-involved shooting off the eastern road this past Friday in which three men were killed by officers is now

the focus of a coroner-led investigation.

Chief Superintendent Solomon Cash told the media that police got information about sus-

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BISHOP HALL SAYS MURDERERS SHOULD GET LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE

BY LISA KNOWLES
 Journal Staff Writer

Senior Pastor Emeritus of New Covenant Baptist Church, Bishop Simeon Hall feels that persons who commit murder and rape should be incarcerated for life, without parole.

Bishop Hall said, "only

when the majority of our citizens, led by our elected Parliamentarians, place more fear in the hearts of gang members and criminals will we see a sustained and continuous reduction in crime.

"We boost about the

■ See page 4...

Minister Pleased With Disney's EIA

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

Environment Minister Romauld Ferreira has expressed confidence in the Environmental Impact Assessment of Disney's development of Lighthouse Point in South

Eleuthera.

Minister Ferreira also confirmed that the EIA will be made available to the public once it is completed.

"The way you do an environmental impact assessment is not a mystery; you can actually

google that and you can get a number of ways to do it.

"The government has its own protocol which is on the website of the Best Commission. So the protocol as to what's involved in an Environmental Impact

Assessment, that's kind of like known science, well established and that's not going to change.

"What happens is there is a degree of specificity for a particular project. This is nothing new. The

■ See page 4...



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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

TORCHBEARERS ANNOUNCE YOUTH CONVENTION

BY LISA KNOWLES
Journal Staff Writer

The Torch Bearers Youth Association says the Free National Movement continues to be the epicenter for good governance and youth engagement in the country. During a Press Conference yesterday afternoon at the FNM Headquarters, the Executives of the Torchbearers outlined plans their upcoming Conference.

Carlyle Bethel, President of the Youth Association said, "shortly after the FNM was formed in October 1971, the Party established the Torchbearers Association in 1972. The Party realized the need for positive social and political activities among Bahamian youth. Thus, the Torchbearers Youth Association was formed.

"The FNM has an excellent track record for youth empowerment. Under the leadership of the Most Hon. Hubert A. Minnis, the FNM has built on the core belief of youth empowerment and involvement. We have seen this manifest itself in numerous government policies and programs that focus on Education, Entrepreneurship and

Employability. The FNM is the only political party that truly gives young people a seat at the table."

"Although the PLP was formed almost 2 decades before the FNM TYA became the first official and constitutionally recognized political youth organization in the country and might I add, most effective and active to this day!

"The aim and objectives of TYA are to establish of TYA are to establish a Youth Association, which will truly reflect the political, social, cultural and economic aspirations of the youth of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas and to help elect, establish and maintain a government that will do the same.

"We affirm and preserve the principles of a democratic government in The Bahamas and strive to put into effect the programs and policies of the FNM as outlined in the Manifesto.

"We liaise with leaders of the Party to provide feedback on current policy issues from a youth perspective, while grooming young, future leaders of the Party and Country.

"We aim to foster a spirit of love, caring and sharing among the

Bahamian people and to assist in the implementation, as far material resources allow, programs designed to provide assistance to young people in the areas of education, health, law, culture, employment and physical and spiritual well-being."

"We aim to promote accountability, high ethical standards and dedicated and efficient service to public life."

"The main focus of this TYA National Executive is to get young people throughout The Bahamas engaged and active in the political process at the community and constituency level. It is at the community level that we hope to change lives. We believe that a bottom-up approach is the best way to empower people to make a positive change in their own community. Our District Association Initiative is our main avenue to accomplish this. The District Association have a mandate to work with the various constituencies in their district to engage, inspire and empower young people."

Mr. Bethel advised that, "On Wednesday, May 29th at 6 pm, we will hold "A Road to Convention Pep Rally" at the FNM National Headquarters.



► Carlyle Bethel, President of the Torchbearers Youth Association

There will be music, entertainment and dynamic speakers. We invite all Bahamians to attend

"Throughout the month of June, we will be hosting a series of Town Hall Meetings throughout New Providence under the theme, "What's in the Budget for Youth" that will focus on breaking down the details of the Government's Budget relevant to young people while providing an opportunity for young people to ask questions and get information on key issues, policies and programs. We will also continue the

launches of our District Associations throughout New Providence and the Family Islands," said Bethel.

"In addition to these events, TYA is planning its upcoming Youth Convention. The Party has given TYA full autonomy in the planning and execution of this event.

"TYA is not an Association of one. We have a diverse group of humble, dedicated and committed members who work tirelessly to help TYA achieve all that it has and will in the future.

"We invite young peo-

ple who are interested in getting involved in nation building to reach out to us via Facebook or Instagram or come to one of our monthly General Body Meetings that are held at FNM National Headquarters on the last Wednesday of each month at 7pm. After all, politics is only as good as the people involved.

"We remain humble, dedicated and committed," he said.

Danielle Miller, Committee Chair gave more details on the Party's

■ See page 4...

Prime Minister to deliver third National Report for 2019

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis will deliver his third report to the nation Today, at 8pm.

The prime-time address will be carried on television and radio and is the final in a series of reports of this kind for 2019. The reports are aimed at providing important updates and information to the people of The Bahamas on a range of issues.

In his third report, Prime Minister Minnis will update the public on matters related to land reform, the environment,

energy reform, general infrastructure and digital transformation and modernization.

The report will highlight major reform efforts underway to digitize and modernize government services and the implementation of a system to clear the land application backlog and restructure the application process for Crown Land.

An overview of the extensive ongoing roadworks program throughout New Providence and The Bahamas, major capital works projects, progress on the New

Providence Landfill and environmental conservation initiatives will also be highlighted.

The report to the nation series is part of the Government's commitment and responsibility to provide timely, accurate, clear and complete information about its programmes, services and initiatives to citizens and residents of The Bahamas.

Monday's national report will be broadcast on ZNS, REVT, ILTV and the Jones Communications Network.

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BLEAK OUTLOOK

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Mr. Davis said that the Finance Minister and his cabinet colleagues are "bloody minded" in their desire to abandon well considered plans for the modernization of the country left in place by the Christie Administration.

This, he said, is all in an effort to mortgage the assets of the State to benefit foreigners, friends, families, and political cronies.

Mr. Davis predicts this will intensify in the upcoming fiscal year.

He said, "they have decided to transfer public buildings to a fund created by Holowesko Partners to minimize the ability of other Bahamian individuals and entities such as the National Insurance Board, churches and ordinary

Bahamians from renting to the Government. At an estimated \$400 million price tag, one can only imagine the windfall the Holowesko Partners stand to gain from compounded interest payments alone."

He also expressed that the government has decided to eliminate business license fees for all banks including RBC, Scotia, CIBC, Citibank and Commonwealth Bank as a reward for their profiteering of Bahamian workers and not lending to Bahamian businesses.

Additionally, he said that the current administration ensures that business license and Value Added Tax (VAT) is calculated on the same tax base to reduce the business license fees of large food stores, pharmacies, Morton Salt and others

with large zero-rated or exempt supplies.

Lastly, he said that the government's decision to join the World Trade Organization and reduce the Common External Tariffs (CEF) to an average of 15 per cent in less than three years, will benefit large importers and in the process, foregoing more than \$100 million in revenue without any articulated replacement plan.

While statistics shows a 1.6 per cent growth in the economy, Mr. Davis noted that customs revenue is down in comparison to last year at the end of the third quarter.

Overall, he said, the government's revenue is also down against projections at the end of the third quarter because of what he calls an "ill-considered

60 per cent increase in VAT and meddling with the tax structure of the web shop gaming industry."

Additionally, the opposition leader labelled the dismantling of the Revenue Enhancement Unit within the Ministry of Finance as another "poor politically motivated policy".

He added that there was over \$400 million in uncollected taxes and hundreds of high end properties unregistered, leaving taxes unpaid.

The PLP leader said, "As this Government is both arrogant and indifferent to human suffering, all of these institutions have been forced to do more with less and the non-Governmental Organizations which in the past have relied on

Government subvention, now do so virtually alone as a result of no adjustment in their subvention to account for the 60 per cent increase in VAT imposed last year."

For the working poor, Mr. Davis said, the outlook is bleak, as he indicated that the government refuses to increase minimum wage in the wake of raising taxes.

He added that VAT's increase coupled with inflation significantly reduced the poor's small income.

As a result, he said, the government has five options – to increase taxes and/or fees, drastically cut recurrent and capital expenditure, borrow from the Central Bank, borrow internationally, or find any excuse to abandon the government's failed poli-

cies... all of which he says are equally bad for the country.

"In light of the foregoing, we in the PLP have no confidence in the ability of this FNM government to put politics aside and bring to Parliament a realistic and practical budget, taking into account the reality of what is happening on the ground and literally in thousands of Bahamian households.", he said

"We say again that the country would have been better off and better served had the FNM left in place many of the policies they inherited from the PLP government.", he added.

Finance Minister Peter Turnquest is set to give his third budget communication of this term on or before Wednesday may 29th.

CORONER PROBES THREE HOMICIDES

Continued from / PAGE 1...

pects in connection with the most recent homicide here in the capital.

He said, "Officers executed a search warrant on the property. Once they entered the property, they were confronted by two armed suspects opening

fire on the officers.

"The officers being in fear for their life, returned fire. Both suspects were shot and certainly injured. Officer then proceeded to empty out the building."

Superintendent Cash indicated that as they continued into the building,

they were confronted by a third suspect.

He was also shot as officers were in fear for their lives, according to Chief Superintendent Cash, who said, once the gunfire subsided, officers recovered three firearms.

However, he revealed to The Journal later that

day that a total of five firearms were recovered from the property along with 22 pounds of marijuana.

When questioned, he declined to comment on reports that children were used as human shields.

Officer Cash did however confirm that all per-

sons in the Newgate Road two story home were taken into custody.

Sources claiming to be close to the victims, told The Journal that their loved ones were actually unarmed and that while the suspects are known to police, authorities clearly came to the home with the

intention to kill.

In fact, one resident of the home alleges that an officer expressed such intentions shortly after arriving on the property.

At last report, residents of that home are still in police custody; the number however, was not specified.



THE PORT DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Nassau, The Bahamas
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no later than 5:00 pm on the 31st of May 2019.

Tenders will be opened at 10:00 am on the 4th of June 2019 at the office of the Tender's Board, Ministry of Finance.

*THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL TENDERS.



THE MINISTRY OF FINANCIAL SERVICES, TRADE & INDUSTRY

PUBLIC NOTICE

The following persons are invited to contact the Ministry of Financial Services, Trade & Industry and Immigration with respect to pending applications at the Department of Immigration:-

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12. Keswani, Jitender
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14. Lopex Alarcon-Bevans, Rosina Elvira
15. Lordeus, Maudelene More
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DAVID R. DAVIS
PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF FINANCIAL SERVICES, TRADE & INDUSTRY
AND IMMIGRATION

"GOV'T OUT OF TOUCH

Continued from / PAGE 1...

97 Radio Programme Jones and Company, the Senator said, "we still have baby boomers leading the millennial generation, and how can you connect to us if you do not have millennials as a part of your team?"

"If you look at how this government has set up their Cabinet, they had young persons that ran. They had young persons that were selected to represent various constituencies, but those persons did not get a seat at the actual table where the actual decisions are being made," she added.

Mrs. Coleby-Davis said that this is important with regard to determining which direction the country should go.

"They would be able to tell them, wait. Instead of trying to sign off another

hotel deal, millennials actually want to be entrepreneurs. So, how about we bring some industries in here, and try to find more ways to build more young entrepreneurs in The Bahamas."

The PLP senator said that the only way to patch this disconnect is to actually give millennials an opportunity to sit at the table and make decisions.

She said, "when Pindling was in power, he represented a generation of women wanting to vote, men wanting to vote, but didn't own land, persons that wanted to work in the banks and didn't want to just be housekeepers, and the taxi cab generation."

"He connected with all of the average Bahamian stories, because that was the group he came out of. Remember, he was young. He wasn't always old. So, when he represented; he

connected to the people in the country and their needs."

When asked if the Christie administration was also out of touch with millennials, she said, "in some ways there probably was a disconnect, but I think that a lot of persons that I speak to who may have even supported the current administration, are saying that they felt like the would've gotten more when the PLP was in power."

"They felt like their needs were considered. They felt like they were doing things for them to make it. You would hear stories on the street now where people are saying that they've never been this frustrated, never been this broke, or scrapping to make a living. The younger generation felt as though they were actually surviving under the PLP," said Ms. Coleby-Davis.

Minister Pleased

Continued from / PAGE 1...

construction of a pier and the installation of amenities, I'm sure is no new ground-breaking era.

"It's all well-established industrial activities with well-known impacts and well-known mitigating measures," he said.

The purpose of an EIA, said the Minister, is to discover the greatest benefit for the greatest amount of people.

"The tool will be applied and is applied to all developments in the country and the Disney development in South Eleuthera will be no exception.

"I have not received the

final Impact Assessment for it, but as we get the information, we will make it public on the government's website and we encourage all Bahamians to keep abreast with what's going on so; you can weigh the pros and cons for yourself," he said.

The Minister's comments come two weeks after five environmental groups raised concerns over the adequacy of the EIA on Lighthouse Point.

This resulted in the group writing a letter to Disney's Senior Vice President of enterprise social responsibility expressing their concerns.

Following this move,

both Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis and Tourism Minister Dionisio D'Aguiar expressed confidence in the deal with Disney.

In March this year it was announced that a private Heads of Agreement signing was held between the government and Disney executives for the construction of a \$250 million to \$400 million project in South Eleuthera amid large push back from the environmentalists.

However, Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis maintains that this deal is in the best interest of Bahamians.

THREE ABACO RESIDENTS

Continued from / PAGE 1...

City, homeowners getting to this point was no easy feat. As the Prime Minister tells it, the construction of homes in Spring City, presented a series of challenges.

"The construction of houses in Spring City presented many challenges. Tough the funds for completion were disbursed, none of the houses were completed.

"The houses were left in various stages of completion, but with no funds to complete the homes. Sadly, all of the funding for this project was paid out, but with no financial

means of completing the eighteen houses, as all funds borrowed from NIB were depleted," he said.

The government last year embarked on a service lot programme aimed at giving Bahamians access to affordable homes by transferring land titles to qualified candidates.

There are 60 lots available for sale in Abaco's Central Pines area. The related concessions include exemptions from customs duties and excise tax on all material necessary for building a single-family home.

The new homeowners had a few things to say after being presented their

keys.

"I work three jobs just trying to get life together as well as going to school fulltime and having a full-time job. It feels good, it's definitely a relief," said one of the new homeowners.

"I'm just so excited and emotional because it took a long time for me to get this. I've been working to my job for 10 years and I actually did it," Okita Parks said.

"It's been an overwhelming experience and it's been really tough and rough at the same time and it was exciting. It was just a lot of emotions mixed up in one," Kyle Johnson said.

BISHOP HALL SAYS MURDERERS SHOULD GET

Continued from / PAGE 1...

statistical reduction in certain crimes, particularly homicides, then only days later, there are multiple slayings. The criminal is hardly impressed or frightened by statistics. In fact, some persons are so demonic and depraved that the recent announcement of relatively positive crime statistics might have motivated some with criminal intent," he said.

The Cleric said, "both the ghastly act of rape and the nefarious, intentional murder of a human being qualifies as the worst of

the worst in my book – the United Kingdom's Privy Council's position notwithstanding.

"We are too passive in this country for certain matters and we must not accept wanton acts of crime as our new normal. Anyone rightly convicted through the judicial system of rape and/or murder should be removed from civilized society for the rest of his or her natural life.

"I do believe that when people make mistakes, particularly when they are repentant, they deserve another chance to remake

their lives," said Bishop Hall.

"Unfortunately, I am also convinced that there are some who are impervious to the best that society offers, and they should be permanently removed from civilization.

"A life sentence without parole protects public safety, while sparing the barbarity of killing our own. It sends the strongest message that violent acts will be severely punished." Bishop Hall said.

The murder count in The Bahamas for 2019 is currently at 34.

TORCHBEARERS ANNOUNCE

upcoming Youth Convention. "During the 2017 Campaign, the FNM promised opportunities for Bahamian ownership and economic growth. A vast majority of the plans presented were tailored to the nation's young people, which were highlighted during our 2017 Youth Convention. From this Administration's election to Office, to present, that mandate has not changed.

In its two-year tenure, our Free National Movement has caused for the establishment of initiatives that offer grants, scholarships and development courses to young persons all over The Bahamas.

"The Free National Movement has and continues to be epicenter of youth engagement and governance in our country. The promises of youth engagement and

opportunities for young people were outlined in our Manifesto and have translated to real policy and action to our government. To reassure the Nation that the FNM has placed young people and succession planning as a top priority in our national development, we will host a Torchbearers Convention under the theme. "A Future Secured: Access Granted". On

Thursday, August 15th and Friday, August 16th, people from across The Bahamas will assemble at the Melia Nassau Beach Resort at 7 pm. The Convention will highlight three of our government's focal priorities – Education, Entrepreneurship and Employability."

She further advised that "the Evening Sessions are open to the public and will

be broadcasted live on Television and Facebook. There will be music entertainment and a dynamic lineup of speakers.

"Closed Day Sessions for TYA Members in good standing will revolve around policy creation, leadership, political training and campaign organizing."

She said that "The Torchbearers Youth Association is not just an

event for our members to take center stage and share the plans, visions, policies and programs that our FNM Government had implemented for young people. It is our intention to deliver a Youth Convention that builds skills and capacity in our organization, and strengthens the foundations of teamwork, leadership and governance," said Ms. Miller.



NOTICE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES

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.

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) invites interested entities to submit proposals for the provision of audit services. The term of the audit engagement is for three (3) years – reporting on the financial statements for the years ending 31 December 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The deadline for submission is 14 June 2019 at 4:00pm. A copy of the Request for Proposal(RFP) may be downloaded from URCA's website at www.urcabahamas.bs/



NOTICE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS SOLAR CANOPY SYSTEM

The Utilities and Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) is the independent regulatory authority with responsibility for the electronic communications sector (ECS) and electricity sector (ES) in The Bahamas. In the electricity sector URCA's primary role is regulation of the sector in accordance with the goals, objectives, and principles underpinning the national energy and electricity sector policies. These policies mandate the use of renewable energy as a form of generation in The Bahamas.

URCA requests proposals for the engineering, procurement, construction, commissioning and maintenance of a solar canopy system (SCS) at its carpark located on Frederick Street in Nassau, Bahamas. The RFP document - ES: 01/2019 - can be collected from URCA's offices on Frederick Street or by writing to info@urcabahamas.bs. The deadline for submission is 4.00 pm on Friday, 31 May 2019.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FORMER M.P. PIERRE DUPUCH

COMMENTARY ON THE WTO

What is WTO? It is the World Trade Organization comprised of some very large countries and organizations controlling the economies of smaller countries. Is that not colonization?

They flatter us by telling us that we would be able to negotiate various positions which would be good for our country. Are they kidding? That's like an ant crawling up an elephants leg with the intention of rape!!!

They don't ask you what to do, they tell you what you must do. Today the Government is overspending as did Government's before them. The WTO says that they must stop overspending or the dollar will weaken. Do we need the WTO to tell us that? Don't we have the guts or the knowledge to do what is right?

They say we must join the WTO to tell us it is best to reduce import duties so that prices can decrease? Do we need the WTO to tell us this and demand that we do it? Does our Government have a "yes sir boss" mentality?

Many years ago when I was in the House of Assembly we got a direct order from Washington saying that "bearer bonds" were immoral and should be made illegal. They didn't bother saying that their state of Delaware was thriving on "bearer bonds" and that we were giving them a run for their money. I suggested that we tell them that when they outlawed bearer bonds in Delaware, we would outlaw them here. Yes, you guessed it. We said "yes sir boss" and outlawed bearer bonds here and Delaware is still thriving on them.

And we want to join the WTO? Will it help us or will it help the big boys?

We are sitting on some of the most valuable assets in the world. But to make anything successful in commerce three things must be present: (1) production, (2) transportation, (3) market-

ing. Bonefishing on the flats of Andros is a multi-billion dollar business. The Bahamians there have the knowledge of production, Bahamasair could provide the proper transportation and the Ministry of Tourism could supply the marketing.

Is that difficult? Or do we need to join the WTO so that they can do it for us?

Inagua has the largest colony of flamingoes in the world. The National Trust says that there are sixty thousand there. The people of Inagua have the product, Bahamasair could supply the transportation and again the Ministry of Tourism could supply the marketing.

Is that difficult? Or do we need to join the WTO so that they can do it for us?

The Bahamas could feed itself. We have any number of ripening seasons, what is blossoming in Abaco is ripening in Inagua.

The farmers on the islands can produce. Reliable transportation is for all intents and purposes non-existent. Marketing does not exist.

Is that difficult to make happen? Or do we need to join the WTO so that they can do it for us?

It would seem that this Government only knows how to tax, not to build!!

A most recent report says that our people are underproductive and overpaid.

Is this telling us something?

Immigration laws have made it easier to bring people in. Is it a stretch to say that since the successive governments have failed, the large corporations of the WTO should be able to come in here, bring in their workers, take their profits out and leave us and our grandchildren to wallow in the sludge left here by the likes of Carnival Cruise Line?

Wake up Bahamians!!!! We're being taken!!!!

establishment of a national Sea Park at Clifton.

The CSC must be congratulated for its wonderful efforts and a call is being made to concerned citizens and the public at large to give support to the organization for a job well done.

As part of its 20th anniversary celebrations, the CSC recently held a special luncheon where several of the other organizations and individuals in the fight were recognized and honored.

It is the work of organizations like the CSC that must be recognized for the extraordinary work done. So often they are overlooked and the public is not aware of the great things they have produced that has, and continues to benefit all Bahamians. So kudos is extended to the CSC, happy 20th anniversary, continue to keep up the good fight!

Sincerely Yours
Lorna Brown

Dear Editor,

There are many non-profit organizations that have fought bravely to preserve the rights of Bahamian citizens, one such organization is the Coalition To Save Clifton (CSC). This awesome body of proud Bahamians, have throughout the course of 20 years, worked tirelessly to ensure that what rightfully should be enjoyed by Bahamians, is indeed given to them and not others.

In doing so, the CSC has set a standard that makes it unique in that it has shown its dedication, reliability, responsibility and its relentless drive to seek ways to improve the livelihood of all Bahamians.

The patriotic stance of the CSC is far reaching, as it has been the driving force behind the preservation of beaches at the historic site, thus the establishment of the Clifton Heritage National Park. However, their fight continues as the organization now has its sight set on the

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Quo Vadis, Bahamas?

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E D I T O R I A L

COUNTER – CULTURES AND CRIME

Public attention in The Bahamas is again being focused on what appears to be a contagion of crimes against persons and property. In a number of particularly gruesome instances, allegations are made of grotesquely savage attacks upon a number of victims. In a number of cases, savagery was sexualized, with girls and women being subjected to no end of terror.

In addition, there is an increase in the number of extra-judicial homicides in the Bahamas. Just last Friday, Police killed three men in a home on the Eastern Road in New Providence who they say were wanted after committing murder.

For a time, this onslaught of crime news had the pernicious side effect of fuelling an outbreak of fear and dread which threatened to unleash an avalanche of hysteria. Many householders started to believe that they were defenceless, and that the police were being stymied by their nemeses in the criminal underworld.

Many residents who support the Police now say, they have apparently risen to the challenge implicit in the threat to their credibility and the mental composure of the public. With the arrest of a number of alleged law breakers, a number of Bahamians are just now daring to breathe a little freer. So while we have no way of knowing for a fact that the people accused are guilty of committing any offence against anyone, we, are quite pleased and comforted that our Policemen are determined to bring serious crime under control, which have led to charges being laid against a number of people.

Time will tell whether the people who are held can help bring closure to the recent spate of homicides, robberies, rapes and kidnappings in New Providence, Grand Bahama and the rest of The Bahamas.

Believing as we do in the supremacy of the law in The Bahamas, we counsel that now that the police have suspects in their protective custody, all efforts much be made of afford these Bahamians the respectful care and attention they deserve. The quintessence of the matter is that no matter what the charge, no matter what the public outrage or fear, there is the magisterial principle of the presumption of innocence which demands that those bringing accusations prove their case.

We allude to this principle because many Bahamians – in their innocence, ignorance or naivete – often rush to judgement and conclude that once a person has been charged, guilt has been affirmed and confirmed.

In extreme cases, enraged mobs take the law into their hands and execute their own brutal brand of rough justice. Such mobs are themselves guilty of undermining law and order. This is why we are adamant in our conclusion that the police should never shirk

from their duty when faced with crowds which threaten public order and decency.

Fortunately for the entire nation, the Royal Bahamas Police Force has carried out its duties with consummate professionalism. The result has been that police officers are able to carry out their duty to serve and protect not only the public, but also the citizens who are in their custody.

Now, lest we be considered naïve, we hasten to add that there are instances where police do exceed their powers, thereby becoming law breakers themselves. When this happens, the law – again – should take its course, without fear or favour

While we are relieved by the new developments which have come to light concerning a number of crimes against persons and property and what the police have achieved, we are alarmed by what appears to be a growing counterculture, one which apparently condones, encourages and legitimizes horror attacks upon innocent men, women and children.

Evidence of the existence of this counter culture is to be found throughout any number of neighbourhoods in our urban spaces where neighbours, family and friends routinely cloak their rapacious sons and daughters and shield them from the state sanctioned consequences of their actions.

This 'cloaking' begins when parents find out that their children are using drugs or alcohol. It begins when they become aware that their under age children are sexually active. It is full-blown when these parents decide to do nothing about their children's offences. A similar pattern is revealed in school when teachers routinely cover up the criminal behaviours of their peers and their student charges. Indeed, the Ministry of Education itself becomes complicit in cloaking when it denies media and police direct access to school campuses. Cloaking takes place whenever information is massaged and managed. Unfortunately – and often tragically – many Bahamians cloak, shield and deny until it is too late.

When they reach the point where dereliction and delinquency can no longer be denied, they often turn their wrath on any number of scapegoats. The truth, however, is extremely simple: when mainstream society fails, counter-cultures proliferate. The Bahamas is uniquely susceptible to assault from any number of negative cultural influences which would work to corrupt and pollute the nation. As we have previously argued, the government and its social partners must move with all due speed to shore up the foundation institutions undergirding this nation, inclusive of family, school and church. Continuing neglect can and will lead to further ruin, more rot, community disintegration and the proliferation of criminal counter-cultures.

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