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Caymanian Times

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Announces Three-Year
Partnership

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CHALLENGES'
FOR CAYMAN SMALL
BUSINESSES

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Health City answers
call to be 'Gold
Corporate Guardian'

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► The welcoming party included Stran Bodden, Chris Saunders, Miss Cayman Universe, Georgina Kerford, Kenneth Bryan, Rosa Harris, and a Cayman Pirate



► United Airlines return to Cayman with four flights a day

Cayman welcomes back United Airlines

By Christopher Tobutt

The arrival of four United Airlines flights at Owen Robert's International Airport on Saturday February 12th signalled an important milestone for the recovery of Cayman's tourism industry following the economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

With Cayman once again open to regular international commercial travel, the resumption of the United Airlines service from Newark, Washington (Dulles) Chicago and Houston is the latest of the major carriers putting the destination back on their schedules.

"These hubs are critical to reestablishing stayover tourism in the Cayman Islands and we're just very excited to be able to welcome four planes from United Airlines today," was the official word at a welcoming ceremony at ORIA.

"It's great to be back," remarked one delighted passenger.

On hand leading the welcoming ceremony was Tourism Minister Hon. Kenneth Bryan, along with Deputy Premier Hon. Christopher Saunders, and Director of Tourism Rosa Harris.

Tourism Minister Bryan said: "Cayman is open for business. We are very happy to know that we have four flights from the United brand on one day, and it is a signal of the necessary steps to get Cayman back to where it needs to be, in respect of the tourism industry."

The PACT administration has made a number of adjustments in line with global policy trends by relaxing several of the COVID restrictions.

"Hopefully, we will be making some more changes soon to make it even better. I'm happy from a global perspective that the world is learning how to live with COVID," Mr Bryan remarked.

"We've been trying to get that delicate balance of safety and tourism and opening and freedoms so we can get back to where



► Miss Cayman joins United Airlines' pilots, Kenneth Bryan and Stran Bodden

we need to be. It's about putting Caymanians back in a profitable situation as the cost of living is really high and we need to make sure more income is in the hands of the people," Mr Bryan added.

He again appealed to residents about the importance of getting vaccinated.

"Again I take the opportunity to say, 'get boosted, get vaccinated Cayman.' It's the easiest way for us to be more confident with the safety-risk levels so we can add more and more passengers."

Deputy Premier Chris Saunders spoke about the government's aim to balance safety with getting the tourism industry rolling again.

"It's not just airlift," he said, "but we want to get more hotels, get more rooms stock and everything else. Stayover tour-

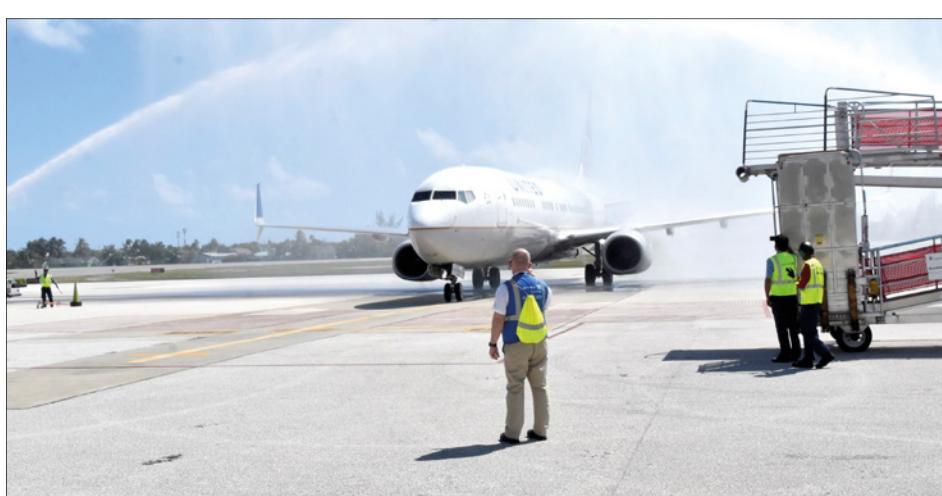
ism is one of the drivers of our economy and a lot of people depend on it for their livelihood."

Min. Saunders also stated: "People must also appreciate that the government's responsibility is to our people to make sure we are still a safe environment, so it has to be done, but it has to be done responsibly."

The United Airlines flights from Newark and Washington operate on Saturdays and Sundays.

The service out of Chicago is initially on Saturdays, with Sunday to be added to the schedule from next month.

The flight from Houston which will be on Saturday only for the rest of this month will move to a daily schedule from March 4th.



► Water cannon salute for United Airlines

Cellular World

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Jubilee tree planting project aims to green Cayman

As part of the Cayman Islands Government's year-long schedule of events and initiatives to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Ministry of Sustainability & Climate Resiliency is launching an ambitious national tree planting project to create a living legacy that honours The Queen's leadership and benefits future generations.

With a goal to plant 70 trees in each constituency, of which 70 will be Mahogany (*Swietenia mahagoni*) trees across all three islands, the 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee' initiative is the Cayman Islands contribution to the Queen's Green Canopy project in the United Kingdom.

Premier and Minister of Sustainability & Climate Resiliency Hon. Wayne Panton personally recommended the selection of Mahogany in honour of The Queen's seven decades of service.

this earth-saving project and help green Cayman."

By focusing on native and endemic plants with cultural significance - like Mahogany, Cabbage (*Guapira discolor*), Strawberry (*Eugenia axillaris*) and Cayman Sage (*Salvia caymanensis*) - the Queen's Jubilee tree planting will support local biodiversity, enhance community wellbeing and combat climate change. The project also promotes the planting of fruit-bearing trees to bolster local food security.

Ministry of Sustainability & Climate Resiliency Chief Officer Jennifer Ahearn said the Plant a Tree for the Jubilee project supports a number of objectives outlined in the Strategic Policy Statement.

"Trees are remarkable allies to our efforts to create a more sustainable and climate resilient Cayman Islands," Ahearn said. "Trees improve our physical environments, sequester carbon, provide important ecosystem services that support biodiversity, enhance community well-being and, in the case of fruit-bearing trees, even support increased local food security."

Trees planted over the course of the year will be registered on a digital map and presented to Her Majesty The Queen as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative.

How to get involved

Individuals, schools, constituencies and corporations are all encouraged to get involved in planting trees for the Platinum Jubilee.

The Cayman Islands Government is collaborating with a variety of organisations to secure seeds and saplings free of charge for schools, parks and other places of community significance, including the

National Trust for the Cayman Islands, Caribbean Blooms, the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park and the Department of Agriculture. A number of local nurseries have also pledged to donate trees or provide discounts in support of the programme.

Ahearn said: "The fact that so many local organisations have leapt at the chance to support this programme speaks volumes about the importance of trees to everyone in our community. We are also indebted to our advisory committee, led by Senior



► Close-up of a Mahogany (*Swietenia mahagoni*) tree blossom; Cayman Islands residents are encouraged to propagate fallen Mahogany seeds to support the Jubilee tree planting programme

"Mahogany is an incredibly important tree in terms of its deep cultural and historical significance to the Cayman Islands, so it was a natural choice to celebrate Her Majesty's enduring legacy while fostering connection between our community and our natural environment," Panton said. "To plant 1,330 trees across our islands is a big goal but I know we can achieve it by working together. From schools to church groups to service clubs and corporate green teams, everyone can get involved in



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► Members of the National Tree Planting Advisory Committee at the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park; the Committee includes representatives of the Cayman Islands Government, National Trust for the Cayman Islands, Caribbean Blooms, Cayman Nature, and the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park (Photos by Nick Johnson)

Policy Advisor Kristen Smith, whose members have been working behind the scenes for the past few months to help us turn an idea into a reality. We are grateful and inspired by the support and look forward to seeing these seeds of change take root and flourish."

Representatives of local schools and non-profit organisations are encouraged to contact the Ministry at treplanting@gov.ky to learn more about requesting trees or seeds. Mahogany trees are also easily propagated from seed.

The Plant a Tree for the Jubilee initiative will run throughout 2022. A new website and social media pages have been established to provide regular project updates and planting tips.

In addition to encouraging tree planting events across the Cayman Islands, the initiative also encourages residents to recognise trees of cultural, historical or environmental importance. Individuals or organisations with trees to spare are encouraged to consider donating trees by emailing treplanting@gov.ky; the Ministry will then connect donors with local schools and non-profit organisations in need of trees.

For more information on how to get involved, register your tree planting, donate a tree or nominate a tree, please visit: www.gov.ky/national-tree-planting



In celebration of Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, the Cayman Islands has set a goal to plant 70 trees in each constituency, and 70 Mahogany trees across all three islands by the end of the Jubilee year.

Trees provide benefits for our whole community by:



Improving urban environments



Tackling climate change



Enhancing health and wellbeing



Supporting local biodiversity

To get involved, please visit: www.gov.ky/national-tree-planting/

Cayman Cigar Company Champions Charity

Dinner, with a twist, was served up at the Abacus restaurant in Camana Bay on Wednesday, 9th February, as the Cayman Cigar Company hosted a special event to showcase cigars made exclusively from Caymanian grown Tobacco.

Cigar aficionados, epicureans and socialites all enjoyed dinner, along with choice beverages in the run-up to the presentation of the cigars, which featured 50 hand-rolled prototypes made just for Wednesday night's guests.

Cayman Cigar Company's Sales and Service Manager, Thomas Gaw referred to the presentation of the special cigars as the next era in the company's evolution, adding the the company hoped to have more



► Guests enjoy dinner and cigars made from Caymanian tobacco to support charity

events in the future, as it seeks to grow advocacy for its mission.

Along with being the only cigar company to now feature Caymanian grown tobacco, the Cayman Cigar Company has a bigger goal in mind and is also the only cigar company in the

world to donate 100 percent of its profits to charity.

The company's story is quite unique in many respects. It is the brainchild of Granger Haugh and his son Scott, who saw the need to assist the Bridge Foundation in the Cayman Islands, which is a programme dedicated to helping recovering addicts to restore their lives.

They came up with an effective way to make sure that the Bridge Foundation would feature a robust and thorough transitional phase and through the family's Haugh Foundation, developed Beacon Farms on 32 Acres of land in North Side, where persons in recovery could continue to progress in their sobriety whilst having gainful employment.

SEE CAYMAN CIGAR, Page 5



► (L-R) Cayman Cigar Company Director Scott Haugh, Beacon Farms Chief Operation Officer Sandy Urquhart and Cayman Cigar Company Sales and Service Manager Thomas Gaw at Wednesday's Cigar dinner

HighWater celebrates 15-year anniversary

Cayman Islands corporate governance firm, HighWater Limited celebrated 15 years of operation last month.

Mr. Gary Linford, founder of HighWater said the company's longevity came from being built on the principles of integrity, reliability and dependability, and a commitment to evolve in order to meet the changing needs of its clients.

"Since our inception, we have created a culture that focuses on teamwork and responsiveness, by providing the highest level of service, with a tailored approach," Mr. Linford said. "We are proud of the growth and success we have achieved and we thank our clients for trusting in our expertise over the last 15 years."

Established in January 2007, the business has expanded from a 3 person company to its present team of 20 and has established itself as a leader in the alternative investment funds industry as a boutique provider of corporate governance services.

The company provides personal, high-quality director services to a select number of premium hedge funds and investment managers of various strategies.

"With the careful addition of every new team member, we added capacity and diversified our expertise. We are grateful to



► Gary Linford, Founder, HighWater

our team whose contributions continue to shape our business," Mr. Linford said.

HighWater now serves over 220 corporate clients throughout Asia, Europe, and the Americas with our focus on quality not quantity of our clients.

Highwater is dedicated to making an impact in the community through volunteerism, mentorships, and financial support for many nonprofit and professional organizations, such as AIMA, Cayman Finance, Hedge Funds Care, Jasmine, and the Cayman Islands Crisis Centre.

"We are proud of this milestone as it highlights the strength of HighWater's business, our strong and important connection to the international financial services communities as well as our local partnerships."

CARIBBEAN UTILITIES COMPANY, LTD ANNOUNCES DECLARATION OF DIVIDEND ON CLASS A ORDINARY SHARES

CARIBBEAN UTILITIES COMPANY, LTD. CLASS A ORDINARY SHARES ARE LISTED FOR TRADING IN UNITED STATES FUNDS ON THE TORONTO STOCK EXCHANGE

Caribbean Utilities Company, Ltd. (TSX:CUP.U) ("CUC" or "the Company") announced today that the Board of Directors has declared a dividend of US\$0.175 per Class A Ordinary Share, or an annualized dividend of US\$0.70 per share. The dividend will be payable on March 15, 2022 to shareholders of record on March 1, 2022.

CUC provides electricity to Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, under a non-exclusive Electricity Generation Licence expiring in 2039 and an exclusive Electricity Transmission and Distribution Licence expiring in 2028. Further information is available at www.cuc-cayman.com.

Caribbean Utilities Company, Ltd. ("CUC" or "the Company"), on occasion, includes forward-looking statements in its media releases, Canadian securities regulatory authorities filings, shareholder reports and other communications. Forward-looking statements include statements that are predictive in nature, depend upon future events or conditions, or include words such as "expects", "an-

ticipates", "plan", "believes", "estimates", "intends", "targets", "projects", "forecasts", "schedule", or negative versions thereof and other similar expressions, or future or conditional verbs such as "may", "will", "should", "would" and "could". Forward-looking statements are based on underlying assumptions and management's beliefs, estimates and opinions, and are subject to certain risks and uncertainties surrounding future expectations generally that may cause actual results to vary from plans, targets and estimates. Such risks and uncertainties include but are not limited to operational, general economic, market and business conditions, regulatory developments and weather conditions. CUC cautions readers that actual results may vary significantly from those expected should certain risks or uncertainties materialize or should underlying assumptions prove incorrect. Forward-looking statements are provided for the purpose of providing information about management's current expectations and plans



relating to the future. Readers are cautioned that such information may not be appropriate for other purposes. The Company disclaims any intention or obligation

to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise except as required by law.

Maples Group Announces Three-Year Partnership with Central Caribbean Marine Institute

The Maples Group is proud to announce a new three-year partnership with the non-profit marine organisation, Central Caribbean Marine Institute ("CCMI"). The partnership is part of CCMI's Navigator programme that provides funds for CCMI's core capacity that helps to facilitate new projects, expand their ocean and climate science literacy campaign, build their network of researchers and help to maintain and enhance their field station facilities. The Group will donate US\$25,000 each year for the next three years and its contributions will be used to support CCMI's research, conservation and education within the Cayman Islands and across other Caribbean communities.

"Healthy oceans are vital for a healthy planet and for human life, particularly here in the Cayman Islands. The threats our reefs face require urgent, meaningful research and conservation action and this multi-year support from the Maples Group enables that work at CCMI. The Navigator programme can provide seed money for new projects, support a new hire, or help us address urgent needs that may arise. By committing to three years of support, the Maples Group's contribution also facilitates greater long-term planning and

continuity of projects," said CCMI's Director of Research & Education, Dr. Gretchen Goodbody-Gringley.

Commenting on the Group's partnership with CCMI, Matthew Gardner, Cayman Islands Managing Partner said, "The Maples Group is delighted to continue to support CCMI's mission as a Navigator partner. Their work is vital in helping to ensure the ongoing health and protection of our oceans and coral reefs for enjoyment by both current and future generations."

Some of the initiatives undertaken by CCMI include an annual Reef Lecture series, the Reef Ecology and Evolution Laboratory aimed at understanding how ecosystems function in order to maintain biodiversity, offering 100+ scholarships for local students to attend courses at the Little Cayman Research Centre and coral restoration nurseries. To learn more about CCMI or to make a donation, please visit <https://reefresearch.org>.

The Maples Group continues to support local causes and organisations in the Cayman Islands which focus on the development, improvement and benefit of five pillars in the community: Youth & Education, Healthcare, Sports, Arts & Culture and



Community Outreach. To keep up to date with the Maples Group philanthropic efforts, follow the Maples in the Community Facebook page and our Instagram page @ MaplesGroup.

About Maples Group

The Maples Group is a leading service provider offering clients a comprehensive range of legal services on the laws of the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Ireland, Jersey and Luxembourg and is an independent provider of fiduciary, fund

services, regulatory and compliance, and entity formation and management services. The Maples Group distinguishes itself with a client-focused approach, providing solutions tailored to their specific needs. Its global network of lawyers and industry professionals are strategically located in the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East to ensure that clients gain immediate access to expert advice and bespoke support, within convenient time zones. For more information, please visit: maples.com.

Cayman Cigar Company Champions Charity

CONTINUED FROM Page 4

"The farm provides Caymanians with agricultural jobs that never existed before. We produce coconut oil. Coconut flower, sugar beets that are used to make mengel - which is a type of animal feed - coconut trees and other crops. It's really an agricultural incubator and our brand new compost facility allows us to produce some of the best soil on the Island," noted Cayman Cigar Company Director Scott Haugh.

He explained that the Cigar Company is a vehicle to capitalize on the work of the farm in order to benefit the charitable arm of the operation and all of the profits go toward charity.

"We have been involved with the Bridge Foundation, which is doing a great job supporting recovering addicts and providing safe, supervised residential homes; essentially a transitional house for early recoverers to re-establish their lives since 2009," noted Mr. Haugh, who added that his family had been coming to Cayman since 1978 and wanted to find a way to give back to the place they fell in love with all those years ago.

The Cayman Cigar Company's main retail point is in Bodden Town, which is also where the cigars are hand-rolled and stored.

Their cigars are available at various locations around Grand Cayman including Tortuga, Blackbeards and the Ritz Carlton, with other retail points to be added.

The range of cigars offered by the Cayman Cigar Company includes the Sovereign, the Diplomat, the Monarch and the Caravel, which feature a mixture of tobacco from around the Caribbean region.

The launch date for retail of their cigars featuring Caymanian grown tobacco and presented at Wednesday's event is to be announced.

CG Wins Wellness Gold

The Zest Wellness Programme, created by Coralisle Group Ltd. (CG), has been awarded a Gold Medal by the Wellness Council of America (WELCOA) for building a workplace culture that promotes, protects and supports the health and well-being of its employees and clients.

CG is the only company outside the United States to have achieved Gold Medal status in WELCOA's 2021 Workplace Awards, which were announced in December.

For CG's Zest Wellness team, the award vindicates its work to build a workplace culture that supports healthy work-life habits for CG employees and, through outreach programmes, CG clients and their families.

"It has been amazing to see CG's wellness journey over the years, from traditional programmes to its holistic approach today, which emphasises overall well-being," Jacqueline Perreault, CG's Corporate Wellness Director, said.

"This has been made possible by a company-wide commitment to putting people and their well-being at the core of its work."

CG's Zest Wellness programme started nearly 20 years ago with glucose and blood pressure screenings, subsidized gym memberships and walking challenges. Those programmes branched out in years since

to include mindfulness, workplace resilience, mental well-being and even financial literacy. During the pandemic, Zest Wellness made sure its work continued to reach people through virtual initiatives that included online coaching, fitness classes, virtual events, webinars and podcasts.

Beth Frazier, CG's Chief Operating Officer for Health, said the WELCOA award was 'very gratifying for our Zest Wellness team because we've been working to embed wellness into the cultural fabric of the company and, through it, to CG clients and their families.'

The Gold Award recognizes this work to build and spread healthy, sustainable habits that strengthen employees, our clients and the community beyond.'

The Wellness Council of America has more than 4,000 corporate members. Its annual Workplace Awards recognise organizations that have built successful employee wellness programmes defined by a set of benchmarks. These include assessments of an organization's leadership, team dynamics dedicated to building and sustaining wellness initiatives, data collection, operating plans and evaluation of efforts to ensure continuing improvement in wellness initiatives.



In 2021, 33 organizations received WELCOA awards, with CG Insurance as one of 11 to receive gold status.

'I'm very proud of our Zest Wellness team for their commitment and enthusiasm and for the obvious benefits their work generates throughout CG,' CG's Chief Executive Officer Naz Farrow said.

'As a company, we want to be successful in the broadest terms, and that includes creating the healthiest possible environment for our employees, improving the lives of our members and effecting positive change in community health through our work. The Council's gold medal recognizes this work and underscores our people-first approach to business.'

THE PANEL DISCUSSION

'CONFLUENCE OF CHALLENGES' FOR CAYMAN SMALL BUSINESSES

By Staff Writer

Pathways to profit for small businesses in Cayman, despite the challenges they face, are being exemplified by Chris Goddard, owner and CEO of Winners Circle sports goods outlet.

Appearing on the Caymanian Times weekly discussion programme, The Panel, Mr Goddard underscored the importance of small business to Cayman's economy and society.

However, he is concerned that small businesses are encountering challenges on a scale unlike that faced by their larger counterparts.

According to the young Caymanian entrepreneur, the situation is compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in what he termed "a confluence of challenges" for small businesses.

"The nature of small business is such that the principles normally have to wear many hats...and what happened during COVID is we had a confluence of challenges that they all came together. You had logistical supply chain challenges, you had HR challenges, illness, or potential illness, regulatory challenges because the regulations are surrounding the illnesses on a pandemic. And we had to have empathy, caring, a strong strong emotional IQ in order to keep your staff with you, understand what they're dealing with and appreciate the challenges they're facing."

RED TAPE

He said these are in addition to the normal hurdles already faced by small businesses daily.



"There are times when you're calling particular entities in government for information pertaining to your business and nobody answers the phone. It could take hours out of your day, just trying to check on one particular thing. Something as simple as that makes a big difference because you could be spending that time more productively," Mr Goddard related.

But projecting the 'can-do' spirit which has been the hallmark of his success, Mr Goddard offered insights based on personal experience that the respective government divisions and the banking sector could adopt.

One such example is business licences.

"It would be wonderful if we can fill out a form submitted and get a three-year license. It's not so difficult to do (but) we have to continually do it every year, every year. If you have the front-loaded, that's great for government coffers, and they just fill up the paperwork once. Some of these things could cut down under red tape if we are able to pay online," he suggested.

Acknowledging that the government is now making new steps in that direction, he welcomed the forward-thinking.

"One thing that I know the government is working on which will be very helpful as a customs online system. If we're able



SPECIAL GUEST
CHRISTOPHER GODDARD

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10 | 8 PM | CAYMANIAN TIMES

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to pay online, you don't have to take time, you know, to go up to customs to coordinate that payment and so on. That would be very helpful as well."

FINANCING HURDLES

Start-up funding for small enterprises was another key discussion topic with interventions from the guest and the panelists on the challenges faced in the crucial first step in getting small businesses established and then helping them to thrive in a competitive environment.

Goddard: "I have a couple of friends who are into the trades in terms of plumbing, electrical, you know, those types of technical trades. They can get you excellent references to show that they know their job. And sometimes it's just a situation where they need, you know, \$2,500 or \$5,000 to buy tools to get started. And they will approach financial institutions and they will not get that assistance."

In this aspect, the role of a small business association was deemed as critical, as posited by panelist Mario Ebanks.

"There's certainly tremendous opportunities for small businesses to receive counselling, mentoring assistance with business plans, getting applications for financing."

He also wondered about special financing avenues for small enterprises via the government-owned Cayman Islands Development Bank (CIDB) in addition to the commercial banks.

SEEKING SOLUTIONS

In response, Chris Goddard felt it called for a collaborative effort by the government and the banking sector.

"I think all should work together. The government can have a small business development centre and work in tandem with the development bank because financing the small business is almost non-existent," he said.

"If you just show up to a bank with a business plan, a regular commercial bank, you have a very limited chance of being able to start a business unless you have significant collateral already in place. And at the end of the day, what banks really look for, they want to see proven cash flow to pay back those loans."

Host and Caymanian Times editor Ralph Lewis, a veteran banker and former man-

ager of the CIDB, brought his informed perspective to the discussion.

Noting that while there has been support for small businesses during the pandemic via government grants, soft loans and training, he said the situation now requires a different approach with "a commitment for a number of years".

"Financing is a decision made by the lenders, and they're based on risk. Yes, small businesses are very high risk, but we have to look at Caymanian small business owners differently because you have to give them a chance. They may not have all the boxes ticked or assets that they need, but you know what this person is genuine. They may not have a lot of cash, but they have a good idea...and sometimes we have to give people a chance to succeed in the country."

Panellist Roy Bodden raised the example of successful micro-business finance schemes and training elsewhere as examples to follow for small business success.

"What I would like to see and I know it's available, is the government to set up some funds that people can access but not only give them the funds, but also give them the discipline...I know it can work because it works for the Grameen Bank (a world-renowned micro-business finance scheme started in Asia). It can work for us here to adapt to deal with these economic times. Because there are some areas that Caymanian entrepreneurs will not be able to get in because the startup requirements are prohibitive," the former president of the University College of the Cayman Islands (UCCI) said.

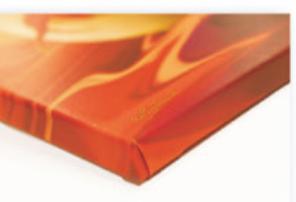
Another method of financing for small local enterprises recommended by guest Chris Goddard of Winners Circle is for financial institutions to allocate a portion of funds exclusively for this purpose.

"Each financial institution may be encouraged to ring-fence a certain portion of their balance sheet - 2 per cent or three per cent - for small business financing. I think that would encourage people to go in and apply... So we have to look at the regulatory framework around that and see what would make sense and make those accessible."

(Listen to this edition of The Panel on Caymanian Times' website, Facebook and YouTube pages)



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Kids to get vaccine in weeks

The Ministry of Health and Wellness has said that the campaigns for both booster and children's vaccinations are in the final planning stages. The paediatric vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 is expected to arrive from the United Kingdom in the next few weeks, they advised in their weekly round-up of Covid-19 news.

From 30 January to 5 February, the downward trend in people testing positive continued, with a total of 1,671 new positives (out of 6,810 tests carried out during the week). That number was down from 2,146 in the previous week and 2,739 from the week before. The case rate had reduced from 3,018 and 3,852 respectively in previous weeks and

was at 2,274 for the first week of February.

More up-to-date figures reveal a continuing trend of lower numbers, with 204 positive cases reported on 4 February, 156 on 5 February and 175 on 6 February.

New variant here

The new Omicron variant BA.2 of Covid-19, first discovered in the Philippines in November 2021 was discovered in Cayman on 3 February. Despite its high level of transmissibility, BA.2 seemed to present with less severe infection than the original Omicron variant, Public Health officials explained.

Hospital admissions remained stable throughout the first week in February, however there was

one previously reported death in an elderly patient with multiple severe comorbidities on 2 February. There have been 16 Covid-related deaths in the Cayman Islands since the beginning of the pandemic.

Since 11 December 2021, there have been 18 patients admitted to hospital who were Omicron positive. Eight of these patients were fully vaccinated. There were no deaths among the eighteen patients admitted with Omicron. Their average length of hospital stay was 5 days, while those testing positive for the Delta variant remained in hospital for just under nine days.

Officials also reported that between 11 November 2021 and the end of the first week in



February, there had been 15 children admitted to the hospital for Covid-19. Genomic sequencing isolated four cases of the Delta variant and one case of Omicron among the paediatric cases. Three out of 15 children had severe complications.

Additional clinics added for vulnerable 5-11 COVID-19 vaccine

The Public Health Department has announced additional clinics for vulnerable children 5 – 11 seeking the COVID-19 vaccine. The appointment-only clinic is offered 9:00am – 3:30pm in the Public Health Clinic at the Cayman Islands Hospital on the following dates:

- Saturday 12 February 2022 – 1st dose
- Saturday 26 February 2022 – 1st dose
- Saturday 12 March 2022 – 1st dose
- Saturday 26 March 2022 – 2nd dose (for those vaccinated on Jan 29th)

Appointments can be made by contacting the Public Health Clinic at 926-8152. Please bring along the child's immunisation record.

Studies have shown that a larger interval between the first and second dose may provide better immunological response and less side effects. The second dose can be administered at least 8 weeks following the first dose.

As a reminder, a physician letter in support of their patient receiving the vaccine will be required for any administration to this age group. Vulnerable or high-risk children aged 5 – 11 and those on the same age group living with vulnerable or immunocompromised individuals will qualify. This includes children 5-11 years old who have:

- Chronic respiratory disease

- Chronic heart conditions
- Chronic conditions of the kidney, liver or digestive system
- Chronic neurological disease (ie: Down's syndrome)
- Endocrine disorders
- Immunosuppression (ie: those undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy, solid organ transplant recipients, bone marrow or stem cell transplant recipients)

- Asplenia or dysfunction of the spleen
- Serious genetic abnormalities that affect a number of systems

The childhood vaccines will not be administered at the regular COVID vaccination clinic.

For children who would be eligible for this in the Sister Islands, please contact Faith Hospital to schedule an appointment 244-7643

Kids' vaccine arriving this week

Children between the ages of 5 and 11 will be able to get their first Covid-19 vaccine shot very soon as Cayman anticipates its first delivery of the paediatric formulation of the Pfizer vaccine on this Thursday's BA flight.

Governor Martyn Roper said Cayman would be receiving 2,000 doses of the kids' vaccine on the 17 February flight.

"The UK heard our pleas for Cayman to be allowed to move ahead with vaccinating our 5-11-year-olds as quickly as we could," he stated, adding that the UK had given Cayman permission to proceed in advance of a wider roll-out in the UK.

The Health Services Authority will be issuing a vaccination schedule for this age group shortly, he advised. Children will need two shots at least eight weeks apart.

"As we increasingly learn to live with Covid, the capacity to roll-out vaccines to 5-11s will be another important tool we have to protect our community," the Governor said.

Booster uptake stalled

But while Cayman looks forward to protecting its young people, it had not done such a great job in embracing booster shots. The Governor reminded residents that it remained vitally important that the



uptake of the booster shot needed to increase significantly.

"Our booster rate is low at only around 30% of the eligible population, well below that achieved in the UK," he warned. "We know from irrefutable evidence that the booster provides essential protection as immunity wanes over time after two doses."

The Governor said that while it was welcome that cases of Covid were dropping and Cayman's high vaccination take-up was saving lives, getting boosted was also extremely important.

"Our death rate remains very low on any global comparison and sadly it is overwhelmingly the unvaccinated who are getting seriously ill. Please get your booster if you are eligible. It is the best way we know to protect yourself, your family/friends and the wider community," he said.



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Health City answers call to be 'Gold Corporate Guardian' for East End Primary School PTA

Health City Cayman Islands has been named as "Gold Corporate Guardian" for the East End Primary School Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) for 2022 after making a CI\$10,000 donation to support the group's activities for the year ahead.

The funds have been earmarked to support initiatives such as field trips, playground equipment at the school, sporting uniforms, and other items.

East End Member of Parliament, Isaac Rankine, spearheaded the initiative working with PTA President, Joy Vernon, to seek a marquee corporate sponsor to support the lone primary school in his district. He noted that sponsorship is key to helping to supplement the needs of schools to better support the overall development of students during their formative years.

"I have always wanted to ensure our children have the best learning environments because these early key stage years are of vital importance to developing the bedrock of our future leaders. This being stated it takes committed individuals and resources to help ensure this is achieved," said Mr. Rankine.

"I am ecstatic that Health City has answered the bell once again and showed

their commitment, not only to the Cayman Islands, but to the people of East End," he added, noting that this is expected to be an annual initiative with other Corporate Gold Guardians demonstrating their support in the years ahead.

"The East End Primary School PTA is most grateful to Health City Cayman Islands for their sponsorship and becoming our very first Gold Corporate Guardian," said Ms. Vernon. "The PTA strives to enhance and enrich the students' school lives and experiences and with this donation, we will certainly be able to achieve our overarching goal."

Health City Cayman Islands Chief Business Officer, Mr. Shomari Scott, said his organisation, which has an advanced tertiary hospital in East End, was proud to take the lead as the PTA's inaugural Corporate Gold Guardian.

"It takes a village to raise a child. This has been stated over and over. However, we all know the actual truth behind this statement. At Health City, we are proud to be a part of the village within the district of East End and to be able to step forward and offer this assistance through the PTA," said Mr. Scott.

"This is just a small part that we can play outside of the medical educational



► (L-R) EEPS Deputy Principal, Jessica Jackson; EEPS PTA President, Joy Vernon; Health City Cayman Islands Chief Commercial Officer, Shomari Scott; and East End MP Isaac Rankine

interactions we offer in the hope of sparking the minds of future healthcare professionals through our Healthcare Explorers programmes that encourage students to pursue paths to rewarding careers in medicine and allied health," he added.

For more information about Health City's Healthcare Explorers, which includes virtual school visits, on-demand learning videos, and other activities available to students in the Cayman Islands, visit www.healthcareexplorers.com.

CABINET OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS – POST MEETING SUMMARY

His Excellency the Governor Mr. Martin Roper, OBE, chaired the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 1st February 2022 in the Cabinet Conference Room, Government Administration Building.

All Ministers and Members of Cabinet were present with the exception of the

Hon Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, Minister for Education, District Administration and Lands. Mrs. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks acted as Temporary Minister for Education, District Administration and Lands.

At this meeting Cabinet:

- approved the issuance of a Coastal Works Permit to the Public Works Department on behalf of the Ministry of Planning, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure, for dock improvements at Block 53A, Parcels 102 and 103 in Old Man Bay, North Side;

- approved change of Directors on the Board of the Cayman Islands Development Bank in accordance with Section 4 and Section 4 of the First Schedule of the Development Bank Act (2018 Revision) and Sections 9 and 13 of the Public Authorities Act (2020 Revision) as follows:

- appointment of Mark Scotland – Chair; Ingrid Simms – Deputy Chair; Lucille Seymour - Director; J Rosalie Twohey - Director; Andrew H McBean - Director; Karen Turner - Director; Daniel R. Reid - Director; and Marilyn Brandt – Financial Secretary designate – Ex-Officio;

- remove Richard Lewis; Lynne Whitaker; Doyney (Doyle) Scott, Catherine Guilbard and Bruce John as Directors.

• approved change in Board of Directors of the Special Economic Zone Authority; accepted the resignation of Owen Henry and appointment of Langlie Powery;

- approved the appointment of Dr. George Meggs as Member of the Health Practice Commission;
- approved the declaration to close section of surplus public road identified by Boundary Plan 640 and transfer land to adjoining land owner of Block 2C Parcel 204 in accordance with Section 14 of the Roads Act (2005 Revision);
- approved for the Hon Attorney General to table in Parliament the Government Minute on the Report of the Standing Public Accounts Committee on the Auditor General's report on Efficiency of Summary Courts (November 2019); and
- noted school absences due to SARS CoV-2.

Published by the Cabinet Office on

Wednesday, 9th February 2022.

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THE CHANGING WORLD ACCORDING TO COVID

With the phrase 'learn to live with COVID' becoming as inconsistent as a mantra or as ubiquitous as a meme, what that really means beyond the public health implications, is starting to emerge.

It would appear that the world might already be living with COVID in some forms, simply on the basis of COVID-caused new realities that assail us daily.

The much-touted 'new normal' might already be upon us in ways that we might yet not truly comprehend..or might have expected.

Might it be that the sheer fatigue of COVID - its mental drain being just one of the debilitating effects on the individual sufferer - has made us numb to the ever-present reminders of COVID around us?

Masses of masks

In the United Kingdom, a study by the University of Portsmouth found mask litter increased by 9,000% in the first seven months of the pandemic and could have led to the further spread of the virus.

Researchers from the university believe the plastic pollution caused by face mask litter could last hundreds of years and are urging the government to pre-

vent an "environmental disaster" caused by face mask litter.

Professor Steve Fletcher, from the University of Portsmouth, said: "Without better disposal practices, an environmental disaster is looming."

PPE - persistent plastic everywhere?

Meanwhile, the global pre-pandemic war on plastic seems to have taken a hit with increased demand for PPE (personal protective equipment) adding to the problem.

An investigation by China's Nanjing University has discovered that plastic waste from the Covid-19 pandemic has leaked into the oceans.

It said the mismanaged plastic waste, consisting of personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves, vastly exceeded the capability of countries to process it properly.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an increased demand for single-use plastics that intensifies pressure on an already out-of-control global plastic waste problem," the researchers said in a study on the Magnitude and impact of pandemic-associated plastic waste published in the online journal PNAS.

"The released plastics can be transported over long distances in the ocean, encounter marine wildlife, and potentially lead to injury or even death," they added.

Too early to be 'irie'?

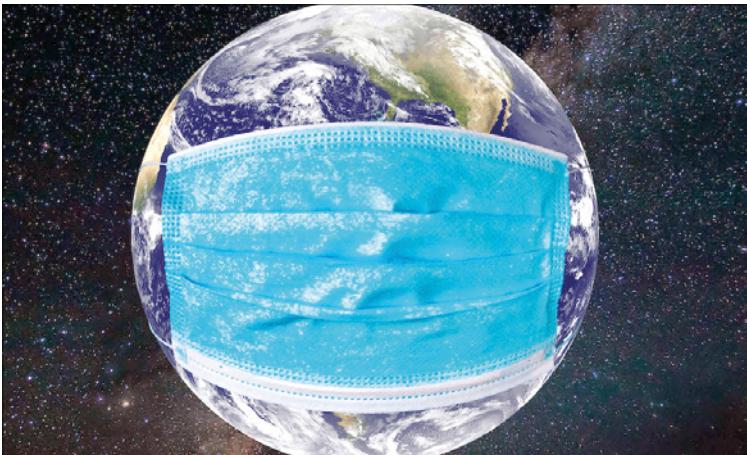
Earlier this month, Reuters news agency reported that new research suggesting that a popular non-psychoactive compound derived from marijuana might help prevent or treat COVID-19 warrants further investigation in rigorous clinical trials.

It said several recent laboratory studies of cannabidiol, or CBD, have shown promising results, attracting media attention.

However, many other potential COVID treatments that showed promise in test tubes, from hydroxychloroquine to various drugs used to treat cancer and other diseases, ultimately failed to show benefit for COVID-19 patients once studied in clinical trials, the Reuters report stated.

It quoted Marsha Rosner of the University of Chicago as saying: "Our findings do not say this will work in patients. Our findings make a strong case for a clinical trial."

A separate team reported recently in the Journal of Natural Products that high doses of CBG



and CBDA do prevent the coronavirus from breaking into cells.

The CBD her team tested was more than 98% pure, while purity in commercial products is far lower.

"People should not run out and get CBD from their favourite dispensary," Rosner cautioned.

Small CBD trials in humans with COVID-19 are underway, according to the Reuters report.

Masks minus a mandate

Masks-wearing now become a feature and necessity in western society to the extent that it has taken on the aura of a marketable fashion accessory as well. That's a far cry from donning a mask in some eastern cities because of

the suffocating levels of air pollution that their residents have had to endure.

In many instances, it's no longer even mandated and voluntary usage is part of the 'new normal'.

The risk of catching a COVID variant, some might argue persuasively, matches and even outweighs that of air pollution, notwithstanding that COVID particles are also pollutants.

With these and other emerging changes to our way of life, it's clear that the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting our world in ways not previously imagined, and the 'new normal' is already upon us ... with its own interpretative mutations.

Fish and Boat seized in Marine Reserve



the area around the boat and recovered two net bags containing 51 fish of various species, and 8 lobster, which all appeared to have been taken with spear guns from within the Marine Reserve.

Conservation Officers seized the boat and a Honda CRV which had also been used in the commission of the offences. The seized seafood was donated to a local charity.

4 men are facing several possible charges including:

- Taking marine life from a Marine Reserve
- Possession of an unlicensed spear gun
- Taking marine life with an unlicensed spear gun

- Taking Lobster above the daily limit
- Taking fish under 8-inch length

Had the spear guns been licensed, the following charges could also have been applicable:

- Taking parrotfish with a spear gun

- Taking lobster with a spear gun
- Exceeding the daily limit of fish that may be taken with a spear gun

The public are reminded that violations of Marine Park, spear gun license and catch limit regulations are criminal offenses that will be prosecuted.

Breaches of the National Conservation Act should be reported to DoE Conservation Officers at 916 4271. Active poaching can also be reported to 911.

Download the DoECayman app to know the Marine Park boundaries, fishing season and catch limits in seconds on your phone or visit doe.ky/marine-parks.



With a dog named Lulu by his side, Army Ranger Briggs races down the Pacific Coast to make it to a soldier's funeral on time. Along the way, Briggs and Lulu drive each other completely crazy, break a handful of laws, narrowly evade death, and learn to let down their guards to have a fighting chance of finding happiness.

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National Gallery: making Caymanian art accessible

By Lindsey Turnbull

The People's Collection at the National Gallery is a brilliant showcase of artwork that makes up the Gallery's collection, telling the story of its beginnings through to its present-day presence within the community. One aspect of the exhibition (which runs until 28 May) is a room dedicated to the efforts the Gallery has gone to, to ensure it reaches far and wide into the community and beyond with its digital platform.

William Helfrecht, the Gallery's Collections Curator said they had done similar things in the past but in this exhibition, they really wanted to showcase their digital programmes, even in what he said was a hybrid moment where the Gallery was open to the public, but didn't offer the full suite of programmes, like their school tours coming on site.

Collection online

"This room is a reflection of the work that the Gallery has been doing over many years, but specifically over the last two years and when we were closed for four months during lockdown from March to July 2020," William explained.

Getting the Gallery up to speed digitally had been a focus over the past years, however with doors shut to the public, this mission became a focus for Gallery staff.

"It almost felt like we were working harder while we were closed because we were making up for the fact that we couldn't be here in the way most people

think of us: a space where you can come and experience art in person," he advised. "So, like a lot of museums, in conjunction with our education team and exhibitions team, we thought about how to make ourselves available in this time of lockdown."

William said that very quickly they were able to make some changes and lean heavily on their website and digital programmes. An entire room in the new exhibition has been dedicated to this work.

"What you see in this room is the fruits of that labour. We basically put about 240 works from our collection online and they are arranged in terms of categories and styles. That was really a very worthwhile project because our website can of course be accessed from anywhere in the world."

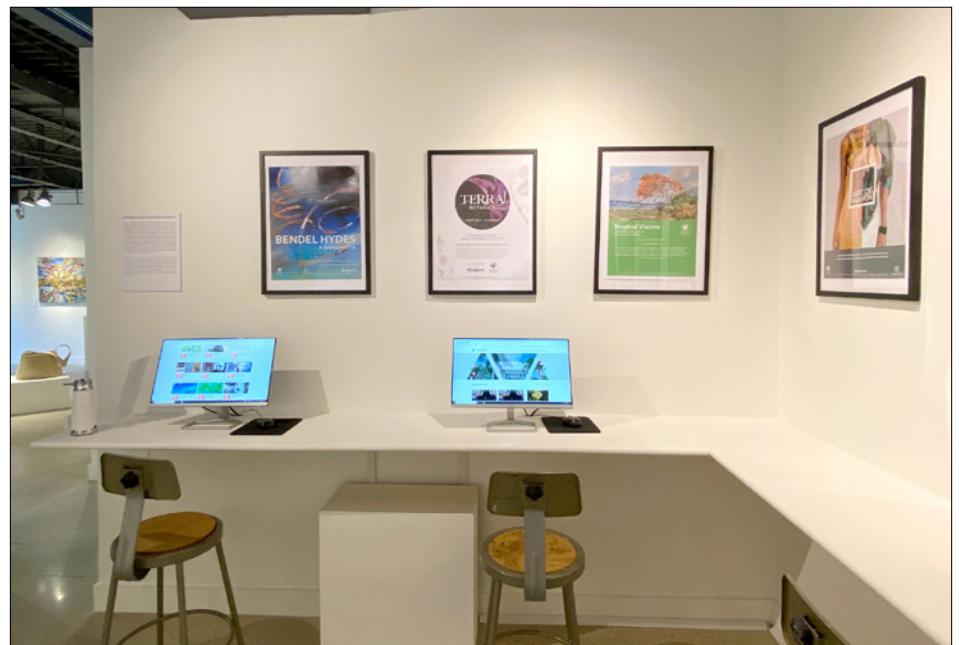
Part of this effort was to provide the local community with a creative outlet, and, in addition, they found this new level of accessibility was reaching further and wider.

"Suddenly, researchers, scholars and art historians can see the finest examples of Caymanian art and learn more about our artists and this history," William said.

This complements the broader effort that the Gallery has been working on for many years in terms of raising visibility overseas for Caymanian artists and the arts in general, beginning with the Caribbean and regional neighbours and then more broadly.

Exhibition archives and virtual tours

Another impressive aspect to the online work the National Gallery has been under-



► Art goes digital

taking is the provision of exhibitions, both past and present.

Website viewers can find a great deal of information on a good many exhibitions, including a description of the artwork, a link to the artist's biography and then a hyperlink to all of the National Gallery exhibitions that that artist had been featured in, so it's a dynamic and user-friendly resource. A useful element of this is that they have now included at least six past exhibitions as well, a "living repository" of past exhibitions, as William said.

"So, if you have missed the exhibition, you now have got the exhibition text, the artist's bio, and even a virtual tour, where you can do 3D tours. It's almost like you're back in the exhibition and how it was," he said.

Technology used is the same kind adopted by real estate agents, to allow clients to have 3D tours of properties. And, while these features have been a great addition to the National Gallery, it has also helped them to preserve work that they have undertaken, because, as William stated, exhibitions are ephemeral.

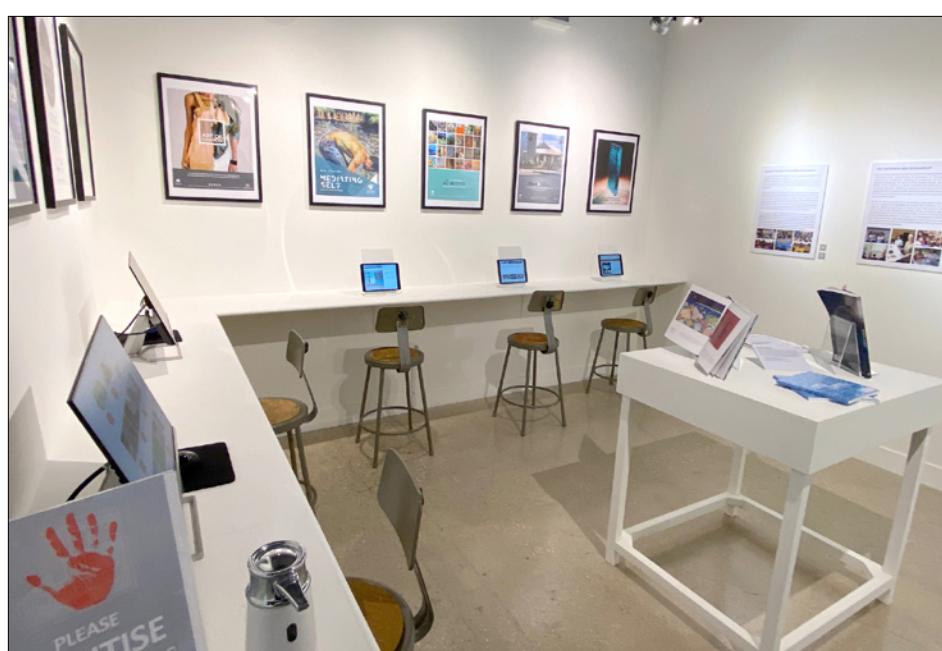
Educational resources

Staff have also worked hard to ensure that young people still receive an educa-

tion as to the work of the Gallery and on local art in general. Downloadable materials including worksheets all tied into the national curriculum have been made available, which are teacher-led resources such as lesson plans that teachers can work on offline with their students or combinations of the two where they have also conducted Zoom and online learning.

To enhance research and scholarship, the National Gallery has published four books over the past six years and they have been distributing free copies to all public libraries and schools in Cayman. They have also started delivering them to international libraries and universities in places such as London and New York. Williams confirmed that when regular postal services resume, they will strategically share these with major museums and universities around the world.

"This is really intended to benefit the broader art scene here, because one day it would be great to see an artist like Bendel Hydes exhibited in a museum exhibition of Caribbean art in somewhere like New York," he said. "The plan is to build awareness and respect and critical acclaim for some of our artists and that takes time, but things like this really helps us to elevate the stature of what we do," he said.



► New exhibition showcases online offerings

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► The National Gallery has published four books in recent years

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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.

By Dave Green

