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TUESDAY - MARCH 17TH, 2020

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Atlantis Gives Workers Option

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMSON
Journal Staff Writer

Atlantis asked its employees to take earned vacation days or volunteer to take unpaid leave as the resort seeks to protect staff and manage the impact of the global coronavirus (COVID-19).

In a letter written to employees on Monday, Atlantis Human Resources Senior Vice President Karen Carey said, "While our efforts



Effective immediately, Atlantis asked employees to take earned vacation days or volunteer to take two weeks unpaid leave as the resort shoulders the burden of the impact of COVID-19.

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Carnival Postponed

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMSON
Journal Staff Writer

Bahamas Carnival 2020 has been postponed until a later date as a result of the confirmed case of COVID-19 in The Bahamas.

"As the world continues to grapple with the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus, we have

taken the advice of Ministry of Health officials and the prime minister and postponed the event," Bahamas Carnival Experience announced in a statement yesterday.

"As The Bahamas Public Parks and Beaches Authority has also sus-

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WSC Suspends Water Disconnection

CHERIKA JOHNSON
Journal Staff Writer

Water and Sewerage Corporation (WSC) Executive Chairman Adrian Gibson has stopped the disconnection exercise of water supply, citing the importance of water in combating the coronavirus.

Gibson said people



WSC Chairman Adrian Gibson

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Eight Persons Quarantined

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMSON
Journal Staff Writer

Eight persons are in quarantine after possible exposure to the coronavirus (COVID-19), according to the Ministry of Health.

The number of quarantined persons increased

after The Bahamas reported its first case of the coronavirus on Sunday.

A 61-year-old Bahamian woman tested positive for the disease and according to health officials, the woman has

See page 6...

DPM MEETS WITH ECONOMISTS TO DISCUSS COVID-19



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Peter Turnquest meeting with economists and a range of stakeholders from the private sector on Monday to discuss "Recommendations for Mitigating the Economic Fallout of COVID-19." (Photo/Ministry of Finance)

PLP Accepts PM's Invitation to Monitor COVID-19

BY LAURENCIA I.A. SMITH
Journal Staff Writer

Progressive Liberal Party COVID-19 Taskforce Chairman Senator Dr. Michael Darville said the PLP accepts the prime minister's invitation to monitor the government's efforts to address the impact of the coronavirus on The Bahamas.

"The Progressive Liberal Party welcomes the statement by the prime minister outlining the government's response to the COVID-19 virus emergency. Matters are clearly now at a critical stage as the first case has been confirmed without a recent

See page 8...




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Wilson Awaits Plans for Educating Students at Home

CHERIKA JOHNSON
Journal Staff Writer

Bahamas Union of Teachers (BUT) President Belinda Wilson said she awaits the plan from the Ministry of Education (MOE) for the use of instructional time for students, as schools close and children remain at home over public health concerns of the coronavirus. "I am awaiting further

information from the Ministry of Education as to the use of instructional time, using technology. So, I will get back to teachers once I get the plan from the MOE on how we can continue instructions for our students during this month while we're at home," Wilson said.

Wilson said as the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education and Bahamas

Junior Certificate examinations approach, she also awaits information on the plan forward for the national exams.

On Sunday, the Ministry of Education officially announced closure of all public and private schools until April 14, following one positive case of covid-19 in the capital.

Wilson admonished teachers to follow precautionary measures and

follow the tips that her union has issued to teachers to remain safe.

Ministry officials said they are guided by the need to exercise vigilance.

Minister of Education Jeffrey Lloyd promised to give additional details on virtual schooling, upcoming examinations and lunch programs in the House of Assembly on Wednesday.



▶ BUT President Belinda Wilson

Teen Charged with One-Year-Old's Death

TYLER SYMONETTE
Journal Staff Writer

A 17-year-old male and a 22-year-old female were arraigned

on Monday in the Magistrate's Court for the unlawful death of the female's one-year-old child.

Guetly St. Fleur, 22,

was charged with child neglect, while the 17-year-old male was charged with manslaughter.

The crime allegedly

took place in Exuma on March 9, 2020.

The two defendants were not required to enter a plea.

St. Fleur is expected

to return to court today at 11 a.m. for a bail hearing.

The 17-year-old male is currently in the

process of applying for emergency bail and will return on to court on May 21 for a voluntary bill of indictment.

16 March 2020 - 11:53 am

WORLDWIDE	THE BAHAMAS
CONFIRMED CASES 174,995	CONFIRMED, SUSPECTED & RECORDED 1
RECOVERED CASES 77,658	CURRENT QUARANTINED PERSONS 8
DEATHS 6,706	RELEASED FROM QUARANTINE 30

*Source: Johns Hopkins University Live Coronavirus Dashboard

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GOVERNMENT NOTICE
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the general public that the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas will commence the salvage and demolition of the Clarence A. Bain building, located **University Drive (Old Thompson Boulevard) & Moss Road** beginning **2ND FEBRUARY, 2020** through to **2ND JUNE, 2020** during the hours of **9:00AM to 5:00PM**.

Members of the public are advised to cautiously traverse the area during demolition hours.

Should you have any questions or concerns, kindly submit the same in writing to the Superintending Officer, Director of Public Works, P.O. Box N-8156, Nassau, N.P., The Bahamas.

The public's cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated.

Signed

Carla Bain-Colebrooke
Carla Bain-Colebrooke (Mrs.)
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Public Works

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WSC Suspends Disconnection

Continued from / PAGE 1...

should not be without fresh water at this time.

"As such last Friday, I directed the immediate cessation of all intended or proposed disconnection exercise. This decision is to safe guard the health of the general public," he said.

"No WSC staff member is authorized to disconnect any home or

building at this time. All disconnection is halted until further notice. I have further directed that any and all related public announcement, publications, announcement or internal work orders relating to disconnections be cancelled immediately."

Gibson said no vacation will be granted and WSC employees on vacation will be recalled.

This, among other initiatives, will be taken to combat the threat of the virus, he said.

"An isolation area is being built with an industrial nurse to refer persons to medical care. She is also in direct contact with the Ministry of Health making arrangements for staff with all medical facilities. Standard protocols are in place," Gibson

explained.

"Hand washing stations will be installed throughout the corporation. Four wash stations were rented recently. We expect delivery of them shortly.

"WSC will be outsourcing two infrared thermometers for the industrial nurse to check staff as needed. All planned WSC vacation is cancelled. No applica-

tion for vacation will be signed off during this period."

Gibson added that WSC staff should practice social distancing and use hand sanitizers.

He said that in-house training that requires large groupings will be postponed and cashiers are mandated to wash and sanitize hands after the use of money.

Gibson said boxes

containing cleaning supplies are being shipped to WSC in the Family Islands.

The box contains Clorox spray, alcohol, wipes, Lysol spray, surface cleaners, sanitizers, gloves and limited face masks.

Gibson said WSC had distributed information sheets about the virus over the last two weeks.

Historic RBDF Reception and Silent Art Auction

An historical milestone in the history of the Royal Bahamas Defence Force was observed. For the first time, the Officers and Marines participated in a Cocktail Reception and Silent Art Auction on Friday past at the Defence Force's Coral Harbour Base.

As the force celebrates 40 years under the theme "Beyond the Horizon,

into the Future," a large crowd was in attendance to view an array of over 30 arts and paintings. These were on display for persons wishing to purchase them, which were carefully done by the men and women of the force, as well as by RBDF Veterans, Rangers, persons within the community and also from the students at The

Bahamas Association for the Physically Disabled (BAPD). Part proceeds from the event, which is one of several that is planned in observance of the organization's anniversary celebrations, will benefit The Bahamas Association for the Physically Disabled.

In attendance were the Minister of National Security, the Honorable

Marvin Dames and the Acting Commander Defence Force, Captain Raymond King. In his brief remarks, Minister Dames commended Captain King along with his Executive Team and the Officers and Marines for the awesome showing.

"What you are doing here this evening speaks volumes. And it certainly

sets the tone for what all law enforcement agencies ought to be doing," said Minister Dames. You and your executive team and members of the planning committee ought to feel proud of what you have accomplished here today. I hope that this is the beginning of what is to come."

The Acting Commander Defence

Force also commended Lieutenant Floyd Moxey, Chairperson of the event along with his committee team members for making the night a success. He noted that along with performing its normal duties of protecting the territorial integrity of The Bahamas, the organization is also about giving back to the community.




► Petty Officer Mary Sweeting and Leading Woman Marine Stacey Ferguson viewing an art piece. (RBDF Photos by Marine Seamen Michael Turner II and Wellington Ramsey)



► The Minister of National Security, the Honorable Marvin Dames and Mrs. Dames and their daughter Kai; the Acting Commander Defence Force, Captain Raymond King and Mrs. King.



► From L-R: Petty Officers Charles Edgecombe, Mary Sweeting and Antoine Adams, and Lieutenant Commander Natasha Miller at the RBDF Cocktail Reception and Silent Art Auction on March 13 at the Defence Force Base.



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Public Service Announcement
Resident Return Quarantine

On 30th January, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

Currently, The Bahamas has no suspected, reported or confirmed cases of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus. Moreover, the Ministry of Health is closely following the global development of this virus.

In view of the implemented border control and quarantine measures for travelers to The Bahamas, as a component of its 2019 nCoV Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan, the Ministry of Health advises the public that **residents returning to The Bahamas who have a history of travel to China within 20 days of commencing travel, WILL be quarantined on arrival in The Bahamas for up to fourteen (14) days.**

During this quarantine period, persons will be monitored for the development of symptoms. Additionally, contact with non-health personnel, such as families and friends will not be permitted.

The Ministry of Health requests the understanding and support of the general public during this time to ensure the protection and well-being of all our residents and visitors. These public health measures are being taken to minimize the risk of introduction of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, and to protect the health of the population.

2nd February, 2020

GOT NEWS?

Please call The Bahama Journal's News TIP LINE at 356-7254 and let us know!

Atlantis Gives Workers Option

Continued from / PAGE 1...

continue and we work on this together, it is essential and important for us to make changes and take further steps to help us all manage through this as situations evolve. To this end, we are asking team members to take earned vacation days or volunteer to take two weeks unpaid leave of absence effective immediately.

"We encourage you to speak with your manager

today and confirm your dates.

"We want you to feel absolutely confident that we are doing our best to shoulder the burden of our operations to secure our future and to lessen the burden that this situation imposes on you."

Over the years, Carey said Atlantis has continually demonstrated its enduring values regarding the safety, satisfaction and well-being of its guests and team members

and in this current climate, where COVID-19 is impacting everyone globally, it is no different for us.

"We are all in this together so, let's continue to be resolute and strong. We remain optimistic that we can count on your support and cooperation at this critical time. We will get through this!" she said.

The first case of the coronavirus was confirmed in The Bahamas

on Sunday after a 61-year-old woman tested positive for the disease.

During his national address on Sunday, Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis said the coronavirus crisis will have a growing adverse impact on confidence, travel, and supply chains across the globe.

"This will affect Bahamian workers and businesses and will have an impact on the poorer and more vulnerable in

our country," Dr. Minnis said.

He added that no sector is more at risk than travel.

"This crisis will have a tremendous and widespread economic impact," Dr. Minnis explained.

"Tourism accounts for an estimated 50 percent of our gross domestic product, just under 50 percent of direct employment, and has a cascading impact across the broader economy.

"Another important fact is that over 80 percent of our stopover visitors are from the United States, which is reporting increasing cases of the virus and 75 percent of our visitors come by cruise ships, which are suspending cruises.

"All of these developments signal to us the huge exposure our economy faces from the spread of the virus, which has already begun to show up."



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

CORONAVIRUS

Editor:

Just some words of encouragement to persons who may be a little bewildered because of the situation we now face. I think we could turn this coronavirus setback" into something positive. When we were advised to stay away from crowds and we would be "homebound" more or less for the next four weeks at least, my daughter and I sat down last night and mapped out a schedule as to how we would work smart over the next four weeks. We have not been home like this together ever. We would exercise each morning then we would improve our surroundings on a daily basis. We would deep clean, paint, beautify every room then we would improve our yard/garden etc. We would once again start practicing our musical instruments; she the saxophone and I the piano.

So early this morning we went for a jog/run/walk as soon as it was daylight. When we returned we prepared breakfast. Then we cleaned one room from the ceiling fan to the floor, moving around all the furniture. We then had lunch and took a rest. Later we will practice our musical instruments do some reading, computer etc. and enjoy the evening.

Mr. Jones it may seem ambitious but we are determined to follow the health instructions and still be as active as possible. We will not get bored at home.

Maybe employers can make this time vacation time for their employees and when this is over our country could be further ahead.

I hope I can inspire someone that there is much we can accomplish and help ourselves and our country during this time.

Wendall Jones
Art Exhibition

Editor:

Many of us know Wendall Jones is a draftsman, journalist, entrepreneur, media magnate and social commentator. Through his art exhibition at the Central Bank, we see him as an artist.

Wendall is not a formally trained artist. He has God given talent. The works displayed show an impressionistic style, conveying mood through the interplay between light and color. That someone not formally trained paints in an impressionistic style suggests that person has tremendous courage. Impressionism conveys mood. The artist lays bare his emotions for public scrutiny. These paintings also convey a courageous man because, as anyone who has tried to paint knows, putting colour on top of another colour and next to a colour requires technical knowledge and skill. Paint does what it must. It is not respecter of people. The canvas, sometimes mercilessly, reveals all. Also, the use of the paint brushes, the thickness and quality of the strokes, to capture mood or essence requires skill. Wendall has obviously spent hours mastering these skills. This is no surprise because throughout his life, Wendall has shown discipline and determination to master any arena into which he entered.

I think that the paintings capture the essence of The Bahamas and Bahamians, people whose indomitable free spirit cannot be caged. In them I saw sunrise and sunset colors; various shades of our ocean; and the plethora of colors of our flora and fauna. I recall someone saying that impressionist art is like wine – a matter of taste. It's wonderful to have with others a discussion about how a painting makes you feel or what you see in the painting. These paintings evoke lively discussion.

I loved the works that were painted as a triptych but not displayed as such. Although I saw women dancing in celebration, others may have



Allyson Maynard-Gibson, QC

seen something else. The colors used made me wonder whether the woman/women were on a journey or whether they epitomized the progression of women over time. The artist, maybe wisely, won't say what he was feeling. Also, I thought that it was a good idea that they were painted so that they could stand alone, or as a triptych.

This first exhibition, at the Central Bank, a premier space to display Bahamian art, is a reason to celebrate Bahamians. My Grandmother, the late Meta Davis Cumberbatch, called the Mother of the Arts in The Bahamas, spoke unceasingly about the tremendous artistic talent and cultural richness of Bahamian people and The Bahamas. We are gifted people, filled with artistic talent and cultural richness. Wendall's exhibition of paintings that can hang in any collection alongside acclaimed Bahamian and international art is more evidence of this fact.

Wendall for decades has found ways, including through books and "the Person of the Year" to honour, celebrate and acknowledge Bahamians. Is it now time for The Bahamas to honour him – a Renaissance Man?

Sincerely,
Allyson Gibson

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Wendall K. Jones
Publisher/Chief Executive Officer

Kimalely P. Jones
Vice President/Operations

E D I T O R I A L

The Level Of Anxiety

This is a difficult time for the Bahamas. The country seems to be falling in a deep economic hole. There is no doubt that governments around the world are hard pressed in dealing with the current health and economic crisis caused by the spread of the Coronavirus that is sweeping the world. Most countries are closing their borders and have put in place stringent measures to contain the virus or to mitigate against the damage that is being caused to local economies.

In the Bahamas we have to prepare for the fallout that is sure to come in the next few weeks and months when the full brunt of the crisis is felt. We are hoping that on Wednesday of this week Cabinet Ministers will allay the fears of Bahamians that we are not able to come out of this crisis whole and that we can dig ourselves out of the economic hole and remain highly competitive in tourism.

The Cayman Islands is now a major competitor to the Bahamas in financial services.

The following is how the Premier of that British Colony announced measures to deal with COVID 19: "The events of the last few days, with the confirmation of the first COVID 19 infected person, combined with his subsequent death and the impact on Health City Cayman Islands has understandably created much concern in our community.

A concern that I am sure has been heightened by the images that we see on our TV screens and on social media of what is playing out in Italy and elsewhere. A concern that similar scenes could play out here at home.

Let me say two things. I am concerned as well. But we should not panic. I say this because I, as Premier, and the entire Government, have been focusing on this for weeks. Our health professionals have also been focusing on this. And we will continue to focus and take the best advice available and to then make the decisions that we believe are in the best interest of all of the community.

Whilst the Government and health professionals play our part each person living here also has a part to play to help keep the community as safe as we can. Dr. Lee will, I am sure, remind us again when he speaks about social distancing and hygiene.

But I do want you to know that we are, I am, taking the march of COVID 19 through the Caribbean very seriously. The primary role of Government is to protect the health, safety and well-being of its people. I, along with my Government take this role very seriously. This has been at the forefront of everything that we have done over the past two terms.

And this is why we took the decisions that we did on Friday last to ban cruise-ships for 60 days and to close educational facilities; cancel the final day of the inter-primary sports day; and to implement a ban of on no more than 50 persons at places other than supermarkets, medical facilities, pharmacies. This excludes staff at their places of work - though if at all possible we encourage businesses to allow those staff who can work from home to do so.

We also added several at-risk countries to the list of banned countries. But as I indicated on Friday there were other measures being considered to help protect and safeguard our Islands. It is important that while we as a country seek to minimise the possibilities of local transmission that we do all we can to ensure that we prevent new infections

reaching our shores.

So today I am announcing that the Cabinet has approved the following:

1. To close the Owen Roberts International Airport and the Charles Kirkconnell International Airport for international passenger flights for a temporary period of three weeks, beginning Sunday, 22 March, 2020, at 11:59 pm until Sunday, 12 April, 2020, at 11:59 pm

2. For all destinations except for the United Kingdom, inbound flights from Thursday, 19 March, 2020, will operate for returning residents only.

3. Outbound flights will operate as usual through Sunday, 22 March 2020.

4. With immediate effect, any person arriving in the Cayman Islands will be required to be isolated for 14 days.

5. Inter-Island flights will continue; however, flights from Grand Cayman into Cayman Brac and Little Cayman will be restricted to residents and essential persons, for example, medical staff, etc. This because, as we all know, Cayman Brac has a significant elderly population and we want to ensure that they are protected.

6. Cargo flights, as well as courier flights, will continue as will be emergency medical air- ambulance flights needed to take residents overseas for medical treatment.

We have not taken this decision lightly, but it is in the best interest and for the health of the people of the Cayman Islands. As a premier vacation destination of choice, this decision will help ensure that the Cayman Islands will be able to not only protect our people but to also protect the welfare of our tourism business and our guests over the long term.

We should always remember that because we have our own airline, Cayman Airways, we can maintain our air links as necessary. There are also options being pursued by the Governor, for which I thank him, to ensure that there is an 'air-bridge' maintained between the UK and its Overseas Territories during this period. We will advise more on this once details are confirmed.

I can also state that the decision, including the timing, was not made in isolation. Since Friday and over the weekend the Government has held meetings with key segments of our economy and more are planned. These include the banks, water companies, telecoms companies, Caribbean Utilities, the Chamber of Commerce, the supermarkets and main food and goods importers, the financial services sector, the tourism sector, and doctors representing the Cayman Islands Medical and Dental Society. Conversations were wide ranging and encouraging. I am satisfied that everyone is taking this threat seriously and everyone supported the measures being taken by Government.

From what was said they all have plans to protect their staff and to keep their key businesses running. This is important to ensure that we maintain the services that a modern society requires.

I was also heartened by what I heard with regards to a willingness to assist those persons who will be hit hard by the economic reality that we are facing. The ban on cruise ships automatically means that several thousand people working in this industry will be impacted.

In discussions with the banks, they have all agreed to work individually with clients with mortgages and loans who are

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Carnival Postponed

Continued from / PAGE 1...

ended both existing permits for organized public gatherings and the issuance of any further permits, our team has

decided to err on the side of caution for the wellbeing of everyone interested in participating in this year's Bahamas Carnival Experience."

Bahamas Carnival

Band Owners Association President Rafel Dean explained that the move is one supported by mas bands as their main priority as well is the health and

safety of their supporters.

"This is obviously something the world is watching and everyone is concerned," Dean said.

"With travel bans being put in place and

governments on high alert, we think it's imperative that we put the health of our supporters and Bahamians, in general, first. The band leaders have agreed to this

change and assure our supporters that we will accommodate any questions or concerns. The Bahamas Carnival Experience will still be a great one."

Eight Persons Quarantined

Continued from / PAGE 1...

no history of traveling outside the country within the last 20 days.

She is receiving care in a designated isolated area at the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH).

During a press conference on Sunday, health officials said the patient's family and social contacts are currently being investigated to establish the source of her infection.

Health officials also explained that the patient went to PMH after showing signs of a respiratory issue. She was then tested following morning and early Sunday morning her test was confirmed positive for COVID-19.

A total of 30 person have been released from quarantine, according to the Ministry of Health.

Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis advised during his national

address on Sunday that all Bahamian nationals and residents returning to The Bahamas through any point of entry from any of the restricted countries or an area where community infection and spread is present will be quarantined or be placed under self-isolation upon arrival and are expected to follow the protocols of the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Minnis also advised that Bahamian nationals

or residents returning to The Bahamas who have been abroad and believe that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 are asked to contact the Ministry of Health's hotline or their local health provider.

"Non-essential travel by Bahamian nationals and residents and other countries is highly discouraged," Dr. Minnis said.

"Let me repeat this. If

you do not need to travel overseas at this time, I highly urge you to remain at home.

Dr. Minnis also reminded Bahamians of some the symptoms of COVID-19.

"Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties," he said.

"In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respi-

ratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

"Most people who contract this virus will fully recover. But there are a number of people who are particularly vulnerable, including the elderly and those with chronic diseases, such as hypertension and diabetes, and those with compromised immune systems.

"We do not know how long this crisis will be with us."

Bahamas Customs Celebrates 106th Anniversary in Church Service



The Bahamas Customs and Excise Department celebrates 106th Anniversary with a church service on March 15 at Bible Truth Ministries. Comptroller Dr. Geannine Moss delivered remarks on behalf of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance the Hon. Peter Turnquest and the Bahamas Customs Choir rendered a selection. (BIS Photos/Patrick Hanna)

Bubbles, zero calories



DASANI SPARKLING