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GOVERNOR ROPER TO TAKE FIRST COVID JAB IN CAYMAN

HE Governor of the Cayman Islands, Martyn Roper, has confirmed that he, along with Hon. Premier Alden McLaughlin and Chief Medical Officer Dr John Lee will be first in line for the jab when the COVID-19 vaccine is rolled out in Cayman.

"I have agreed to be one of the first to take the vaccine in public next week with the Premier and Dr Lee."

In a social media post on Wednesday morning, Governor Roper welcomed the news out of the UK that a second vaccine has been approved for use.

"Excellent news from UK this morning that the UK regulator has approved the AstraZeneca/Oxford University vaccine," he wrote.

"UK has ordered enough for 50 million people. Roll-out will start on Monday with aim to vaccinate 2 million people a week. Much easier to deliver and transport as does not need cold storage.

"One dose will be given to as many people as possible giving 70-80% immunity and a

SEE GOVERNOR ROPER TO TAKE FIRST COVID JAB IN CAYMAN, Page 8



► HE Governor of the Cayman Islands, Martyn Roper

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EDITORIAL

A CLASH OF PRIORITIES - VACCINE, ELECTIONS, ECONOMY

Editorial Staff

Across the world governments and the citizens for whom they have a duty of care are placing their hopes and bets on the roll-out of vaccines to return their countries to something resembling normality following the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic last year.

But hopeful platitudes pale into insignificance compared to the challenges which lie ahead.

A plan of action is needed even beyond the monumental coordination required for national voluntary vaccination programmes. And while 'voluntary' is the watchword, indications are that the world, especially the travel market, could be moving towards a 'COVID-passport' reality.

Amidst the veritable flood of Christmas and New Year messages of goodwill, hopes for a better 2021, and complimenting ourselves on how well we did in 2020, one can't help but notice the scene being set for the 2021 election campaign.

Cayman as a society can indeed look back on how comparatively well we have done to date in the fight against the pandemic to keep it at bay the best we could.

But we should be careful not to expend so much energy looking back when our focus should be on looking ahead to the future.

With an election pending and the clock already ticking, the question is; does Cayman have the time to wait for political manifesto pledges?

The vaccine expected here this month is not a panacea for all the challenges that lie ahead of us for 2021, but it could be a catalyst for many opportunities to kickstart the economy and return to some semblance of normality.

One opportunity might be for us to start looking at Cayman in a different light; not just as a Caribbean regional entity but as a global trendsetter.

A clear, revised and cohesive recovery plan is crucial not just for our economy but broadly for our society.

We have heard rather cautious projections on returning to some semblance of tourism in about three months time depending on the success of the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine.

That timeline is however shrouded in uncertainty as it does not address a number of variables and constants re-



quired to navigate out of the current continuing crisis.

There have been several ideas put forward and many calls for an updated reopening plan.

Some have made their way into previous iterations of government planning last year during the peak of the pandemic.

But much has changed since then, including the availability of vaccines - plus a new more contagious strain of the virus.

Should we as a society have to wait for 'strategically-time' manifesto pledges?

The COVID-19 pandemic we are told does not respect borders. Well, nor does it respect political timelines.

We commend those in the business sector who have taken the lead in not just demanding an updated cohesive plan, but have put their own plans in place.

That speaks of confidence in Cayman's economy.

It's that 'Confidence in Cayman' that we at Caymanian Times ascribe to that has led us to take the bold step to increase our circulation to three days a week as we work towards returning to our daily paper output.

We see this as a reflection of our responsibility to keep Cayman informed, present a variety of opinions, but more importantly, our 'Confidence in Cayman'.

At the same time, we empathise with those companies which are cast in a state of limbo, those which have had to scale back their operations or being forced out of business because of the circumstances and uncertainty.

As a society, if we wait and delay, we stagnate and we can already see the rut setting.

Let's not spend too much time, looking back. Ahead is where the future is.

Together, let's make it a Happy New Year Cayman.

ALL EYES ON COVID-19 IN 2021

The fluid situation of the COVID-19 virus and pandemic continues to occupy the attention of health experts, government authorities and residents of Cayman.

The first consignment of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is due on the BA flight arriving on January 5th with "enough vaccines initially for 5000 people", according to HE Governor Martyn Roper.

He said that "that will be the 2 dose Pfizer vaccine and discussions are underway on future supplies."

Meanwhile, Chief Medical Officer Dr John Lee has welcomed the news that a second vaccine has now been approved in the developed by Oxford University and the company AstraZeneca.

According to the CMO, "This is good news for the Cayman Islands as the greater the availability of vaccines means the quicker we will be able to get our most vulnerable protected by vaccination and move onto a surer footing in reopening our borders."

The government is pinning the eventual full reopening of the borders, and especially restarting the key tourism sector, on a successful vaccination programme.

"All of us are also watching carefully the development of new strains of this coronavirus, especially those that are more infectious," Dr Lee has stated.

The CMO admitted in his statement that "Cayman does not currently have gene sequencing technology although we are looking into this which will have widespread applications not only in monitoring infectious disease outbreaks (includ-



ing COVID-19, Dengue and Zika) but also in the field of cancer management."

A debate has started in the UK among medical experts and vaccine manufacturers over the gap between administering the first and second dose of the drug.

UK health authorities have said they will give the Oxford and Pfizer vaccines 12 weeks apart, but Pfizer has said its tests were based on two doses 21 days apart.

CASE COUNT CREEPS UP


Cayman ended 2020 with fewer people in quarantine but a further eight cases have been confirmed, six of which were asymptomatic and two displaying symptoms.

The number of people in quarantine was down by more than half at the end of December to just over 600 after peaking at around 1,500 in November.

Year-end statistics showed that Cayman had recorded 338 COVID-19 cases in 2020 of which 294 have recovered.

There were 42 active cases. In all, 60,382 COVID-19 tests were carried out in the jurisdiction during the past year.

There have only been two fatalities here directly related to the pandemic.



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Hon. V. Arden McLean New Year's Message

My fellow Caymanians, residents, and visitors, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I would like to wish you all a healthy and happy 2021.

As we turn the page on 2020 and reflect on the global pandemic, which has shaken the foundations of public life as we know it, let us use the experience and knowledge gained to welcome the opportunities of the New Year.

Our beloved islands are relatively free from COVID-19, thanks to our collective courage and determination to accept short-term curtailment of our freedoms, for the long-term health of each other and the stability of our islands. We must also pay tribute to the dedication and tireless work of all our public servants. They continue to educate our children; defend our safety; care for the sick; help the less fortunate and ensure that products and services continue to be made available.

Nevertheless, we are not entirely out of the woods yet and I therefore encourage you to continue to protect yourself and others in the coming year. The vaccines that are now being administered to the global community will soon reach our shores.

The choice of whether to accept the vaccine should remain yours. There is much information (and disinformation) on the various vaccines. So, please educate yourself on the options and discuss the choices with your trusted loved ones.

Simultaneously, we must start working to restore our country as a great place to live and work whilst equally providing opportunities to those individuals and businesses affected by the loss of our tourism sector.

We foresaw the need to prepare for the very eventuality that is upon us now, hence why my New Year's message last year called upon the government

to prioritize the development and implementation of a National Strategic Plan— a plan to prepare the Cayman Islands for substantial changes and ensure that we are creators of opportunities. A plan that is still very much needed.

We know that major obstacles are still on the horizon: climate change, rapid population increases and technological changes all of which require progressive policies. At the same time, we must continue to

tackle health care costs; mortgage and pension reforms; enhance our education system; and reduce poverty and inequality, as too many among us are still struggling to make ends meet, much less to get ahead.

In 146 days, we will have the opportunity to vote to elect leaders who will lead with our values, work together across all our differences and challenges to tackle the inequalities in education, housing, job opportunities and transportation so as to uplift every Caymanian.

More than ever before, you must be discerning in your choices. Reject those who want power just to have it and those who will only use that power, for the benefit of a select few.

We know the majority of our people care about the future of our country and will show up at the polls on 26th May 2021. They know this is our Cayman. They want to ensure that its future remains securely in our peoples' hands; that our people will benefit. That prosperity will be for all our people. Please, therefore, cast your ballot wisely.

We have seen Caymanians and residents of all walks of life willing to work as ONE PEOPLE for ONE



CAYMAN, and mount fierce opposition to matters that affect our country. That spirit will be needed to continue to drive the development of our islands.

We in the Official Opposition, along with other members of the community, will be contesting the upcoming Elections. We look forward to your support. There is much to be done, and we are confident that we have the courage, determination and experience to rise and meet them on your behalf.

As we enter this New Year, let us begin anew with shared optimism and a reaffirmed commitment to continue working as one to realize that full potential for all Caymanians.

May God bless you all and continue to bless and protect our beloved Cayman Islands.

Ezzard Miller, MP New Year's Message

My fellow Caymanians and residents, as we embark upon another new year, we have, yet again, the opportunity to renew our faith, hopes and plans.

Even as we do so, I am only too conscious that during the past year we have had to face challenges and setbacks—most related to Covid-19, which will continue to have its impacts for some time.

We have nevertheless sought valiantly to rise to and overcome many of the challenges. And we can be sure that our tested traditions for strength and resilience in the face of hardships and difficulties will continue to stand us in good stead as we start a new year.

Indeed, we begin 2021 much better prepared to forge forward despite the trials and tests that may inevitably come our way.

For the immediate future, the Government expects to receive a shipment of vaccines early in the new year. We can anticipate an effective vaccination programme, designed to enable each of us and our families, our way of life, and our Islands to resume an appreciable degree of economic equilibrium by as early as August or September.

My family and I plan to take the vaccine as soon as available to us. I similarly encourage all Caymanians and residents.

So, as we begin 2021, we do have a strong basis for the expectation that life will get better as the year progresses.

In line with these expectations for change and renewal, the Cayman Islands People's Party offers Caymanians an opportunity to play

a direct role in directing and guiding our own future and that of generations to come.

This is essential, as meaningful political and economic growth and change can be achieved only when people are empowered to participate fully in our democracy.

The Cayman Islands People's Party is a movement thus built on the foundation of true participatory democracy.

As such, the goal of the People's Party is to return the rightful political power to the people and away from the self-seeking politicians. This includes the narrow special interest groups that constantly lobby for the benefit of their own agendas.

To do so, the People's Party has been conceived, constituted, and organized to empower the people to effect positive changes in their respective electoral districts and for the Islands as a whole.

The Constitution of the People's Party mandates that the power resides with the people and not with the politicians — no politician, for example, can hold administrative office in the People's Party. The party's constitution requires that the core executive body of the party be elected from among and by non-political members of the party.

Importantly, the People's Party advocates for change in the way we select, elect and govern political representatives.

Under the principles of the People's Party movement, the people — not the Party Leader nor the Party Chairman — will determine and administer political candidacy for respective electoral districts.

This is a central tenet of our new movement.

This major departure from the standard modus operandi here and elsewhere is driven in the Cayman Islands by the concern that under the current political parties the majority of Caymanians are excluded from the decision-making process.

This concern is at the heart of the distressing phenomenon of Caymanians being left behind in the political and economic dynamics of our Islands.

Much of this is based on the so-called "trickle-down economics".

As an economic proposition unduly favouring businesses and the wealthy in society — supposedly as a means to stimulating business investment in the short term and benefiting society at large in the long term — this economic scheme has never managed to achieve its stated goals.

It is not hard to understand why this stratagem has failed. The top-down decision-making style that trickle-down economics promotes inevitably leads to poor government decisions, in both policy direction and programmes.

It is time to stop allowing a few politicians, influenced by the wealthy, to decide what is best for Caymanians and the Islands as a whole.

This reflects a model bereft of empowerment, participation, and consultation with the people. Instead, we handout some turkeys, microwaves, and cash or gift certificates to influence or buy votes.

Unfortunately, we have seen this corrupt and corrupting influence



at work even over this holy observance of the birth of Christ.

We expect that this already festering sore will degrade further into an open, oozing wound leading up to the May 2021 elections.

The Cayman Islands People's Party aims to eradicate these all-too-entrenched undemocratic and corrupt practices.

We anticipate that the principles and goals of the movement will come as welcome relief across the three Cayman Islands, as the interim officers of the People's Party launch a membership drive in this new year. That will be followed in rapid succession by the establishing of electoral district committees.

These initiatives will enable electoral district committees to begin selecting candidates to contest the election in May 2021.

We therefore believe, despite all the setbacks of 2020, that 2021 will be a year not only of renewal but also of transformation.

Indeed, we, the interim executive of the People's Party, intend to make 2021 a historic year.

We invite each of you to join us in steering these Cayman Islands to new horizons, and making this a happy, prosperous and healthy 2021.

May God continue to bless these beloved Cayman Islands.

Premier Hon. Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MP 2021 New Year's message. Part 1

As we bid farewell to 2020 I know we will all be sharing the hope that 2021 is a much better year.

Undoubtedly 2020 will be remembered as the year that everything changed, as the COVID-19 virus spread from Asia across the whole world in a matter of mere months, causing havoc to the health systems in many countries and bringing first sickness and death and then economic hardship as the world battled the disease.

Over 81 million people worldwide have been infected, with infections rising as far too many countries experience a resurgence. Tragically, some 1.8 million people have died because of the virus, including two people here at home. As infections increase, inevitably so too will deaths.

It was back in January that we started planning for the possible arrival of the virus on our shores, and held the first press briefing on February 3rd to update the public on those plans. Despite any efforts to keep the virus away the public health advice that we received indicated that it was not a case of whether it would arrive here, but rather when.

On March 12th that advice proved true when we had our first confirmed case of COVID-19. That triggered the implementation of our COVID-19 response plans - with the closing of our borders, the introduction of the hard and soft curfew regimes and the other public health measures to help eradicate the virus in the community and to protect health and life. Those measures were hard on all of us, but I remain convinced that the swift and decisive action we took helped to contain the community spread. The phased opening of our local business sectors, starting at the end of May and continuing through July, along with increased testing, helped keep our community safe as we opened up. With our safety secured I am grateful that much of our local commerce has been able to return.

Regardless of how well most of us are doing there are those of you who have lost jobs or are working reduced hours because of the harsh economic realities of the pandemic. As in most countries, it is those working in tourism and hospitality who have been hardest hit.

The various relief programmes initiated by Government have helped many during these tough times. The ability to access your pension, combined with the pension holiday and the direct financial assistance provided by Government to tourism workers and businesses has helped ease the financial pain until we can once again safely

welcome tourists back to our shores in numbers.

The private sector and civil society have also helped in significant ways, including through charitable assistance to those in need.

The temporary loss of our tourism sector has also left a hole in Government's revenues. However, Government's financial stewardship over the past seven years provided significant cash reserves, some \$522 million at the start of this year, as a buffer against an economic downturn. This has allowed us the ability to fund the fight against the virus while keeping the country running and providing economic assistance to families and businesses.

I am pleased that the Minister of Finance and his team successfully negotiated a US\$403 million standby line of credit with a consortium of local banks to provide added funding should Government need it. As things currently stand, the line of credit will not be needed until perhaps the second half of 2021.

The Minister of Finance and his team also separately negotiated a Government Guaranteed Loan scheme with five local banks. This loan scheme is fully managed by the banks and will assist eligible Caymanian businesses obtain the necessary bank financing, with government backing, to allow them to remain in business, serve their clients, and keep staff employed during the period of the economic downturn.

These initiatives, combined with those from the private sector, will help families and businesses survive the months ahead as we move from responding to the virus to rebuilding - particularly our tourism and hospitality sectors.

Rebuilding will take time and it will take resolute effort, but I have every confidence that our Islands and our people will emerge stronger from the challenges we have faced.

The availability of vaccines early in the New Year offers the safest way for us to open up our country and our economy more broadly. Our first shipment of vaccines will arrive in early January and we will then roll out our national vaccination plan.

By March we hope to have successfully vaccinated and protected a sufficiently large number of our population, including all of those at most risk. If we can achieve that target, we should be able to open our borders once again.

However, having struggled so hard to get through the worst of this crisis, we are

determined to keep Cayman safe. Therefore, we will require that arriving travellers have also been vaccinated and received both a negative COVID-19 test before arriving, and a second negative test on arrival, along with any other public health requirements. Travellers not meeting these requirements will have to quarantine.

Despite the focus on COVID-19, we have been able to progress key Government projects including improvements to our road network to reduce traffic congestion; enhancing the Owen Roberts Airport runway; and the work to cap the landfill and to move closer to a final contract signing for a modern waste to energy facility. Work on the new John Grey High School is also progressing.

In February the European Union included our Islands on its list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes. We worked diligently throughout the COVID shutdown to address their concerns and in October we succeeded in having Cayman removed from the list by the EU; a very good result for our Islands in a not so good year.

As 2020 ends there is much that as a Caymanian and as Premier that brings me great satisfaction and hope for our future.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, our economy will strengthen with growing private sector confidence, and increasing investment. This confidence was recently demonstrated with the announcement by Aster DM Healthcare of their intended phased investment in a US\$350 million medical facility, focused on specialist healthcare tourism, an assisted living and independent living facility, and a medical school on Grand Cayman, as well as a medical clinic on Cayman Brac. Construction should begin in mid-2021. These types of projects are hugely welcomed as they help to further diversify and strengthen our economy, providing opportunities for Caymanians now and into the future.

As I reflect on the last seven and a half years I am proud at how much this Government and the last administration I led have achieved.



In coming into office in 2013 we faced an economy struggling to grow at just over 1% and with Caymanian unemployment at 10.5%. Tourism numbers were the lowest they had been in over a decade; the development and construction sectors were hurting and small businesses were struggling.

Fast forward to 2019 and we had a Cayman economy that was the best in the region. Growth averaged over 3% during the previous five years with Caymanian unemployment below 5%. Tourism had grown by record numbers while financial services business activity grew at almost 4% on average. The development sector was booming and in 2019 alone nearly 750 projects were approved with a combined total value of over \$890 million; a tremendous accomplishment by any measure.

It was Government's political leadership and strong financial stewardship over those seven years that provided the business sector with the confidence to invest and fuel the economic growth that created opportunities and thousands of new jobs for Caymanians. Even against the backdrop of a global pandemic and challenging economic times those investments are continuing.

Continued investment is critical to the rebuilding of our economy; and investment will continue as long as the business sector remains confident in the political and fiscal leadership Government is providing.

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COMMUNITY EVENTS

National Museum Featured Exhibition – Things I got for Christmas

Ongoing – Enjoy an eclectic collection of Toys from early 1900s through the 1980s. The exhibit features an extensive display of Caymanian Dolls and Dolls from around the World, collectible bears, and other boys’ toys from the Virginia Foster Collection. The exhibit is augmented with a small number of early toys from the Museum’s collection and a 1957 handmade wood Grater and 1950s Stucco truck on loan from Tony Powell. A traditional Cayman sisal Christmas tree and apple complete the period display of things Cayman.

The National Museum is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and on Saturdays from 10am to 2pm.

Telephone 345-949-8368 or email info@museum.ky for more information.

Music at the Library

7 January – Cayman Arts Festival and Cayman Islands Public Library Services presents “Music at the Library” at the George Town Public Library featuring Bella Rooney on vocals and James Brake on piano. This event begins at 6pm and admission is CI\$20 for adults and CI\$5 for students. Tickets are also available at the door. For more information, call 922 – 5550 or email enquiries@caymanarts-festival.com.

Alex Panton Foundation – Breaking Barriers

9 January - Young adults between the ages of ages 18 – 30 are invited to join the peer-led Breaking Bar-

riers support group. This is a safe environment for those struggling with stress and mental health difficulties. This event is FREE to attend, with no commitment required and takes place every Saturday from 12:30pm - 2:00pm at the George Town Public Library, on 3rd floor in the Breakout room. Free gift vouchers available to attendees from community sponsors and light snacks & beverages will be provided. For more information, please visit <https://alexpantonfoundation.ky/support/>

CI Chamber of Commerce – Business Workshops

12 & 14 January – The Chamber of Commerce is hosting 2 workshops in early January 2021. Time Management & Productivity on 12 January is a half-day workshop includes practical applications and time saving activities to assist you in learning how to make the most of your time by getting a grip on your workflow, planning and pri-



► Cayman Arts Festival

oritising accordingly and delegating effectively.

Immigration: Work Permits (BVP’s, TWP’s and RERC’s) will be held on 14 January. This is a four-hour course is intended to detail the full range of options under which a non-Caymanian can lawfully “engage in gainful occupation in the Islands”, with the emphasis

on private sector employment. Other work permit issues will also be addressed. Visit the website caymanchamber.ky or call 949 – 8090 for more information.

Send your community events to wendy@caymaniantimes.ky

COMMUNITY NOTICES

Cayman National Cultural Foundation – Come sing with us!

CNCF is inviting interested singers to join the C.I. National Folk Singers. You must be able to attend rehearsals on Tuesday evenings, and participate in four or five performances per year. For more information, email info@artscayman.org today!

Live Christmas Tree Drop Off

The Department of Environmental Health (DEH) wishes to advise the public that bins have now been placed for the public to drop off Christmas trees.



Locations include:

- Spotts Dock
- The Cricket Grounds, George Town
- The George Town Landfill 24 hour drop off site

The trees will be collected and mulched in the landfill. The mulch will then be taken to the Cricket Grounds next to the Farmer’s Market in George Town for public collection on Saturday, 23 January 2021 starting at 8a.m. For more information interested persons may contact DEH at tel. 949-6696 or by email at dehcustomerservice@gov.ky

TravelCayman

The Team at Travel Cayman reminds everyone that the current travel protocols are still in place. For all information about travelling, please go to travelcayman.gov.ky

Cayman Brac & Little Cayman Immigration Board Meeting

The Immigration Board Meeting for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman will be held on Monday 11 January.

Send your community notices to wendy@caymaniantimes.ky

Three Entities Benefit from PoLA Christmas Donations

With the challenges brought upon so many during the year 2020, the staff at the Portfolio of Legal Affairs made the extra effort to help brighten the spirits of the Cayman Islands community. For the past 3 years, Portfolio staff have donated to various organisations such as the Special Needs Foundation and the Golden Age Home.

This year, they did their Christmas charity drive a little differently by donating to three charities instead of one. The selected charities to benefit from this year’s donations were Acts of Random Kindness (ARK), the Department of Children and Family Services and the Humane Society.

The staff presented ARK with various gift certificates that can be used towards relief care packages for children, families and individuals who continue to suffer from the severe economic hardship of COVID-19. ARK endeavours to be a friend to people in unique circumstances of crisis and demonstrate kindness through loving acts of service. “Thanks to Kendra Okonski who was on hand to accept the dona-

tions from PoLA staff,” Solicitor-General and PoLA head, Ms Reshma Sharma said.

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is well known for its assistance across the Islands; so PoLA staff were happy to support the department’s efforts in providing for children and families within the local community, and hopefully to bring a bit of joy on Christmas Day. “Thanks to the Director of DCFS Mrs. Paulinda Mendoza-Williams for collecting the gifts from the Portfolio. Our staff really enjoyed searching for the perfect gifts on the wish list,” donation coordinator and PoLA Financial Administrator Ms Shemina McLaughlin commented.

“And last but not least, the Portfolio was keen to contribute to the animals who have also been affected by the pandemic,” the Solicitor General said. “With the loss of jobs, many pet owners were forced to leave the Islands; others struggling financially were unable to bear the costs of caring for their pets. As a result, the demands upon the Humane Society to look after these animals increased without a corresponding increase in financial support.

“The Humane Society continues to do a wonderful job in getting the stray animals off the streets and from the Department of Agriculture and into forever homes. POLA staff contributed towards dog chow, cat litter and toys, among other things to ensure that the animals would not be left



► (L-R) Legislative Counsel Ms Kimberley Superville, Administrative Assistant (Legislative Drafting Department) Ms Clea Boddington, Financial Administrator Ms Shemina McLaughlin, DCFS Director, Mrs. Paulinda Mendoza-Williams, Solicitor General and Chief Officer of PoLA Ms Reshma Sharma, Legislative Counsel Ms Dharlene Smith and Director of the Law Reform Commission Mr. Jose Griffith (Photos by Bina Mani, GIS)



► (L-R) Legislative Counsel Ms Kimberley Superville, Administrative Assistant (Legislative Drafting Department) Ms Clea Boddington, Financial Administrator Ms Shemina McLaughlin ARK representative Ms Kendra Okonski, Solicitor General and Chief Officer of PoLA Ms Reshma Sharma, Crown Counsel Ms Celia Middleton, Administrative Secretary Ms Tesia Scott, Legislative Counsel Ms Dharlene Smith and Director of the Law Reform Commission Mr. Jose Griffith

out during the holidays. We were fortunate enough to spend some quality time with two frolicking young pups who ended up taking us for a walk!” Ms Sharma noted.



► Two playful pups helped the Humane Society receive the PoLA Christmas donations from l-r the Solicitor-General and Chief Officer, Ms Reshma Sharma and Financial Administrator Ms Shemina McLaughlin

“The Portfolio extends its sincere gratitude to these organisations for their invaluable services within the local community.”

“From the Staff at the Portfolio of Legal Affairs, Happy Holidays to all!”

EDITORIAL

Pension bonanza fueled Christmas spending

Roads almost at gridlock with holiday shoppers, a local drinks store selling out of Bollinger Champagne, brisk sales at Cayman's local jewellery stores and a Port clogged up with imports all suggest that many Cayman shoppers have been happy to splash some cash at Christmas time.

Last year Customs and Border Control announced that they had received 18,000 individual imports in June, which was 5,000 more than in May, putting a huge strain on its resources, so the Christmas trend of spending follows months of online expenditure on the part of local residents.

Cayman has also seen a boom in its real estate industry, with realtors busier than ever before as new builds in particular are getting snapped up by locals as well as overseas buyers.

This does not come as much of a surprise when viewed against a backdrop of recently released statistics which show that CI\$443,464,491.28 had been paid out to pension plan



members in Cayman, since the Government amended the Pension Law to allow people to withdraw large sums from their pension.

But while the injection of such a vast sum of money into the economy (even online shopping imports bring in duty for Government) are currently keeping Cayman afloat, experts are fearful that local resi-

dents will feel the economic impact in the years to come of frittering away their pension monies on possibly frivolous items.

At the time the law was amended in April, Premier Alden McLaughlin urged caution in withdrawing pension funds, stating that people should only withdraw the funds if they really needed to and that the

money would still be there if they chose not to make the withdrawal.

At Public Accounts Committee hearings in June of this year, Fidelity Cayman CEO Brett Hill warned that releasing pension funds into people's pockets before they retired would cause big problems for Cayman in the future.

"We seem to be kicking a very large can down a very short road," he stated. "The average pension plan member regards their pension as a tax. They do not want their money locked away until they are 65 years old. They somehow believe that Government will take care of them if they cannot afford to live. This is my grave concern," Mr Hill said.

Government has also just passed an extension to the pension holiday, which has given employers and employees permission not to contribute to pensions up until the end of June 2021. Given an ever-widening pension shortfall, it is prudent to heed the warnings of the experts and continue paying pension if it is possible to do so.

Government Wraps Up Successful Experience Cayman: Shop Local Campaign

Experience Cayman, the Cayman Islands' first online festival, closed its virtual gates last weekend, after highlighting more than 100 local businesses and entrepreneurs, across a diverse set of industries and in all three islands, over the last three months.

Hosted by the Ministry of Commerce, Planning and Infrastructure, Experience Cayman provided a platform for local businesses, struggling with the knock-on effects of the coronavirus pandemic, to promote their services and offerings to Cayman Islands residents.

The virtual festival and supporting campaign were free for companies to take part in and featured long-established business, like Foster's supermarket, the Cayman Turtle Centre and Camana Bay, as well as start-ups, such as Glazed With Nature, Tomfoodery Kitchen and Lummae Cayman. Experience Cayman also gave a stage to local not-for-profits including the Pink Ladies Volunteer Corps, Beacon Farms, the Cayman National Cultural Foundation and the Cayman Maritime Heritage Foundation.

"It's been amazing to watch how the Cayman Islands business community and general public have rallied around the Experience Cayman campaign," says Commerce, Planning and Infrastructure Minister

Hon. Joey Hew. "I believe the campaign has not only reminded everyone how much talent we have in the Cayman Islands but also how lucky we are to live in such a magnificent and supportive community."

Experience Cayman received additional support from the Cayman Islands Chamber of Commerce, the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism, the Cayman Islands Small Business Association, the Cayman Islands Tourism Association and Celebrate Cayman, who each hosted a virtual festival arena.

Notable local personalities such as international supermodel and Cayman's own, Selita Ebanks, as well as radio-personality, Taylor Vaughn, also lent their talents to the campaign.

Aside from the virtual festival, Experience Cayman also invited local social media influencers to promote offline events including "Shop & Dine the Waterfront" and "George Town Holiday" in George Town, "Shoppers' Night Out" at Camana Bay, and "Looky Ya! Kitchen Dance" at the Cayman Islands National Museum, as well as the Ministry's own "Experience Cayman LIVE" Saturday Night Live event in George Town through a host of Instagram takeovers.

"During these unprecedented times, Experience Cayman allowed us to showcase all that our islands



► The Experience Cayman virtual festival draws a close as Cayman is encouraged to continue to support local

have to offer, in a virtual setting," PR, Media and Design Specialist for the Cayman Islands National Museum, Brian Walter Jr, said. "My hope is that we will continue to utilise technology and creative means to promote our brands and our beautiful Cayman Islands."

At the close of the campaign, 12,000 virtual Experience Cayman attendees had enjoyed around 100 virtual experiences, collectively experiencing the festival more than 19,000 times. Experience Cayman also engaged 1,700 social media followers, including 22 brand ambassadors, in its three-month run.

"Just because Experience Cayman has come to an end, it doesn't mean we stop showing support for our local businesses," adds Colin Lumsden, the Ministry's George Town Manager and Revitalisation Initiative Coordinator. "I look forward to seeing the spirit of the festival carry on throughout and beyond the holiday season, as people continue to explore everything there is to do, across all three of the Cayman Islands."

The Experience Cayman virtual festival will be available online until the end of the year on www.gov.ky/experiencecayman.

GOVERNOR ROPER TO TAKE FIRST COVID JAB IN CAYMAN

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

booster 12 weeks later to give longer-term immunity (how long not known yet)."

He called it "a game-changer" saying it "offers hope to the world" and is "a great result for British science."

Mr Roper said the UK has given the commitment to supply vaccines to the Overseas Territories with the first shipment of the Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine - the first to be approved globally by the UK due to arrive here on the BA flight on 5 January.

The Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine is now being administered in the UK, the first country to do so.

"We are still expecting our first supplies on the BA flight on 5 January and enough vaccines initially for 5,000 people on our

Islands. That will be the 2 dose Pfizer vaccine and discussions are underway on future supplies," the Governor stated.

A national COVID-19 voluntary inoculation campaign throughout the Cayman Islands is being coordinated to start in the coming weeks.

On the issue of ensuring that Cayman continues to suppress the spread of the virus, Mr Roper said, "While we are fortunate to be largely Covid free (apart from a small number of returning travellers), the virus and a dangerous new strain continue to rage around us."

He is urging residents to "continue to exercise the utmost caution. Approval of this new vaccine, and other vaccines, is our way out of this pandemic."



26 Certificates and Badges of Honour awarded *Cert. Hons. for Local COVID-19 Heroes*

His Excellency the Governor Martyn Roper on Thursday 31 December 2020 announced the award of a further 26 Certificates and Badges of Honour for outstanding COVID-19 related work.

Mr Roper said: '2020 has been a quite extraordinary year and so many people on our Islands have stepped up to support our community. When looking around the world at how the virus is raging, we are blessed indeed to be largely COVID-free apart from a small number of returning travellers, all in 14 days of isolation to manage any risk.'

I awarded a number of Certificates and Badges of Honour earlier this year. I am now pleased to make a number of New Year awards for the many people across our community who played a significant role in the battle against the virus. These awards focus on persons involved in healthcare, teaching and procurement of our test kits.

This is a larger number of awards than in the past reflecting the unprecedented nature of the global pandemic and the outstanding contribution of so many individuals.

I am therefore pleased to announce awards to the following individuals in recognition of their exceptional service to our community during this pandemic:

For meritorious services rendered during the COVID Pandemic:

For meritorious services to education

- Cayman Islands Further Education Centre Dual Entry Student Liaison/Literacy Specialist - Lorna Blackman
- Department of Education Services Head of Business Services - Mark Ray
- East End Special Educational Needs Coordinator - Troy Rodgers
- Edna Moyle Primary School Counsellor - Amy Hunt
- George Town Primary School Assistant Teacher Year 4 (1:1) - Briana Welds
- Lighthouse School Teacher - Carolyn Powell
- Deputy Principal Red Bay Primary School - Ryan Dale
- Special Support Aide Sir John A. Cumber Primary School - Esther Rivers
- Special Support Aide Sir John A. Cumber Primary School - Nuvia Manderson

Health Services Authority

- Director of Sister Islands Health Services - Dr Srirangan Velusamy
- Nurse Manager GP Services - Joanna Rose-Wright
- Director of Corporate Services - Douglas Vinton
- Director of Support Services Caswell Walford

- Facilities Manager - Christopher McNamee
- Clinical Head of Department GP Services - Dr Eryka Simmons
- General Practitioner - Dr Ricardo Clarke
- Nurse Manager CCU - Karen Pinnock-Stewart

Procurement of test kits and testing of the public

- Susan Olde, OBE
- Matthew Forbes, OBE
- Vernie Coe
- Craig Merren
- Dr Bella Beraha
- Dr Yaron Rado, Doctor's Hospital

Cayman Airways

- CEO - Fabian Whorms

Her Majesty's Cayman Islands Prison Service

- Director - Steven Barrett

Support for children in need

- Chairperson Feed Our Future - Stacey VanDevelde



sons to receive Certificates and Badges of Honour at the Queen's Birthday Party in June 2021. Names must be submitted before the end of March 2021.

The Governor invites members of the community to nominate deserving per-



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This is to advise the public that **Sophia Tracy-Ann Tulloch**, aka 'Ms. Sophie', is no longer employed to Superior Auto Limited. Miss Sophia Tulloch is therefore not authorized to conduct any business whatsoever on our behalf.





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Caymanians Offered Internship Opportunities in the Financial Industry with MUFG Investor Services in Partnership with WORC

Workforce Opportunities & Residency Cayman (WORC) continues a long-standing partnership with MUFG Investor Services which provides paid internship and apprenticeship opportunities for young Caymanians in the financial services industry.

MUFG Investor Services' Executive Director Lenin Perumalsamy says "It is true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed. We started this tradition with WORC and would like to see this program grow steadily and meet the longer-term goals of organically growing skilled workers and professionals within the local financial services industry.

In their day to day duties, we engage/train our interns on our technology platforms and cash/positions reconciliation between Brokers and Administrators. These reconciliations give insight into Investments/Securities and the cash flows. This is the fundamental knowledge interns acquire before moving into other areas of data management. Upon completion of their Internship, successful candidates will be provided an Apprenticeship up to 2 years. During Apprenticeship, candidates will develop knowledge on trade capture, pricing investments, etc. Once that's completed, exposure to Net Asset Value (NAV) preparation and publishing are next.

All these middle office skills are quite rare in the local community and we are trying to plant these skills with the hope of delivering an end to end Cayman product."



► (L-R) MUFG Lenin Perumalsamy, WORC Paul Puckerin, MUFG Susan Eden, centre MUFG Intern recipient Robia McField, WORC Katherine Whittaker, WORC Dianne Conolly, MUFG Fijona Jaggernauth (Photo courtesy: Ministry of Employment and Border Control)

Katherine Whittaker, Head of Labour Demands, Development & Training says, "WORC is pleased to have had the opportunity of partnering with MUFG Investor Services to provide Caymanians with Internships and Apprenticeships within Funds Administration. Thanks to those at MUFG Investor Services and their dedicat-

ed staff, we have seen Caymanians grow from nervous Interns to driven individuals who have been mentored and guided towards full-time employment. We look forward to our continued partnership with MUFG Investor Services as we seek to introduce more Caymanians into this career pathway."

Young Caymanians interested in internship opportunities at financial services firm MUFG Investor Services should contact WORC's National Training & Development Unit by calling 244-4048 or email worc.training@gov.ky.

Visit www.worc.ky or follow on Facebook and Instagram.

Maples Group Supports US\$300 Million China-focused Logistics Fund

Maples and Calder, the Maples Group's law firm, was pleased to advise the logistics arm of CITIC Capital Holdings Limited ("CITIC Capital"), CCRE China Logistics Limited ("CCRE China") on the set up of CC SF China Logistics Properties Investment Fund, L.P. ("the Fund") with Prosperity Sino Limited ("Prosperity Sino"). The Fund which completed on 30 October 2020 was valued at approximately US\$300 million and will be invested in logistics properties in China's top-tier cities and others.

CITIC Capital, founded in 2002, is a Hong Kong-headquartered global alternative investment management and advisory company that manages over US\$30

billion of capital from a diverse group of international institutional investors. The firm currently employs over 300 staff members throughout its offices in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen, Tokyo and New York.

S.F. Holding Co., Ltd. ("S.F. Holding") headquartered in Shenzhen, China, is the parent company of Prosperity Sino. The company is one of China's leading comprehensive service providers of express logistics, which provides domestic and international integrated and comprehensive logistics solutions and logistics services including warehousing management, sales forecasting, big data analysis, and financial management. After completing a major asset restructuring, S.F. Holding was officially renamed and listed on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange in 2017. It is a constituent of SZSE 100 Index.

This is not the first time CITIC Capital and S.F. Holding have joined hands with the two company's forging a number of long-term partnerships over the past number of years.

A team based in the Group's law firm in Hong Kong advised on this transaction and was led by Ann Ng, a Partner in the Funds & Investment Management practice, and assisted by Associate Anna Chen.

About the Maples Group

The Maples Group, through its leading international law firm, Maples and Calder, advises global financial, institutional, business and private clients on the laws of the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Ireland, Jersey and Luxembourg. With offices in key jurisdictions around the world, the Maples Group has specific strengths in areas of corporate commercial, finance, investment funds, litigation and trusts. Maintaining relationships with

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leading legal counsel, the Group leverages this local expertise to deliver an integrated service offering for global business initiatives. For more information, please visit: maples.com/services/legal-services.



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A child's life-saving journey of 8,000 miles and 200 days

From Mongolia to the Cayman Islands, and back – with a pandemic in between

When five-year-old Aagii left rural Mongolia for lifesaving heart surgery in the Cayman Islands in January 2020, neither he nor his mother Amaraa could have imagined that they wouldn't see their homeland again for nine months. He was initially anticipated to stay in Cayman for just six weeks.

Born with ventricular septal defect Aagi, whose full name is Altangerel Chogdon, came to the Cayman Islands with a group of children from his homeland, courtesy of the international charity Samaritan's Purse – which has a longstanding relationship with Health City Cayman Islands to perform heart surgeries on children from impoverished countries around the world. He was accompanied by his mother, whose full name is Amarjargal Chulu-unbaatar, and by interpreter Baigalmaa Khalzan, known as Baagii.

While the other children in his group went home in March prior to the Cayman Islands' Covid-19 related lockdown, Aagi remained.

Once he arrived in Cayman, doctors discovered a dental condition that made surgery risky but which could be treated locally. However, before Aagi could get dental treatment in March, the Covid-19 suppression measures came into effect – putting the Islands into lockdown and temporarily closing medical facilities and dental offices for elective procedures.

No one at that time knew just how long the lockdown period would last. And when restrictions were lifted, it took several weeks to find a dentist who could treat Aagii.

Consequently, Aagii didn't have his 2.5 hour surgery to repair what is commonly referred to as "a hole in the heart" until early September – nine months after he first arrived and after unexpectedly experiencing an earthquake, a pandemic, and a hurricane.

Most people would have been anxious and fearful during those uncertain months far from home.

Initially, Aagii's mother Amaraa said, "I had a strong feeling of fear. I didn't know if we would ever get back to Mongolia and see my family again."

It was a confusing time, but their translator Baagii interpreted the televised

press conferences and explained the situation day by day.

"It was very stressful," said Amaraa. "It was not clear whether it was going to happen for my baby."

But soon, she felt at peace due to the support she received in Cayman.

"It was in the beginning kind of scary, but then since we knew that we are in good hands... and we didn't worry about anything. We were provided by everything we needed so we didn't feel any bad."

She singled out the doctors who were caring for her son, "All the doctors were so kind and so attentive, so this made me be peaceful, and you know, be thankful to them."

But primarily, throughout the long lockdown period, Amaraa said they depended on their host family for encouragement and support.

During their eventful nine months on island, Aagi, Amaraa and Baagii were sustained and cared for by Caymanians Mario and Lovenia Ebanks, who became a host family through their church. Samaritan's Purse is a faith-based charity with links to several churches in the Cayman Islands.

Host families sometimes have visiting patients stay with them, but in this case, because of the length of the stay, Aagi and his family lived at a mission house in Savannah. The couple brought them food and took them to the shops on their 'letter days' during the shelter-in-place restrictions.

Lovenia Ebanks explained that they've previously hosted children from overseas and enjoyed the experience, but this group from Mongolia had become like family to her and her husband.

She said, "Normally we only have them for like two maybe three months. This



nine months has been a little bit long, but you know you're truly blessed to give back to a community that you live in. But you also must live your life with a sense of purpose. You have to wake up in the morning, find something positive to do with your

On October 12, Aagii, his mother and their companion Baagii left Cayman to begin the long journey home to Mongolia, where his family herds goats, sheep and cattle on the Mongolian steppe and live a nomadic life in traditional tents called yurts.

"We have everything except camels and we travel with the animals from place to place," Amaraa said.

She explained that Cayman had become like a second home, and that while they are looking forward to seeing their family again, they are sorry to leave people they have grown so close to.

"Now we've been here for a long time, we've adjusted to everything here and we met so many good friends and people. So in one way, even though we are happy to leave we will be missing all

those friends...we will miss [them] but we all will have good memories," Amaraa said.

Aagii also had some words of farewell, shyly told through his translator before he left: "He says he loves all of those people all of them. Thank you very much."

Aagi was one of the over 100 children that Health City treats for congenital heart defects every year, often from far flung countries including Uganda, Bolivia, Haiti, and his homeland of Mongolia.

"We have been doing these surgeries for around six years," said Dr. Upadhyia. "Dr. [Devi] Shetty's vision is that cost should not come in the way of getting treatment."

As she and her son prepared to leave, Amaraa said, "I want to encourage those who want to come to the Cayman Islands... don't be afraid to come here, because there are many good people, godly people here in [the] Cayman Islands. So that's why we are so thankful. We can't even express the words we have to thank them."



life, and I do other things besides this, but this has been a very rewarding experience for me personally."

Finally, once the required dental treatment was complete, paediatric cardiologist Dr. Sripadh Upadhyia went ahead with the surgery.

"Aagi is a wonderful 5-year-old boy," said Dr. Upadhyia. "He is all fixed up and ready to go home. He is quite energetic and enthusiastic and he has recovered extremely well."

Before the operation, Amaraa explained that Aagii would become out-of-breath quickly, with his features turning blue if he tried to run. He also had frightening seizures due to his condition.

Dr. Upadhyia explained that if left untreated, Aagii's condition would have resulted in decreased quality of life and could eventually prove fatal later in life, but the surgery would allow Aagii to live a regular life and grow healthily into adulthood.



Aagii left rural Mongolia for life-saving heart surgery in the Cayman Islands in January 2020



► Myrtle and Oswald Thomas. Myrtle won the 'Prettiest Hat' competition for the sixth year running



► Miss Cayman Islands Universe, Mariah Tibbetts gives guests a royal greeting

Rotary's Boxing Day Luncheon Celebration for Seniors

By Christopher Tobutt

It was Rotary's great big Annual Boxing Day Luncheon Celebration for Seniors, and everyone was having a great time as they settle down at the tables in the big hall at First Baptist Church. The Rotarians work so hard each year preparing to make an extra-special day for Cayman's senior citizens to remember, and this was the 55th year they have been doing it. Lots of other people make time to help, too, and companies chip in with all the Christmas gifts – a small mountain of them piled up near the door. There were singers and musicians, and Miss Cayman Islands Universe Mariah Tibbetts, had turned up too complete with her crown, because it's nice to have some royalty to greet the guests.

"I am here to talk to seniors and greet them and see how their Christmas was," Ms. Tibbetts said. "We need to support them in our community and I think this is the perfect opportunity to do so. They are the backbone of our community. I want to be as connected to my culture and my community as I can be. These are the perfect people to teach me that."

Soon, food was served, and it was time for lots of fun and games. Some of the seniors got up to dance, and there was a competition for the best dancer. There were lots of prizes and entertainment too, including steel pan and some Christmas songs. It was a great time to see old friends and a chance to catch up on things. The food was lovely, and Rotarian Chris Johnson was busy in the kitchen helping to get everything ready, with help from lots of others.

Rotarian Brendon Lyons said, "Today is our 55th year for our Senior Citizens Party. We have a number of companies that support us with the food. Lots of prizes and surprises here today we have 'Most Grand Children,' 'Eldest Person,' and 'Best Dancer.' We have lots of entertainment, prizes and surprises happening today, and Deputy Governor Franz Manderson is here today, too.



► Just a small part of the people from Rotary who made the day extra-special. Photo includes Rotarians Chris Johnson, Brendon Lyons and Gina McBryan

Gina McBryan President of the Rotary Club of Grand Cayman, said, "We've done it every year since we started the Club, and we are so happy to be able to do it. Because of the pandemic this year we just didn't know if we would have this much of a crowd, so we are excited to see the seniors coming in.

Myrtle Thomas and her husband Oswald Thomas have been coming to the party year after year. They love the friendly atmosphere and all the fun and food, and of course, the competitions. "I come here every year I really like it. This is the sixth year running I have entered the Prettiest

Hat prize, and won it. Oswald my husband has a lovely hat too, but he didn't want to wear it," she said. Melburn Campbell loves

the activities like the dancing competition too, but he didn't take part in any of them this year, he said.

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REGIONAL HOTEL ASSOCIATION HOPES FOR BETTER 2021

The president of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) has painted an optimistic picture for the region's tourism outlook for 2021.

In a New Year's message, Pablo Torres predicts that the Caribbean will see a return of tourism "faster than many parts of the world".

He credits this to the protocols and partnerships implemented throughout the region to help lessen the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Saying 2021 would be a year of recovery, Mr Torres declared: "Tourism is our key to recovery, to restoring the livelihood of thousands of employees in our industry, to reopening our doors, and welcoming our guests."

In addition to replenishing tax revenues to cash-strapped governments, the CHTA head noted that a tourism revival would "refresh and renew the minds, bodies and spirits of millions of travellers who will discover that the Caribbean is the best place on earth to recover from the ravage of this pandemic."

Applauding the Caribbean's response to the pandemic, Mr Torres praised the "countless health heroes" whose dedica-

tion and sacrifices he said had averted a great deal of human suffering and have helped to set the stage for the economic recovery the region will be experiencing in the coming months."

He also feels the region's rapid response coordinated by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) helped to contain the spread of the virus more effectively than many other parts of the world.

The hospitality industry veteran lauded CHTA's "key partners in health", including National Hotel and Tourism Associations, the Caribbean Public Health Agency, the Caribbean Tourism Organization, the UN World Tourism Organization, and the World Travel and Tourism Council.

"Through collaboration and sharing insights and expertise we all help one another," he stated.

He also commended industry workers across various sectors linked to the tourism industry saying they have "led by example, providing exemplary services while adhering to essential health safety protocols. We are all in debt to your service."

Mr Torres noted that the Caribbean's hospitality sector has gone to great



► Pablo Torres, The president of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association

lengths to protect and ensure the health and safety of both residents and visitors.

Recalling that the Caribbean and its tourism sector has weathered many crises

over the years and has always rebounded, the CHTA chairman described 2020 as a year when CHTA members were challenged to do more with less, including significant revenue shortfalls.

Traveller breaches quarantine following day 15 PCR test

A traveller who breached quarantine after attending a day 15 PCR test site has been warned for intended prosecution.

Rather than returning directly home to receive their results the traveller, stopped at a number of public places on the way home. This was in contravention of an agreement all returning travellers must sign with Travel Cayman.

"It is important that travellers abide by their agreement to remain in quarantine until they are cleared by public health,"

comments Dr Tasha Ebanks-Garcia, who heads the Travel Cayman programme.

Meanwhile health officials note that a person can test positive at their day 15 test following a negative result on entry and as such still able to transmit the virus

It has since been determined that the traveller did not pose a public health risk at the time of the breach.

For more information on the Cayman Islands travel process visit; www.explore.gov.ky/travel

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CIS and Cayman Prep dominate high school football leagues

The 2020 Cayman Youth Football Leagues (CYFL) Dart Under 13 and Appleby Under 18 high school football leagues were dominated by Cayman International School (CIS) and Cayman Prep & High School.

The recently concluded Appleby Under 18 boys' and girls' leagues saw the young ladies from CIS and the young men from Cayman Prep retain their 2019 titles with perfect records.

In the Appleby Under 18 girls' league, CIS' road to the title included three wins and a draw amassing a total of 10 points, three points more than runners-up Triple C and third-place Cayman Prep, who were tied on seven points. Triple C finished runners-up as they conceded less goals than Cayman Prep as outlined in the league structure.

In the Appleby Under 18 boys' league, Cayman Prep secured the coveted title with a 'nail-biting' 3-2 final day victory over John Gray High School (JGHS). The win was significant for the defending champions as eventual league runners-up Triple C were at the same time, enjoying a 5-0 win over Clifton Hunter High School and were hoping for a Cayman Prep draw or loss, which would hand the Triple C Crusaders their first high school football championship. Cayman Prep managed to overcome a final 10 minutes of



► 2020 Appleby Under 18 girls high school football champions – Cayman International School



► 2020 Appleby Under 18 boys high school football champions – Cayman Prep & High School

sustained pressure from JGHS to secure the win and the title by a single point. JGHS finished third in the league.

In the Dart Under 13 high school football leagues, which concluded in November, defending girls' champions Cayman Prep retained their title with CIS finishing runners-up and St. Ignatius Catholic School securing third place. In the boy's division, CIS were crowned champions with JGHS and Cayman Prep 1 finishing runners-up and third respectively.

High schools participating in the 2020 CYFL Dart Under 13 and Appleby Under 18 high school leagues this year included Clifton Hunter High School, John Gray High School, St. Ignatius Catholic

High School, Triple C, Cayman Prep & High School, Cayman International School and Cayman Academy.

The CYFL Organising Committee extends special thanks to league sponsors Dart and Appleby and to the Cayman Islands Football Association (CIFA) and the Department of Sports for the use of the various sporting facilities. Thanks also to the Cayman Islands Referees' Association (CIRA) for providing officials for all the high school games.

CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank take Chamber golf top spot

Dallas Neatham, Glenn Abell, Michael McBain and Ross Fortune from CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank claimed the top prize in this year's Chamber of Commerce Golf Classic which took place at the North Sound Golf Club in late November. The annual fundraising tournament attracted 108 golfers who helped to raise money for the Chamber and various charities.

Dart Real Estate signed on as platinum sponsor for the tournament at a time when many businesses are facing the economic challenges resulting from the global pandemic.

"This annual golf tournament is an important fundraiser for the Chamber and helps to offset the costs associated with the various member and community programmes that we hold," said Chamber CEO Wil Pineau

at the awards ceremony at the conclusion of the tournament. "This year's event was sold out in record time. I am grateful to Dart Real Estate for signing on for the first time as the platinum sponsor which clearly demonstrates their support for the Chamber and the programmes and services that we offer to our members and the wider community."

Pineau also acknowledged and thanked Broadhurst LLC, Doctors Hospital, Knighthead Annuity & Life Assurance Company, Liftech Ltd., Maples, CEL Distributors, Maples FS, Baker Tilly (Cayman) Ltd., Walkers, Animal House, Saxon Insurance, CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank, R&H Restructuring, Collas Crill, Davenport Development Ltd, Caribbean MGT, GT Automotive, Island Jewellers, CG



► (L-R) Dallas Neatham, Glenn Abell, Michael McBain, Ross Fortune and Woody Foster

BritCay, Cayman Cigar Company, Red Sail Sports, Health City Cayman Islands, The Westin Grand Cayman Seven Mile Beach Resort & Spa, Cost-U-Less, North Sound Golf Club, Kimpton Seafire Re-

sort + Spa, Rocky's Diamonds, Anytime Fitness, Smoothie King, A.L. Thompson's, Subway, Agave, Tortuga, Cayman Spirits Co and the Cayman Islands Brewery for supporting the event as a spon-

sor or by providing prizes for the tournament.

"I would also like to thank the Chamber staff who worked so hard in organising such a well-attended event which was postponed due to bad weather at the first attempt," Pineau said. "Everyone had a brilliant day of golf and a lot of fun. We are already planning another great event for November 2021."

The Home Gas' team of Kim Corallo, Marcos Montana, Shane Delaney and Jason Lucraft finished in second place followed by Alan Silverman, Connan Hill, Gilles Laplante and Graham Robinson from the Broadhurst team. Jenny Bodden won the Ladies Long Drive on Hole #7 and Graham Robinson the Men's Long Drive on Hole #2. Mike McBain won the closest to the pin on Hole #5.

CARIBBEAN BRIEFS

St Vincent's volcano may erupt

St Vincent's La Soufrière volcano is on the verge of explosive eruption and is being closely monitored. At press time the residents in the north of the island have been placed on evacuation alert and public visits to the volcano are no longer allowed.

The volcano recently began to spew lava from a newly formed dome after lying dormant for decades. Authorities have issued an orange alert for the area, affecting more than 100,000 people, as scientists assess the latest activity.

The orange alert means the volcano may erupt with less than 24 hours' notice. The next highest alert level is red, which means an eruption is in progress.

Last Tuesday officials warned of strong gas emissions, forma-



► St Vincent residents around La Soufriere fear it erupting

tion of a new volcanic dome and changes to its crater lake at the volcano. Officials said the volcano could erupt any day and is advising people from Fancy in the north of the island to Georgetown on the northeast coast they may have to evacuate.

A team of scientists from Trinidad and Tobago were flown in to the island to provide support to those assessing the eruption.

BVI, JA and Grenada bans UK travellers

The British Virgin Islands (BVI) government has imposed a travel ban on anyone travelling from the United Kingdom to the territory. The travel ban on the UK is due to a new strain of COVID-19 there. Grenada and Jamaica have also imposed a travel ban on the UK.

BVI Health Minister Carvin Malone said the ban will take effect on Jan. 11. The ban will not apply to nationals, belongers, residents, work permit holders, anyone permitted to reside in the territory, diplomats, and anyone employed by the government and its statutory bodies.

"Cabinet decided to implement a 14-day quarantine period for all persons allowed to travel to the BVI under the previously-mentioned exceptions, provided that they un-



► BVI is off limits to UK travellers

dergo an RT-PCR testing regime on days on entry — Day 0, Day 7, and Day 14," Malone stated.

"Cabinet decided to use 20 positive cases as a trigger to inform a decision by cabinet regarding travel restrictions to the territory except for nationals, belongers, residents, work permit holders, persons permitted to reside in the territory, diplomats and persons employed by government and statutory agencies."

Cuba overhauls its currency

The Cuban government overhauled its currency on New Year's Day to try to improve its economic performance amid the pandemic and the tightening of US sanctions against the island. This will be a relief for Cayman Islands residents who regularly visit the island and are confused by the varying exchange rates.

The reform eliminates the dual currency system in place on the island since 1994, and increases salaries, pensions and social security payments while transforming the pricing structure completely.

Cuba's planned economy has been operating with the Cuban peso (CUP) and the Convertible peso (CUC), pegged to the US dollar at par and worth 24 times as much as the CUP.

However, the CUC has had different exchange rates for the public, joint ventures and state-owned enterprises over the past three decades, which has created distortions in the



► Cuba is reforming its confusing currency

economic system, say the island's authorities.

With the new measures in place, one dollar will equal 24 CUP, and

the CUC will be out of circulation by the end of June.

Cubans generally believe that this is a wise decision by the government.

Havana resident Sonia Cruz said: "As a state employee, I was paid in CUP but needed to convert most of my salary into CUC to buy hygiene products and food. That made things more complicated."

Nationwide, automatic teller machines are no longer dispensing CUC notes as grocery stores, shopping centres and state-operated businesses are giving change only in Cuban pesos.

Jamaica confirms new virus strain



► Jamaicans are taking extra precautions against the virus

Jamaica has reported four cases of the highly contagious strain of COVID-19 that recently surfaced in the United Kingdom but the authorities there are cautioning against panic. Like BVI and Grenada, Jamaica has banned all travellers from the UK as a result.

Health Minister Dr Christopher Tufton stressed that the government is taking all the necessary precautions to keep it under control. The four positive samples were among the 20 confirmed coronavirus cas-

es out of the 301 passengers who arrived from the UK on Dec. 21, the date Jamaica banned passenger arrivals from the UK because of the newly discovered strain of the virus in that country. Jamaica has now restricted flights from the UK until Jan. 31.

The samples were analysed by the Trinidad-based Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA).

"As of now, there's no evidence to confirm that this makes you more ill or it affects the initiatives that are now in progress towards having a vaccine," Tufton said. "We are monitoring. We are learning as we go along. To date, the evidence is not so damning that one should feel more threatened, except, of course, that it was only in the UK that there have been reports of quickened spread.

Grenada appoints its first female AG

Grenada has announced the country's first female attorney general.

Just months after being appointed solicitor general, Dia C Forrester-Gellineau was given the promotion, replacing Darshan Ramdhani who served as attorney general from Jan. 2019 to last Thursday.

Ramdhani stepped down to serve as a judge in the British Virgin Islands, following which he will be returning to private practice.

Forrester-Gellineau is the first woman to be appointed attorney general since the first AG was appointed in 1763 when Grenada became a British colony. Since passing the bar in 2008 as well as Grenada she has also worked in St Kitts/Nevis and Anguilla.

Her areas of practice include Banking and Finance Law, Com-



► Dia C Forrester-Gellineau passed the bar in 2008

mercial and Civil Litigation, Taxation, Insolvency, and Intellectual Property law.

As Solicitor General over the past 21 months, Forrester-Gellineau played an instrumental role in most government matters before the court and other negotiations.

UK MINISTER REGRETS EXCLUSION OF OTs IN BREXIT DEAL

The British government says it tried but could not persuade the European Commission on a "future relationship that included the Overseas Territories."

In a statement dated December 30th the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Minister for the European Neighbourhood, Wendy Morton, outlined several outstanding issues impacting the OTs from the Brexit agreement.

She stated: "Despite trying everything we could, the European Commission refused to negotiate a future relationship that included the OTs. We sought to change the Commission's position, but it declined to engage."

Despite that, the FCDO minister assured that "with the signing of the historic UK-EU trade agreement completed the UK Government affirms its unwavering support for all of our Overseas Territories (OTs)."

"We remain unwavering in our commitment to safeguarding their interests," she affirmed.

The UK and the European Union reached agreement on Christmas Eve over the thorny Brexit deal of the UK leaving the now 27-member bloc.

REASSURANCE

While, the statement by the (FCDO) Minister Morton only specifically mentioned Gibraltar, Tristan de Cunha, the Falkland Islands and the Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus, it broadly sought to reas-

sure Cayman and the nine other OTs which have been beneficiaries of EU aid and other programmes, which will now cease with Brexit.

"We will take into account any shortfalls that arose from the end of EU funding, as we plan future UK spending in the OTs. We will focus this funding on the greatest needs and to deliver the greatest impact," she said.

FCDO Minister Morton, who has the 'European Neighbourhood' portfolio, declared that "the OTs are a much-valued part of the whole British family and we will continue to do all we can to protect their interests."

The last substantive UK Minister responsible for the Overseas Territories, Baroness Liz Sugg resigned in November - coincidentally during the annual Joint summit of the UK and its OTs - in protest over the British government's decision then to cut its foreign aid budget.

LAST-MINUTE GIBRALTAR DEAL

While much of the focus of Min. Morton's statement has been on Gibraltar, the only UK Overseas Territory that shares a land border with Spain - and by extension the EU - it was announced today (Old Year's Day) that an agreement had been reached over that issue which has strained relations between the UK and Spain for decades.

The two countries have a long-standing border and territorial dispute over Gibraltar.

The last-minute arrangement reached on Thursday, just hours before Brexit was due to take effect at midnight UK time, means that Gibraltar will remain in the EU's Schengen free-movement area.

Thousands of Spanish workers cross the border daily to work in Gibraltar, and the British territory also heavily relies on tourism from Spain.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said the special arrangement would "ensure border fluidity, which is clearly in the best interests of the people living on both sides".

Meanwhile, for the Falkland Islands which has a thriving fish export business with the EU, the UK said it will "continue to work closely with the Falkland Islands to manage the effects of new EU tariffs on their fish exports (including a 6% tariff on squid) while also helping the islands - and all of our OTs - to maximise the benefits of our newly independent trade policy."

Regarding Tristan da Cunha, FCDO Minister Morley stated that "as the UK exits the transition period, Tristan da Cunha will continue to have tariff-free access to the EU market for its main export, lobster."

The FCDO minister also reiterated a UK commitment to provide "extra support and reassurance to Overseas Territories excluded from the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement."

"With the signing of the historic UK-EU trade agreement complet-



► Wendy Morton UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office Minister for the European Neighbourhood

ed the UK Government affirms its unwavering support for all of our Overseas Territories (OTs)," she said.

DISAPPOINTMENT

Earlier, Conservative MP, Andrew Rosindell who chairs the UK Parliament's All-Party Committee on the Overseas Territories, expressed disappointment over the failure to conclude satisfactory arrangements for the OT's as part of the Brexit agreement.

In a social media post, Mr Rosindell who supports the UK's departure from the EU, wrote: "I am disappointed that vital issues relating to Gibraltar, our British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies were not fully settled as part of the overall agreement, despite clear promises that they would."

"No part of our great British family can be left behind!", he declared, adding that, "These are battles I will continue to fight. There is unfinished business to be concluded!"

GEORGIA SENATORS BAT FOR MACK

The delicately-balanced, critical run-off elections in the US state of Georgia next Tuesday January 5th hold a unique significance for Cayman.

The two senators who are defending their seats in the crucial vote which could tip the balance in the US Senate from Republican to Democrat have weighed-in on the Skylar Mack issue.

Republican Senators Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue have written to the US ambassador in Jamaica, Donald R. Tapia, asking him to intervene in the matter in which American teenager Skylar Mack is serving jail time for breaching Cayman's COVID-19 quarantine regulations.

The US Embassy in Jamaica has two Consular Offices; one in George Town, Grand Cayman and the other in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Mack who was in standard 14-days quarantine after arriving in Cayman on November 27th had evaded the authorities to mingle with the public at a jet-ski race event in which her Caymanian boyfriend Oscar Ramgeet was a competitor.

She, along with Ramgeet who was charged with 'aiding and abetting' in the offence were sentenced

earlier this month to two months in prison after two appeals.

The first conviction which resulted in an order for both to pay a fine of C\$2,600 each plus 40 hours community service, was successfully appealed by the Director of Public Prosecutions Patrick Moran on the grounds that it was "unduly lenient".

That had led to the sentence being increased to four months in prison, but on a further appeal, her attorney Jonathon Hughes, successfully argued that the four-month term was too harsh.

The sentence was subsequently cut by half to the current two months sentence.

In their joint letter sent to the US Ambassador in Jamaica, Republican Senators Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue who are battling for their seats - and to maintain Republican control of the Senate - are seeking "further leniency" for their constituent.

The letter dated, December 25th is also being reported in much of the press in Georgia and US national news outlets.

It states in part: "Ms. Mack has admitted guilt, regrets her actions, paid a substantial fine, and been in-

carcerated for over a week. However, it is the sincere hope of her parents that she can safely and expeditiously return home to continue her studies as a pre-med student at Mercer University."

It also says: "Her family has also expressed serious concern about her safety, as she has received numerous threats against her life following the publicity of her case."

No evidence of such threats is outlined in the letter.

The letter ends by calling on the US Ambassador to "convey to the Governor (HE Governor Martyn Roper) our support for her family's call for leniency."

It could not be confirmed if, to date, there has been a response from either the US Ambassador's office in Jamaica or the Governor's office in Cayman.

On its website, the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the US State Department advises American citizens who run afoul of the law while they are abroad that it; "cannot get U.S. citizens out of jail, state to a court that anyone is guilty or innocent, provide legal advice or repre-



► Georgia Republican Senators Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue

sent U.S. citizens in court, serve as official interpreters or translators (or) pay legal, medical, or other fees."

To date, there has not been any confirmed intervention in the Skylar Mack issue by the two Democrats challengers in the closely-contested Georgia senate race, Jon Ossoff and Reverend Raphael Warnock.

The Skylar Mack case in Cayman has gained considerable international media attention led mainly by a publicity campaign orchestrated by her grandmother in Georgia, Jeanne Mack, who had also written to outgoing US President Donald Trump seeking his intervention.

Mr Trump has not personally got involved although one of his sons, Eric Trump, has given his support to her efforts.

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 Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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

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Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

3/10

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Canyon sound
 - 5 Spuds
 - 11 Earth orbiter
 - 12 Pilot Earhart
 - 13 Cartoonist Caniff
 - 14 Logic
 - 15 Fireplace items
 - 17 "— Believer"
 - 18 "The Rehearsal" painter
 - 22 Had title to
 - 24 Took the wrong way
 - 25 Equip
 - 26 De-pressed
 - 27 Pun response
 - 30 Grows dim
 - 32 Good judgment
 - 33 Yale roofer
 - 34 Frangelico flavoring
 - 38 "The Grass Harp" writer
 - 41 Storybook monster
 - 42 Puts on a pedestal
 - 43 Forum garb
- DOWN**
- 1 Jane Austen novel
 - 2 Quarter, e.g.
 - 3 Persevering
 - 4 Punctual
 - 5 Poi source
 - 6 Reparations
 - 7 Service for a social
 - 8 High trains
 - 9 2016 Olympics host
 - 10 —
 - 16 "Gnarly!"
 - 19 Valuable bar
 - 20 Lotion additive
 - 21 Uses a needle
 - 22 Assns.
 - 23 Electrician's concern
 - 28 On the beach
 - 29 Tidy up
 - 30 Doctor's charge
 - 31 Portions out
 - 35 Relish
 - 36 Longing
 - 37 Cowboys or Indians
 - 38 Upper limit
 - 39 Hoopla
 - 40 Cook's need

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

Yesterday's answer

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		

3-5

Word Search

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

- Acrylic
- Aquarelle
- Brush
- Canvas
- Charcoal
- Collage
- Crayon
- Easel
- Gouache
- Model
- Oils
- Paint
- Palette
- Pastel
- Sketch
- Studio
- Tempera
- Tint
- Tone
- Varnish
- Wash

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



Have fun with
**CAYMANIAN
TIMES**

CURTIS

By Ray Billingsley



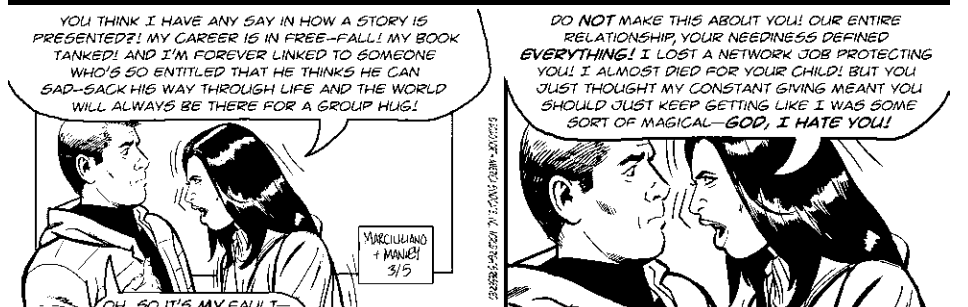
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By Stan Lee



JUDGE PARKER

By Woody Wilson & Mike Manley



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