

T Caymanian Times

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Sneak Peek - Full story on Wednesday



► (Photo by Bina Mani, GIS)

Lack of Court room space an urgent issue

In his report at the opening of the Courts last week, Chief Justice Anthony Smellie implored Government to make the expansion of the Courts a priority as the new decade progresses.

The Chief Justice spoke of his relief last year that the Government had bought the Scotia Bank building for the use of the Courts. He was relieved, he said, because he had been

reassured that by mid-last year, they would have commissioned two more "long overdue" courtrooms in that building, to be dedicated to criminal trials, one of which would serve as the base for the Court of Appeal when in session.

"The clear stated priority was to tackle the backlog of criminal indictments," he advised.

However, even though the courtroom project would only have involved a simple reconfiguring and fitting out of internal space within the building, he said that had not been achieved and in the meantime the building had been partially occupied to relieve space shortage for admin staff and training.

"The fact of the matter is that the Judicial Administration may not under-

take the courtroom project without the permission of the Planning Department, and input of Public Works and Lands and Survey who hold title to all Government buildings," Chief Justice Smellie advised. "We therefore call upon our colleagues from these other agencies to recognise the urgent need for these courtrooms

... Continued story on page A3

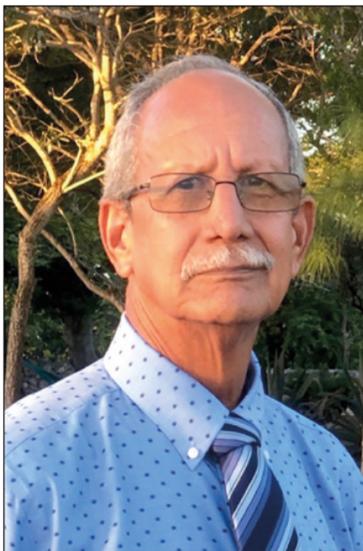
Kearney Gomez is new Chairman of Port Authority Board

The Ministry of District Administration, Tourism and Transport is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Kearney Gomez as Chairman of the Board of the Port Authority of the Cayman Islands (PACI), for a period of four years, commencing 2 January, 2020.

Mr. Gomez is a retired civil servant whose career began in the early 1970's during the advent of the Regional Cadastral Survey & Registration Project and the establishment of the Lands and Survey Department.

In 1980 Mr. Gomez moved into the Portfolio of Agriculture, Lands and Natural Resources where he served as an Assistant Principal Secretary and shortly thereafter was appointed to the post of Principal Secretary. He was also appointed as Supervisor of Elections at that time and remained in those positions until his retirement from the civil service in 2013.

During Mr. Gomez's long career he was instrumental in the creation of several Government Agencies as well as the establishment of Marine Parks. Notable amongst these is the Water Authority, Department of Environment, Lands and Survey, 911 Emergency Communications, Street Naming and Property Numbering,



the Elections Office and the National Weather Service.

Mr. Gomez also played a significant role in the introduction of a considerable number of infrastructural projects during his tenure. These include the creation of the Port Container Terminal, the new Government Administration Building, the Mail Sorting

... Continued story on page A4

Lifestyle - Take the Yoga Challenge

If you are looking to make 2020 the year that you get healthier, destress more and generally take a little bit of time out of your busy day just for you, then Cayman Yoga Club's 40-Day Challenge might be what you need for motivation.

Beginning on 13th January and running until 22nd February, the challenge is to attend at least 30 yoga classes within the 40-day timeline. Hally Vu from Cayman Yoga Club says the reason for the challenge is to encourage yogis to commit to serving themselves well, practicing yoga regularly, and living a healthier and "well-thier" lifestyle. Cayman Yoga Club has held the challenge twice now in the year and a half that they have been open.

"The challenge aims to create the foundation for a committed and regular yoga practice, as well as support our community's growth into one of health, wellness, and loving, sustainable practices," Hally explains. "Last year's theme was 'Mindfulness', and this year's theme is 'Abundance'."

Hally says the practice of yoga is so beneficial, but even more so when practiced regularly.



► Take the 40 Day Challenge

"When we take the time to focus on ourselves through simple practices like breath work or pranayama, meditation

... Continued story on page A5



Caymanian Times

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EDITORIAL

A letter to our readers

Thank you for your continued support of our publication.

As we look forward to the year ahead, we promise to play our part in providing the people of the Cayman Islands with credible news from a trustworthy source free of agendas. We will strive our best to provide balanced coverage of the issues and events happening in our community.

When we sit at our computers to compile our newspaper, this is done without the burden of pursuing any hidden political or business agenda. We believe that an informed and educated population is able to make better decisions on matters that affect their country's future. We will not simply dwell on the political rhetoric that can often be at the fore, or splash catchy and sensational headlines across our pages with little substance behind them.

We will pursue truth from every angle and report it for our readers. While we do not like to dwell on the negatives, we will focus on the issues that affect our community and cover them fairly for the benefit of our readers. In keeping with our roots - Caymanian Times evolved from Employment Weekly - greater emphasis will be placed on employment and issues that affect employment in the Cayman Islands, while at the same time highlighting the achievements of those who excel in our community.

Readers can look forward to a rich mix of stories, features and analysis that covers everything from the econ-



► Ralph Lewis, Owner, Publisher

omy, employment, politics, community sports and culture. We crave your feedback. Feel free to comment on our articles, whether online at www.caymaniantimes.ky or via our Facebook page. You can also be directly in touch with our News Editor by sending an email to ralph@caymaniantimes.ky.

As we step into the next phase of our development, we do so with energy and an eagerness to be a top newspaper, telling the stories of our people, educating our children and providing a window to the world.

We do not live in isolation and a credible newspaper is key to the development of our country.

Thank you for reading and we look forward to your continued support in the year ahead. 🌐

COMMUNITY NOTICES

Coco Fest at Pedro St James

The Management and staff of Pedro St James invite the public to the fifth annual Coco Fest set for Saturday 8th February 2020 from 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the Pedro St James National Historic Site, Pedro Castle Road, Savannah.

Coco Fest brings together local cooks, craftsmen, producers, and farmers through a shared love for the coconut, in a fun and interactive environment.

The event provides an avenue for local micro-businesses to showcase their coconut-inspired products to the community while allowing guests to indulge in an array of creative, cottage industry products which often cannot be purchased in stores.

Cultural demonstrations on the uses of coconut throughout Cayman's his-



tory will be held on-site by local artisans.

Admission is only \$5.00 per person while children under six are free. \$1.00 for each entry fee benefits Meals on Wheels Cayman.

For information on the event email admin@pedrostjames.ky or call 947-3329. 🌐

Family Resources Announces Free 2020 Programmes

The Family Resource Centre (FRC) proudly presents the following free, interactive programmes, starting in February and March, to help parents and strengthen family ties.

- **Family Skills** (6 February - 9 April, 6 p.m.) - Learn effective behaviour-management strategies to support your children and equip your family with skills to improve all relationships. For families with children ages 6-11.

- **Co-Parenting** (3 February - 6 April, 5.30 p.m.) - The weekly sessions for families raising children between two separate households will help adults navigate with the successful transition from a one- to a two-home family.

- **Young Parents Services** (4 February - 30 May, 9 a.m.) - This weekly parenting programme for young parents (16-25 yrs old) is designed to as-

ist attendees with parenting skills to build and improve parent-child bonding

- **Positive Discipline** (4 February - 24 March, 12 p.m.) The weekly Lunch & Learn workshops will focus on teaching you positive parenting strategies to help and handle challenging behaviour. For parents with children ages 5-12 years old.

- **Digitally Distracted** (5 May - 26 May, 12 p.m.) - This weekly Lunch & Learn will give you the practical tools to support you parenting your digitally distracted child(ren). For parents with children of all ages.

For further details, call FRC on 949-0006, or email frc@gov.ky. FRC is now located at Apollo House West, 87 Mary Street, 2nd Floor, George Town. 🌐



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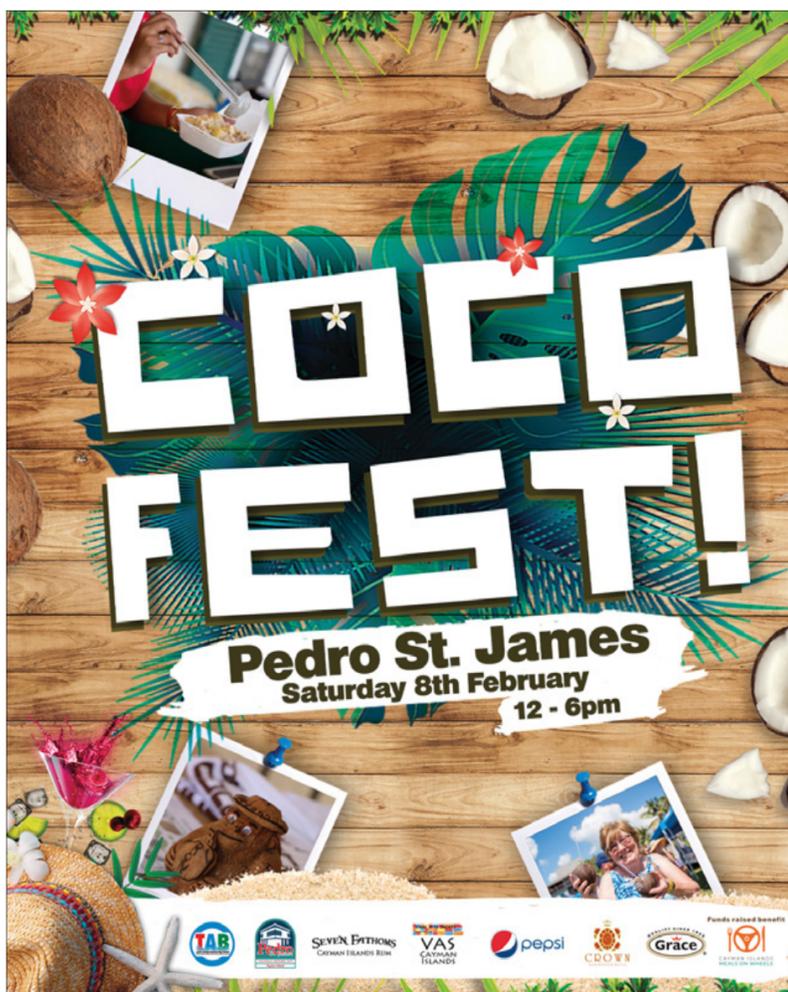


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Youth Services Unit Hosts College Week Activities

Next week, high school students enrolled at private, and public schools throughout the Cayman Islands will have the opportunity to interact with local and overseas college recruiters as part of College Week activities that will take place through a partnership between the Youth Services Unit (YSU), Cayman Academy and Home Gas Ltd.

As part of the week's activities, a series of college fairs will be held at Cayman Academy, Clifton Hunter High School and South Sound Community Centre that will target students in year ten onwards.

To close the week's activities, the YSU and Cayman Academy will then host an information session for parents of prospective students at the Grand Old House on Thursday at 6:00 PM.

Acting Head of the YSU, James Myles outlined the purpose of the fairs. "The fairs are aimed at inspiring young people, some of whom may not have previously thought about college to consider tertiary studies as an option."

He lamented the number of Caymanian families that are still awaiting their first college graduate twenty years into the new millennium and re-

affirmed the YSU's commitment to the youth.

"The YSU is intent on preparing young Caymanians to become leaders who are looking toward the cutting edge of being top innovators and leading in global change."

The fairs will involve a mix of local, regional and overseas higher learning institutions. Local institutions will include the University College of the Cayman Islands (UCCI) and the Inspire Cayman Training Centre. Representatives from regional institutions St George's University (Grenada), University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus (Barbados) and Northern Caribbean University (Jamaica) will also be present to engage with the students in addition to representatives from overseas tertiary institutions New England Institute of Technology (USA), Ontario Tech University (Canada) and The University of Law (UK).

Booths will also be set up by the YSU and the Scholarship Secretariat to provide additional support to students and their families.

For more information on the College Week activities, please visit Cayman Youth on Instagram or Facebook. 🌐



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► (Photos by Bina Mani, GIS)

Lack of Court room space an urgent issue

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and not to allow too much red tape to humbug progress.”

It was vital that the Courts had more space because they now have the largest number of indictments ever awaiting trial, he said.

Chief Justice Smellie made the position clear when he said: “It is of utmost urgency that these two court rooms are available no later than May of this year. So far as the Administration can drive this initiative, we will be engaging a project manager especially to work with the other agencies to have these court-rooms installed by May.”

The Summary Courts

The chronic lack of courtrooms continued to also hamper the work of the Summary Courts, the Chief Justice stated, and they were much impacted by this situation.

The Chief Justice said that the work of the Summary Courts covered several jurisdictions: The Criminal Courts; Traffic Court; Civil Court; Family Court and Coroners’ Court.

“Given the large number of cases coming before the Summary Courts, they must convene every day in all their main divisions - criminal, traffic, civil, family and, at least weekly, in coroners. This means that our five full time Magistrates and two acting magistrates need courtrooms on an ongoing basis. Currently, they are forced to rotate sittings throughout the day,” he explained. “Yet over the years, only one fully equipped courtroom has been regularly available to the Summary Courts.”

As a result, if the Court of Appeal sat, that got priority, followed by a court room used for indictment trails which then got priority over the Summary Court, which often then had to be



bumped with no accommodation then available for it.

The Chief Justice said the disruption that this caused to an already fragile listing system ought to be obvious to everyone and could not be allowed to continue.

“After many years of explaining this problem, one is obliged to think that any lingering reservations about the need for dedicated courtrooms for the Summary Courts can only be the result of lack of understanding,” he stated.

Government, he said, had committed itself to the building of a new Court-house which would address these problems and the similar needs of the Grand Court and Court of Appeal, into the foreseeable future. The project was of crucial importance to the administration of justice in the Cayman Islands and it was imperative that it be allowed to proceed. 🌐



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Chamber elects new Council for 2020

Woody Foster is the new President of the Cayman Islands Chamber of Commerce. He accepted the top leadership role at the organisation's annual general meeting held at the Grand Old House restaurant on Wednesday, 8th January.

He becomes the first son of a Past President (the late David Foster who held the position from 2000 - 2001) to be elected to this high office. He thanked members for their vote of confidence and pledged to address the key issues that matter most to them and the community.

Economic Growth and Education were among the key topics that he highlighted in his acceptance address as issues of utmost importance for 2020 and the future of the Cayman Islands.

"As we enter a new decade, the Chamber's leadership in advocacy matters is even more critical. The panel discussion on population growth [at the 2019 Economic Forum] generated considerable member and public discussion as we considered Cayman at 100,000 population and its implications on all aspects of our economy. The pressures on all aspects of our society are certainly evident," Mr. Foster said.

"It is a fact that the Cayman Islands is no longer the little upstart economy that was hungry for business nearly 60 years ago. Years of rapid growth is forever changing the nature of our society. While we are thankful to those visionary leaders who created the economy we enjoy today, the time has come to evaluate the current situation to ensure that the society that we are developing will be suitable for our children and their children."

Mr. Foster stressed the importance of investing in quality education, as our

islands grow, to help ensure that our students will take up their rightful positions in the public and private sector workplace.

In light of these issues, Mr. Foster identified the Chamber as a key stakeholder to help frame the national dialogue leading up to the next election so that aspiring political leaders understand these concerns and share their solutions on the campaign trail.

Mr. Foster acknowledged the contributions of the immediate Past President, Chris Kirkconnell and presented him with a gift on behalf of the membership for his voluntary service to the Chamber over the past five years.

Shomari Scott, Director of Business Development at Health City Cayman Islands, is the new Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce. Chamber members elected Scott, three Councillors and the treasurer at the organisation's annual general meeting at the Grand Old House on 8th January.

Troy Burke, director of Heritage Holdings, Jenn Cowdroy, Director and Co-Owner of Island Montessori and Dave Johnston, Managing Director, Corporate Electric Ltd. were elected as Councillors and will serve two-year terms. They will join Tim Bradley, Owner, Professional Yacht Management Ltd., Simon Watson, Founding Partner, Charterland and Amanda Wilson, Director, GreenTech Group who will serve their second year on the Council.

Executive Committee members include President Woody Foster, Managing Director, Fosters IGA, President-Elect Mike Gibbs, President, Kensington Management Ltd., Vice President Scott, Sec-



► Woody Foster, Managing Director of Fosters-IGA, and newly elected Chamber of Commerce President



► Shomari Scott, Director of Business Development at Health City Cayman Islands, and newly elected Chamber of Commerce Vice President

retary Steve McIntosh, Chief Executive Officer, CML and Treasurer Colin Robinson, Director, Strategic Risk Solutions. Chris Kirkconnell, Vice President, Operations, Kirk Freeport Ltd., becomes Immediate Past President.

Retiring Councillors, Nelson Dilbert, owner at Cayman Spirits Company, Mario Ebanks, Chief Human Resources Officer at Cayman Islands Airport Authority and Shomari Scott were acknowledged for their contributions and voluntary service to the Chamber of Commerce. The retiring Councillors have each served in various roles on the Council from chairing or serving on committees, representing the Chamber at meetings and events and canvassing

their industry sector, to informing the Council of any issues of concern that require action.

Outgoing President Kirkconnell presented a gift to each retiring Council member for their contribution to the Chamber during their terms of service, and the collective mission to support, promote and protect the interests of members, and the wider community.

Dilbert and Robert Tate each received the 'Volunteer of the Year' award for 2019. Dilbert coordinated Chamber's Cayman CLEAN anti-littering campaign and Tate chaired the 2019 Leadership Cayman programme.

The Chamber celebrates its 55th anniversary in 2020. 🌐

Kearney Gomez Appointed Chairman of Port Authority Board

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Facilities at Owen Roberts Airport, new facilities for the Mosquito Research and Control Unit and most of the district jetties and launching ramps.

Commenting on the appointment, Hon. Moses Kirkconnell, Minister of Tourism and Transport said, "I welcome

the appointment of Mr. Kearney Gomez as the new Chairman of the PACI Board of Directors. Having served for over four decades in government service, his experience and knowledge will bring invaluable insight and leadership to our Port operations and its future strategic direction. Mr. Gomez has chaired many Board meetings of both the Port Author-

ity and the Water Authority in the past and is ideally suited to serve as Chairman on an ongoing basis."

"I am honoured to have the opportunity to continue progressing the important work of the Port Authority," said Mr Gomez. "Optimizing the efficiency of our country's trade, freight and supply chain is particularly important, especially as

we are seeing rapid growth in freight and population. Having dedicated much of my life and career to the growth and development of the Cayman Islands, I look forward to working with the board, staff and Port partners to deliver safe, efficient and customer focussed operations while contributing to the economic development of our Islands." 🌐

GIRLFORCE 100 IS MAKING AN IMPACT

GirlForce 100, the flagship female youth mentoring initiative for 100 Women in Finance, recently launched its fourth year of operation with an introductory session to over 45 mentees at ArtNest Studio in the Cayman Islands.

Successful mentees from John Gray High School and Clifton Hunter High School gathered to learn about what the programme would offer for the 2020/2021 school year. Attendees were also treated to some inspiring words from guest speaker Selita Ebanks, International Model, Actress and Producer. Ms. Ebanks spoke candidly to the mentees about her road to success, overcoming obstacles and the experiences that shaped her both personally and professionally throughout the course of her outstanding career.

Christina Bodden, 100 Women in Finance Global Association Board member and Partner at the Maples Group welcomed the participants to the programme.

"100 Women in Finance is proud to launch GirlForce 100 for the 2020/2021 school year. 100 Women in Finance empowers women to achieve their professional potential at every career stage. Our work inspires, equips and advocates for a new generation of female industry leaders. GirlForce 100 supports this mission by encouraging female students to enter careers in finance while



providing them with the tools they need to succeed," said Ms. Bodden.

"The ethos behind GirlForce 100 is to bring together members of 100 Women in Finance and young women to help guide their career paths from school, through tertiary education and into the finance industry. We are excited to welcome another group of excited and

motivated mentees from John Gray High School and Clifton Hunter High School and wish all the mentees success with their studies."

GirlForce 100 has enhanced its offering through several strategic local partnerships which include the YMCA, The Cayman Islands Red Cross and The United College of the Cayman Islands.

Jenny Stuesser, YMCA, Sr. Programme Director said, "The YMCA teambuilding programme is built on relationships and takes a unique approach to learning that's fun and meaningful to participants. Through various icebreakers, group challenges and problem-solving activities we hope to help GirlForce 100 mentees build relationships and the confidence they need to develop overall leadership, teambuilding and communication skills. Partnering with GirlForce 100 provides us with the unique opportunity to work with and develop future leaders within our community and we look forward to being part of their leadership journey."

During the launch session, mentees were invited to speak about their per-

sonal journey with GirlForce 100. Asia Bush, former Clifton Hunter student and winner of a 2019 essay competition spoke about her experience in the programme. "GirlForce to me symbolizes empowered females, who rise not just for themselves but for each other. GirlForce allows us to use our talents and abilities to move forward and build careers that better ourselves and the world around us, and we support each other in the process. GirlForce is you, me and the person next to you," said Ms. Bush.

GirlForce 100 pairs local 100 Women in Finance members with girls ages 13-18, from John Gray High School and Clifton Hunter High School, who have indicated an interest in a career in finance and have demonstrated notable potential meriting their placement. Through mentorship, GirlForce 100 guides the mentees in the development and progression of their career paths leading them to success.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming part of GirlForce 100 please contact GirlForce@100women.org. 🌐



Take the Yoga challenge!

... Continued story from page A1

or dhyana, and yoga asana, we are able to serve ourselves better by creating space for spiritual realisation, thus building a community of well-intentioned, loving, and healing seekers of Truth and Goodness," she says. "As human beings, we are universally connected – to each other and to nature. One yogi at a time, one pose and one body at a time, we hope to create a shift that encourages more love and support in the world."

As well as undertaking the challenge, participants are also invited to undertake weekly reflection sessions.

"During these reflection sessions, our instructor leads will guide subgroups of

challengers through short meditation, reflection, and journaling prompts so that the qualities of yoga that are practiced on the mat can also be carried into life off the mat," Hally explains. "The challenge has resonated well with everyone, not only because it helps to create the foundation for a strong and steady practice, but also because it's created our strong and supportive community."

Yoga for all

If you are thinking about taking up this yoga programme, no matter your ability and time available, Hally says anyone and everyone is invited to join the challenge.

"The 40 days runs from 13th January to 22nd February, but only 30 classes are required to complete the challenge. Since the only requirement is to attend 30 classes, someone can sign up on 23rd January and attend one class a day to complete the challenge," Hally advises. "Otherwise, they can also double up on classes in one day to still have some days off. We have a diverse number of classes on the schedule that would enable doubling up without burning out mentally, spiritually, and physically. For example, you can go to a powerful vinyasa class and stay for a slow flow, yin, or restorative class right after, so you'd get the benefits of an energising and strengthening class as well as a calming and restorative class."

Cayman Yoga Club is located in the West Shore Centre on West Bay Road.

Read more about the practice of yoga and how it can benefit you in our next Lifestyle column.



► Hally Vu from Cayman Yoga Club

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National Heroes Day

is a time to celebrate our history, heritage, and be inspired for the future!

The Cayman Islands is currently celebrating the 60th anniversary of our first written Constitution. This milestone in our history also culminates the era when women petitioned for and won the right to vote in elections and hold public office.

At the 2020 National Heroes Day Celebrations, we are honouring the people who pioneered the establishment of our first written Constitution; heralding the first four women who bravely stood in the 1959 general election; and reflecting on our journey to modern-day Cayman Islands.

This day is also a time to recognise our National Heroes. There will be a special ceremony to honour and memorialise our National Heroes.

2020
NATIONAL HEROES DAY

You are Invited...

Monday, 27 January 2020
9:00 a.m.

Please be seated by 8:30 a.m.

Heroes Square | Downtown George Town

Parade, Awards Ceremony, Constitution exhibit, live entertainment and local food

Dress Code:
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Orders, decorations and medals to be worn

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CELEBRATE CAYMAN

60

YEARS

Our First Constitution

In the event of inclement weather, a general public notice will be issued by Radio Cayman. The Celebrations will instead take place at the First Baptist Church, across from the Lions Centre, beginning at 10:00am.



► Andrew Zimmern chats with Chef Shetty of Blue Cilantro

Cayman Cookout Photo Album



► Andrew Zimmern praises Cayman's number one export



► Kirk Market's Chef Joao



► Chef Christian from The Wharf



► The Ketel One Bloody Mary bar kicked off Friday's events



► Chef Emeril Lagasse brought his New Orleans flare to Cookout



Heroes Day Awardees Part 1

EARLY PIONEERS

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 Mrs. Hebe Marie Briggs-Connor *
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 Mr. Robert Mark Bodden Soto MBE *
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... Continued story on page A8

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... Continued story from page A7

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FRONT PAGE

Annual Turtle Release a Success

Continuing a tradition that started decades ago, the Cayman Turtle Centre, held its annual turtle release on Sunday, November 10th. It was a fun, family-friendly event with meaning. Everyone there seemed to have great time and there were moments of inspirati...

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Local News



"Be Informed" theme for series of port meetings

With the port referendum drawing closer, the government has organised a series of eight big public meetings for disseminating information and answering voters' questions about the proposed new cruise berthing facility, the first of which took place at Mary Miller Hall

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Government



Government to Hold Public Meetings on Cruise Berthing

The Government will be holding a series of public meetings in its ongoing effort to inform the public about the proposed cruise berthing facility and enhanced cargo port project (CBF).

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Government commits to beneficial ownership register

In a statement issued this week, ... has announced that it will



An alluring new development on the North Sound

Allure is a brand new development of 13 two-bedroom and 13 three-bedroom units that is currently grabbing the attention of buyers looking for a water-front property that is in the mid-to-high price range, yet conveniently close to schools, shopping and town.

This gated development is located in Tropical Gardens and offers luxurious condo living on the waterfront, with the two-bedroom units situated on the lower level and the three-bedroom units occupying the upper two floors, which

also includes a penthouse master suite with a back terrace.

Michelle Watler, Real Estate Advisor with Engel & Völkers Cayman Islands, gave some background as to what stage the developers are at: "Currently it's in the pre-construction stage so, we are pre-selling units with an anticipated ground breaking in October," she advised.

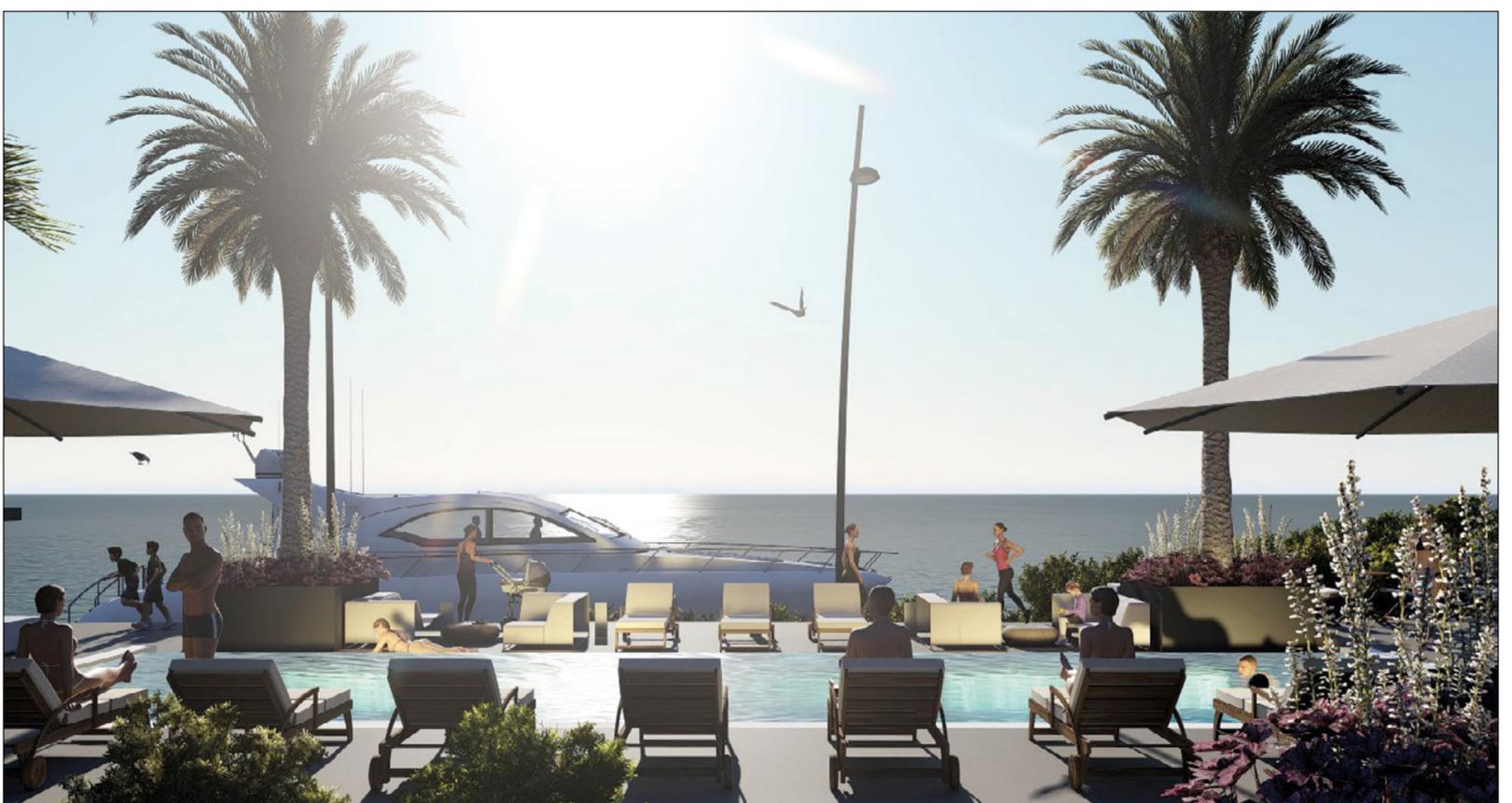
As far as pricing goes, she said: "The two-bedroom units started at CI\$410,000 however, we only have one two-bedroom unit left at CI\$470,000.

We have the three-bedroom units starting at CI\$620,000."

Michelle said that Allure would appeal to professionals and executives looking to purchase a property on the water, with energy efficiency in mind while being conveniently located close to everything. Sustainability appears to be high on the list for buyers in this mid to high range of the market and Allure successfully ticks this box, as the units come with an installed solar panel system and gas appliances, as well as other interest-

ing amenities such as a boat dock that gives owners easy access to Rum Point and Stingray City, and terraces or balconies to enjoy the North Sound breeze.

The development is being built with resistance to storms in mind and is made from ICF construction, incorporating hurricane rated windows and doors. Added benefits for owners include an infinity pool and a boardwalk, promoting a family-friendly, relaxed atmosphere within a great little community. 🌐



US Denies Wanting to Extradite Senior Jamaica Government Minister

The United States has denied rumours that it's seeking to extradite a member of the Jamaica government.

The denial yesterday came on the heels of social media reports that the Donald Trump administration had officially requested the extradition of a minister to face the courts. It had been rumoured that efforts were being made to extradite Daryl Vaz, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, whose US visa had been revoked late last year.

In a tweet yesterday, the US Embassy in Jamaica sought to put those rumours to rest.

"Contrary to social media rumours: There is no extradition request(s) for any Minister of the Jamaican Government from the United States Government. The Jamaican Government has been very cooperative with the United States Government on these matters," it stated.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamina Johnson-Smith replied to the tweet, saying: "Many thanks for your clarification! Much appreciated."

The tweet was also reposted by Prime Minister Andrew Holness, who suggested that the opposition People's National Party (PNP) was behind the rumours.

"The PNP operatives who have been carrying rumours and fake news should know that the era of social media is not just for those who would seek to use it negatively, more so it is a tool for transparency, clarity and integrity," he said.

Vaz, who is also the Member of Parliament for West Portland, speaking on Nationwide Radio last week, described the claim of him being the subject of an extradition request as "the usual politricks",



► Rumours had been circulating that Daryl Vaz, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, whose US visa had been revoked late last year, was the subject of an extradition request



as he charged that political activists were behind the rumour.

As for the revocation of his visa, Vaz, who previously has US citizenship but revoked it in 2008, said there has been no change in the status of his visa but he was continuing to pursue the matter vigorously.

The correspondence he received from the US Embassy last year had informed him that "subsequent to the visa issuance, information has come to light that you

may be ineligible for a visa. If you would like to travel to the United States, you must reapply". Vaz had said then that if he was unable to secure a visa, he would resign from the Cabinet as he would not be able to carry out his ministerial functions.

News about his situation broke in early November last year, when it was also revealed that the visas of PNP Vice President, Phillip Paulwell, some businessmen and some senior police officers were also revoked.

US Puts Even More Restrictions on Air Travel to Cuba – Charter Flights to Nine Cuban Airports Banned

Less than three months after suspending commercial flights to airports in Cuba outside Havana, the United States Government has suspended all public charter flights as well.

Charter flights will only be allowed to Havana's José Martí International Airport, and even then there will be limitations.

US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said in a statement that the flights were "suspended until further notice" by the US Department of Transportation (DOT), at his request.

Nine Cuban airports currently receiving US public charter flights will be affected.

"Public charter flight operators will have a 60-day wind-down period to discontinue all affected flights. Also, at

my request, DOT will impose an appropriate cap on the number of permitted public charter flights to José Martí International Airport. DOT will issue an order in the near future proposing procedures for implementing the cap," Pompeo said.

He said the action "will prevent the Cuban regime from benefitting from expanded charter service in the wake of the October 25, 2019, action suspending scheduled commercial air service to Cuba's airports other than Havana".

Pompeo added that the suspension would "further restrict the Cuban re-



► Charter flights will only be allowed to Havana's Jose Marti International Airport, and even then there will be limitations

ble support for dictator Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela".

"In suspending public charter flights to these nine Cuban airports, the United States further impedes the Cuban regime from gaining access to hard currency from US travellers," he added.

Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez has described the new measure – which marks a continuation of President Donald Trump's rollback of the easing of restrictions by his predecessor Barack Obama – as a "serious violation of human rights and freedom of travel of US citizens and hinders family reunification".

gime's ability to obtain revenue, which it uses to finance its ongoing repression of the Cuban people and its unconsciona-

13 Political Parties to Battle for Power in Guyana Elections; But a Prime Ministerial Candidate Drops Out of the Race

Thirteen political parties are set to contest the March 2, 2020 polls, based on submissions made on Nomination Day. But one of them is now looking to find a Prime Ministerial candidate after the man who was running for the position pulled back because of dual citizenship.

The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) will later this week give the official approval of the lists. But all 13 parties are expecting they will get the nod.

Among those contesting the polls is Change Guyana, whose chairman and Prime Ministerial Candidate Nigel Hinds yesterday announced he would no longer be participating in the elections because of his dual citizenship status.

Under the Constitution, Hinds is barred from holding a seat in the National Assembly because he is also a US citizen. And he told local media that he would maintain that citizenship because he had health issues – diabetes and kidneys functioning at 50 per cent capacity – which he felt would be better dealt with at healthcare facilities in the US.

He told Newsroom Guyana that during a routine medical check-up last November, he learned of the health developments and did not want to "risk doing

the kinds of interventions that might be needed and getting the right medication" in Guyana.

"The truth is, Guyana's health system is in a decrepit [state] and really represents the worst health system in the English-speaking Caribbean," he told the media house.

"It is unrealistic to compare the medical facilities and treatment available in the United States with what obtains in any Caribbean country and more so Guyana."

Meantime, the ruling A Partnership for National Unity+ Alliance for Change (APNU+AFC) coalition, led by President David Granger and with Khemraj Ramjattan as its Prime Ministerial candidate, will be contesting the polls in all 10 administrative regions for both the general and regional elections.

The People's Progressive Party (PPP), with Presidential candidate Irfaan Ali and Prime Ministerial candidate, (ret'd) Brigadier Mark Phillips will also be contesting all regions in both elections.

Following the two larger parties is the United Republican Party (URP) with Presidential Candidate Vishnu Bandu. The party leader did not announce his running mate for this year's poll. URP will also be contesting all regions in both the general and regional elections.

Unlike the URP, newly formed party, A New and United Guyana (ANUG) will only be contesting the coastal regions. Presidential candidate Ralph Ramkaran said Regions 1, 8 and 9 are out. A Prime Ministerial candidate was not announced. ANUG reportedly split from the Federal United Party (FED-UP) a few hours before the list of candidates was submitted to GECOM last Friday.

A group of young Guyanese under the banner of The New Movement (TNM) is being led by Presidential candidate Dr Ashley Kissoon and Prime Ministerial



► President David Granger (middle) Minister of Public Security Khemraj Ramjattan (right) and Director General of the Ministry Joseph Harmon (left) handing over their list of candidates to Chief Elections Officer of the Guyana Elections, Keith Lowenfield on Nomination Day

candidate Dr Gerald Forde. They will be contesting Regions 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10.

Another young party, the Citizen Initiative (TCI) led by Rhonda Ann Lam, will be seeking votes from Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10.

Meanwhile, Change Guyana will be contesting in all regions except 1, 7 and 8, according to Presidential candidate Robert Badal.

The Berbice based FED-UP party will only be contesting the regional elections in regions one and two, while the Liberty and Justice Party (LJP) led by Lennox Shuman, will only be contesting Regions 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 and 9.

The People's Republic Party with presidential candidate Timothy Norton will be contesting all regions except 7, 8 and 9, while the Organisation for the Victory of the People led by Gerald Pereira will only be contesting in Region 4.

The Guyana National Service Party (GNSP) is led by Arthur Fredricks, while the National Independent Party's (NIP) presidential candidate is Saphier Husain.

At the close of nomination day activities last Friday, GECOM's Chief Elections Officer (CEO) Keith Lowenfield noted that the process was smooth and GECOM is continuing its work.

"The tasks to be completed are (now) internal. The parties will be made aware after the commission has pronounced on the submissions I will make to the commission for approval or non-approval," he said.

Lowenfield used the opportunity to encourage citizens to use this period to ensure their biographic data is correct on the Revised List of Electors currently posted in their respective polling division.



► Chairman of Change Guyana Nigel Hinds

Former Barbados Government Minister Found Guilty of Money Laundering Charges in US, But An Appeal is on The Horizon

A former politician and a senior minister in the Barbados Government is now awaiting sentencing in the United States after yesterday being convicted of laundering bribes paid to him by executives of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados Limited (ICBL) to secure government contracts.

After two hours of deliberation at the end of a four-day trial in the Eastern District Federal Court in New York, a 12-member jury unanimously found former Minister of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development Donville Inniss guilty of conspiracy to commit money laundering, as well as laundering US\$16,536.73 on April 17, 2015 and US\$20,000 on April 18, 2016, through his friend's company in the US.

The 54-year-old Inniss, who is a US legal permanent resident with a home in Tampa, Florida, remains on bail pending sentencing.

According to the evidence presented at trial, between 2015 and 2016 Inniss took part in a scheme to launder into the US, just over US\$36,000 in bribes that he received from high-level executives of ICBL, while serving as a minister and a Member of Parliament under the previous Democratic Labour Party (DLP) administration. In exchange for the bribes, he leveraged his position as the Minister of Industry to enable ICBL to obtain two insurance contracts from the Barbados government to insure over US\$100 million worth of government property.

The bribes helped ICBL win contracts that paid more than US\$93 million in net profits.

To conceal the money paid to him, Inniss had it sent to a US bank account in the name of his friend's dental company, Crystal Dental Lab, in Elmont, New York, even though that company had been dissolved since 2004. The money was then transferred to one of his US bank accounts.

The trial evidence further showed that Inniss used a personal email account to communicate with an executive from ICBL in connection with the bribe payments and the laundering of the money through the dental company.

"It can't be disputed that ICBL sent \$36 000 to Crystal Dental Lab for consultation services which were never provided; it can't be disputed that the money was for Inniss; and it cannot be disputed that ICBL sent the money to secure Government contracts. That alone should be enough evidence," prosecutor David Gopstein had told the jury, which heard the case before District Judge Kiyo Matsumoto, during closing arguments yesterday afternoon.

Although not disputing the money transfers, Inniss' lawyer Anthony Ricco argued that the evidence did not support its view that they were bribes.

It is on that basis that he told reporters, after the jury delivered the guilty verdicts, that he would be fighting the conviction.

"I plan to appeal and challenge the decision based on the insufficiency of the evidence. The trial is just step one of what could be many...Justice is a long road and we're built for it," Ricco said.



► Former Minister of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development Donville Inniss was found guilty of money laundering and conspiracy to commit money laundering

The defence attorney also took issue with the fact that Inniss, a former Barbadian official, was being tried in a court in the US.

"We have a case where an American jury is judging a Barbadian official from the mindset of an American. Can you imagine what would have happened if an American official had been arrested in Barbados and tried in Barbados? It's unheard of," he said.

The US Justice Department a year ago also charged ICBL's former chief executive officer, Ingrid Innes, and its former senior vice president, Alex Tasker. The two, who are not in US custody, were

charged with one count of conspiracy to launder money and two counts of money laundering, in a superseding indictment unsealed on January 18, 2019.

The Justice Department said ICBL had cooperated with the investigation, voluntarily disclosed to the US government the payments to Inniss, enhanced its compliance programme and internal accounting controls, and fired individuals involved in the misconduct. It received a prosecution declination under the FCPA Corporate Enforcement Policy and also handed over the US\$93,940.19 in the illicit profits it earned from the scheme.

Jamaica Government Moves to Get More Traditional Ganja Farmers into Medicinal Marijuana Industry

Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries Floyd Green says emphasis will be placed on increasing the number of community groups of traditional growers participating in a programme that aims to prevent and eliminate the illicit cultivation of ganja and channel the process through legal streams.

The 1998 Action Plan, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, provides for the inclusion of such a programme – the Alternative Development Programme – through specifically designed rural development measures consistent with sustained national economic growth.

"What we will be doing in 2020, is looking for more community groups of traditional growers that we will engage and provide the technical support for them to transition into the medicinal marijuana industry," he told the House of Representatives.

"Already, we have a group from St Ann that has approached us and a group in Kingston and a group from south west St Elizabeth."

Green also mentioned that a cannabis pilot project has started in Accompong, St Elizabeth.

"We have gone in there with the team to provide technical support. The programme focuses on community groups, so it starts with a group of ganja farmers, and we would have gone in and provided the seeds, provided reduced requirements and we have gone through a learning process. I would say the pilot has been a success," he said.

The State Minister noted that from the pilot in Accompong, new guidelines have been developed for the initiative.

"Some of the things that we have realized is not because we have traditional growers; it means they are growing to the specifications and the standards that are needed for the medicinal marijuana industry. And, as such, we have taken those learnings and we have now developed some guidelines for the alternative development programme," he said.

Green further informed that some 44 pounds of ganja have been sold from Accompong into the medicinal marijuana industry.

"We are now looking to move from the one acre that we started with to go into 10 acres of cultivation. We also met with the farmers from Orange Hill in Westmoreland. Again, we had some challeng-



es getting the pilot off the ground, largely because of identifying suitable land that can be used and land that is owned that we can utilize for the purpose of planting ganja," he said.

The Alternative Development Project is being implemented as a strategy to transition traditional cannabis farmers

from an illicit framework into the regulated environment as a means of promoting sustainable economic development and poverty eradication.

It is also aimed at providing access to quality-controlled cannabis for medicinal purposes, in keeping with government policy.

Barbados Government Hires Law Firm to Help it Dig for Corruption

Attorney General Dale Marshall says the government is digging to find evidence of corruption at several state entities, and has promised that when the proof is unearthed, some people will face the courts.

Marshall assured that Barbadians will get it the "blood" they're seeking, once investigations by London-based law firm Fulcrum Chambers Ltd. are completed.

He said the Mia Mottley-led administration had engaged the services of the "very reputable law firm" which "has specialized in doing corruption and bribery cases both in England, the United States and other parts of the world", and the firm had completed a three-month scoping study.

That study, the Attorney General said, examined the financial dealings of state enterprises and other departments to identify those areas where there is prima facie evidence of corruption, so as which would inform a more in-depth and intensive investigation stance to be taken by the Government.



► Attorney General Dale Marshall says those found to have been involved in corruption will face the courts (File photo: BGIS)

He said the consultants from Fulcrum are expected to deliver their report to the Government early next month.

"I know that Barbadians want blood, I suppose," Marshall said. "They want to know that some people face the courts,

and I guarantee, some people will face the court. They have to face the court, but you don't carry to court a man based on hearsay, you carry a man to court based on proof."

The Attorney General gave the assurance as he led off debate on the Integrity in Public Life Bill in Parliament which would be relevant to members of Cabinet including members of the House of Assembly and the Senate; Permanent Secretaries; heads of departments in the public service and holders of public office of the same grade as that of heads of departments; chairpersons of state-owned enterprises; chief executive officers, general managers and other executive heads of state enterprises; magistrates; the Director of Public Prosecutions; the Auditor General; and members and senior officers of the Integrity in Public Life Commission.

Breach of the legislation can result in sentences ranging from BDS\$5,000 (US\$2,500) or two months in prison or both, to BDS\$20,000 (US\$10,000) or two years in prison or both.

CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

- ACROSS**
- 45 Lorry
 - 1 Spiny flora quartet
 - 6 Marina sight
 - 11 Aisle worker
 - 12 Detest
 - 13 Afternoon hour
 - 14 Seoul setting
 - 15 "— girl!"
 - 17 Speech problem
 - 18 Big party
 - 20 Wading bird
 - 22 Play division
 - 23 Like high-lighted hair
 - 26 Hack-neyed
 - 28 Even though
 - 29 Shore embankment
 - 31 Brewery output
 - 32 Staff item
 - 33 Easy task
 - 34 Tops
 - 36 Eats
 - 38 Sonora sendoff
 - 40 Clearly stunned
 - 43 Replay feature
 - 44 Sly's "Rocky" co-star
- DOWN**
- 1 Edit out
 - 2 Fire product
 - 3 French designer
 - 4 Saw things?
 - 5 Angry states
 - 6 Hairy beast
 - 7 Do away with
 - 8 Oscar winner for "The Fighter"
 - 9 Works the soil
 - 10 Golf bunker
 - 16 Melody
 - 18 Clubs on diamonds
 - 19 Field measure
 - 21 Soup setting
 - 23 Accomplishment
 - 24 First name in jazz
 - 25 Profound
 - 27 Couple
 - 30 Trip segment
 - 33 Bakery need
 - 34 Survive
 - 35 Without basis
 - 37 Assess
 - 39 Urgent call
 - 41 Snapshot
 - 42 Put away

S	I	P	S		B	U	S	W	A	Y	
C	O	U	P		E	N	C	O	R	E	
A	N	N	O		A	W	A	K	E	N	
M	A	C	K	E	R	E	L				
		H	E	N		L	I	B	E	L	
A	M	E	N	D		L	A	U	R	A	
B	A	S						N	I	P	
B	R	U	T	E		D	I	C	E	D	
A	S	P	E	N		U	G	H			
				S	T	A	G	L	E	A	P
B	A	L	T	I	C		O	S	L	O	
A	P	I	E	C	E		O	U	T	S	
N	E	E	D	E	D		S	P	O	T	

Yesterday's answer

- 10 Golf
- 25 Profound
- 11 Aisle worker
- 27 Couple
- 12 Detest
- 30 Trip segment
- 13 Afternoon hour
- 33 Bakery need
- 14 Seoul setting
- 34 Survive
- 15 "— girl!"
- 35 Without basis
- 17 Speech problem
- 37 Assess
- 18 Big party
- 39 Urgent call
- 20 Wading bird
- 41 Snapshot
- 22 Play division
- 42 Put away
- 23 Like high-lighted hair
- 24 First name in jazz

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11					12				
13					14				
	15		16		17				
18	19			20	21			22	23
24				25				26	27
28				29		30		31	
	32					33			
34	35			36	37				
38				39	40			41	42
43					44				
45					46				

12-14

SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Concepts Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

2								5
		3	4		6	1		
5								4
1		9		8				3
2		7		5				9
8								5
		6	5		4	9		
3								6

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

10/27

Answer to previous puzzle

4	7	9	5	3	8	1	6	2
3	6	1	4	7	2	8	5	9
8	2	5	6	9	1	4	3	7
5	3	8	2	6	7	9	1	4
1	4	2	9	8	5	3	7	6
7	9	6	3	1	4	5	2	8
2	5	7	8	4	3	6	9	1
9	1	4	7	5	6	2	8	3
6	8	3	1	2	9	7	4	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

Word Search

- Bagpipes
- Bonnet
- Border
- Bothy
- Brae
- Caber
- Cattle
- Claymore
- Croft
- Dirk
- Firth
- Gaelic
- Glen
- Haggis
- Heather
- Highlands
- Hogmanay
- Isles
- Kilt
- Kirk
- Kyle
- Laird
- Loch
- Mist
- Oatmeal
- Pibroch
- Plaid
- Porridge
- Reel
- Sassenach
- Sporran
- Tartan
- Whisky

P	I	Y	B	H	C	A	N	E	S	S	A	S	R	U
L	S	A	A	T	E	N	O	B	L	G	L	E	N	
V	L	N	G	H	A	G	G	I	S	D	C	P	E	W
Y	E	A	P	F	R	R	T	S	I	M	A	L	L	H
H	S	M	I	I	B	C	T	R	M	Y	B	A	T	I
I	V	G	P	R	V	L	K	A	H	V	E	I	T	S
G	S	O	E	T	D	A	Y	F	N	B	R	D	A	K
H	P	H	S	H	T	Y	I	V	T	F	O	R	C	Y
L	O	C	H	L	M	M	B	P	P	O	E	L	Y	K
A	R	R	I	S	C	O	G	O	A	H	D	K	B	B
N	R	K	F	I	R	R	D	T	T	L	M	R	A	B
D	A	U	L	D	A	E	M	A	H	H	G	I	P	T
S	N	E	E	V	B	E	E	F	H	U	Y	K	A	B
Y	A	R	H	U	A	H	P	O	R	R	I	D	G	E
G	P	H	A	L	P	I	B	R	O	C	H	A	B	A

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions – forward, back, up, down and diagonally.

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