

# The Independent

Reformer Belize's Rebel Paper

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## "MOYA MUST GO!"

There is no present outlook for peace in Belize's City management. It appears that there will never be such peace as long as **Zenaida Moya** is Mayor.

Zenaida has been around long enough to realize that if she stops all of the hustle that those involved in the hustle may leave their employment. She must realize that the hustles have been going on for so many years that the hustlers consider the extra money they receive as fringe benefits or supplemental pay. They do not want to lose their fringe benefits.

She continues to interfere with managers obtaining fringe benefits. She will no longer allow them to make waivers of fees. Managers can no longer collect one half of the required fees, sign a waiver for all fees and pocket the one half of the fees they collected.

Zenaida shows no sympathy for the manager, some of whom have been

involved in the hustles so long that they feel they have a right to the money. Their position is: after all, the money doesn't belong to Zenaida—it is the tax payer's money.

The Mayor should have known she was stepping on big toes when she rejected bloated contracts and prevented their enforcement. Her attempts to stop corruption have created BIG political and business enemies. In both parties.

It has almost a tradition that there be something in the contract for the person that has authority to authorize it. Zenaida has interfered with, and blocked, tradition by preventing such contracts. There are people involved who wish to live high on the hog and those who will pay them off for a lucrative contract. The bigger the bloat, the bigger the booty.

Mayor Moya's actions are magnified by the fact that in her attempt to stop



Mayor of Belize City  
Zenaida Moya

corruption and block bloated contracts she is stepping on the toes of the Big, Big Boys. These Big Boys have influence and are part of the reason why she continues to receive

bad publicity. Publicity that distorts the facts and disregards the truth. The big boys must see that Zenaida is removed from office so they can continue with their scams at the tax payer's expense. The false bad publicity is their means of bringing about her removal.

The big boys say "*Moya must go.*" They will use all their political influence and such other means as they conceive to make certain she goes. After all, they have been carrying out their scams at tax payer's expense for years, under the very noses of previous mayors, perhaps with their collaboration. Why should they let this newcomer interfere with and prevent further corruption?

Each time you read or hear bad publicity about Zenaida Moya, stop and consider its source. Think of the Big Boys that brought the publicity about and how they are involved in corruption.

## Congratulations To The Ministry Of Education

Since the announcement of the standardization of text books for Primary School Students much of the response has been negative criticism. Such criticism does not take into consideration the positive aspects of what has taken place and the great benefits to the children and the future of Belize.

The main complaint of those who criticize is that there wasn't enough consultation. One would think that twenty five (25) years of consultation should have been more than enough! The necessity and benefits of standardization has been recognized for over two decades. During that period there have been many meetings in respect to standardization. They all failed. The only reason given for the failures was that those involved could not agree upon what text books would originate as standardized.

Now after 25 years of frustration there have finally been those with sufficient intelligence and intestinal fortitude to make the selection and bring about standardization, for the Primary level. They took the bull by the

horns and accomplished that which could not have been accomplished otherwise and which others failed to accomplish during 25 years. The critics should be working to assist those involved to make a success of standardization.

Standardization is one of the more important achievements since Independence in 1981. It will have a very far reaching beneficial effect on the future of the Country and the livelihood of its children.

Standardization requires the cooperation of the parents to make it entirely successful. It is the parent's responsibility to see that the issued books are protected from loss or damage so that they can be re issued to others.

Standardization of books for Primary School Students is a great achievement, however, **it is only the beginning. Standardization of books for the First through Fourth Form is an absolute necessity.** Such standardization would provide such education for thousands of additional students annually. Students that could not otherwise afford such an education.



The Language Exchange Project - Belize/Guatemala/UK  
The Article On Page 5

**Standardization for Secondary education could be easily accomplished without a large expenditure of money. It could be self supporting and maintain itself without further expenditures.**

The Greek Philosopher Socrates (469BC – 399BC) believed that bad behaviors resulted from ignorance.

Socrates was correct; however, during modern days the problem goes much further. Education is necessary for one to make a living and advance in life. Absent a secondary education, the children of Belize will have great difficulty in making such a living and advancement.

(Please Turn To Page 15) 

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# Letters to the Editor

## Moody's Report .....A Trojan Warning!

Dear Editor,

After reading Moody's Economic Report and Economic Out-look for Belize in the Amandala on Monday, July 9th 2007 ...."Belize not out of the woods as yet, says Moody" I felt as though I was reading a highly diplomatic and Trojan warning. I felt the need to try and decode the subtle hints and clues directed to us the Belizean people.

A prominent paragraph to me in the report was:"The most surprising element of last year's macroeconomic performances was the ability of the authorities to avert a full balance of payments crisis and a devaluation. This is mostly explained by the unexpected build-up in FX [foreign exchange] reserves due to an unusual confluence of positive factors, including the discovery of oil and loans from Venezuela and Taiwan"

The report used such words as "surprising"....."the ability of the authorities" it goes on to try and explain and again another of those words...."unexpected" build-up in Foreign Exchange.....more of those

words....."unusual" confluence.....the discovery of oil and loans from Venezuela and Taiwan.

Those beautiful descriptive adjectives.....Words speaking clearly for themselves to anyone with a grade 3 education in Belize who cares to read or listen!

The Discovery of Oil.....well, we all know who owns all that! Certainly not Belize or Belizeans.

What is promised to Venezuela??? What is promised to Taiwan????? NO ONE GIVES YOU SOMETHING FOR NOTHING !!! Well maybe in Taiwan's case.....the support VOTE against China.....But I have a very strong feeling that both of those countries/their politicians will later on be revealed to own most of Belize's land and/or assests. And with no disclosure and accountability.....we could very well have bargained or sold our souls!..... Unknowingly.

If these were the FORCES that came together.....sorry I meant CONFLUENCE to SAVE Belize.....I there say that it was the PRIVATE

SECTOR AND FOREIGN INTEREST that saved Belize.....ne can therefore conclude ...."THUS"

..... BELIZE IS OWNED, Lot, Stock and Barrel by the Private Sector!!!!!! (I think we know them too )

The facade created by corruption is keeping Belize artificially afloat. How long can this go on??? ....read between the lines....Moody's warning!

Like the DFC which was arbitrarily utilized by this same Private Sector as a slush fund and co-signer liability for their corruption, we see that Belize is not "tangible" in this Economic sense.....and may very well be a national disposable vehicle as was DFC.

Why does the government of Belize "keep paying" to keep our dollar afloat when most of the Caribbean countries with surplus economies have abandoned this huge costly practice so long ago?

Especially since Belize is in the red" by over a billion United States of America Dollars. (\$1,000,000,000.00US ). and this debt growing geometrically..

On brief speculation, one could Surmise it is because they don't know what they are doing?? This could easily be a convenient and palatable answer. On closer inspection...BECAUSE IT (Please Turn To Page 14) 

### Comments? Suggestions?

or want to share your thoughts & photos? Email us at [Independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com](mailto:Independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com)

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# PNP Donates Stove To School

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

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614-8307

SAN ANTONIO VILLAGE, Toledo District, Thursday, June 28, 2007:

Wil Maheia, Leader of the Peoples' National Party (PNP) donated a stove today to the San Antonio RC primary school in the Toledo District.

The Principal of the School Mr. Onorio Rash and other teachers accepted the stove on behalf of the school. The Principal thanked the PNP for its dedication to education. *"This donation was made on the PNP pledge to continue to support education and to ensure that a feeding program exists at every school so that children can have a*



Making the presentation, PNP Leader, Wil Maheia, far right

healthy meal while learning," said Maheia, "We realize this is a small

step toward realizing our goal that every school provide a free meal program but it is a concrete

step forward in the right direction."

*"It is very important for children to have a good diet and a full stomach so that they can retain what is taught to them in school"* said Dionicio Choc PNP candidate for Toledo West. *"Education is vital to the building of a solid nation but it must be done properly and food is a critical part that too often is ignored"*, continued Choc.

The PNP also pledges to keep the gas tank full on the stove for the first six months

## Dialogue From The Countryside; "Now, That's Interesting..."

By George Deuck

On a recent trip to Belmopan I met a businessman, who is also my friend. He came to the city to collect a \$2,000 bank check which had bounced from a shop owner. *"Ah heah no money deh"* the shop owner say. The shop owner reasons with my friend on the bounced check by explaining that a Government Department owes him and did not pay on the date they had said they would. *"They are not paying their debt,"* the shop owner complains. *"Now they are 3 weeks late. They seem to be broke,"* sighs the man with resignation.

On my way back through a village we stop at a grocery store. The owner said he only sells 1/3 of what he sold a year ago. It is 3 years now since business took a downward spiral. He told me

that today about 12 people got their electricity disconnected in his village. They just can't pay the bill.

That is very interesting because on a morning show at a well know radio station, the Hon. PM said, *"Our dollar is strong and our economy is vibrant."* Of course he sees it from his perspective. He also commented that their Convention up north went very well. Someone put the approximate cost of the activity at close to 1/2 a million dollars. Our Hon. PM also spoke on *"social justice"* and *"integration"*. How ironic!

Most Chinese restaurants sell a dish called *"sweet and sour"*. Is this what Belize has become? Sweet for some and sour for others? Let's dialogue some more...

From Office of National Reform Party <http://nrpbelize.org>

## Belize Puts 4-5 Offshore Oil Blocks Up for Grabs

BNamericas, Mon., July 09, 2007:

There are 4-5 vacant oil blocks in Belize out of 21 blocks in the country, geologist Pedro Cho from the natural resources and environment ministry's geology and petroleum department told BNamericas.

The government has not seen the need to launch formal bidding for the available blocks. Instead, interested companies can approach the department to review available information, Cho said. The blocks are in deeper, offshore areas.

There is a possibility Japan's Japex Geoscience Institute (JGI) may help update and verify offshore oil data, including the 4-5 blocks, he said. JGI is helping Honduras with similar work.

Seven production-sharing agreements have been signed to date and there are six applications pending for different blocks - not including the 4-5 vacant ones, the official said.

Belize Natural Energy (BNE) currently is the only company producing oil in the country, roughly 3,000b/d, as well as further exploratory work, said Cho, adding that the bulk of oil is exported and only 4-5% remains in Belize. Much of the crude is exported to the US, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

BNE was the first company to find a commercial oilfield in Belize in the country's 50-year exploration history.

In May, Latin American and Caribbean infrastructure financing firm CIFI committed US\$5mn as part of a US\$30mn credit facility to help BNE develop a recently discovered oil field of 25M-50Mb sweet crude, BNamericas reported previously.

Other companies in advanced E&P stages are Allan Oil carrying out exploratory drilling and US Capital Energy conducting seismic work, Cho said.

## Workers Say Pesticides Made Them Sterile

By NOAKI SCHWARTZ, Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES, Calif., Monday, July 9th, 4:46 AM ET-

The pesticide was designed to kill worms infesting the roots of banana trees on Latin American plantations. But at least 5,000 agricultural workers from Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama have filed five lawsuits in this country claiming they were left sterile after being exposed in the 1970s to the pesticide known as DBCP.

Jury selection for the first of the lawsuits is scheduled to begin Tuesday in Los Angeles County Superior Court.

*"This is the first time any case for a banana worker has come before a U.S. court,"* said Duane Miller, one of the attorneys representing more than 30 Nicaraguan plaintiffs who worked on plantations from 1964 to 1990.

The cases raise the issue of whether

multinational companies should be held accountable in the country where they are based or the countries where they employ workers, legal experts said.

A verdict in favor of the workers could open the door for others to file similar claims in the U.S., where juries are known for awarding bigger judgments.

*"The administration of justice in developing countries in comparison to the administration of justice in the U.S. — there's a big gap,"* said Alejandro Garro, a Columbia University law professor.

*"The significance of it is we're talking about a global economy where big business does business all over the world and where we don't have a uniform type of justice,"* he said

The upcoming lawsuit was filed in 2004 and accuses Dole Fresh Fruit Co. and Standard Fruit Co., now a part of Dole, of negligence and fraudulent

concealment while using the pesticide.

Dow Chemical Co. and Amvac Chemical Corp., manufacturers of the pesticide, *"actively suppressed information about DBCP's reproductive toxicity,"* according to the lawsuit.

Attorney Erin Burke, who represents Westlake-based Dole, and Kelly Kozuma, a spokeswoman for Newport Beach-based Amvac, declined to comment.

Scot Wheeler, a spokesman for Midland, Mich.-based Dow, said in an e-mail that the lawsuits were without merit, and that *"there are no generally accepted studies in the scientific community of which we are aware which establishes an effect on sterility in banana farm workers"* exposed periodically to the chemical.

*"Workers bringing these claims rotated jobs often or changed jobs*

*altogether with enough frequency that long-term exposure would have been fairly unusual and it is not likely that there is any injury whatsoever related to DBCP,"* Wheeler wrote.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Web site says the chemical was used as a fumigant on more than 40 different crops in the U.S. until it was largely phased out by 1979.

Long-term exposure to the pesticide causes male reproductive problems, including decreased sperm count, according to the site, which lists DBCP as a *"probable human carcinogen."*

In April, all five lawsuits were placed under the jurisdiction of Superior Court Judge Victoria Chaney. The legal actions involve claims on behalf of workers from Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, Guatemala and Costa Rica. Other growers and manufacturers are (Please Turn To Page 14)

# Compassion Tourism



**By: Karla Heusner Vernon**

*"What a cute baby! So chubby! What did he weigh when he was born?"* An American woman was smiling at the photo the proud Papa, and owner of the restaurant was showing her. All the patrons had turned around when the woman, in a brightly colored t-shirt, flanked by two teens in similar shirts had come in bearing a gigantic cardboard box. Now, as it was being filled with styrofoam containers, the trio with the Jesus inspired slogans on their shirts was looking at baby pictures and speculated about whether *"all this food will fit in the van."*

We see the matching t-shirt set all over Belize, especially during the summer-in-the-US months. Volunteer church and medical and college students from all across America who come down to Belize not to paint the town red or have sex with reckless abandon on Temptation Island, but to paint schools and churches, help provide health care or some sort of humanitarian aid, or get university credit while doing marine or zoological or archaeological research. Some just come to *"experience other cultures."*

They don't just come to Belize of course; they go all over the world. Filling entire sections of airplanes with their excited, hyper selves, passing cups of Starbucks and mp3 players and digital cameras back and forth across

the aisles, examining brand new passports and trying to figure out if they have anything to declare or not when they fill out their forms and what exactly was their *"port of embarkation."* They are almost

I don't know that as a group the general public really understands how much they spend, how much they buy, how long they stay among us.

oblivious to the other passengers in their focus on themselves.

On the return of course, they are a different bunch. Sunburned and freckled and fly bitten, brand new backpacks showing signs of mildew, wooden carvings carefully wrapped in newspaper inside. Some have shell jewelry, plaits and beads in their hair. Almost all have hats and t-shirts with *"Belize"* emblazoned on them. Traces of kriol have infiltrated their American accents. Belize has gotten under their skin, as well as into their luggage.

Whenever I see them, in US airports or on the ground in Belize, in my mind, I always refer this type of Christian group as *"compassion tourism."* They seem so intent, not just on ministering or spreading the gospel, but on doing some good works, reaching out to the less fortunate.

For a long time I used to think there was some element of guilt involved in their arrival, like so many US celebrities who travel the world in search of poor people to save from hunger and conflict, adopting babies along the way in some bid to repay the millions of people the world over who watch their movies and enable them to make millions of dollars. . . I used to think these young, flush faced teens and the blond streaked men and women with that *"I know Jesus is my savior"* serene expressions

*prepared to make this country a much more strong country. And through education there will be such a deep change, there will be such a wonderful change not only in your lives, but in the lives of all those who live and believe in this." (Marco has a serious non-Belizean accent but he may have a passport)*

**Wells Singleton, Provost, Nova Southeastern University**

*"You will be a changed person professionally and personally as a result of this journey and that change that will occur within you will then spread from you to the community, to this great country, and in fact well beyond the boundary lines, political, economic, religious, cultural that you might be facing at the present time."*

were somehow trying to fill some sad void in their lives by doing unto others.

I am less cynical now, particularly reading through the many interviews with them available online from small local and metropolitan newspapers in the States. For weeks these articles have been popping into my yahoo *"belize"* alert box. American citizens

talking about how they stayed in Mayan villages in Belize and were so welcomed, so impressed with the dignity of the people despite their humble circumstances, doctors visiting villages to provide medical care and surgeries for the deformed and disabled, primary school students who were startled by crabs and snakes and scorpions and swam with dolphins, made friends with Belizean children. Teachers visiting Belize City or rural schools, bringing books, meeting Belizean educators.

For while I once believed it was a one-sided exchange with the affluent North Americans bringing stuff they collected at work or school in some frenzied drive to *"provide"* for the less fortunate abroad. I was concerned they might even be deepening our own culture of dependency on handouts, our own people's aversion to fixing and repairing and painting our own kids schools, our own communities' churches.

But now, I am beginning to see that in so many ways, these visits can serve a useful function, and are mutual exchanges. For the people who come really do need to explore a world outside their own comfortable existence, to be shocked and startled by life in the *"real world."* They need to make friends with people who look

Both provosts were smooth as silk in their sharp presentations, avoiding the cost issue but highlighting the major benefit to Belize in that no one has to go away anymore and disrupt their lives and livelihoods in pursuing a Doctorate in Education abroad. This is a great start. Maybe in the future we will get other offerings.

Belize Senator Dr. Deborah MacMillan gave the inaugural address. Much thanks was given the previous provost of UB for the early groundwork of this collaborative effort where over 30 Belizeans have already signed up.

Kriol Gyal Sylvana Woods, is one of the thirty something Doctoral Candidates; she is a current lecturer at UB and former Chair of the Belize Broadcasting Authority, among many other titles. She gave the lovely vote of thanks.

and speak differently than they do, and to get past those superficial differences. They need to feel they have somehow made a *"difference,"* however trite, however small. To leave some footprint, however faint, somewhere in the wider world.

From their descriptions of life in Belize and their interactions with Belizeans, it is clear to me that while they came thinking they would give something to Belize, they quickly discovered it was Belize giving something to them. One youth told his hometown newspaper reporter, *"They just don't worry about the same stuff we think is so important in the US."* Perhaps he has learned some of that stuff really is unimportant, or at least only commercial and fake. Perhaps he has learned to make do with less, slow down and enjoy life a bit more.

Maybe their coming here changes our own views too. Calling attention to the things we take for granted. One boy was so thrilled that a village youth could kill a snake with a machete, another man that fish could be caught on a hand line. A nurse so impressed with a community health worker's ability to serve her community with almost no resources, that traditional, medicinal plants are still a vital part of our culture. A college girl was astonished to see a baby carried in a sling around her mother's head and she was so moved when the woman let her hold her child with complete trust.

I suppose these *"compassion tourists"* and *"educational exchange-ees"* are included in the BTB surveys of departing passengers at the airport. But I don't know that as a group the general public really understands how much they spend, how much they buy, how long they stay among us. For they are not housed at the more exclusive resorts and hotels, they do not eat at the higher end restaurants. Instead they book rooms at guest houses and private homes, eat at Chinese restaurants and buy from rice and beans stands and *"panades shops"* and taco carts. They ride water and land taxis and rent vans and buses. And gift shops, everywhere they look for gift shops.

It would be interesting to calculate how many thousands, perhaps millions of dollars student and church groups and other volunteer organizations pump into Belize each year. It is probably an impressive number. But there is no way we can put a dollar value on what this interaction is worth to us in terms of promoting Belize, and Belizean hospitality. For while they may quickly forget the fried chicken they bought at a particular restaurant, they may well remember the photo of the restaurant owner's baby when they come back years from now to visit and they meet him all grown up. And introduce him to their own children and grandchildren.

## UB Offers Doctor In Education Degree In Belize For a cool \$50,000 and a three year/9 semester commitment

The University of Belize in collaboration with Nova Southeastern University is now offering what appears to be its first full time doctoral program in Belize.

The launch of the program was announced at an Inaugural Session at the Princess Hotel last Thursday, July 12, 2007.

With Jason Guerrero strumming out the National Anthem and Bishop Wright blessing the undertaking, the respective provost of the two Universities had this to say:

**Marco Olsen, Provost, University of Belize**

*"University of Belize, we will not help you to print a title in your business card within three years or even to enable you to get an increment. But we are here committed to ensure that you are*

# The Language Exchange Project - Belize/Guatemala/UK



**By: Trevor Vernon**

*"Boy, Trev, don't put my picture in your paper. I don't want people to think I came here to sell them out..."* said one ranking participant over lunch during last weekend's language exchange program in Guatemala City.

Even though the program was sponsored by the British government, public perception is that Belize's leaders and some leading citizens have a long history of visiting Guatemala to pick up suitcases of money. These participants were well aware of the stories and were clearly concerned that colleagues and friends back home might think they were doing the same thing.

I was way more concerned for my personal safety given the level of violence and political crime in that august city. But I could relate to my colleagues' concerns.

The group was in Guatemala at the invitation of the Society for the Promotion of Education and Research (Belize), SPEAR, to participate in a workshop on *"Transparency and Governance,"* within the broader context of Confidence Building Measures of the Belize/Guatemala failed negotiations. I was hesitant to go, quite frankly, but I threw caution to the wind and boarded the flight with the specific aim of promoting the paper and doing a little research of my own.

Given my previous incarnation in the Foreign Service, I was grasping at straws in an effort to justify my commitment to participate. But from the very opening session at the Presidential Compound, the director of the Language Exchange Project, a seasoned British Diplomat, expounded on the aims of the UK government funded project. Lots of ranking Belizean delegations have participated in the various exchanges over the last four years in an effort to build confidence between the various institutions in Belize and Guatemala: Defense, Judiciary, Political Parties, NGOs, newspapers, mayors, diplomats, etcetera. So I felt comforted by the precedence set by earlier attendees, mostly in Guatemala. Even our constitutionally-appointed Opposition Leader had participated.

So the Brits have been funding this confidence building project that has seen them spend almost ¾ Million British Pounds. I kept asking myself: To what end? Yes, it's a wonderful thing to build confidence between the governmental and NGO community. But why fund and manage a project like this? Naturally, it has to be in their best interest. Somehow. Right?

Before I go on let me tell you where you can get more information on the soon-to-be historic project: [www.guatemalabelice.com](http://www.guatemalabelice.com) Apparently the project comes to an end within the year. It has been highly successful.

Anyway, I personally believe the confidence building measures are mostly good given the state of play of the political dynamic both in Belize and in Guatemala. Both Belize and Guatemala are facing elections within the next six months, or so. The latter in September.

In Guatemala, nearly every political analyst claims that the *"mafia"* is running the country as is the case in Belize. Corruption is a malignant cancer that is eating away at the heart and soul of our individual states. And the corrupting trans-border forces have united to some extent; it appears, to cheat the individual nation states not only of taxes and government revenues but of public and private resources.

Take the case of the stolen car ring that benefits the *mafiosos* and the ruling politicians who provide them cover. SUVs are stolen in Guatemala but only the insurance companies appear to lose there. While here in Belize, only certain buyers lose their money when elements of the Belize Government selectively target them for punishment. Other, better connected buyers continue to drive their stolen vehicles with impunity. For now, I wait on the court registrar to even call up my case...been waiting for two years. Wonder why Musa had three of his called up in the same week against the Reporter Newspaper of Belize and won them all. Animal Farm?

The point is, there is trans-border collaboration that involves ranking politicians, civil servants, and the ever enterprising hyphenated Belizean businessmen.

I can't figure out why the Guatemalan insurance companies are not making a fuss over the huge losses they suffer...unless it's the re-insurers in the USA & UK who take the hit. It's a great little gig and the biggest losers say absolutely nothing. I am out of pocket a tidy sum. So, I don't need to say one of the reasons for my participation was to gather information on the trans-border stolen car situation that the otherwise competent Belize Police Department is normally good

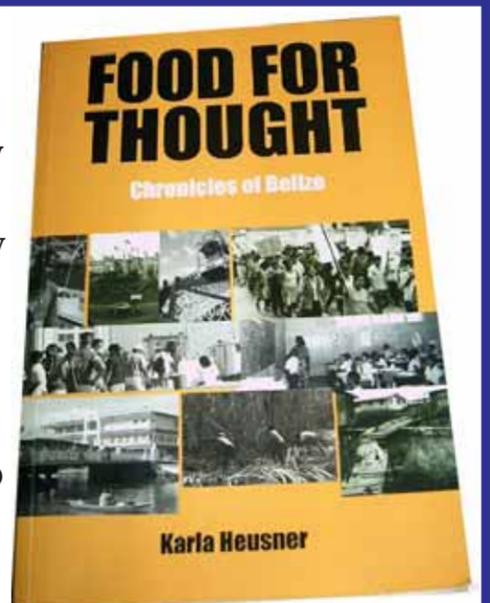
at cracking. Lots of money changing hands by this ongoing scam.

Maybe the LX Project managers should have a confidence building workshop for the *"businessmen"* who facilitate the disappearance cars in Guatemala and reappear in parking lots and farms around Belize. Maybe their devious and predatory minds can resolve the border issue with their harems, their contraband, their political contributions, their controlled substances and their wicked ways. I'd be happy to supply them with a list of predatory characters they could

invite. After all, who better to negotiate a sell out than the politically connected cocaine cowboys? They are great guys with a lot of ill-gotten resources.

I understand they are branching into new areas such as the importation of school textbooks and exportation of carbon credits. But seriously, with all these people making off with suitcases of money, what a shame that a bunch of decent people who just want a nice trip to Guatemala and to meet some real counterparts face to face have to worry about what Belizeans at home will think of them.

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# It's Simple - 65% Is The Majority Of The Population

## Third Indigenous Electoral Observation Mission (Guatemala) ANTECEDENTS

In the eighties, a new era in the institutional life of Guatemala begins. After three decades of internal armed conflict, with tragic sequels that still persist in the Guatemalan society, an important institutional and political change is initiated that makes the accomplishment of general elections possible. Similarly, the Constituent National Assembly of 1986 and the Political Constitution that arises from this constituent in 1986 establish the adoption of a multicultural State. The recognition of the Guatemalan nation as multiethnic is an important step; nevertheless, the demands for participation by the natives have come to face several challenges in the interior of a State that historically has been monist and excluding.

The element of ethnic and cultural discrimination that has been constant in the politics of the country and the precarious conditions of life determined by the high indices of poverty and extreme poverty, are constituted in obstacles that prevent strengthening democratic processes. Inequality is a constant threat to democracy and to the institutions themselves, where the "social inequalities become political inequalities".

The signing of the Peace accords marked an important landmark in the history of the country. These agreements do not only manage to put an end to the armed internal conflict, but also to propitiate a series of reflections and reforms about varied themes that affect the principles of the country. The democratic system is one of these subjects that has been a matter of reflection. It is important to emphasize that as a result of the Peace accords a place has been given to the analysis and reflection of that democratic system from an intercultural perspective.

The next general elections of 2007, constitute a possibility of creating a scene, that is initiated and supported by the natives with the object of forming and participating in the system, by means of a "*mission of electoral observation*" that reveals practices and actions that cause the levels of participation and representation on behalf of the natives to be greater. Similarly, the necessity to reflect concerning the obstacles that make it difficult or that prevent the ample participation of the indigenous peoples in electoral processes.

This exercise tries to be constructing proposals from the optics of the natives, who more and more wish to be part of an institutional order that should be incorporating reforms to surpass the emptiness and the shortcomings caused by a monist and excluding state. It is of special importance the previously mentioned within the framework of a possible constitutional reform that would be made during the governmental period that begins in 2008.

## WHO CARRIES OUT THE III MISSION OF INDIGENOUS OBSERVATION?

The Organism Naleb', private institution, non lucrative, of pro-positive and constructive character, whose mission is to elevate the level of intercultural relations that allow a better development of the Guatemalan society, counts with two accumulated and successful experiences of electoral observation from the perspective of indigenous peoples; first carried out during the general elections of 1999 and the second during the elections of 2003.

Among the reached profits of these unpublished and enriching experiences it is important to mention:

\* It was verified that a high degree of manipulation of the indigenous population exists and that municipalities with more than 50% of indigenous people are those that have a greater percentage of electoral participation through the exercise of voting.

An analysis and debates were initiated on a national level concerning the situation of the indigenous peoples and their participation in democratic processes.

\*A young group of political analysts with intercultural perspective in the rural area was started.

\*A process of work of electoral observation with national cover took place, able to cause an encounter between the departments and the capital.

\*A report of observation was presented to the Electoral Supreme Court and to mass media.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE III MISSION?

\*To observe and to analyze the messages and the publicity unfolded by the political parties and civic committees, identifying their cultural relevance, handling of languages and contents.

\*To observe the indigenous participation in the political parties and civic committees through proposals, dialogues, ethnic composition, structure of decision making, plan of government, strategy of campaign and financial information.

To observe the operation, the cultural relevance of their public actions, the cover of work during the electoral campaign of 2007 and the fulfilment of the Electoral Law and Political Parties of the Electoral Supreme Court, Executive authority, Legislative and Judicial Power, Office of Human rights and Municipalities.

To get to know and to analyze the political activities, electoral alliances and proposals that the social sectors and groups make within the electoral campaign of 2007, taking into account, the situation of citizen security of all the process.

When obtaining the raised objectives, the fundamental aim of this III Mission of observation is to certify the electoral process from an intercultural perspective and to produce a departmental map of indigenous participation within the civic structures of political parties and committees.

## WHO LEADS THIS PROCESS?

1. *The Intercultural Directive Council*: Maximum instance of decision of the process of Observation. It is a body formed by professionals; they are representatives of different indigenous and nonindigenous organizations from the country. With the purpose of obtaining the wished impact and including the whole country, this council will integrate thirteen people: ladinos, natives, garífuna and xinca. In addition, this council will have the mission to give continuation to the political events that happen during the electoral campaigns and during the national elections. The members are: Maria del Rosario Toj, Otilia Lux, Antonieta Castro, Lilia Palacios, Patricia Ardón, Orlando Queme, Anabella Giraca, Carla Villagran, Jose Serech, Jose Luis Tiguilá, Pop Alvaro, Irma Citalán and Medarda Castro.

2. *The Interinstitutional Consultative Council*: Sets itself up as an advisory instance of the III Mission. It is formed by representatives of important organizations who affect, analyze or study national events from different scopes: political, economical, social, cultural, etc. Their uprisings will be a fundamental base to follow during the process. These institutions are: Institute of Interethnic Studies, Faculty of Political Sciences of the University Rafael Landivar, CONAVIGUA, Association of Mayan Women MOLOJ, CONGECOOP, and the Training center of Western Border CEDFOG.

3. *Executive Being*: It sets itself up as the Naleb' Organism. It will mainly consist of a Head of Mission and three coordinators: an executive, a coordinator of mass media and one of finances. In addition to the personnel of support in logistic and information systems.

4. *Realization*: It is planned to contract 56 observers on a national level. The country will be divided into 5 regions, therefore 5 regional observers are required who will coordinate these regions:

1. The Northern Region: Petén, Verapaz Discharge, Low Verapaz and Izabal.

2. The Western Region: Quiché', Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Quetzaltenango, Totonicapán, Sololá and Chimaltenango.

3. The Central Region: City of Guatemala.

4. The Eastern Region: Zacapa, the Progress, Jutiapa, Chiquimula and Jalapa.

5. The Southern Region: Retalhuleu, Suchitepéquez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa, Guatemala and Sacatepéquez.

## METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

To accomplish the III Mission four areas are included:

1) Mass media; through publicity the use of languages will be analyzed, cultural relevance and the content of messages will be analyzed.

2) Political Institutions; the plans of work on a local and a national level, campaign strategy, financing, ethnic composition and structure of political parties and civic committees that

participate in the election will be analyzed.

3) Responsible Institutions; the operation will be observed, cultural relevance and coverage of The Electoral Supreme court, executive, legislative and judicial Organizations, Municipalities and Office of Human rights.

4) Social Context; here, the goal is to observe political activities, alliances, proposals, the electoral process and the participation of ONGs, indigenous organizations, academic institutions, businessmen/women, cooperatives, churches, women and farmers.

The III Mission is implemented in three stages, with duration of 17 months – from October 2006 to February 2007.

1) *Assembly of the III Mission*; from October to December of 2006. This stage includes the definition of the objectives in terms of indicators and people in charge, the search of financing of the project and the contact of the described human resource.

2) *Accomplishing the III Mission*; it will be carried out of from January to December of 2007. During the first semester of the year, meetings of organization and coordination will take place on levels of the Directive, Consultative and Executive council, calls and selection of observers at a national level, press conferences will be given to know the project and its objectives, emissions, training of observers, analyzing mass media, accreditation of observers before the Electoral Supreme Court, and elaboration of the I observation report. In the second trimester of 2007, meetings on levels of the Directive, Consultative and Executive Council will continue, press conferences, observation of the process, poster distribution on the III Mission, interviews with directors of political parties, strategy of the coverage of the Election Day, II written report of observation, edition of the B'aqtun magazine.

3) *Socialization of results of the III Mission*; it will be carried out from January to February 2008. The consolidations of observations and analysis of mass media will be carried out, elaboration of the closing report, publication of results in the B'aqtun magazine, public presentation of results at a regional and a national level, presentation of results before the Electoral Supreme Court and spreading of the results of the III Mission.

## FINANCING

A group of co-operators will be formed, integrated by International nongovernmental Organizations, Credited Diplomatic body in the country and international institutions that sponsor this project. Three meetings will be organized with the purpose of presenting information regarding both the physical and the financial advance and the achievements of the III Mission. With the purpose of presenting reliable financial information to the co-operators, it is planned to carry out three revisions: two will be made with the first and the second reports and also a final revision.

# Inflation In Belize

By Ray Auxillou



There has been a good debate on the internet listservs lately about cost of living and food inflation costs in the twin towns of Cayo West.

There doesn't seem to be any argument that inflation of foodstuffs, both Imported and local, have increased at least 25% over the past year.

In Cayo West, by my estimation food inflation is running 32% for the past twelve months. Most of the arguments were that the percentage was actually higher and the majority felt it was over 50%. I suppose that depends on the kind of foods you eat? Certainly for our family inflation in foodstuffs, is at least 25%, though those that eat a lot of imported processed foods can quite rightly claim higher inflation costs, perhaps even into the over 50% range.

Certainly corn tortillas are still a dollar a pack, but the pack quantity is a lot less than in years gone by. I don't know much about the price of beans, and most poor people eat a lot of red kidney beans as a meat substitute. Gasoline of course continues to have a rising trend line.

One of the more humorous rumor mongering stories I found quite funny was the effect inflation will have on vote buying in the Ladyville, Hattieville, Gales Point, for an elected representative seat. In past articles, mostly in the Amandala I think? It has been hinted that in the last election, the representative's team paid out about \$60,000 on Election Day for his seat at \$100 a pop per vote.

There was an explanatory article in one of the weekend port town newspapers explaining how they did it in the PUP, to ensure they got the actual vote for the money. I forget the details, but accept the story articles as true enough.

What the rumor mill is saying though, is that the vote this year in this division, of Hattieville-Ladyville-Gales Point is that the PUP will have to pay \$500 to \$700 per vote this time around. Now that is inflation indeed!

There was also an interesting discussion on the listserv as to whether

or not the ministry responsible for Internal Security is obstructing investigations into the multi-million dollar US currency smugglers from Belize to Panama? It certainly makes a good general conspiracy theory! One list member was explaining that the SWIFT banking wire transfer network had been illegally supplying SECRET customer information to the US Government in violation of EU laws (I believe SWIFT -wire transfer system is located in Belgium?); suddenly clarifying why anybody would go to all the trouble and risk of smuggling millions of dollars of US currency from Belize to Panama by commercial airliner using people as mules. You want to break the paper trail? This obviously would work, for who would know this information in our government? Couple that with the fact you need Cabinet permits, a local bank to accumulate illegal forbidden foreign currency and the connivance of some nation's Central Bank in such money laundering schemes, the newspapers who are insinuating such skullduggery at Cabinet levels, certainly have enough circumstantial meat to create a valid conspiracy theory.

The thing about conspiracy theories is there is usually at least some degree of truth.

That said; some pundit over at the local hardware store, today in the cashiers' line, re-iterated once again his faith that the PUP will be able to BUY the next government elections! Since the guy has been right for the past two elections, he may very well be right for this next one. Although, another participant in our hardware store session suggested that Mr. Cornelius Dueck of the NRP says he has as big a bank account to buy the next election as the PUP. That boggles the mind!

Personally, after a visit to a Camalote Mennonite-run auction where a backyard full of farmhouse junk worth \$1500 sold for over \$10,000, it might behoove the voters of the above mentioned voting district to band together and hire this Mennonite professional auctioneer operation to sell their votes in front of their ballot box to the highest bidder.

If Dueck gets to run for his NRP in that district, those unpatriotic votes would spiral upward to maybe \$1200 to \$1500 each and maybe more! Surely an auction of votes would fit the piratical times we are in? It would be such fun to watch! Channel 5 & 7 could film it and we could see what a Cabinet post is really worth to the highest bidders!

Whatever happens; inflation is hitting us all, from wannabe get rich aspiring politicians, to the poor family living on tortillas and beans at home in rural Belize.

## Pallotti High School - Fifty Years Later

PRESS RELEASE

July 8, 2007

Belize City, BELIZE

In celebration of Pallotti High School's 50 Years of operation, 54 Young Women of the Graduating Class of 2007, held its Commencement Exercise preceded by a Graduation Mass on Sunday, June 10, 2007, at the Fordyce Memorial Chapel of St. John's College in Belize City, Belize.

The Salutatory Address was given by Lianni Yanini Rodriguez, while the Valedictory Address was presented by Dayrin Mariela Perez Polanco.

The Guest Speaker was former graduate of Pallotti High School, Dame Rosalie T. Staines. In her brief and succinct presentation, Rosalie repeated the message which, she said has made an intense impression upon her over the years to her graduating class of 1966, was given by their Guest Speaker the then Premier of Belize, George Cadle Price said in part "... *in charting a course for a successful future you must reach for the Moon and clutch the Stars which represent your Dreams, Aspirations and Achievements ...*".

The highlight of the 50th Anniversary of Pallotti High School was a Banquet Dinner which was held on Saturday, June 30, 2007, at the Princess Hotel & Casino.

Guests of Honor were his Excellency Sir Colville N Young, the Governor General of Belize and Honorable Francis Fonseca, our Minister of Education and those Pallottine Sisters who dedicated over three decades as educators at the High School from its inception. Awards and presentations were given by Provincial of the Pallottine Convent, Sr. Rosalyn, Sr. Benedict, the Principal of the High School for 30 years. Sr. Rosella who was not present but received an award for over three decades of contribution, other teachers and past graduates also received awards. Sr. Elsa who founded the Stella Maris School coordinated a Documentary depicting 50 years of the Pallotti High School which was presented for viewing to those in attendance.

The Director of Ceremony was Dame Rosalie T. Staines who is also a graduated from Pallotti High School.

Presently Pallotti High School has embarked on a fundraising campaign to construct a new building which will accommodate some 100 more students.

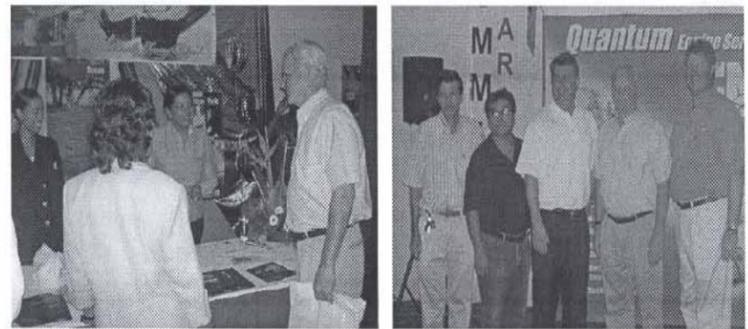
For more information to contribute to the Building Fundraising Initiative, call the organizers at :

**Tels: 224-4886/223-0486 or email us at: [marlene1965@yahoo.com](mailto:marlene1965@yahoo.com) or [srcteu12006@gmail.com](mailto:srcteu12006@gmail.com).**

### U.S. Embassy Belmopan 6<sup>TH</sup> Annual MADE IN THE USA EXHIBITION

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# The Best Political Platform

The platform of this party shall include the following provisions. The party shall insure that these provisions are enacted into law as soon as practical after entering into office. A public quarterly report on the progress made to fully enact and enforce these changes will be madethroughout this party's administration.

## Plank No. 1

**Granting of Powers to Local Government** Whereas, it is recognized by this party that local town and village government is considered as being superior to federal regulation in dealing with certain local village matters, and Whereas, each town or village is recognized as having different standards and needs for the provision of certain services, and Whereas, the ability of the GOB to finance and provide all services to local towns and villages from funding sources available to the GOB is very limited, this party will insure if elected into office that:

1) Local towns and villages will be allowed to petition for incorporation by Charter from the GOB, to be responsible for raising local taxes and fees, if required, in the provision of certain services including but not limited to road and drainage maintenance, utilities, telecommunication services, solid waste services, local police services, and certain other services as may be petitioned by the local town or village.

2) Decisions concerning the quality of service and the administration of such services, including setting fees and taxes for chartered services, will be totally the responsibility of the local elected town council with no oversight or determinations by Ministries of the GOB being required.

3) That the GOB will work with local towns and villages to the extent possible in grant assistance and other cooperation between the town and GOB.

4) That in order to petition the GOB for a town Charter, that a minimum of 51% of local registered voters must petition the GOB for a Charter through the local town or village council.

5) That all local town and village elections will be nonpartisan in nature and any participation by any recognized party will be specifically prohibited by law.

6) That local Towns and Villages will have the specific authority to regulate the use of land through zoning and land use designations through the use of appropriate planning principals and through public participation in the development of such land use regulations.

7) All Chartered Towns and Villages shall be required to operate with a

balanced budget each year with an audit of all accounts performed by professional auditors on an annual basis.

## Plank No. 2

**New Requirements of Elected Officials** Whereas, it is recognized by this party that holding public office is a public trust granted by the general public, and Whereas, the appearance of wrong doing can result in the loss of trust in government officials, and Whereas, holding public office requires 100% of available time dedicated to the office held, this party will insure if elected to office that:

1) **Declaration of Assets** - A law shall be passed requiring that all people running for public office at the national or local Town and Village level shall declare to the public, in a form to be determined, all assets and interest held in any and all businesses both within Belize and in other countries. The candidate shall also make public their prior year's income tax statement. Discovery of assets not declared shall result in the immediate termination from office.

2A) **Business Interests During the Term of Office** - During the term of office, the elected official (at the national level), shall not participate in any private business operations directly or indirectly including attending any meeting concerning the business, presence in the office of any personally owned business, work of any kind for the business(s) or government contracting that would lend favor to any personally owned business or business of any relative. Local Town and Village elected officials may hold public office and continue in their normal business, however, anytime a vote of the council relates to any business or personal interest of the local Town or Village official, that official will withdraw from voting on or discussing the issue. Failure to comply with these requirements shall result in the immediate termination from office.

2B) Any lawyer or other professional who is elected to office (at the national level) shall immediately assign all work load to associates of the firm or other companies and cease and desist from any work representing any past, current, or future client, until such time as the term of office is over. Any lawyer or other professional who is elected to local Town or Village Mayor or Council Member may continue their practice, however that official will withdraw from voting on or discussing any issue that relates to personal or family business and other similar interests. Failure to comply with this provision in the proposed law shall result in immediate termination from office.

3) **Campaign Finance Reform** - In order to improve the public confidence and reduce the excessive influence of individuals or corporations in the election process for national and local elections, this party shall pass laws that will (a) require the maximum contribution of any individual or corporation (including the candidate themselves) to any one candidate for office (including the party of the candidate) a maximum contribution of \$1,000 BZ for each election campaign, and (b) all contributions shall be kept in the records of the candidate and such records shall be available as public information within 7 days of the contribution. After the day of the election, no contributions will be allowed in any amount to any successful or unsuccessful candidate until a formal announcement is made that the candidate will run for the same or another elected office in the next election cycle. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the immediate termination from that elected office. Nothing in this law shall be intended to limit the reporting by news media on the status of the election process, news articles reflecting the opinions of individuals or editors of the papers, public meetings, or other forms of communication including the use of the internet for public information. Political advertisements in the form of ads in various print media, ads on TV or other visual media forms shall be paid for by the same fees as other similar forms of advertisement. All advertisements shall be paid for from funds collected and reported as described above.

4) **Term Limits** - This party shall support the concept of term limits for certain elected offices including the office of Prime Minister, Senator, and certain other offices to be determined. The term of office shall be for 4 years and each person shall hold the elected office for no more than 2 terms. It shall also be the policy of this party to hold regularly scheduled elections to properly implement the concept of term limits, hold down the cost of elections, and allow for proper planning for elections.

## Plank No. 3 :

**Implementing the Political Reform Commission Recommendations** Whereas the final report of the Political Reform Commission contained several recommendations that have not been totally implemented to date, and Whereas there continues to be a lack of accountability of elected and public officials, this party pledges to enact or revise legislation to fully and effectively implement the following recommendations from the 2000 Final Report of The Political Reform

Commission:

1) **Statutory Instruments** - This party recommends that the use of the Statutory Instrument mechanism be further regulated by:

(a) curtailing the enabling power of Ministers to legislate by reducing legislation that gives this power;  
(b) Making it mandatory for all statutory instruments to go to the House of Representatives for ratification at the next sitting of the House.

2) **Public Debt** - This party recommends that:

(a) provision be made for all details of all loans made to the Government of Belize to be published in the Government Gazette;

(b) The Government take measures to ensure that public debt as a proportion of national income is kept at a prudent level.

3) **Government Contracts** - This party recommends that the following measures be taken with regard to the process of awarding government contracts:

(a) that the Constitution and relevant laws be amended to require the House of Representatives to approve the awarding of all contracts over \$100,000, or to any one entity whose aggregate contract exceeds \$100,000;

(b) That internationally recognized standards for competitive public contracting be adopted by the Government through legislation such that there be public bidding process that is opened to the general public.

4) **Auditor-General** - To enhance the effectiveness and independence of the Office of the Auditor-General, this party agrees with the Commission that:

(a) the Constitution be amended at section 109 of the Constitution to reform the appointment process so that the Auditor-General is appointed by the Governor-general acting on recommendation of the National Assembly contained in a resolution passed on that behalf;

(b) the Auditor-General be required to have specific qualifications equivalent to that of a certified public accountant, and be an active member of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants;

(c) Chapter IX, section 120 be so amended as to ensure that the budget for the Office of the Auditor-General is submitted directly to the House of Representatives and be given priority call on the Consolidated Revenue Fund;

(d) the Public Accounts Committee of the House be the medium through which the Auditor-General communicates with the House;

(e) the Finance and Audit Act be so reviewed with the aim of making amendments that increase, establish, and ensure the execution of penalties for (i) government auditors who disclose information on audit inquiries without proper authorization, and (ii) public

(Please Turn To Page 9) 

# The Best Political Platform

 (Continued From Page 8)

officers and others who refuse to cooperate with the requests of the Auditor-General during annual audits;

(f) the Public Services Commission delegate, as allowed by the Constitution, its authority of employment, promotion, and removal of staff of the Office of the Auditor General Department to the Auditor General;

(g) provision be made for the development and implementation of penalties for failure to present audited national accounts to the House;

(h) provision be made and resources be provided to allow the Auditor General to contract the services of auditors outside of the public service to assist in the execution of the duties of the office;

(i) amend section 120(b) of the Constitution to state that a report be submitted to the House by the Auditor General whether or not the report is complete and, if not completed, the reasons why;

(j) provision be made for the revision of the Finance and Audit Act to ensure compatibility with the Constitution;

(k) Revise and consolidate the Financial Orders, Store Orders and Control of Public Expenditure regulations into one document.

5) Wavier of Fees - This party recommends that provision be made to:

(a) require that all waivers suspending the legal requirement of any persons or organization to the payment

of a particular fee or charge be done only by permission of a statutory instrument and that no waivers be allowed until such statutory instrument is passed by the House;

(b) Ensure that all waivers of fees are published in the government gazette.

## Plank No. 4

### Planning and Environmental Protection

Whereas the pristine environment of Belize is recognized to be one of its most important and valuable assets of Belize, and Whereas the protection of the environment is one of those unique roles best suited for government, and Whereas there are certain industries that present unique threats to the environment, and Whereas the GOB does not have the adequate capacity in place to monitor the Cruise ship or the oil industry, and Whereas local communities ought to have a greater say towards influencing land development, industry, and economic development opportunities that are undertaken in their communities:

1. A special business tax, placed on cruise ship companies and oil companies, shall be enacted to fully fund the regulation and management of the cruise ship and oil industries that are granted access to Belize. Such taxes

shall be managed through a special fund and will be designated for the sole purpose of environmental protection and management programs.

2. Each district will be encouraged (but not required) to develop a 20 year General Plan. This plan shall be developed through the Strategic Planning Process with a broad range of stake holders. The plan shall be adopted by a majority of the Area Representatives including Mayors of Towns and Villages, and the leader of each Alcalde, who shall also form a permanent body whose approval will be required for major development projects affecting the district. A major project is defined as one that under current laws would require an environment impact assessment before being granted a license or permit. Funding for this planning process shall be provided for and included in the budget of the general government. Towns and Villages who opt for their own Charter shall provide their own local plan development with funding of the plan development by the General Government.

## Plank No. 5

### Economic Development of Belize

Whereas it is recognized that the creation of job opportunities for all Belizeans is of significant priority for Belize, and Whereas it is of primary importance that the education of people match the economic job opportunities that will come to Belize in the future, and Whereas it is recognized that small businesses have the potential to provide significant economic development of Belize, and Whereas it is recognized that Belize operates in a competitive way with many countries of the world:

1) Cooperative Village Banking – This party supports the concept of "*Cooperative Village Banking*" where village and surrounding community residents combine their borrowing power to encourage lending of small business development funds for the development of small local individual owned business operations including farming, service shops, light manufacturing, and similar business ventures. These opportunities to finance the start of small local business shall be open equally to men and women and all ethnic and cultural backgrounds who are citizens of Belize. This party will pass laws to encourage and facilitate the start of new small business operations by the Belize Government and offer tax relief and other means to facilitate new business development. The Town or Village Council will act as the Board for the cooperative banking and shall approve loans and shall determine standards and types of businesses to be approved that will coordinate with local planning and economic development efforts.

2) Education and the Economy –

Given the interlocking relationship between Education and Economic Development this party recognizes the critical importance of a viable educational system. The prior findings of the Education Commission will be honored and put into place in the elementary and secondary systems. Post secondary education will be brought under review and a Board with a majority seating of active business leaders will be created. This board will act with the authority to approve budget allocations, curriculum, all appointments, and the award of all publicly funded scholarships. The Department of Labor shall select five industry sectors and assign priority in terms of growth, balance of payments/cash flow, tax generation, employment impact, and include government operations as one of the five industry sectors. Starting with one sector the first year, education will add an additional sector each year for the subsequent four years meanwhile creating a full service curriculum with degrees proceeding through graduate programs as appropriate which will cover the spectrum of jobs in each sector. In all cases, the curriculum content will be developed via a DACUM type study led by SME's (subject matter experts) drawn from businesses in each sector. Further, funding will be made available for a small business incubator program under the community college component. Sufficient funding will be allocated for the startup of at least three businesses each year. The selection will be on a competitive basis as judged by the CC business faculty and other faculty relative to the priority sector for that year.

Encouraging Investment in Belize - Given the poor history of business and job development in Belize, this party recognizes the critical importance of job creation and need for business investment in Belize to create those jobs. It is also recognized that the history and culture of Belize needs to be fully understood and protected by those who may invest in Belize from foreign countries. Since passing a law to encourage business development several years ago, very little business development with significant job creation has been accomplished and improvements need to be made in this legislation that will foster real and measurable quality job creation. It is also recognized that not all business types generate the same economic impact to Belize. It is important therefore, to promote the types of business that will allow money generated through the new business to circulate to other businesses within Belize and multiply the value and impact of the money generated to the overall economy. Partnerships between foreign investors and Belizean Nationals will be encouraged with

increased incentives offered to majority ownership of Belizean Nationals. Existing government offices will be reorganized to form a new Department of Economic Development designed to solicit investment, track and report the progress of investments and business development, and work with the GOB in creation of legislation to implement this policy. This legislation will include but not be limited to:

(a) Requirement for foreign investors and new residents to attend the UB for a course in Belize History and Culture,

(b) Improve the criteria relating to tax incentives and other inducements to encourage foreign investment in new business including the attraction of new retirement communities, medical training facilities, manufacturing and light industry, non-traditional medical facilities, and the development of unique products to be exported,

(c) Plan and provide for the development of the University of Belize Business Park in Belmopan including the provision of needed infrastructure improvements,

(d) Continue with the expansion of airport facilities including smaller airports located near business development,

(e) Plan for and improve the development of port facilities, and

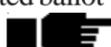
(f) Utilize the Strategic Planning process in the implementation of these strategies.

## Plank No. 6

### Support Constitutional Amendments

Whereas the Constitution of Belize has not been amended since its original institution in 1981, and Whereas the history of government operations based on this constitution indicates the need for change, and Whereas the people of Belize need a more direct voice in government through the election of government officials and also need mechanisms to make petitions to their government, and Whereas the size of government and government budgets needs to be limited to what the people want and can afford:

Elected Senate – In order to further the balance of powers and provide a more direct voice of the people in government, this party supports the proposal to provide for the "*District Election*" of senators. There shall be two elected senators from each District in Belize which will have equal voting rights and other equal responsibilities for their District. The terms of office shall be staggered and shall be for a period of 3 years. Senators elected to office may be recalled by a petition of the registered voters of the District and a special election set within 6 months of the receipt of the validated petition.

Petitions by the People – Petitions to the government of Belize for grievances and voter initiated ballot (Please Turn To Page 11) 

# No Money Deh!

From the NRP Party Office Belize  
www.nrpbelize.org

Noh money deh, means we need some more money.

It is said that money makes the world move. That's is true... if we move it is because there is money. Mr. Jones said this past February, "*Money answers all things.*" Yet it is not **the** answer for all things; even in the good country of ours, called the Jewel, of riches untold.

Have you wondered where the phrase, "*we live in a good country*" came from? You may have to go back about 8 years in our financial history and drive from Belize City to Belmopan, and look carefully at every sign. Normally, the Government would help industries and thus promote development; and then wait for their tax money to come in. Somehow we got it the other way! Most of us Belizeans are waiting expectantly that Government hire us and give us jobs and even give us contracts. If the Government runs out of money, ideas and vision, like it has happened today, many would loose their jobs, contracts, their house, furniture, even friends and family.

Come to grips. The few of us that read newspapers or have gone through experiences know that we as a country owe a large amount of money. Some may think that it is the problem of the administrator that borrowed the money, but it so happens that it is our country, the jewel, that owes the money. It is you and I who will have to pay it back. You may say I have my own bills to pay! Which is true; but what you may not realize is that every time you pay light, water, phone, tax and fuel bills, you are paying our countries debts. Also, you are paying to run Government, like the offices, fuel and labor expenses; for the police force, for hospitals, and as of late even for a private hospital.

Many have heard about our country's financial situation but have not listened carefully because we don't understand it. Therefore, reality has not hit us. At the beginning of this year we heard we could borrow Five Hundred and Sixty million to pay all our outstanding bills. We went for it through the "*Supa-bonds*"! Later we find out there are more bills in the drawer. So we make a few smaller loans. This has many guessing how much we really owe. We can speculate that it is about 2 billion now, with interest maybe over 3 billion. How much is one billion? If we have never seen one hundred thousand, much less a million, then a billion is just unimaginable. But breaking it down, a billion is one thousand times a million.

You may think, why did we borrow so much, if the tax and revenues collected pays to run the country; beside we are getting so many millions from

foreign organizations and missions as grant money. On top of all this we have sold off land properties every where (towns, cities and even islands).

A few years ago, we heard that we were financially strong and it made us feel good about our country and gave us a sense of security. But the problem is that from the time we heard that we were very strong financially and those from neighboring countries came and worked for us is something of the past. Things have changed! People went back to their countries and many Belizeans are left without jobs. What is worse is to hear that our government is broke. *Noh money deh!*

We have not heard any explanation as to what really happened. Well, really we have not asked for an explanation. What changed the story so suddenly? This is a question that should come to our minds. We should ask ourselves, what happened with so much money that came our way? Did we have it for a rainy day? Or when disaster strikes? You may ask who administers this money. Is it the National Assembly? Oh, well, is it the Minister of Finance? But it is one and the same person, the Prime Minister! Who should be held accountable for the finances? We should hold him accountable for the sake of our children and grandchildren to come. They will surely hold us accountable for not holding our government accountable.

Let us imagine. With a quarter of this money we can promote industries that will give Belizeans a job and increase in their wages. When money circulates and businesses increase, jobs and contracts also increase. This is done by investors and local entrepreneurs and producers; who in turn bring more development, so government gets more tax money. But if government raises taxes, businesses decrease.

Today, banks are not happy. About a year ago a banker commented, "*our best customers are defaulting because business is down 50% and some have even closed down.*" Our government development bank went down as well. The consequences are that many students will not be able to go to college this year because parents don't have the money to send them. Many farmers will not even plant this year. Some fear that DFC will take away their land for what they owe. Some have sold their machinery to pay off the loan, to save the land. Others are leaving the country to follow a dream in foreign lands.

The dangers of a low economy! People say "*laif haad out yah!*" This means different things to different people. A slow economy creates negative things like an increase of arguments, fights, court cases, divorces,

drugs dealings, theft, jealousy, animosity, and even murder. Many parents will have difficulties sending their children to school this year. Teachers are saying that when children come to school hungry they cannot learn. They even fall asleep in class, which is an effect of starvation. What can teachers do? They have orders to send children home if they cause too much trouble, or when they come without shoes or uniform.

The worst part of the "*haad out yah*" is that the parents are trying to stretch their "*dalla*" and trying to feed the children by buying foods at the Chinese store, the cheapest food in town, with long shelf life. The food is very low in nutrients. It fills the stomach but that's about it. White flour, white sugar, white rice, instant coffee, ideals, soft drinks are "*foods*" that have no nutritional value. If children live on this for a while, parents will later have to buy back their health with medicines and vitamins, which is very costly and it hardly solves the problem. A social worker said that many children in the Cayo area have diabetes, some even at an early age of three years old. Those sicknesses used to be for old people only, but not any more.

Most Belizeans are not aware of living conditions in some areas. They don't write to newspapers, neither do their neighbors. A PUP campaigner said, "*I did not know that there are people within one mile from my house are eating only one meal a day*". He came upon this, because he went house-to-house campaigning; but never-the-less we live in a good country.

This instant cash and suffer later attitude will not take us where we want to go. When the cash is gone, suffering settles in. Some of our best Belizean people begin here and end up in foreign countries; most of them never come back to the good country. Minister Coye said "*that is why we run short of nurses in Belize.*" Many contracts are designed so that only foreigners qualify to get them. Our schools are not designed for a student to have the skills to assure him an immediate job after graduation. Many times a Minister will not hire a contractor from his own district. This game was played by the UDP and now by PUP. When the UDP government retrenched people just before Christmas many years ago to please some foreign masters, they still did not get the money to keep the economy going, and people starved just like today.

Mismanagement and ignorance are costly. It is as if a worker sells his shoes to buy food. How will he be able to work without shoes? This is what is happening with the multi-million dollars Social Security buildings. They spend

so much money in the buildings and what about the people that put up the money to build them? No wonder if you are in an accident and you go to collect your "benefits" it is as if you did something wrong all those years you paid your money to the institution.

It seems that our government is happy with our economy. In January they were happy to negotiate the "supa-bond" which set all our bills at ease until 2029. What a relief! Then in May, they were happy that the Belize Bank had mercy over the 33 million over due bill. Then later in the same month, we hear the PM came from Taiwan. They were glad that they favored us with a loan again. In June 6<sup>th</sup>, PM came from Venezuela. He announced on Love FM that he was assured that our loan request with the CDB will go through and meet some very serious target. We learn now this is a monthly thing. The rest of us are eager to hear the rest of the story. If some crumbs will drop; if perhaps we will get a job again; or get a loan to start a business; or have the luxury to finish our house; or come to a moral level of making payments on our overdue bank loan payment bills; and for some at least pay the grocery bill.

Don't tell me we are all under an illusion syndrome. Here is one way to check it out. Most people find out where they stand by visiting their neighbor. They either come back jealous of the better things and the life they have or thank God I am not in their shoes. Today, in our country the amount of people that come out of all corners to beg for food and medical help is tremendous. Some of course have spent their last dollar to the China man and lottery. Some just ran out of job and have a family to feed. Some are too under nourished to maintain their health anymore. Some go to the hospital and hear that we run out of medicine.

Richard Merrow on Love FM made a profound statement, "*negative people are constantly looking at what others have and do; real winners have their eyes on what they are doing; but selfish and negative people cannot stand the success of others. And sometimes not even their own success. They think that the success of others is in the way of their success when it is just the opposite.*"

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Comments?  
Suggestions?  
or want to share  
your thoughts &  
photos? Email  
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# Mario Lara Reviews "Thanks For Choosing LOVE"

I picked up a copy of *"Thanks for Choosing Love"* by Rene R. Villanueva, Sr. at the airport in Belize and read it on my flight back to the US. It is a good read and I would encourage anyone interested in Belizean culture to get a copy.

Mr. Rene Villanueva, Sr. describes himself as a hard working and dedicated professional who tirelessly pursues his dreams and goals to achieve his success story in Belize. His hard work and dedication and the excellent role models he had in his parents are clearly aspects he felt were important in his life and things that we often lament are considerably lacking in Belize

## The Best Political Platform

(Continued From Page 9)

initiatives (including proposed constitutional amendments) shall be accepted by a petition of 25% or more of the registered voters of the people. District petitions shall be by District voters. National petitions shall be from voters of Belize. Upon receipt of the petition, the petition shall be validated and placed on the next respective election ballot. To make changes in the law or recall an elected Senator by voter initiated change will then require a vote of approval of 60% of the registered voters of the District or Belize depending on the type of petition.

**Voter Fraud** – Any voter found to accept payment for any public vote shall be considered to have committed a felony punishable by the loss of all future voting rights in Belize and shall pay a fine of \$1,000 BZ.

**Issuance of Public Debt** – No debt in excess of \$500,000 BZ shall be issued by the government of Belize without a vote of 9 of the 12 elected Senators.

**Tax Reform** - This party believes that the current type of taxation system in Belize to raise income for government debt and operations is unbalanced and places an undue burden on people of low and moderate income. It is also recognized that certain revenues are required to operate government in the provision of public services. This party will recommend the decrease in the current gas tax as a priority and will not increase any taxes unless first recommended by the auditor general after a full audit

of all current government income and expenses. No tax increase or decrease shall be allowed without a vote of 9

of the 12 elected Senators. Tax reform will be initiated

with the philosophy of graduated tax scales from low taxes

on the poor and increased percentage of taxation on higher incomes and higher valued property. Revenue sharing with

today. So, it is great to have his story told as an example that includes the importance of these values.

His memoir also includes other aspects of Belizean life and culture such as the role of political connections and how it often overshadows the role of hard work and dedication. Without the political connections and access he enjoyed based on knowing and meeting the right people, you get the sense that his story would have been very different. He might have given up in frustration and/or left Belize altogether (like some of his peers and other pioneers did) had he not been fortunate enough to make some key political and

local chartered Towns and Villages based on population and need shall be considered.

### Plank No. 7 Foreign Policy

Whereas it is recognized by this party that the foreign policy of Belize can have significant impact on not only Belize, but other nations of the world, and Whereas the foreign policy of Belize should reflect the majority feelings of Belizeans and is, as a sovereign nation, recognized as a bridge between Central America and Caribbean nations, and Whereas Belize desires to be a positive influence in the world:

The Prime Minister shall serve as the official voice of Belize foreign policy in dealing with other nations. The Prime Minister will confer with elected Senators, Cabinet Members, and voters prior to taking official positions before the United Nations, individual nations, or other world bodies.

Belize will honor all agreements and debts incurred by past and present Belize commitments unless found to be unlawful.

Belize will honor past commitments and enter into new mutual aid agreements for emergency aid in the relief of hurricane damage and other national disasters.

It shall be the official policy of Belize to work with other nations of the world in the control and elimination of drug trafficking, improper trafficking or forced labor of peoples, money laundering, and similar acts of crime as determined by Belize law. Law enforcement within Belize (through combining the efforts of the Police Force and the Belize Defense Force) shall give such crime a high priority in daily operations through the establishment of a special department for such crime control.

It is recognized that foreign trade is an element of foreign policy. It shall be the general policy of Belize to trade fairly with all nations which adhere to mutual international treaties and do not violate human

business connections, which he was able to skillfully leverage to his advantage. So his story also illustrates that in Belize who you know is clearly just as important, if not even more so, than what you know.

In his book, Rene Villanueva, Sr. spent a great deal of time describing the difficulties he had with a fellow by the name of Norris Hall (a PUP fanatic who tried to destroy him and in the process laid the groundwork for the ultimate destruction of the Broadcasting Corporation of Belize because he thought that Rene had switched allegiance to the UDP). We get an insider's look at the pettiness and rights according to the UN and Geneva Convention in an effort toward a free market and economic development.

It shall be the policy of this party to continue discussions and promote positive relations with Guatemala in the resolution of the historic border dispute between the two countries.

This party shall seek appropriate development using sustainable methods, whether privately, through grants and other assistance from foreign countries in the development of Belize that would be beneficial to Belize in every aspect. We will not accept or allow assistance or development which will undermine or degrade our sovereignty or natural resources.

This party recognizes the need to remain neutral to the extent possible in the international disputes between other nations. Belize will not support acts of aggression, illegal sanctions, or acts contrary to international treaties.

This party will ensure that the foreign policy of Belize will be such that Belize will become known for its unbiased integrity and advocacy for human rights in international affairs. The party shall also insure that the best interests of the Belizean people and the sovereignty of Belize will be the primary driving factor in all foreign policy.

It shall be the policy of this party to protect the historic rights and culture of Belizean peoples.

This party will re-evaluate existing treaties and participation in international organizations relative to the best interest of the Belizean people. All proposed changes in existing treaties and participation in international organizations shall be brought before the public through media, discussed in open forums, and placed before the elected Senate for majority vote (9 out of 12 minimum) prior to making changes or implementing new treaties and participation in international organizations.

### Plank No. 8 Ethics in Government

pervasiveness of politics in Belize and the lack of greatness and vision in our political leaders. We see broadcasting in Belize suffer due to the shortsighted meddling of politicians and their lackeys; but ultimately coming out okay as a result of the dedication and hard work of people like Rene and his staffers who he sometimes mentions and credits. I'm reading somewhat into what he wrote, he doesn't come right out and say it and Rene clearly has affection, respect, and admiration for the some of the political leaders he has dealt with throughout his career.

The political meddling and lack of vision continues to plague our country and that is why it is even more important for there to be hard working dedicated professionals willing to stand up and do the right thing even at great personal risk (as Mr. Villanueva has described himself to be) so that the country can continue to move forward.

All in all, I think the book is a very worthwhile read and I commend Mr. Villanueva, Sr. for expending the effort to tell not only his story, but also the story of broadcasting in Belize. Reading it on the flight back from Belize was a good cap to my one week vacation and a reminder that I better get my professional and dedicated self back in gear.

**READ  
INdependent  
Reformer  
Belize's Rebel Paper**

Whereas this party will insist upon the highest of ethical standards in the operations of government, and Whereas this party will deal honestly with the citizens of Belize, and Whereas every elected official and every government employee has a duty to report violations of ethical standards, and Whereas knowingly failing to report a violation is a violation of the Code in itself, and Whereas this party shall insure that a code of ethics will immediately be put in place with the following elements as a minimum, and Whereas failure to abide by the newly established code of ethics by any elected, appointed, or other government employee will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from elected office, appointed office, or employment with the Government of Belize at municipal, District, or national level; the following shall be the minimum standards of the "Government of Belize Code of Ethics":

**PLEASE STAY IN  
TUNE AS WE  
CONTINUE THIS  
DISCUSSION  
NEXT WEEK**

# A Journalist defying Silence In Honduras

FROM THE BBC.COM

Honduran journalist Dina Meza has won the 2007 Amnesty International Special Award for Human Rights Journalism Under Threat.

A lawyer for her online magazine Revistazo, which has investigated abuses by the country's burgeoning private security companies, was shot dead in December 2006 in a crime which remains unsolved.

Here Meza, a mother of three teenagers and a devout Christian, tells the BBC News website about the pressure she and her six fellow journalists work under, and why she refuses to give up:

*"In the Middle East, the war is obvious. We can see the physical destruction of buildings and deaths of people. But in Latin America, the war is different: it is one waged against poverty, hunger and a violence rooted in corruption which targets people who express their own ideas.*

*It is a silent war against the impunity of recent years. It is a fight for a fair society.*

*Corrupt legal systems, corrupted media and impunity for the torturers and killers of the 1980s are phenomena to be found across Latin America.*

*Journalists here only have two options: you are either for or against the oppressed.*

*If we can get into the shoes of those who are suffering, we will feel their pain and will be moved to do something.*

*My colleagues and I created Revistazo because we could not publish our stories about human rights abuses anywhere else.*

*Dina Meza (seated) at work in her office in Tegucigalpa (image: Amnesty International) We want the state to protect us properly*

*As a website, we aim to impact on decision-makers in Honduras and give the people whose interests we defend a hearing.*

*One area we have been investigating particularly is the private security companies which appeared in Honduras after the Cold War of the 1980s when our country was nicknamed the "backyard of the USA".*

*They were mainly formed by landowners and people who had violated human rights during the war, and who suddenly found themselves without the protection of the army.*

*There are more than 350 such companies in Honduras. They employ seven times more people than the whole of the national police force.*

*They are overflowing with*



Honduran journalist, Dina Meza is the winner of the 2007 Amnesty International Special Award for Human Rights

*weapons and the state has little control over them.*

*It is very easy to violate the human rights of their employees who typically have very little education and come from very small villages. They often have to work around the clock for no extra pay and without holidays.*

*They have to buy their own uniforms and can have their pay docked for no reason. They are given weapons in very poor condition and have to pay for any bullets they fire.*

*We decided to take up their case because nobody else was fighting*

*for their rights.*

*Since last year staff on the magazine have been threatened more and more.*

*We have had our telephones bugged and we and our families have been followed in the street. Threats get posted in the comments section of our website.*

*Once I got a message telling me that my teenage daughter was "very good-looking".*

*It is not easy to say who is behind this harassment. We also*

*investigate the pay of senior civil servants and we also cover the rights of workers in the fast-food industry.*

*Our lawyer, Dionisio Diaz Garcia, was murdered on 4 December.*

*All seven of us have been assigned one police bodyguard each but they are effectively only there during office hours.*

*We also have to pay for their meals and travel expenses though that should be the state's responsibility.*

*Even then, we do not know if we are really safe because the security companies have a lot of influence within the police.*

## Tell All Who You Think Should Know

BY: George & Candy Gonzalez, San Ignacio, Cayo.

Monday, 16th July 2007:

We would like to see a lot of folks COME to Court - 2:30 Wednesday, July 18th to show support for the people living downstream of the Chalillo and Mollejon Dams - our children, our families, our homes, our communities.

We are asking the Chief Justice of the Belize Supreme Court to ORDER the Department of Environment to do their job and follow the law.

The hurricane season is here. There is a plan to bring people inland if there is a hurricane warning. But what do people do if there is a dam failure?

We want protection for the people and communities who are directly and indirectly effected by the failure to put in place a dam break emergency preparedness plan, the failure to inform people about the safety of eating fish from the Macal River and if the water is safe to swim in, to drink.

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*We want the state to protect us properly and to find the murderers of our lawyer.*

*I compare the risk my family and I now run with the legacy which I would leave my children by giving up.*

*One state official privately offered me plane tickets to leave Honduras but I said I could not because I needed to continue my work.*

*He was asking me to stop our investigation of the murder because of a "clash of interests".*

*I asked what these interests were and he said he did not want to go into it and that he would give me no more information.*

*When I recently asked the same official what progress had been made to solve the murder, he got quite annoyed and told me he was going to take no further action regarding our problem.*

*When you get a reply like that from the state, all you can do is put your faith in God and go on working.*

*I compare the risk my family and I now run with the legacy which I would leave my children by giving up.*

*I would leave them a corrupt society with a lot of injustice. It is just not worth it. My children know what I do and they know the risk we run. They also trust in God and know that He is protecting us.*

*So no, I won't give up.*

Interviewed by Patrick Jackson, BBC News, London

## VACANCY

We are looking for a certified beautician to work in Dangriga Town.

For more information please call 522-2360 during normal working hours and ask for Geraldine.

## FOR SALE

One 2003 Lexus RX300 Mini SUV Reasonably priced Please call 522-2360

# Guest Gallery



**HRH Prince Charles doing inspections  
"Careful with the hands, Your Royal Highness!"**

## TOPICAL TIDBITS

We hear that a Venezuelan Foreign Minister-led delegation was in Belize for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Members of the political establishment were seen rushing off from US Ambassador's party for a special state dinner for the visiting delegation. Rumors were flying of a \$10 million USD contribution to the PUP with no formal strings attached...

\*\*\*\*\*

ScotiaBank Manager turned VP of that Canadian Bank is on a meteoric rise. Couple months ago the bank elevated him to VP now last week the Canadian Government named him Honorary Counsel for Canada to Belize. What's next for Mr. Andrews? Governor General? Godspeed, old chap.

\*\*\*\*\*

British Royal family members rarely come to Belize when the PUP is in Government. Perhaps because Mr. Price had more grace. Princess Ann was in Guatemala last week but couldn't be bothered with Belize. No wonder people ask if the Queen is still alive. Musa dislikes the Brits so much, he had them pull the BBC broadcast plug on us...yet his wife is British and his kids all have EU passports. What's Musa's point exactly? Who does he represent? Pinks Alley? Get real.

\*\*\*\*\*

Whatever happened to "Malcontents" Zetina and the various cases of the hundreds of missing passports? Someone ought to be held accountable for the wholesale disposal of our passports. Foreign authorities now look at ordinary traveling Belizeans as suspects. Where does the buck stop? Panama?

\*\*\*\*\*

We hear of all sorts of changes and appointments in the Belize Foreign Service but nothing officially released in Belize...standard operating procedure. CEO Amalia is still CEO.... for now. But Mr. Frijoles Leslie was busying himself in DC a few weeks ago with interviews. It seems all the Belize Ambassadorial Appointments now are full-fledged Assadistas. We will say nothing of the "N" word, that is, NEPOTISM, within the service.

\*\*\*\*\*

We hear the political establishment is trying to do to Zenaida what they did to Derek but Zenaida is no fool; she sees the play coming from a mile away...

\*\*\*\*\*

This latest "free school book program" is yet another temporary electioneering scheme. Under Price's PUP there was an excellent leased schoolbook program at all government schools, including the tertiary level. Somebody is kicking back somewhere along the pipeline. Come clean with this program, Francis.

\*\*\*\*\*

No DFC Commission Report? What's the hold-up, Guys? Something's being cooked and curried or what?

\*\*\*\*\*

Did you know that Guatemala has 21 registered political parties and that 65% of their population is indigenous? Yet most of the indigenous peoples of Guatemala (mostly Mayans) are de facto disenfranchised...don't vote, for whatever reason. NALEB Organization of Guatemala is trying to change this and it could prove to be another South Africa, post Apartheid, come

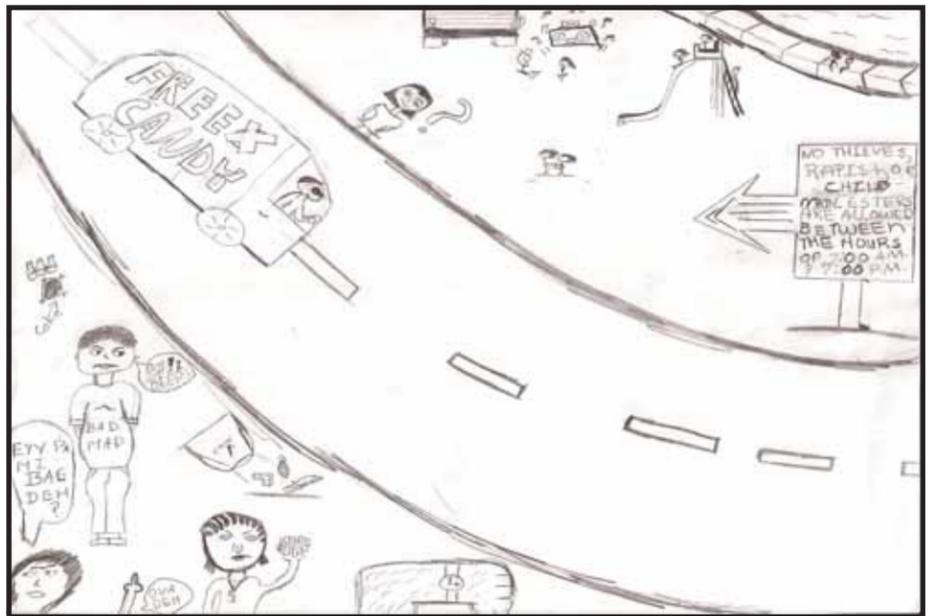


**Belize's delegation at the Language Exchange Project Workshop in Guatemala.**

Visiting Antigua, Guatemala. From left to Right: Troy Flowers, Gustavo Perera; Belize Immigration Official, Valerie Samuels; Belize City Mayor Moya; General Manager INdependent Weekly Newspaper; Trevor Vernon; CEO, Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kevin Herrera and Public Service Union Executive, Dylan Reneau.

## TEEN CARTOON

By: Julia Heusner



**OAPN PAKI**  
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**OAPN PAKI SHOW**  
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**Every Sunday morning**  
**from 10:15 a.m. to 12:00 noon**  
**With your Host**  
**ROSALIE T. STAINES**

September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Wonder who their Bishop Tutu is.

\*\*\*\*\*

If you think it's been a particularly warm year, you might be right, at least according to the new and improved Belize Telemedia

Ltd 121 service. A few nights ago after a power failure, BTL's time and date hotline recording was telling customers "the current temperature is 109 F degrees." Talk about climate change! Thank you for calling BTL.

## Citizens Group Seeking Justice

By George & Candy Gonzalez, San Ignacio, Cayo, 11 July 2007

On July 9, the Belize Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (BELPO), acting on behalf of citizens living downstream of the Chalillo and Mollejon Dams filed an action in the Supreme Court seeking to get the Court to order the Department of the Environment to do their job! The hearing on the Application has been set for July 18, 2007.

BECOL is already blasting in preparation for the construction of the Vaca Hydroelectric Dam, which will be downstream of the other two dams, on the Macal River. The group wants to see the Environmental Compliance Plan (ECP) concerning the Chalillo Dam complied with before any further work proceeds. Failing to do so seriously puts at risk the lives, property, health and safety of the people and communities downstream.

BECOL was to put in place a Dam Break Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP), a public awareness program on the plan, and a public awareness program on the water quality and safety issues related to mercury levels in the fish of the Macal River as part of their obligations spelled out in the ECP signed April 5, 2002.

The Dam Break Emergency Preparedness Plan was to be completed and in place before the Chalillo Dam started operation (in November,

## Primary School Reading Controversy

By Ray Auxillou

I read all the full page ads on the textbook program to increase reading ability and reading comprehension.

As an old person and ex-primary school teacher I can only shake my head in wonder. What nonsense the debate over reading books are today! This argument was resolved back in 1967.

Neither of the solutions presented today will work as good, if at all, as the solution we found in an experiment done over two years on Caye Caulker RC Primary School back in 1967. We had got our primary school library outfitted with donations of new books, from a bunch of doctors from an Osteopathic Hospital in Detroit.

To our dismay as teachers, we could not get children to read. It was painful to see children and adult villagers laboriously fingering the headlines on a local newspaper in the village, spelling out the words, trying to read.

What we finally decided on, was that reading had to become a pleasure. The missing link we thought was COMIC BOOKS, whether from the UK or the USA. A campaign, writing Texas High Schools out of a telephone book was done and we received donations of thousands of COMIC BOOKS from students of these schools in Texas. COMIC BOOKS were given out as prizes to the island primary school students at all grade levels. At the time, they were Donald Duck, Superman, Fantasy Four, Batman, Pluto, and many other comic books of that era. It took no time at all for primary school students and their parents at home to learn to read. TESTS on reading speed and com-

prehension found that primary school students increased eight class levels in examinations in just five short months.

We gave away comic books for being first place in class contests, for last place, for being first to school, for chopping yard, for being last to school, for smartest kid, for being class dunce and so on. Kids were hiding comic books under their desks and reading when they were supposed to be doing other classes, trading comic books and so on. It was a fun experiment. At first they just looked at the pictures, then they gradually spelled the words and learned them and the concepts. In five months the Caye Caulker primary school children were college level in reading, writing and comprehension. Then we would start reading printed books of their age group level from the unused school library, get one third of the way through a book and and stop reading it at a point of exciting suspense. The mad rush of children lining up to take out this library book to find out what happened next in the story was pandemonium.

Within the next ten years, the United Nations had announced Caye Caulker village was the richest village in all of the Caribbean and Central and South America. It still is! Of the original 90 families of then Caye Caulker, nearly all are now millionaires in assets.

BRC phonetics, or Caribbean Texts for primary schools? What nonsense! Get comic books if you really mean business. The experiments in learning to read have been done forty years ago in Caye Caulker, Belize and the conclusion is inescapable. Make reading FUN!

2005). BECOL was also required to monitor the water and the level of mercury in the fish and to make the public aware of their findings. Obviously, they have failed to do that, as well. Since it is the responsibility of the Department of Environment to monitor and make sure the ECP is complied with, their refusal to do so is unlawful. Although it is BELPO bringing the case, without an attorney, it is done so not as an organizational act but in the public interest on behalf of the people and communities who are directly and indirectly effected by the failure to enforce the ECP.

The ECP, according to the EIA Regulations, is a *"legally binding document developed by the Department of Environment . . . consisting of a set of legally binding environmental conditions, guidelines, policies and restrictions which the developer or his representative agrees to in writing to abide by as conditions for project approval"*.

Since the Department Health, the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) and the National Meteorological Service had roles to play in the enforcement of the ECP, they are listed as *"Interested Parties"* in the case.

People living downstream have heard rumors about cracks in the dam; we have

seen strange discolorization of the water and been subjected to foul odors coming from the river. We have asked the Department of Environment, the health department and other agencies for answers to our concerns about the health and safety issues related to the water and the eating of the fish. We have not gotten any answers. In fact, we have been ignored.

We previous got promises and assurances that tests on the water and fish would be done, that people would be informed and that a Dam Break Emergency Preparedness Plan would be put in place. But this has not happened.

During the recent National Emergency Awareness Week, observed from May 27 to June 2, 2007, coordinated by the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), many of us asked about planning for a dam break emergency, especially since this area (San Ignacio/Santa Elena) often doubles in size during a hurricane alert.

As to water and fish safety, the government has been misleading and BECOL has shown no concern for the people. In August 2006, the Office of Health Services released a study on the mercury levels in the fish of the Macal River that was done almost a year BEFORE the Chalillo dam went online. We need tests on the amount of methyl-mercury (which is more toxic) that is in the fish NOW. Methyl-

mercury is what is predominant in the fish in tropical dams.

The damming of the river at Chalillo would definitely increase the levels of methyl-mercury found in the fish, but we have not gotten any information about any studies done since the January, 2005 samples were taken.

There have been no meetings to inform people about the safety of eating fish from the Macal River since the Chalillo Dam began operation; there has been no information on the different kinds of mercury content in the fish or the harm that they can cause to the population since the Chalillo Dam went online. There has been no move by the Department of Environment to allay fears of the people living downstream who are concerned about the safety of the dam, even though citizens have continually raised such concerns. And, in fact, we are already into the 2007 Hurricane Season and there is no Dam Break Emergency Plan in place.

For these reasons, we believe we had no choice but to seek help from the Court. Because we have no funds or funding, we are doing this without an attorney and relying on the statements of the Court that they would like to see the legal system more *"user friendly"* and, thereby, more accessible to average citizens to seek justice from the Court and the law, even when they cannot afford an attorney.

## Workers Say Pesticides Made Them Sterile

■ (Continued From Page 3) named as defendants.

The lawsuit filed by Miller claims Dow and Amvac knew about DBCP's toxicity as early as the 1950s, and that scientists employed by Dow had noted atrophied testes in laboratory animals exposed to the pesticide.

*"Defendants, however, continued to market, sell and use pesticide products containing DBCP outside of the United States, including Nicaragua,"* the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit claims the pesticide was sprayed under tree canopies and fell in droplets onto workers and seeped into the water supply.

Plantation workers were allowed to

ingest and bathe in contaminated water when they lived in company-supplied housing on Nicaraguan banana plantations, the lawsuit said.

Dole neither warned the workers of the dangers of exposure nor tried to protect them by issuing gloves, safety glasses or masks, the lawsuit claims.

Joe Fisher, an attorney representing workers in several of the other pending lawsuits, believes the case will get widespread attention.

*"I think everyone has their eye on it to see how a jury treats it,"* he said.

If the case has *"a good result I think there's a chance it could benefit all the banana workers,"* he said.

## Letters to the Editor

■ (Continued From Page 2)

WORKS FOR THEM! This constant need for foreign exchange is a "wind fall" and a perfect vehicle for the laundry business and corruption.

Just think about it! An endless need for money flow!! A perpetual market. Hell, One could easily have their own separate hidden economy. Will a new government carry on this practice???? Again read between the lines in Moody's warning.

Devaluation would reveal the true value of our dollar in relation to our assets and liabilities. Devaluation would expose that "soft underbelly" where all them fleas and worry-ticks are hiding in

the hairs, sucking away like vampires at Belizeans life blood and sovereignty. Devaluation would make it much harder to hide financial activities even with offshore secrecy and anonymity. Devaluation could actually force our Government to come clean and be honest about our financial austerity.

The Report ended with: thus far, little has been achieved in terms of ensuring accountability, thus reinforcing the perception that poor governance could become a chronic issue in Belize," the Moody's report cautions. .... This is plain out self-explanatory!

Respectfully  
Charles Lawrence Payne

# INdependent Classifieds

**Needed:** Mountain Bike Tour Operator wanted in Cayo with equipment. **Tel: 663-5580** Cayo Adventure Tours.  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Need help** with cleaning, ironing, painting or other household chores at your Ladyville home? Then call me at **624-3652**. Reasonable rates, mature female.  
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**Free international real estate and investment blog and podcast.** Go to <http://investtheworld.blogspot.com> as we travel the world for fun, investment and profit.  
\*\*\*\*\*

**For Sale:** Home overlooking Sittee River w/1/3/acre. Info/photos at: <http://web.mac.com/nadjabblz> **609-5632** 3-5p.m. daily.  
\*\*\*\*\*

**For Sale:** Two Yamaha propellers:  
1) for a 115 Enduro (aluminum)  
2) for 200 - Stainless Steel - 19 pitch  
**ASKING BZ\$600 O.B.O**  
Call us at: **225-3520 600-1627**  
**664-1627 671-1964**

**For Rent:** A (2) bedroom flat located in King's Park, Belize City \$800/month. One commercial building (4 offices, conferece room, reception area) in King's Park \$1800.00/month.  
\*\*\*\*\*

Computers \$800/each **Call: 223-1668/602-9182.**  
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**Free Ads!** The INdependent Reformer gives you your first classified ad with us free of charge! After that only \$10 per advert per issue.

Ads must be 1) 20 words or less 2) photos must be jpeg or tiff formats only. Must be emailed, no disk pickup or drop off 3) business card - first run is free 2007, \$20 a run thereafter 4) All classified ads must be emailed to [independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com](mailto:independent.newspaper.bz@gmail.com) with cc to [kheusner@yahoo.com](mailto:kheusner@yahoo.com)

and checks to  
P.O. Box 2666,  
Belize City.

Please note: We must recieve your ad by Friday at mid-day for inclusion in the following Tuesday issue.

## FOR SALE

Industrial lot measuring 0.86 acres for sale in Belmopan, not far from the Constitution Drive, near Builders asking **\$87,500.00US** obo, residential lot measuring 92ft x 125ft in the Orchid Garden extension, Belmopan, near the US

Embassy Residence selling for **\$30,000.00US**; other commercial



land also in Belmopan Starting from **\$30,000.00US** for info please call 600-2499

## Notable Quotes

I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle.

*Winston Churchill*

Foreign aid might be defined as a transfer of money from poor people in rich countries to rich people in poor countries.

*Douglas Casey, Classmate of Bill Clinton at Georgetown University*

A liberal is someone who feels a great debt to his fellow man, which debt he proposes to pay off with your money.

*G Gordon Liddy*

Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.

*Ronald Reagan (1986)*

Giving money and power to government is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys.

*P.J. O'Rourke, Civil Libertarian*

Democracy must be something more than two wolves and a sheep voting on what to have for dinner.

*James Bovard, Civil Libertarian (1994)*

## Congratulations To The Ministry Of Education

(Continued From Front Page)

Without a substantial means of making a living the children will not sit by and starve. They will take whatever means, be it criminals if necessary, to survive.

**Advancing education through the Fourth Form will go long way toward reducing Belize's gang problem and Belize's presently increasing crime rate.**

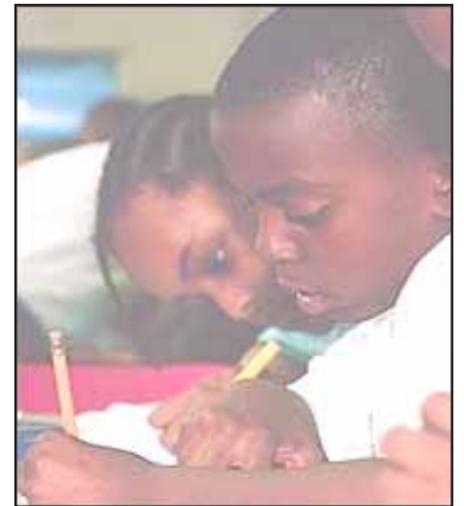
It is hoped that the Ministry will keep up the momentum and provide standardization for the First through Fourth Form. **If money is a problem, standardization could take place with one core subject at a time.** That is, each year, or when money is available, the text books of an additional core subject could be standardized.

The initial procurements of the books would be a one-time only expense. A modest rental sum would provide all future books without any additional expenditure.

Standardization could easily reduce the cost of text books to students to a small fraction of their present costs and provide for their rental. Presently, books for the First through Fourth Form can cost a student around \$200.00 a semester. The greater buying power resulting from the increased number of similar books on a subject resulting from standardization, could reduce their cost by 10% or more to \$180.00 or less a semester. With proper binding and care a book can be used for 6 semesters. This would reduce the cost of the use of books from \$200.00 to \$30.00 a semester. If the books lasted for only 3 semesters the cost of use of the same number of books would be reduced to \$60.00 a semester instead of the present \$200.00. Such a reduction would allow thousands of students to attend First though Fourth Form who could not otherwise attend as they can not otherwise afford the books.

The heads of the schools who threaten to not use the standardized books and those heads of school who are advocating a parallel list of supplementary books, could well hang their heads in shame.

Children attending secondary education classes frequently complain that they are often required to purchase books that are never used in class or otherwise referred to in their studies. Is it that there are some who claim to be holier-than-thou and are involved in education, who, on the side, profit from the procuring of books? Could that be the reason why there could never be an



agreement between so-called educators leading to the standardizing of books?

It is time for the so-called educators to show they have a conscience and assist the Ministry in promoting standardization. They all have an obligation to the children. It is their duty to assist in making standardization work.

The Union should be cautious regarding its criticism. The world is not perfect and there is frequently a resistance to change. There are those that criticize so as to be noticed. There are dissenters in every union. There are those who do not look forward to having to be oriented to a new teaching approach or appreciate its benefits and therefore find the workshop objectionable and burdensome.

In the overall picture the teachers will benefit. With standardization, when a teacher now wishes to transfer to another school the teacher will not have to be oriented to a different teaching approach as all schools now use the same books. If the complaining school Managers, Principals, Teachers and the Union really believe that there should have been a pilot program with them involved in the consultations, the door is now wide open for them. They can immediately provide for a pilot program and commence consultations regarding the standardization of books for the First through Fourth Forms.

Until the Government altered the truancy laws, the law covered children through the Fourth Form. Those who should have been participating in Secondary education who did not appear in school were truant. Therefore, education through the Fourth Form was mandatory and such education was a right of the children. Instead of complaining the complainers should start a pilot program and take the lead to bring about standardization of books utilized in Secondary education. Such a program is 25 years overdue.

**INdependent Reformer** Belize's Rebel Paper



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## GoB/MoE/QADS

**Not one of us does not support the Textbook Programme. What we do not support is your choice of books in the Infant Division. The teachers, parents, managements, BNTU and BRC have a LEGITIMATE CONCERN.**

You have taken BRC's very successful and popular learning to read series out of the schools and replaced it with Fast Phonics which you wrote and evaluated.

The Reporter Newspaper quotes Mr. Longworth:

"...in March a revision of the list of text books by primary schools was done, experts were invited to review the list and, based on a formula devised by the University of the West Indies, the Ministry made an evaluation and arrived at a list".

You consulted with experts rather than the education partners because you knew that the education partners would choose BRC. The formula devised by the University of the West Indies is no better than the persons using it. QADS used the formula to evaluate Fast Phonics that they wrote and wanted in the schools. Then, they evaluated BRC that they wanted out of the schools.

GoB, how can you accept the obviously biased and extremely optimistic opinion of QADS officials and dismiss the testimony of parents, teachers, principals and managements?

On the 10th of May, 2007, the Association of Catholic Primary School Principals met. Not one of the Principals stated that they had been consulted and almost 100% of the Principals stated that they wanted BRC books to be included in the Textbook Programme. A large majority signed a petition requesting the above.

On the 13th of June, 2007, the Catholic Local Managers met. They were not pleased that they had not been consulted and that BRC's books were not on the Textbook Programme. The local managers asked the General Manager to write the Minister of Education expressing their displeasure at not having been consulted and requesting that BRC's books be an option on the Textbook Programme. GoB, QADS believes that their Fast Phonics is going to be extremely successful. They believe that children will be able to read anything put in front of them after one year of Fast Phonics.

GoB, talk to teachers. The English speaking world is struggling in its effort to teach privileged children how to read in two or three years and QADS believes that they can teach non-privileged children how to read in one year. GoB, our children and all of us will pay the price if you are wrong. The decision is yours, not QADS.

GoB, even after your presentation, parents, teachers, principals and managements are not happy. If your "experts" are wrong and Fast Phonics is not as good as BRC's Reading, you are going to have some very angry people.

GoB, why are you going to risk the anger of the parents and teachers on the opinions of QADS? If Fast Phonics and the New Caribbean Readers do not help children learn to read as well as BRC's Reading, you have much to lose.

Your statement that "parents should not purchase books for core subject areas," meaning BRC's books, is an effort to get BRC's successful books out of schools. Why? Why are you willing to go against the wishes of a majority of parents, teachers, principals and managements?

Parents care about their education. If the children of parents who can afford to purchase books are not learning as well as in the past, they will be really angry when the school tells them that GoB would not even allow them to ask parents to purchase BRC books

Most schools which serve the needy have been using BRC's books. Many parents made great sacrifices and bought the books because they believe in education for their children. Free books that do not help their children learn are not going to make them happy.

Even at this late date, you could listen to the cries of the people and everyone but a few MoE/QADS personnel would be happy. You would accomplish everything you set out to do with your Textbook Programme unless getting BRC's books out of schools is part of your plan.

**To whom can teachers and parents turn if your technocrats are wrong?**

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