



**Rodriguez  
Completes  
Move  
To Detroit  
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Education Commissioner Sarah Wescott-Williams (left) cuts the ribbon marking the start of St. Maarten Institute of Technology and Hospitality (SMITH) at Sundial School Monday, while Interim Head of the Education Department Linda Richardson (second left), Wycliffe Smith, Director of Social Welfare Affairs Stanley Hodge and SMITH Project Manager Paul Riviere look on.

## SMITH launched, initiative lauded

PHILIPSBURG—St. Maarten Institute of Technology and Hospitality (SMITH) was launched Monday with stakeholders underscoring its importance in equipping young people with the necessary skills to function effectively in the job market.

Classes for the institute officially started Monday at the PSVE section of St. Maarten Academy and

at Sundial School, after close to a year of official planning.

Education Commissioner Sarah Wescott-Williams said government had taken steps to obtain a plot of land located at Cay Hill to erect a permanent facility for the institute, while an application for a property adjacent to St. Maarten Vocational Training School in South Reward had been made "for expansion purposes."

The efforts to put together SMITH were lauded by stakeholders attending the launching cer-

**Continued on page 6**

## National Alliance joins Louisa-Godett cabinet

—Gibson, Lynch to be sworn in today—

PHILIPSBURG—National Alliance signed a coalition agreement on Monday, confirming its participation in the Louisa-Godett cabinet. Attorney-at-law and businessman Richard Gibson will become Minister of Constitutional and Interior Affairs and Edgar Lynch State Secretary of Justice. They will be sworn in today. Tuesday.

National Alliance Leader Senator William Marlin confirmed Monday afternoon that he had signed a new accord with five other parties - FOL, PLKP, PNP, DP-Bonaire and DP-Statia - to broaden the base of the FOL-led coalition that can now enjoy a majority of 13 seats in Parliament.

National Alliance was the first party to sign at Fort Amsterdam, the headquarters of the Central Government. PNP and its new leader Finance Minister Ersilia de Lannooy was the second one to

sign, said Marlin. "It was my first signature as part of the federal coalition," he told The Daily Herald shortly after signing.

"It is now a fact that the National Alliance is part of the new Central Government," he said, announcing that Gibson was the candidate for the minister post and Lynch for the state secretary position.

Both Gibson and Lynch have already passed the usual screening process and will be taking their oaths at the palace of the Governor of the Netherlands Antilles this afternoon at 4:00pm.

Also taking the oath will be the DP-Bonaire candidates Oleana as

**Continued on page 3**



"Skippy" holding up the boa constrictor found on the Sucker Garden lot. A boa constrictor approximately 4.5 feet long was discovered when a lot on Sucker Garden Road was being cleared by a front-end loader around 2:30pm yesterday. The reptile was found under a pile of dirt as it was being moved by the loader. Unfortunately, the boa was slightly injured by one of the teeth of the loader. The snake was taken by John Halley to the Animal Health Centre for treatment. Halley intends to keep the snake as a pet. Boas, native to the tropical forests of Central and South America, are closely related to the python. The boa constrictor is pale sandy brown with 15 to 20 chocolate brown marks on its back and normally grows to a length of 10 feet. The largest boa constrictor ever caught was 18.5 feet long.

### IN BRIEF

#### Marigot INFANT MORTALITY

Figures released by the health department of the General Council (DASD) indicate that the infant mortality rate in French St. Martin has been more than triple the national average in the last three years. Page 7.

#### Phillipsburg COMMISSIONERS DRAFT PLANS

If the College of Commissioners of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba police forces has its way, past regulations such as junior officers saluting senior officers and senior government officials will be reinstated. Page 3.

#### Phillipsburg CABINET BUDGET

The Cabinet of the Lt. Governor will have its own budget in the near future. The current cost of the cabinet is NAF. 853,348, not NAF. 2 million as was stated in questions pertaining the draft 2004 budget of the Island Government. Page 6.

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THE DAILY HERALD

ST. MAARTEN

Telephone  
5425253/5425597/  
5420931/5437236  
FAX 5425913

E-Mail:

theherald@stmaarten.net  
advertising@thedailyherald.com  
angilla@thedailyherald.com  
ANGILLA/3138 fax 8707  
SABA  
4162381 (sales)  
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# On the inside

News that National Alliance had joined the FOL-led Central Government after all arrived at about the same time as word that a solution might be in the works for the debt of St. Maarten Medical Center to the Federal Receiver, the last major hurdle in preventing the bankruptcy of the hospital.

While the two are not directly related, a breakthrough in the deadlock between Willemstad and Philipsburg on the medical center could make the participation of the party led by William Marlin in the Central Government a lot more acceptable to many. National Alliance had wanted, but did not get, a State Secretary of Public Health, primarily to solve the hospital crisis. It now appears such a position may not be necessary to attain that goal. But, if agreement is indeed reached, credit for removing this crucial obstacle to a better future for the hospital goes in the first place to the institution's management and board, who fought hard to make a payment arrangement the hospital could carry without again running into financial problems. It appears the suggested two-year grace period previously rejected by the Central Government is now acceptable, be it under a number of conditions.

Lt. Governor Franklin Richards reportedly played a crucial role in brokering the final deal with Minister of Finance Ersilia "Zus" de Lannoy. This newspaper already suggested on December 11, in an editorial called "This can't be the end," that a compromise on the grace period and payment term should be possible, considering the crucial role of the hospital, not just for St. Maarten, but for the Windward Islands as a whole.

Concerning the decision of National Alliance to support the Louisa-Godett Cabinet after all, opinions will again vary. The party now says it never fought over GEBE as reported and believes it is better for St. Maarten to be on the inside than on the outside looking in. Its proposed Minister of Internal and Constitutional Affairs in any case has been very vocal about the island's constitutional quest. He will now have the chance to prove himself.

## WEATHER

Today: Partly cloudy, occasionally mostly cloudy.

Winds: Easterly, 8 to 14 miles per hour, with possible gusts to 20 miles per hour.

Sea conditions: Moderate to choppy.

Wind force: 2 to 4, occasionally 5.

Waves: 2 to 5 feet.

Swells: Southern coastal and open waters, Southwest, 2 to 4 feet. Elsewhere, North to Northwest, 2 to 5 feet.

Occupants of small craft should continue exercise caution because of locally rough seas on our North and East facing shores. Barometric pressure: Above normal. Barometric tendency: Falling slightly. Forecast high: 29°C 84°F. Forecast low: 23°C 73°F

**SYNOPSIS:** A weak Atlantic high pressure system continues to generate a gentle to moderate Easterly air flow over the Northeastern Caribbean. A few areas of patchy cloudiness located to the East of our region on Monday were moving Westward. Some of these clouds will generate a few isolated, possibly widely scattered showers. Otherwise, swells will continue to move into our local waters from the North, causing locally rough seas, especially along our North facing shores. Boaters and swimmers should therefore continue exercise caution because of locally rough seas.

**HAZARDOUS WEATHER OUTLOOK:** None.

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** None.

Outlook until Wednesday midday: Generally partly cloudy.

Rainfall probability: 30 percent or less.

Rainfall potential: 1 to 2 mm, locally more.

Sunrise: 6:44am; Sunset: 6:07pm.

## SMART PLAY SXM DAILY NUMBERS CURAÇAO

### Winning Numbers Robbie's Lottery

## CRUISE SHIPS IN PORT TODAY

Vessel	Place	Arrival	Departure	Agent
Norwegian Sky	Pier 8/10	17:30	S.E.L. Maduro & Sons	

## ST. MAARTEN

**POLICE STATION**  
Philipsburg tel. 542-2222  
**HOT LINE 108**  
**EMERGENCY 111**  
**FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
tel. 542-6001 or 120  
**HOSPITAL**  
Medical Center, Cay Hill  
24-hour Emergency Service  
tel. 543-1111  
**AMBULANCE**  
Philipsburg tel. 542-2111  
Red Cross Building 545-5263  
**MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**  
For medical emergencies the doctors on call can be reached outside office hours: Patients of Dr. Bouman, Dr. Bryan, Dr. Bus, Dr. Hermannes, Dr. Krol, Dr. Mercier, Dr. Schiffers and Dr. Spencer, please call tel. 577010. Patients of Dr. Daniels, Dr. Fokken, Dr. Horles, Dr. van Ouch and Dr. Tjalling, please call tel. 577007. Patients of Dr. van der Waag, please call 570444. Patients of Dr. Audejief, Dr. Dennauw and Dr. Gumbs should contact their own doctor.  
**ANIMAL AMBULANCE TEAM**  
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543-TIPS(4777)  
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**ST. MAARTEN TOURIST OFFICE**  
W.G. Buncamper road, Vinoyard  
Building, tel. 542-2337, fax 542-2734  
**ST. MAARTEN ZOO**  
Madame Estate, tel. 543-2030  
Open daily 10 am - 6 pm  
October-March 9 am - 5 pm  
Admission residents: Adults: \$5, kids \$3. Non-residents: \$10/85.  
**Curacao Bay Community Council:** meeting 1st Thursday of month at Sun Flower Kinder Garden School, Union Rd. Curacao Bay at 7:30pm  
**SERVICE CLUBS**  
**ROTARY** meeting at Old Little Bay Beach Resort every Wednesday at 10 am. Rotary/MidIsle-meets every Tuesday 6-8pm. The Dull Surf & Turf Restaurant, Maho Plaza 2nd level.  
**LIONS** meeting at the Upper Princess Quarter Community Centre Lions Den in Sucker Garden every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 8 pm.  
**ST. MAARTEN Leo Club** meeting at Jubilee Library 1st, 3rd Friday every

month at 6:30 pm.

**KIWANIS** meets at Wilid Building on Thursday each month at 7:30pm.

**Kiwanis Key Club** of the St. Maarten Academy meeting at the St. Maarten Academy every Friday at 1:30 pm.

**JAYCEES** meeting at the WIFOL Building every last Thursday of the month 8 p.m.

**ST. MARTIN MUSEUM**

Frontier 1, Philipsburg, tel. 542-4917

Opening hours from March 1st:

Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday, 10 a.m. - 12 noon

Sundays closed.

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 4-7pm, Red Cross Building.

Airport Road, Saturday and Sunday at Mullet Bay beach next to restaurant 6:30-9:20am. Tel. 5571271 (ext. 544-3203 (evening)).

**AIDS COORDINATOR** Shanna van der Meer tel. 542079

**Health Department**, e-mail: health@stmaarten.net

**NATURE FOUNDATION** ST. MAARTEN

Great Bay Marina, Office: Tel. 547 P08 83.

Philipsburg Tel. 542-0207, Fax. 542-0261. Email: nature@stmaarten.com

**PHILIPSBURG LIBRARY**

St. J. Wagoner, 12, Tel. 542-2970

Open: 10:00-10:30, 12:30-2:00, 4:00-6:30

Tel. 45 761

**WOMEN'S BECK**, Frontstreet 141 (opposite Tel. Co.) Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, Tel. 542-7940, Fax 542-7941.

**SAFE HAVEN**, providing shelter and support to victims of family violence. P.O.B. 836, Tel. 333.

**SECURITY DEPARTMENT**, c/o. Richardson street 116, Tel. 542-5005-1000, Fax 542-1001

**FRENCH HONORARY CONSUL**, P.O. Box 803, Philipsburg, Tel. (0590) 87999, Fax: (0590) 89622. Email: Stanislas.Girardin@stmaarten.net

**LEGAL AID CENTER**, Law Clinic, open every Saturday 10:00am - 12:00 noon. Free advice on personal legal issues. Administration Building, tel. 542223

**Coastguard NMAA** (24hrs) 113

**THE ST. MARTIN RED CROSS**, (24hrs) #34 Airport Road Simpson Bay, Tel. 545526/32594, Fax 545233

**SALVATION ARMY** Unit 59 1st St. Philipsburg, Tel. 542-4542 ext. 547783. Sun 9:00am - Tue 7:00pm, Wed 6:30pm - 7:00pm, Sat 11:00am - Wed 6:30pm, Thu 7:00pm, Sat 11:00am - Wed 6:30pm, Thu 7:00pm, Sat 11:00am

**ST. MAARTEN CHAPTER OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN** holds their general monthly meetings, every 1st Monday at the Delta Hotel at 7:00 pm.

**DIABETES INFORMATION CENTER**, A. Th. Biggus Road, behind Deshpande building.

Free blood-glucose testing every Thursday from 5am - 7:00pm

**USO/Maarten/St. Martin/USAMilitary** contact:

## ST. MARTIN

**POLICE MUNICIPALE**  
tel. (0590) 590 87 50 10  
**GENDARMERIE**  
tel. (0590) 590 87 50 10  
**FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
tel. (0590) 590 87 50 08  
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Offices tel. (0590) 590 87 74 14  
Home tel. (0590) 590 87 72 00

**HOSPITAL** tel. (0590) 590 87 87 67

**DISPENSARIE** Margot tel. (0590) 590 87 71 21

**DISPENSARIE** Margot tel. (0590) 590 87 71 21

**C.R.O.S.S. CENTER**, Research, Organization, Rescue, Security is on standby 24 hours at 0594 709292.

**SERVICE CLUBS**

**ROTARY** meeting at Flamboyant Hotel, Delta Hotel every Thursday at 6pm.

**LIONS** First and Third Tuesday at Nadallier, Margot at 7:30 pm.

**MUSEUM ST. MAARTEN**

Facing the grand parking at Marina Royale-Margot, Open from 9am-10pm 7pm - 7 pm, tel. (0590) 590 29 22 84

Small Lambert 076/06 (0590) 594 0000.

**ST. KITTS** MARTIN/ST. MARTIN meets 1st Tuesday of the month. For location call: 542-4432 (Jermie).

## Post NV: Student's arrest separate issue

PHILIPSBURG—The recent detention by police of a student who was on job training at the Post Office branch in Philipsburg is not connected to the company's recent dismissal of two of its employees, spokesperson for Nieuwe Post NV Sidney Poulina stated yesterday.

Poulina told The Daily Herald the issue involving the student had been handled by the Director for the Windward Islands and was completely separate from the investigations concerning the two dismissed employees.

to which it had responded, but declined to give details of either letter, saying that the matter was being treated internally and not as one for the press.

He was unable to say in what department the other person reportedly sent home had worked. He also could not verify the period during which the money had been taken from the company or whether it had been removed from packages.

He also did not mention the department in which the student had been training, or how he had gained access to the cash.

"We are not aware of any one being detained," Poulina explained. He said the Post Office management had filed a complaint at the police station about two persons against whom they wanted formal charges brought in connection with the missing money.

The company's General Managing Director in Curaçao Martin Quereeng said about a week ago that after an audit was performed, funds had been found missing, for which action was taken in the form of dismissals, pending legal actions.

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Members of the survey team pose for photo with the project director at City Hall.

## Survey evaluating level of insecurity, victimization

MARIGOT—A survey to try to evaluate the level of insecurity and victimization filed by residents of French St. Martin starts today. It is being coordinated by the CLSPD, through the assistance of eight field officers, who will be interviewing a sample of 700 persons in the various villages around the island.

The CLSPD is a special department funded by the State responsible for drafting an action plan to combat violence and delinquency. From now until March 19, the officers will carry out their enquiry, the results of which should help authorities prepare a local security action plan.

Questionnaires have already been sent to those concerned, chosen to represent a broad cross section of a population made up of 48 per cent men and 52 per cent women. Only persons over the age of 18 years have been selected for questioning for the survey.

According to project coordinator Alex Vignat, it is very important to first evaluate the situation if the action plan is to be effective and successful in fighting insecurity and victimization. The same survey will be carried out with business places, as they too have been voicing

concerns about the level of crime and theft on the French side.

The action plan will be put together by law enforcement officers here, with the collaboration of the project coordinator and other stakeholders in several sectors in the community. Vignat said they should be beginning work on the plan as soon as the survey is complete and the results are in.

The questionnaires consist of 18 questions on the issue of safety in St. Martin. Some are to be answered by Yes or No, but others require more in-depth details.

Persons are asked questions like whether they feel safe working the City streets after sundown; if they ever been victims of victimization or robbery; are security and safety priorities for them; and whether they would file a complaint if they become victims of robbery or aggression.

The results of the survey are expected to be made public before the action plan is drafted.

## National Alliance

Continued from page 1.

Education Minister and Oleana-Vos as State Secretary for Education and Youth Affairs.

Marlin explained that the meeting in Curaçao Monday afternoon had been to sign and not to negotiate. However, the coalition partners "pledged" support. "They pledged to really get down to work for the islands and for the Netherlands Antilles as a whole," he said.

"There are important issues to St. Maarten. But the most important one is to be on the inside to get things done. You can't be on the outside, criticize, but still tell them to get things done for St. Maarten," said Marlin.

Asked about the portfolio of energy company GEBE, one of the key issues during the negotiations and one that National Alliance didn't manage to secure, Marlin said he had "no problem" with DP-Statia leader Senator Julian Woodley about this portfolio, which the St. Eustatius party maintained. "Neither of us had to fight or blink," he said.

Marlin said he would be addressing the media tonight when he returned to St. Maarten. At that gathering with the press, he will go "ex-



Richard Gibson



Edgar Lynch

tensively" into the issues discussed during the negotiations that started a few weeks ago, soon after WIPM-Saba and UPB-Bonaire stepped out. One of these issues, apart from GEBE, was the position of Deputy Minister Plenipotentiary.

## Commissioners draft plans to strengthen police discipline

PHILIPSBURG—If the College of Commissioners of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba police forces has its way, past regulations such as junior officers saluting senior officers and senior government officials will be reinstated.

A proposal to make this possible is one of several being drafted by the College of Commissioners for submission to the Justice Minister of the Netherlands Antilles.

It was one of several issues affecting the police organisations that were discussed when members of the College of Commissioners met with their Chairman Police Chief Commissioner Derrick Holiday on January 22 and 23.

Holiday told The Daily Herald Monday that while the police force had become very lenient on issues such as the compulsory wearing of hats when in uniform, the saluting of senior government officials, and places officers shouldn't frequent reinstating these rules and semi-military procedures would serve to strengthen the discipline of the officers and create more apprecia-



Derrick holiday

tion for their work.

He said specific punishments that should be meted out for offences committed by police officers would be included in the draft proposals for submission to the Justice Minister.

He explained that the Code of Ethics was a guideline for police behaviour on and off the job, but did not specifically address the punishment for failing to comply with the rules.

"The College of Commissioners believes that there are cases where officers should have been punished for certain actions, as this aspect of the rules was put aside and we feel that it should be brought back," Holiday told The Daily Herald Monday.

## French band Les Explorateurs wins main prizes at Festival

PHILIPSBURG—The big red-uniformed brass band Les Explorateurs of French Curaçao took away both first prizes at the second annual Drum Band Festival "Keep on Drumming" Sunday.

The band won the Presentation competition at Raoul Illidge Sports Complex, as well as the Street Parade. Soualouga Brass Band Foundation Secretary Dinada Merencia said Monday that the difference between the first and second place bands at the presentation competition was only one point. "Les Explorateurs had 589 points and Curaçao Brass Express walked away with 588 points," Merencia said.

La Flamme, also from the French side, finished third out of 11 groups that participated in the show, which started around 4:00pm with a parade from Celebration Palace and finished at around 9:30pm at the Sports Complex.

"Experience the beat," the first Drum Festival, pulled four bands last year and the organizers Soualouga Brass Band Foundation promised the large and appreciative crowd that next year's festival would be even bigger than the 2004 show.

"We are going to work very hard on it," said Merencia while thanking all the sponsors of this year's event for their contributions.

Hopes to sign deal today

## Minister agrees to let hospital pay debt later

By Suzanne Koelega

PHILIPSBURG—Finance Minister Ersilia de Lannooy said Monday she hoped to reach an agreement with St. Maarten Medical Center (SMMC) through Lt. Governor Franklyn Richards today, Tuesday, about an arrangement for the hospital to postpone payment of its debt to the Federal Receiver for two years.

The agreement is the result of several letters and contact by telephone between the Minister, the Lt. Governor and SMMC's board since late last week. The board of SMMC sent a letter to the Finance Minister on Monday informing her that it would be accepting one of her two pro-

posals.

The proposal the board is willing to accept states that the Federal Receiver will make an "exception" to its policy to collect SMMC's outstanding debt. The letter doesn't mention amounts, but it concerns some NAF. 3.8 million, built up between 1997 and 2002.

SMMC will be given a grace period of two years under four conditions: payment of current obligations to the Central Government, settlement on the medical treatment of prisoners, an evaluation after two years to determine SMMC's "payment potential" and the hospital's property standing guarantee for the outstanding amounts.

In the letter, the board stated that it was "prepared and in the position" to accept this proposal. The other proposal was for POF to take over the debt.

The grace period will make it possible for SMMC to carry out a restructuring, invest in the institution and make a payment arrangement with other creditors for non-priority debts, after which its moratorium on payments can be eliminated.

"After the investment and restructuring period of two years, we see all possibilities to be in a position to comply with payment obligations of the federal debts," stated the letter that was signed by SMMC's Director Dr. George Scott.

Minister de Lannooy confirmed on Monday that she was "close" to reaching an agreement with the Lt. Governor. "I expect to sign an agreement tomorrow (Tuesday, ed.)," she said, acknowledging the role the Lt. Governor had played in this.

"Certain things" will be included in that agreement to "prevent bankruptcy," she told The Daily Herald. "There are different options," she said, adding that public health was "very important" and played an "important role" in the process.

"I just spoke to the Lt. Governor and I am awaiting his response," she said, as she was signing out of the meeting where she signed the political agreement to broaden the base of the federal coalition together with National Alliance and four other parties.

She said SMMC's debt to the Federal Receiver would not be forgiven. "The Central Government can't afford that," she said. "But we came to an agreement that the payment wouldn't be in the way of their financing position."

St. Maarten Democratic Party (DP) Councilwoman and former State Secretary Maria Buncamper-Molanus said she was "very pleased" that a solution was being reached between the parties. Buncamper-Molanus had sent a letter to the Finance Minister recently, urging her to "do something" about the situation.

"I hope that SMMC and the Minister can finalize this so that the hospital can start with the investments that it needs so much. I hope I have been able to make some contribution and I am very pleased that the Minister got directly in contact with me on this matter," said Buncamper-Molanus.



People standing in line at the Island Receiver's Office Monday afternoon to collect their 2004 road tax stickers.

## Some 9,800 road tax stickers sold

PHILIPSBURG—Close to 9,800 road tax stickers have been sold so far, leaving close to 7,000 vehicle owners still having to pay this year's vehicle tax. Controls won't start yet, however, because the police also don't have the stickers yet.

Up to Saturday, 9,760 stickers had been sold, representing about NAF. 2.7 million that will go into government's coffers. "I expect a lot of people to still come this week," Island Receiver Jean James told The

Daily Herald. One of the problems for us to perform controls, because we have to be an example," stated police spokesman Inspector Geronimo Juliet.

The deadline for payment was Saturday, January 31. Last year the deadline was a month later, February 28. More than 17,500 stickers were sold in 2003 and 17,650 were sold in 2002, yielding NAF. 4.7 million in revenues for government.

Police haven't started controls yet, because the Central Government hasn't paid the road tax for the patrol

cars yet. "It wouldn't be ethical for us to perform controls, because we have to be an example," stated police spokesman Inspector Geronimo Juliet.

The Island Receiver's Office has extended its opening hours and has been open on Saturdays since the beginning of January to accommodate its clients. The office, located on University Boulevard under the same roof as the Census Office, is open from 8:30am straight through lunch until 3:30pm.

## Old age pension hike to Parliament

WILLEMSTAD—The Central Government has sent the draft federal ordinance for the increase of the old age pension AOV to Parliament.

But the advising entities, the Advisory Council, the Social Insurance Bank SVB and the Socio-Economic Council SER are far from happy with it due to the cost involved.

SER recommends not to send the proposal to Parliament considering the economic consequences. It will soon present its own law proposal.

In the government's proposal the AOV is increased from 528 to 550 guilders per month, or 6,600 guilders per year. Furthermore, there will be supplementary pension for those who don't have one and have a total income of up to 1,000 guilders per month (12,000 guilders per

year). The aim is for every person 60 years an older to receive at least 1,000 guilders per month. This would all be produced by means of a different premium system, with no longer a maximum premium to be paid, but a percentage of the income, plus an increase of the premium from 10 to 11 per cent.

The SVB doesn't mind the increase of the benefits, but demands that the government guarantee the financing of same.

The Advisory Council

points out the consequences of the proposal. It can agree with the solidarity principle and making sacrifices. "But there are limits."

"Someone with a so-called 'free profession' earning 336,830 guilders per year would have to pay 37,031 guilders per year (or 11 per cent premium) to, in due time, receive 6,600 guilders per year, while someone earning 120,000 guilders per year must pay 13,200 guilders per year to be able to obtain the same 6,600 guilders per year.



Congratulations go out to Elvís Steward (right) receiving his gift certificate for US \$50 from Advertising representative at The Daily Herald Sandra Martina, for winning The Daily Herald's Guess Where? Guess What? Challenge published last Saturday. Elvís identified all the changes: The woman's left thumb, an emblem on her hat and a dot in the background were removed; her bracelet was duplicated on her other hand; the word "SPEED" in the background was changed to "SPEES." Elvís may use his gift voucher at Just In Boutique or Kwik Bargains/Kwik Ideas before March 7.



From left: Ludwig Ouenniche, Veronica Wilson-Webster, Jorien Lucas-Wuite, Maria van Heyningen and Cedrick Ortega at the press conference.

## Small business foundation to help fund food safety clinic attendance

PHILIPSBURG—The Small Business Development Foundation (SBDF) is offering special funding for managers/owners of small businesses in the food sector to attend the Food Safety

Clinic being offered by the Sector Health Care Affairs.

The foundation will fund 70 per cent of cost of the NAF. 100 course for qualifying applicants, SBDF President Veronica Wilson-

Webster announced at a joint press conference of the foundation and the Health Care department yesterday.

The partial financing for the course is possible through the funds granted to SBDF by the Small Enterprise Stimulation Programme of the Netherlands Antilles (SESNA).

To receive the financing from SBDF, interested persons have to collect the relevant forms from the Health Department and visit the foundation office at E.C. Richardson Street #3 for funding approval, Foundation Secretary Ludvig Ouenniche said.

The first phase of the clinic starts on February 17 and continues until the end of April. The first course is already filled. There is space in the other scheduled course. However, the deadline for registration is February 15, said health care official Cedrick Ortega, who is in charge of registration.

The course involves instruction on proper food handling procedures, Course Leader Maria van Heyningen said. The classes are twice weekly at University of St. Martin. Morning and afternoon classes are available. The second phase will be geared towards other food handlers and will be less in-depth.

Health Sector Director Jorien Lucas-Wuite welcomed the initiative of the foundation. She added that approximately 20 per cent of the managers/owners of food-related businesses had already registered for the course.

## Union, police deadlocked on dismissal of officers

PHILIPSBURG—A final decision has not been reached regarding the dismissal of several police and immigration officers, three of whom belong to St. Maarten's Police Force.

The issue of the officers' dismissal was one of the main subjects of discussion at a meeting of the joint committee comprising Netherlands Antilles Police Chiefs, the Netherlands Antilles Police Union and the Advisory committee for the Netherlands Antilles Justice Minister, according to Police Chief Commissioner Derrick Holiday.

The committee was established to advise the Justice Minister on matters relating to police, as he felt that there were too many conflicting opinions, which made deciding on issues difficult.

Holiday said the meeting had been held in Curaçao on Friday last week. Police officer Giferson along with two immigration officers, one of whom is still on active duty,

have been brought up on charges and a request submitted for their dismissal.

Holiday said a major problem was the union's position on the issue, which he explained was that the officers should be reinstated, as the allotted time for an investigation, along with a final decision on their future with the force, had expired before the decision was made.

Holiday said the request from the union was in keeping with the guidelines on how investigations should be handled when officers are accused of committing offences, but said based on the nature of the offences it would ruin the communities' trust in the Netherlands Antilles Police Force if these officers were

reinstated.

He explained that the officers were accused of drug trafficking and at least two in Curaçao were believed to have been in one way or another involved in murders.

With regard to the delay in the dismissal of the officers, he said the factors delaying the process included the fact that there had been a change in the person holding the office of Justice Minister, who has the final say on whether officers are dismissed.

Another aspect was the complicated nature of the case, Holiday said. He also mentioned departmental differences on the cases, which had also played a role in the delayed decision.

## Orders for Caribbean style money boxes still possible

PHILIPSBURG—The local chapter of Antillean Federation for Youth Care FAJ is accepting orders for the handmade and painted money boxes shaped like a Caribbean house. The money boxes, which play music when coins are dropped in, were special gifts in the FAJ Christmas 2003 promotion.

The boxes cost NAF. 25 or US \$14 each and can be ordered from the FAJ office located in Rupert L. Maynard Youth Community Centre in St. Peters, or by calling 548-3500. The orders have to be placed by Friday, February 13.

Persons still awaiting their money boxes will receive them by the end of the month. The money boxes arrived in St. Maarten late due to heavy rains in Curaçao that prevented the proper drying of the clay from which they are made. This also caused several orders not to be filled.

Also several postcard and stamp orders were not filled; these will be rectified by month end. The huge order received from St. Maarten was not expected by the or-



Angie Agol-Pantophlet

ganizers, who had to adjust production to suit.

Local Coordinator Angie Agol-Pantophlet said the demand for the money boxes was still very high and it had been decided allow further orders. The money raised from the sales will go into the FAJ officers and then be allocated as funding for various youth-based projects on all of the Antillean islands.

St. Maarten has been active in submitting youth-based projects for funding, she added. The island has become more aware of FAJ and its operations over the past year and more organizations such as parent-teacher associations have submitted projects.

Four projects have already been submitted for January.

## AGENDA

**ST. EUSTATIUS**  
**Police Station** 182333  
**Emergency** 111  
**Hot Line** 108  
**Fire Department** 120  
**Hospital** 182211/182371  
**Landsradio** 182210  
**Post Office** 182207  
**St. Eustatius Historical Foundation Museum** 182288  
**Winair Office** 182362  
**Lions Club** meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday at the "Den" next to the Airport  
**Drug Prevention Foundation** meets every Tuesday 5:30pm at the Golden Era Hotel.  
**Coastguard NA&A** 113  
**St. Eustatius National parks:**  
 Gallows Bay: 319 2884

**SABA**  
**Police Station**  
 The Bottom, tel. 4163237  
**Emergency** 111/112  
**Hospital**  
 The Bottom, tel. 4163288/4163289  
**Fire Department Airport**  
 Flat Point tel. 4162210  
**SATEL**  
 The Bottom, tel. 4163211  
**Winair Airport**  
 Flat Point, tel. 4162255/2713  
**Tax Service Airport**  
 Flat Point, tel. 160  
**Administration Building**  
 The Bottom, tel. 4163311/  
 4163312/4163313  
**Tourist Office**  
 Windwardside, tel. 4162231  
**Harbour Office**  
 Fort Bay, tel. 4163294  
**St. Martin Park**  
 Fort Bay, tel. 4163295  
**Nature & Hike Guide**  
 James Johnson  
 The Bottom, tel. 4163307  
**Service Club**  
 Saba Lions Club general meeting every 1st and 3rd Tuesday 8:00  
 Eugonius A. Johnson  
 Center.  
**Coastguard NA&A** 113  
**Red Cross**  
 General meeting every 1st Monday, 6 p.m., Eugonius A. Johnson  
 Center.

**ANGUILLA**  
**EMERGENCY**  
**Police** 111  
**Fire** 911  
**Ambulance** 911  
**Police Station** 497 2333  
**Hospital** 497 2551  
**Dental clinic** 497 2343  
**Radio Anguilla** 497 2348  
**Tourism Department** 497 2759  
**Crimestoppers** 0800 777 7777  
**AIRLINES**  
 American Eagle 497 3501  
 Winair 497 2748  
 Liat 497 5080  
 Tyden Air 497 2719  
 Air Anguilla 497 2643  
 Trans Anguilla 497 4690  
**COURIER SERVICE**  
 DHL 497 3400  
 Federal Express 497 2719  
 UPS 497 2259  
**SERVICE CLUBS**  
**Rotary Club of Anguilla**  
 6 p.m. Restaurant Riffin, Mon. - 8:00 p.m. Every Thursday.  
**Soroptimist International**  
 Day Care Centre  
 4:30 p.m. 2nd Tuesday in each month Tel: 497 3509  
**Lions Club**  
 The Valley Primary School  
 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 8:00 p.m.  
 Tel: 6259  
**National Council of Women**  
 Arts and Craft Centre  
 4:30 p.m. 1st Monday in month.  
**Interact Club of Anguilla**  
 Meets every Friday at 3.15 p.m. at the Albena Lake Hedge Conventive School  
**Alcoholic Anonymous** meetings every Sunday at 8:30 am and Monday at 5:00 pm on Shoal Bay picnic area.

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Major Ronald Alexander and Brigadier Siegfried Maria weighing the drugs at the police station in The Bottom. Photo and report by Dave Levenstone.

## Police in Saba arrest St. Maarten drug mule

SABA—Police arrested a passenger on the St. Maarten-Saba ferry "The Edge" on Friday. The young man J.W. of St. Maarten had four pounds of compressed marijuana on his body, together with 30 grams of crack stones. The police took J.W. to the police station for questioning and he was transported to the police station in Philipsburg, St. Maarten, on Saturday afternoon.

This was the first major haul for the year in Saba, but it was reportedly not the first time police had confiscated drugs entering the island via the ferry service. Zero tolerance in the fight against drugs is beginning to bear fruit, it was reported to this newspaper. Major Ronald Alexander said his team of officers would continue to carry out strict controls on the import of drugs to the island. "We cannot allow drugs to take over the island and do nothing about it. We are doing our job and we expect the community to appreciate that," he said.

## Lt. Governor's Cabinet costs Naf. 853,348, not Naf. 2 M

PHILIPSBURG—The Cabinet of the Lt. Governor will have its own budget in the near future. The current cost of the cabinet (for 2004) is Naf. 853,348, not Naf. 2 million as was stated in drafts pertaining to the draft 2004 budget of the Island Government.

The cabinet currently doesn't have its own budget and the Naf. 853,348 in salary cost is now carried by the Island Territory. "It is advisable that for the year 2004, a budget is drawn up for the Cabinet of the Lt. Governor," it was stated in the answers to questions by Chairwoman of the Central Committee Maria Buncaemper-Molonus.

Chief of the Cabinet Ligia Stein, in cooperation with the Finance Department, will be drawing up a proposal for the Executive Council. There is a "need" for this, because the Cabinet is charged with, among other things, protocol. The protocol division, ascer-

that are of 'substantial importance' economically, financially or to governance. The Cabinet also takes initiatives in the area of government's finances, assists in improving the transparency and integrity of government, and advises the Executive Council on certain matters.

Government needs the assistance of the Cabinet, as long as the government organization doesn't comply with conditions of a government apparatus, the document stated. Improving the quality of governance is a "high priority" of the Executive Council.

"Objectivity and proper decision taking, that relate closely to financial and organizational independence of the rest of (government) organization, are served with permanent support of the Cabinet by the Kingdom. The goal is strengthening the system of checks and balances of the insular, decentralized administration," it was stated. The Lt. Governor has already contacted the Dutch Government on this matter.

The need to strengthen the system of checks and balances also applies to the functioning of the Island Council. As such, the document suggested support for the Island Council and mentioned the fact that clerk were now supporting municipal councils in Holland.

In St. Maarten this would make the Island Council function more independently of the administration. Members of the Island Council "encouraged" to come with proposals to strengthen the functioning of this body.

The character of the tasks of the Lt. Governor deserves a "fundamental discussion" within the framework of the Kingdom. The position of the Lt. Governor should also be included in the process of strengthening the administration. Holland is working on a system of an elected Mayor, a system that is already in place in France and the US.

Island Councilwoman Buncaemper-Molonus had asked about the financing of the Cabinet and mentioned the amount of Naf. 2.03 million that appeared on the draft 2004 budget. She wanted to know what share of the cost the Central Government would pay, as she considered it unfair to St. Maarten's taxpayers to carry all the cost.

## SMITH

Continued from page 1.

emony. SMITH Project Manager Paul Riviere called it the first of several accomplishments to be attained.

The second accomplishment, he said, would be successfully integrating SMITH graduates in the job market and/or having them continue their studies at other tertiary institutions. SMITH has arrangements with Mondriaan College in the Netherlands and Lively Technical Center in Tallahassee, Florida, for students to continue their studies there.

"A momentous occasion" was the term used by Director of Social Welfare Affairs Stanley Hodge to describe the start of the classes. He alluded to failed efforts made in the past to start similar programmes and said officials had learnt from their mistakes. "This is a project being prepared for St. Maarten by St. Maarten," he said, adding that teachers who are part of the programme are "highly motivated." All the major stakeholders, he said, combined their efforts to put SMITH together without seeking funding from other sources and this shows that the "Government has put their money where their mouth is."

Hodge advised SMITH officials to pursue other "creative" steps if they encountered difficulties in obtaining accreditation for their

courses. "If, for whatever reason, this is not forthcoming with the necessary expediency, it might be necessary to review for all intent and purposes the Basic Competence Certificate Programmes (BCCP) currently being developed and introduced in other countries," said Hodge.

Tourism Commissioner Theo Heyliger was represented by his Executive Assistant Maurice Lake, who lauded the programme as being pertinent in providing the job market with skilled and competent labour. Lake congratulated those involved in putting the institute together and expressed hope that the intended objectives would be met.

Wescott-Williams said: "I encourage you students to stay the course. This is a new opportunity for you, an open door to your future. Enter confidently, remain focused throughout and at the end of your programme, you will have mastered skills that not only will serve your personal and professional growth, but also make you better equipped to serve St. Maarten as we build this nation block by block," she urged students.

Interim Head of the Education Department Linda Richardson also made a presentation during the ceremony.

## Street Vibes

Judy Fitzpatrick

## What's on your mind?

PHILIPSBURG—Street Vibes allowed members of the public to share their comments on any issue of concern to them. Their comments follow.

**Yolanda Kortenoever, retiree**

"The Emilio Wilson Park should be turned into a real cultural park with additional trees planted to enhance its beauty. St. Maarten is a cultural community with people from every part of the Caribbean residing here and plants should be brought in from all over the Caribbean and planted at the park to represent the various islands. Benches should also be placed there for people to go, relax and enjoy nature.

"Consideration should also be given to having a pond at the park. Everyone is running after the dollar while they should take time to enjoy nature. The Emilio Wilson Park should be a place where people can go to bond without saying a word.

"I also believe that the since the flamboyant tree is a national tree for the island, more should be planted on the island. It should be seen more."

**Sophea York, private sector worker**

"I believe that more should be done by the authorities to create jobs for unemployed persons. Locals and people with legal papers for the island should be given preference for employment and employers should stop favouritism when hiring. People should be employed on their own merits and based on their qualifications and experience and not because they are the friend of someone."

**Ramong Blijden, private sector worker**

"The minimum wage is currently too low and should be increased. This is a matter that needs the urgent attention of the necessary authorities. The minimum wage is insufficient compared to the expenses of the ordinary man. The cost of living is also growing while people's salaries remain the same. If this continues people will continue to engage in illegal activities to earn extra money to make ends meet."

**Crystal Cohen,**

"There is not enough security on the streets. Security



Yolanda Kortenoever



Sophea York



Ramong Blijden



Crystal Cohen



Geraldine Williams

too many vehicles and not enough roads and something should be done to (alleviate) the traffic problem."

**Geraldine Williams, retired**

"The cost of living on St. Maarten is too high, considering that the island is a free port. Government needs to put control mechanisms in place to ensure that the prices for certain items are stable and things such as rent remain affordable for the ordinary man. People can no longer afford the high and increasing cost of living. We are only surviving by the grace of God."

**Teachers union sends letter to Govt. on late payment of salaries**

PHILIPSBURG—The Windward Islands Teachers Union (WITU) sent a letter to Education Commissioner Sarah Wescott-Williams and the Executive Council on Monday, conveying the sentiments of union members who complained that they had been unable to cash their cheques at the bank on Friday. WITU also advised government that its members were upset that their salaries had not been paid on time.

WITU President Claire Elshot said the union had received numerous complaints from public school teachers on Friday that they had been unable to cash their salary cheques at the bank on Friday and were informed that the bank had not yet received January's payroll. Elshot said her members were very upset about the situation and were prepared to take any action to prevent a recurrence.

She said the letter to Wescott-Williams was intended to urge government to put mechanisms in place to prevent a recurrence and implore her to ensure that teachers were paid on time and in accordance to the law. She said public school teachers were normally scheduled to receive their salaries two days before the month ends, but this had not been the case in recent months.

Elshot said civil servants had also complained that they too were unable to cash their cheques on Friday.

**St. Martin records high infant mortality rates**

MARIGOT—Figures released by the health department of the General Council (DASD) indicate that the infant mortality rate in French St. Martin has been more than triple the national average in the last three years.

DASD is very concerned about this development and says these alarming proportions cannot be tolerated in a country like St. Martin.

The figures show that in 1999 the number was 8.94 per thousand, in 2000 it increased to 18.84, in 2001 it was at 20.52 and in 2002 there was a slight decrease to 18 per thousand. The French national figure is presently five per thousand.

According to representative of the General Council Jean Luc Plumenceau, this situation could be attributed either to a shortage of medical staff at the hospital or to an increase in the number of undocumented mothers having babies on the French side. He said it was time for authorities to take the situation seriously and do what is needed to stamp out the problem.

Plumenceau also gave figures on the percentage of

persons seeking medical attention who were covered by the French social security scheme. In 1999 only 21.98 per cent had coverage; in 2000 it was 30.13 per cent; in 2001 a slight increase to 30.43 and in 2002 it was at 30.40 per cent.

This shows that only 20 per cent of those treated at dispensaries had medical coverage. This, according to the director, placed further financial strains on the General Council, which must pick up the cost as a substitute for the state.

Plumenceau is of the view that proper control at the hospitals to deter undocumented mothers from having children on the French side would help decrease the

high rate of infant mortality. According to him, these undocumented mothers cannot seek the proper attention during and after pregnancy, because they have no medical coverage.

He has also called for dispensaries to be better staffed and in acceptable condition if they are to provide serious care of rural areas quality health care.

These figures and the cost associated with health care are some of the factors elected representatives will have to take into account when negotiating transfer of competencies with the General Council, ahead of the change of administrative status to form the new Collectivity.

# Carnival village nears completion

MARIGOT—With the official opening of the 2004 Carnival season set for Thursday, February 12, work is going on every day as booth owners race to finish their booths before the weekend ahead of the official opening.

According to president of the Carnival Committee Jean Philippe Richardson, all of the 40 available booths are already taken, but the variety will be different this year. He said apart from the tradi-

tional booth selling food and drinks, there would also be a few offering games and entertainment.

"When we say we promise to make Carnival 2004 better than before we mean what we say and this is some of the proof," Richardson added. He said 14 troupes would be taking part in the junior parade on Sunday, February 15, the largest participation in the five years he has been president of the CTC. Seven troupes have registered for the

grand parade so far, but several others have expressed interest, according to Richardson.

Contestants for all three queen pageants are rehearsing and the first show, Miss Pitchenouette and Junior Queen, will take place at the Omni Sports Complex in Galisbay on Sunday, February 8, from 3:30pm.

Participation in Sunday's walkathon under the theme, "Get in shape for carnival" was overwhelming and

Richardson extended thanks to those who came out to walk from the Nina Duverly School in Marigot to Galion beach.

The grand opening parade will take place on February 12, with local groups and troupes parading the streets of the city to usher in the new season. The first night at the village, hosted by the Dominica Friendship Association, will feature calypsonians from Dominica.

There will be another Caribbean night at the village on Saturday, February 14, with two concerts scheduled. The promoters of the event have not yet released the names of the performing groups, but have promised to confirm their groups before the start of the season.

The first lap children's parade will take place on February 15, with school children from the entire French side taking part. February 16 will be youth night, featuring up and coming local artists showcasing their talent in rap, dance and music. This will be followed by a concert with the group Dance Starz the next night, ahead of the Compas Night featuring one of Haiti's leading bands.

Promoters of last year's comedy extravaganza have decided to bring back comedians Raymond Pozoy, Miguel Cespedes and Felix Pena from the Dominican Republic, who will be entertaining spectators with their Dominican humour.

Mr. Cool's Reggae night will be Friday, February 20, to be followed by the Miss Teen, Senior and Carnival pageants featuring young ladies from both Dutch and French St. Martin on Saturday, February 21. The first lap of the grand parade will take place on Sunday, February 22, and will feature new troupes with new fashions.

Zouk Flam night will be Monday, February 23, and promoters have promised a lineup of some of the hottest names in Zouk music today, also featuring Carini from Haiti. The Zouk Flam will take revellers into the Mardi Gras grand parade on February 24, expected to feature some of the most colourful troupes to revel the streets of Marigot in Carnival celebrations.

The curtains will come down with the prize giving ceremony on February 25, followed by the burning of King Vaval at Carnival City in Agrément.



In a jam-packed Joe Laveist Ballpark, NBO band leader Kevin James (left) was crowned Road March Monarch in the final of Aruba's Carnival Calypso and Road March Festival, with his song "Jumbie." Claudius "Mighty Talent" Phillips again took the Calypso title with his "Tell Me If I Lie."



Work going on at Carnival Village in Marigot.

# Safe Haven receives donations from TelCell

PHILIPSBURG—As part of its efforts to give back to the community, TelCell management presented several dolls and CD players to Safe Haven for distribution to children in the foundation's care, the phone company said in a press release.

TelCell General Manager Brian Mingo and Marketing representative Arden Frostson presented the items

to Safe Haven spokesperson Angeliqwe Romou-Martis at the company's Sucker Garden location recently.

"The initiative is part of the company's pledge made at the end of last year to give back to the community wherever and whenever possible," TelCell said in the release.

"The foundation continues to do some outstanding work

in the St. Maarten community and it's a pleasure to be able to bring a smile to some of the children in its care by presenting these gifts," said Mingo.

Other TelCell personnel involved in the community-oriented project are Roaming Coordinator Nina Diaz and Secretary Shamaiah Dafalear-Fleming.

"The foundation continues to do some outstanding work



Brian Mingo (left) and Arden Frostson (right) present the items to Angeliqwe Romou-Martis.





A crane places one of the diesel generators in the old RIF plant of Aqualectra on a special trailer in Curaçao. The 110-ton 16-cylinder Mirrlees Blackstone generators will be taken to the harbour to be shipped out. To remove them, part of the structure had to be saved off. Once all engines have been removed the building will be demolished and the land cleared, so that it can be used for developments related to the megapier for cruise ships nearby.

## “Forsa Kòrsou” party officially established

WILLEMSTAD—The Curaçao political party Forsa Kòrsou, established as a political association on January 26, comprises attorney Nelson Navarro as chairman, lawyer Glenn Camelia (director of the Socio-Economic Council SER and the consulting entity for civil service matters GOA) as secretary and director of the Finance Administration Gregory Damoen as treasurer.

According to the statutes, Navarro has also been appointed the political leader. Other board members include communication expert Mariela Nivillac, police inspector and ex-police union president Udemar “Shon Ma” Isidora, director of Air Holland Caribbean Region Edward Heerjeeveen, Public Works official Marlon Balentin, University of the Netherlands Antilles student Valeska Richards (ex-youth prime minister) and administrator Patricia Cijnje-Pinedo (currently working at the Economic Affairs Administration).

When asked, Navarro explained that the party’s vision and programme wouldn’t be announced until next week because of the public’s main focus on the tumba festival to be held this week. There will soon be an open house where

people can find out more about the party and enlist as members.

The political association’s aim is to promote respect for the rights and dignity of every citizen in the community; that the norms and values within the community be restored and maintained; that every citizen is given the opportunity to live a decent life. In the sense that at least all basic necessities are guaranteed; and that decisive governing is possible based on an election system that allows the elected administration to govern with force of action.

Furthermore, the governing of the community must be conducted in an “appropriate, correct and transparent” manner and there should be control on compliance with “all applicable written as well as unwritten rules.”

The tranquility and safety of the community should also be restored and guaranteed as much as possible and a responsible financial-economic policy should be maintained “in the sense of promoting long-term economic growth and healthy public finances.”

Finally, the objectives of Forsa Kòrsou also mention that relations within the kingdom must be optimized “based on equality and mutual respect.”



The culinary teams of the hospitality schools in Curaçao and Bonaire competed in the ABC Culinary Competition, with Aruba absent this year because of exams. *Ban Bria* public MBO, Fefrik and Maria Stella VSBO represented Curaçao and the secondary school community SGB of Bonaire.

## MEP warns against Aruba becoming milk cow of EU

ARUBA—The ruling MEP party is of the opinion that the integration of Aruba into the European Union (EU) will turn the island into a milk cow.

The party has calculated that Aruba would have to contribute much more to the EU than the Netherlands does now per head of population. MEP thinks accurate studies should be made, to prevent a shortfall for Aruba.

“Fifty years ago the AVP told the nation stories that were not based on the truth. We have to prevent that history repeats itself,” states the party’s press release.

MEP is getting a better and better image of the meaning of EU membership. It wants to inform the population, but prefers to base itself on studies and reports instead of populist statements.

With this the party points the finger at the opposition party AVP, which advocates Aruba becoming an Ultra-Peripheral Territory (UPT)

of the EU.

MEP doesn’t like it that AVP puts emphasis on the possibility to get financial assistance from European funds. MEP doesn’t believe that.

Besides, the party has calculated that just for being a member, Aruba will have to pay a lot of money to the EU.

During a press conference MEP member Edwin Jacobs concentrated on an official document from the Dutch Foreign Affairs Ministry about the EU. Every year, Aruba will have to pay 19 million euros to the EU, which means 87 euros per head based on the population of the Netherlands.

Aruba’s net contribution of 19 million florins divided by the total population will come to a sum of 200 euros per head of the Aruban population, or 460 florins per person per year.

“We wonder, based on these calculations, whether Aruba wants to become the milk cow of the EU,” he said.



Sea Scouts of the Monsignor Verriet group in Curaçao, led by Captain Jan Ackermans of the *Chamba II*, turned out the big winners in the ABN AMRO Regatta 2004 from January 26 to February 1. The youngsters competed in the yacht racing/cruising class and demonstrated the skills they have learned so far. In the photo: Ackermans, Russell Maduro, Sergey Boer, Mitchell Amasia, Jessie Hernandez and Mariano “Pitosh” Heyden.



The general Antillean pension fund APNA headquartered in Curaçao booked a return of 21.2 per cent on its investments abroad in 2003, largely because of gains on the international stock markets. Domestic investments produced a return of 5.8 per cent. This puts the average total return at 11.8 per cent. Compared to December 31, 2002, the invested capital of the fund has increased by 263 million guilders, thanks to a positive cash flow in the domestic portfolio during the first three quarters and a strong comeback of the financial markets.

## KCN holds awards ceremony

ANGUILLA—Kreative Communications Network (KCN) held its annual awards ceremony at House of Chandeliers on Saturday, January 31.

Now in its eighth year, KCN is the main producer of local programming through Caribbean Cable Communications and each year recognizes citizens, staff, sponsors and organizations for their contributions and outstanding work given to KCN.

The event was chaired by Andrew Bishop and the guest speaker was National Bank of Anguilla Manager of Market Research and Business Development Pamela Riley. Executive Director/Producer Carlton Pickering said his organization was ready to embark on the next seven years and was hoping for more local support.

He said Caribbean Cable Communications had agreed to grant KCN more time, increasing programming from six to 12 hours daily. He said he would be recruiting creative young people to be trained, and planned to present two new programmes: "Island Life Styles," which has already begun, and "Island Destination," scheduled for April.

He is hoping for support from businesses in Anguilla to help KCN reach a new level and "make an effective difference in Anguilla and the region."

Riley spoke in her address of the impact local and regional television could have on the community. She spoke of television as one of the most important media for shaping the way a society thought, believed and acted, and said adults and

children could learn a great deal.

She spoke of the influence of American television and the need to have more local and regional events reported. She said there is a lot of news in Anguilla and KCN should aim to get live footage of local events.

She suggested comedy and talent shows also being a part of the programming, as Anguilla has a large number of talented persons, and a programme giving biographies of local persons. She urged businesses to support KCN as National Bank does, to enable it to produce more. She closed by congratulating Pickering and his staff on their seventeenth anniversary.

The announcement of awards was given by Ijahya Christian and presentations were made by Caribbean Commercial Bank Talented Teen for 2003 Kafi Gumbs. Appreciation awards were given to Rogers Photo Studio, New Testament Church of God, Anne Edwards, Ursil Webster, Jerome Southwell, Ras B and Cardigan Connor. Sponsors awards were given to Cable and Wireless, Caribbean Commercial Bank and Johnno's Beach Bar. A recognition award went to Colwayne Pickering, the Corporate Award to National Bank of Anguilla and the Community Award to Omar Banks.

## Opposition has no objections to board members for airport

BONAIRE—The DP-Bonaire faction did not oppose the appointment of R. Biemond, residing in the Netherlands, and Telbo manager Ediel Winklaar, residing in Bonaire, as board members of Bonaire International Airport (BIA) NV during the recent Island Council meeting.

Faction member of the opposition party Robbie Beukenboom asked what the expenses would be for Biemond to function optimally in the Board of Directors if he resided in the Netherlands. "Will he be on the BIA's budget and is the company able to afford him?" he asked.

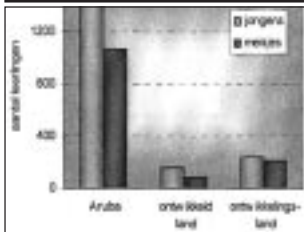
Furthermore, Beukenboom wanted to know if the director of Telbo would have enough time on his hands to function optimally in the board, considering the current developments within the telecommunication company.

The Commissioner announced shortly before Christmas that BIA president-director Kor Folkeringa would be let go. Beukenboom asked whether this was true and, if so, as per

what date.

Finally, Beukenboom lamented that neither the commissioner in charge of BIA nor the Executive Council had answered the questions asked. "Up till now nobody actually mentioned what ex-

actly is going on with the company. It's been over a year since an investigation was requested into the airport's situation, but it's never been clarified," he stated in the Island Council.



The basis for students failing to pass their classes later on is laid in the primary schools, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) in its report "Education in Aruba, context and output." "These so-called 'overyear' children are a structural problem, says CBS. Half of the students in sixth grade (the last year) of primary school are older than they're supposed to be. The number of 'overyear' students continues to increase after that and reaches a 68 per cent average in MAVO schools. Immigrant children who have trouble integrating into the school system are one aspect, but they are only five per cent of the total primary school population. A complex of socio-economic and cultural factors, including the Dutch language of instruction while many speak Papiamentu at home, is involved.

## National Bank makes EC \$17 million profit

ST. KITTS—The St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla National Bank is reporting an EC \$17.6 million profit after taxation for the year ending June 30, 2003.

"It was a year in which good corporate governance, effective risk management and sound strategic planning played a vital part in continuing the long tradition of success and growth of the bank. The success that has been achieved during the year under review is even more gratifying because it has come despite an array of challenges that the bank has had to surmount," National Bank Chairperson Rublin Audain told shareholders.

Managing Director

Edmund Lawrence said total assets had increased to 10.8 per cent over the previous year's figures, bringing the aggregate to EC \$1.1 billion, compared with EC \$956 million in fiscal 2003.

"This is a record achievement, as it makes National the first commercial bank in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean states (OECs) to amass more than one billion dollars in total assets," said Lawrence.

Total deposits were EC \$828.4 million for fiscal 2003, up 14.1 per cent from EC \$726 million. Deposits accounted for 89.5 per cent of total liabilities in 2003, compared with 87.6 per cent in 2002.

National Bank is also the market leader in total assets, total loans and net income. In deposits and loans, National Bank commands 50.4 per cent and 48.5 per cent, respectively, of the local market.

Other banks and lending institutions operating in St. Kitts and Nevis are Bank of Nova Scotia, Bank of Nevis, First Caribbean, Royal Bank of Canada, Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts-Nevis Finance Co. Ltd (FINCO), Development Bank of St. Kitts and Nevis, Nevis Cooperative Bank and the St. Kitts Credit Union, Nevis Credit Union and Poole Credit Union.



The students of the SDA School at the end of Environment Week. Grade One students of the St. Kitts SDA Primary School embarked on a march through some parts of the school's vicinity late last week, to draw awareness to the need to keep the environment clean. The students had studied things that make the environment clean and factors that help to degrade it and make it unhealthy for them to live in. As part of the study on the environment, the students, with the help of guardians and parents, had to put together a message aimed at protecting the environment. The end result was more than 40 posters depicting a variety of pro-environment messages. The students enjoyed their brief walk from their school through the SL Horsford Shopping Complex and Newtown, then back to the school.

## Queen Mary II in St. Kitts Tuesday

ST. KITTS—The streets of Basseterre and the entire country await with pride the arrival of the Queen Mary II, the largest cruise ship currently in service, which was launched late last month.

Tourism Minister Dwyer Astaphan, in a comment to the media, expressed his delight that St. Kitts was on the maiden Caribbean itinerary of the Cunard Line ship.

He said the visit of the ship to the island presented a very good opportunity for a significant boost to the local economy, from the spending of the cruise visitors.

Meanwhile, the MV Freewinds, in its final visit to the island for this season, held a concert on board the ship on Monday night, with the proceeds going towards the St. Kitts beautification project.

## Health week launched

ST. KITTS—Resident American dentist Don Sandquist delivered a brief address at the Basseterre Seventh Day Adventist Church on Saturday, January 31, launching its annual Health Emphasis Week.

Speaking to a congregation comprising persons from St. Kitts, Montserrat, Canada and England, he dentist spoke on the issue of Social Support as it related to human beings.

He showed the relationship between a positive attitude and good health. He stressed the value of a good night's rest, which he said appeared to elude many, for varying reasons. This was tied into the value of good dental health.

Sandquist also showed the relationship between genuine friendship and social support and stressed that



Dr. Don Sandquist

love had to be the basis of all that is done in life and that the deeper meaning of social support means doing something about that feeling of love.

Using an analogy to drive home his point, he said a lot of research had been done on social support over the past two decades and one thing that stood out was the fact that children need it to go through life's journey.



Some of the officials at the strategic talks. Seated (from left to right): Chief Minister Osbourne Fleming, Governor Peter Johnstone and Deputy Governor Mark Capes. Standing: British officials with Permanent Secretaries Marcel Fahle and Kenn Banks.

## Agreement reached on several projects

ANGUILLA—The special session of the annual joint Anguilla/UK Strategic Country Programme talks held on Thursday and Friday last week resulted in agreement on support for several projects.

The talks chaired by Governor Peter Johnstone were convened to discuss the decision by UK Ministers in November 2003 to bring the Department for International Development (DFID) direct development assistance programme for Anguilla to a close at the end of March 2005.

The primary objectives were to agree on a plan and priorities for implementation of DFID-funded projects during the final year of assistance and to explore options for future cooperation between Anguilla and the UK.

The meeting, which was addressed by Chief Minister Osbourne Fleming and Minister of Finance Victor Banks, agreed that the top priority for DFID assistance during the period April 1, 2004, to March 31, 2005, should be professional services for the Wallblake Airport Expansion Project, being provided by the consultants Scott Wilson Fitzpatrick.

Also present at the talks were five officials of the UK Government, Deputy Gov-

ernor Mark Capes and Permanent Secretaries of Anguilla.

According to a release from the Government of Anguilla, a range of key project activities in other sectors were also agreed on by the Anguilla and UK representatives and confirmed by Ministers and other members of the Executive Council within a spending ceiling of EC \$4 million.

Priority among these projects will be support for the recently established Anguilla Health Authority, including further development of the Senior Citizens Home and provision of improved mental health facilities.

The social sector will also benefit from assistance to the newly reorganized Social Development Department, based on the findings of recent needs assessments and recommendations arising from the Country Poverty Assessment undertaken in 2002.

Funding will also be made available for the provision of juvenile facilities for youth at risk and for the education sector, in particular continuation of the programmes jointly delivered by the Isle of Wight Education Department and the Anguilla Education Department.

It was also agreed that high priority would be accorded

to support for the development of the Inland Revenue Department, as a major component of Government's strategy to achieve improved fiscal management. The transformation of the Water Department into an autonomous water utility and the expansion of the Water Laboratory will also benefit from DFID assistance.

Fleming, in concluding the talks, voiced his regret that direct DFID support would cease in March 2005, but expressed the Anguilla Government's appreciation for the assistance provided to date and to be provided over the coming year.

Leader of the UK delegation Clive Warren reaffirmed the UK Government's continuing firm commitment to the people of Anguilla and to their achievement of sustainable development.

While recognizing the disappointment of the Anguillian Government over the planned conclusion of DFID direct support, he said DFID would remain closely engaged and supportive of Anguilla's development agenda through its network of specialist professional staff and its Caribbean regional programme assistance to the UK Overseas Territories.

## Stoney Grove man and Jesus win car

NEVIS—Nevis' edition of TDC's "Turn Me On" promotion programme came to a dramatic end when Reginald Bartlette (40) of Stoney Grove, who had invoked Jesus Christ's name to claim the grand prize, successfully turned on the engine of a brand new Toyota Yaris car late Friday afternoon.

With 100 keys distributed to lucky winners, only one of which could turn on the fully loaded beige 2004 Toyota Yaris, the holder of key 46, whose white Toyota Camry PA2269 had recently been rear-ended and required mechanical attention, strode with confidence when his number was called.

The stocky man, an inspector at the Nevis branch of the St. Christopher and Nevis Social Security Board, literally ordered his nine-year-old son Raynaldon, who was busy playing computer games with a friend, to climb onto the passenger seat.



TDC Director Ernie France (second left) congratulates Reginald Bartlette as his wife Donnella Bartlette and son Raynaldon look on, with the car in the background. On left is Master of Ceremonies Evered "Webbo" Herbert.

Bartlette comfortably sat himself in the car and turned on the engine, which sprang to life amid deafening cheers from an excited crowd.

Asked by master of ceremonies Evered "Webbo" Herbert how he had won the car, Bartlette, a staunch Christian, proudly said he had claimed it through Jesus Christ. He said he had visited the TDC Home and

Building Depot, where the car was, the day before and walking around it he claimed it through Jesus Christ.

The two-month promotion organised by TDC in Nevis had 100 keys that were won by persons who spent EC \$100 or more at TDC. A similar programme was carried out in St. Kitts.

## Fishermen knock PM Manning's plan to send dispute to Caricom

P O R T - O F - S P A I N . Trinidad—Fisherfolk in Tobago and Barbados have denounced as a waste of time Prime Minister Patrick Manning's plan to refer the fishing dispute between both countries to the Caribbean Community (Caricom).

President of the All Tobago Fisherfolk Association, Emile Louis, said he was "very surprised" at Manning's decision to approach the Caricom Secretariat to outline Trinidad and Tobago's side of the dispute, a move which he did not support.

"The problem is that the decisions they make carry very little weight with anyone. There's no enforcement or implementation. Caricom has failed miserably in that regard. It's not too late to keep talking," Louis told the Sunday Express.

Manning on Thursday described the matter as "contentious" and announced his plan to seek help from the Caricom Secretariat, during his weekly post-Cabinet me-

dia briefing at Whitehall. Also condemning the move yesterday was president of the Barbados Fisherfolk Association, Angela Watson, who told the Sunday Express in a telephone interview that the Caricom Secretariat would not have been her first option.

"When would they meet? When would the issue come on their agenda? This might just be another delaying tactic. Sometimes I think governments are just too fanciful. They have poor people suffering because they're too busy to do the work we put them there for," she said.

Both Louis and Watson admitted that they were taken aback by the terse media statement released after last November's round of negotiations in Barbados, which noted that little progress had been made between the sides.

Louis said he was "directly involved in negotiations just hours before, and we didn't leave the room with any type of antagonism. What was said

was a political decision".

Asked if he thought either country was being unreasonable during the two-year-long negotiations, Louis replied: "There's a hidden agenda on both sides. I support our side, of course."

Louis explained that Manning's decision to approach the Caricom Secretariat was worrisome because talks between fisherfolk of both countries had resulted in a "workable relationship. We were working together in an amicable way to share in the resources".

And, Watson agreed with Louis' assessment: "If the issues were left up to us to negotiate, I'm sure we could soon have some sort of working agreement."

Breaking his silence on the negotiations, Louis went into some detail about the issues. He claimed that one of the chief reasons for the protracted fishing dispute between this country and Barbados was the latter's desire to extend its fishing boundary into the oil-rich waters currently being explored by Trinidad and Tobago.

According to Louis, the Barbados team introduced "historical factors" to settle the issue of the fishing dividing line (maritime boundary delimitation) between the two countries.

Louis explained that, generally, the line was drawn down the centre of the fishing waters in question.

"But Barbados took advantage and said that for 30 years it fished across from Tobago, and we never challenged that. They say they have squatters rights," he said.

The dividing line requested by Barbados would, Louis noted, "stretch 12 miles off Tobago and all the way down to Venezuela, cutting right through where Trinidad and Tobago is exploring oil and gas. Well, that particular line won't be set because we will never agree to that".

As the negotiations drag out, Louis said there was a serious problem brewing in the waters off Tobago:

"While negotiations are going on, in Tobago enough illegal fishing is taking place that could threaten the sustainability of resources. Until an assessment of the resources is done, no one really knows how much fish should be taken from the waters.

"We're hoping the Prime Minister will consult with (All Tobago Fisherfolk Association) so that we can offer our expertise on this situation before he goes forward with his plans." (Trinidad Sunday Express)

## T&T Muslims worried about colleagues' fate

P O R T - O F - S P A I N . Trinidad—Spiritual leader of the Anjuman Sunnat ul-Jamaat Association (ASJA) Moulana Sadiq Ahmad Moulana Nasir says Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago were "very worried" about the fate of those Muslims from Trinidad and Tobago who went to Saudi Arabia to participate in the annual hajj pilgrimage.

Some 244 Muslim pilgrims were crushed to death and hundreds injured in a stampede during a devil-stoning ritual over the weekend.

The stampede occurred at Mina where the Trinidadians had gone, along with millions of other people from around the world.

"We do have a few hundred Trinidadians who have gone for hajj but it is now much too early to find that out (if any died or was injured). Because of this huge crowd, people who are actually there may not

know what has happened," Nasir said.

He said Muslims at home were awaiting news from the Trinidad and Tobago delegation. "Yes, this is so, we are waiting for news from groups that have gone about six groups of about 30 or 40 people so yes, we are worried about their well being," Moulana Nasir added.

He said it was virtually impossible to contact the groups Sunday after news of the disaster broke. He said the incident took place in Mina, Saudi Arabia and not Mecca. There was relief however for the wife of one of the group leaders from Trinidad.

Rubena Mohammed said her husband contacted her saying that all Trinidadians in his group were well. "They are all safe, and also the ASJA group, Haji Omar's group," Mohammed said however that her husband "sounded very tense". (From Trinidad Express)

## Guyana faced with high migration rate

GEORGETOWN, Guyana—“Guyana has one of the highest net migration rates in the world,” according to a World Bank report.

According to the report released late last year, with the deterioration of economic and social conditions, people are increasingly looking abroad for improved opportunities.

It continued: “A conservative estimate is that

77 per cent of those with a university education in the mid-1990s have moved to the United States. (Carrington and Detragiache). In one decade, it is estimated that migration increased by nearly 150 per cent with 50,000 people leaving Guyana in 2000. At present trends, nearly one of every ten Guyanese will be leaving the country each year by 2010.”

## R.C. priest shocked by 'practice pony' education

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados—A Catholic priest has expressed shock about a new kind of “sex education” he has recently discovered. That is, older women introducing little boys to sex, and he has called on the Child Care Board to address the issue urgently.

Vicar-General of the Roman Catholic Church Father Clement Paul told the Sunday Sun Saturday he was made “shockingly aware” of the practice, called “practice pony”, where women were initiating boys, sometimes their relatives, into sexual in-



Father Clement Paul

tercourse.

“There are, it seems, many women who introduce little boys into this adult behaviour. In discussing this matter with an educator and parent, I was informed that this is not considered as immoral, or even illegal.

“The experience is seen as initiating the child into manhood. I am reliably informed that this is not seen as a crime, especially since more often than not the boy enjoys the experience,” the priest said.

He said he understood the practice also took place between female teachers and male students.

“When we get there, we have disaster on our hands,” he said and also wrote in his monthly report for January.

But reports have surfaced about such relationships between teachers and students, one involving a couple at an older secondary school.

However, Minister of Education Reginald Farley said yesterday he was not aware of the development.

“Clearly it would be a matter for concern and I would hope that those involved, or concerned, or aware of the situation, would report the matter to us at the ministry so we can properly investigate and take whatever action may be necessary. It is a matter of tremendous concern for us.”

The minister noted, however, that it would be prejudicial for him to determine how a public officer accused of an offence would be disciplined. Farley added that his ministry would make the necessary representation to the Public Service Commission to ensure that discipline was not brought to a “new low” in schools.

“The rumours have been there for a long time but we have no evidence,” was what public relations officer of the Barbados Union of Teachers Cobin Hinds said yesterday. “No report has been made to

us.”

But chairman of the Child Care Board David “Joey” Harper, whom the priest called on to address the trend urgently, said “practice pony” was nothing new.

“Both boys and girls have been exploited by females in the family, those who are 25, 30 and 35 and it has a very traumatic effect on both (sexes)” he said.

He too said he had no evidence of the teacher-student relations.

“I would prefer not to comment on it, not for any aspersions to be carried on female teachers until there is evidence. But I have no doubt that the reverse could be true, and it will gradually come to light and we will investigate it,” the chairman said.

Harper said, however, the issue must be taken seriously and not swept under the carpet, especially in a society where women have always been protected and excused made for their actions.

“Society says that men must protect them, but it is time for equal rules and equal laws for women,” he said. (Daily Nation)

## Retired judges petition President over concerns about their pension

P.O.R.T - O.F - S.P.A.I.N. Trinidad—Retired Supreme Court judges have petitioned the President for an increase in their monthly pension. They also want an increase in other benefits because they are finding it difficult to make ends meet.

In a letter to President George Maxwell Richards 19 retired judges have pointed out that they have fallen on hard times and cannot survive on their monthly pensions, which range from TTS\$4,000-TTS\$11,500 a month. The amount they receive depends on the date of their retirement.

In addition to an increase in pension the judges are asking for medical assistance and chauffeur's allowance. They also want some of the privileges they enjoyed while in office. These include foreign travel allowance, the use of diplomatic passports, as well as the use of the Priorty Bus Route.

The judges have emphasised that they should enjoy financial independence while on retirement. Among the judges whose names are on the petition are Justice Ulric Cross, World War 2 veteran and recipient of a national award; Justice Jean Permann; and another recipient of a national award; George Collymore, former Chairman of the Integrity Commission; Lennox Deyasingh, Ralph Narine, Clebert Brooks, Bissoondath Ramlogan and Maurice Corbin.

In their letter to Richards the judges pointed out that

“When a judge attains the age of retirement (65) he demits office and thereupon becomes entitled to a pension which is calculable by a provision which is nothing short of a convoluted colonial actuarial hanger unfortunately inherited at independence.” They said the pension remains fixed and unchangeable for the rest of the judge's life.

The petition stated that “in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean the retiring judge is in receipt of his full salary with index-linked periodic adjustments to ensure that the retiree is assured of a reasonable standard of living in advancing age when he may well be incapable of physical and intellectual exertions to improve his financial condition.”

The petition noted that the Legal Profession Act of 1986 states that a person who previously held a substantive appointment as a judge of the Supreme courts of Trinidad shall not appear as an attorney at law in any of the courts of Trinidad and Tobago for a period of ten years commencing on the date of his retirement.

It was pointed out that the letter was sent to the President because judicial appointments are made by the president on the recommendation of the Legal Services Commission and it was customary that all matters relating to the judiciary were normally attended to by the President. This, it was said, was in keeping with the separation of the judiciary and the executive.

A retired judge, who requested anonymity told the Express: “It is ludicrous to tell a judge to retire at age 65 and be debared from practising for 10 years.”

He added “In all other professions people are allowed to practice their profession on retirement, and this is also the case with magistrates.”

Another retired judge said laws will soon be passed in Canada” to prevent any employer from compelling an employee to retire so long as he is capable of carrying on his work.”

“No other class of people in society is similarly encumbered or has such restraint of trade inflicted upon them,” said the judge.

The Express learned that there were several retired judges who get a pension of “a little over \$3,000 and are struggling to make ends meet, let alone the hefty medical bills they have to foot on a weekly basis.” That was the amount they were due to get based on their pensionable salary when they retired some 15 years ago.

They stated “some of our esteemed retired colleagues are unfortunately gravely afflicted by ill health, and are experiencing financial trauma, largely the belated outcome of unsatisfactory retirement provisions and plan for retired judges.”

The judges now join a number of other pensioners who are having difficulty to live on their pension while the cost of living continues to rise. (Trinidad Express)

# Record deficit forces cuts in Bush budget

WASHINGTON—U.S. President George W. Bush proposed a \$2.4 trillion election-year budget on Monday that would boost defense spending, slash 128 programs and seek to cut this year's record deficit in half—a goal even fellow Republicans were skeptical he could achieve.

The White House acknowledged it would need to up to \$50 billion in extra money for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan next year. This would be on top of the \$400 billion military budget and would potentially shatter his deficit reduction aims.

After inheriting a surplus, Bush has overseen a dramatic worsening of the budget picture. He hopes to improve his fiscal image before the November election by laying out plans to reduce the record \$521 billion deficit by a third next year and in half between 2007 and 2009.

To get there, he is asking Congress to terminate 65 major programs and reduce another 63, reserving the bulk of new federal spending for homeland security and defense while making his tax cuts permanent. Among those to be scrapped—a \$149 million public housing program and a \$171 million Commerce Department advanced technology program for businesses.

The White House still expects the budget shortfall to total \$1.35 trillion through 2009 and government debt to rise from \$8.1 trillion to \$10.5 trillion, prompting warnings from Democrats that chronic deficits would crowd out private investment, drive up interest rates and slow economic growth.

"We went through a recession, we were attacked and we're fighting a war. These are high hurdles for a budget and for a country to overcome and yet we've overcome them," Bush said of his budget, which would cut funding for about half of the 15 Cabinet-level agencies.

He said he was "confident" his deficit targets would be met, but Democrats and Republicans alike expressed doubts and said they were bracing for a bitter fight between the White House and Congress that could stretch through the campaign season in Florida Republican Rep. Bill Young, the House of Representative's chief overseer of federal spending programs, said "austere" spending limits would not significantly reduce the deficit. "The numbers simply do not add up."

Rep. John Spratt of South Carolina, the ranking Democrat on the House Budget Committee, said it was "nei-

ther credible nor realistic."

In line with his campaign priorities, the budget's biggest winners will be homeland security with nearly 10 percent rise and the military with nearly 7 percent. Defense contractors including Boeing Co. and Northrop Grumman Corp. stand to benefit as Bush's \$401.7 billion military budget increases spending on missile defense and on modernizing the Army.

To placate conservatives threatening a revolt, growth of other discretionary spend-

ing would be capped at 0.5 percent. Because that is well below the inflation rate, it amounts to a cut in domestic programs and the lowest growth since 1993.

Among the harshest hit were agriculture, transportation, environmental and small-business programs. Housing advocacy groups warned that Bush's budget would reduce by 250,000 the number of families receiving aid.

Education would get an overall 1.3 percent boost—not enough, Democrats say, to

fulfill Bush's election-year pledge to improve school performance.

AIDS advocacy groups said he would cut assistance by almost two-thirds to the U.N.-backed Global Fund to Fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Bush has set the goal of bringing this year's record \$521 billion shortfall down to \$364 billion in fiscal 2005, to \$241 billion in 2007 and then to \$237 billion in 2009. There is no talk of surpluses in the foreseeable future.



Alan Bjerga (L) reacts after being one of the first members of the press to receive the official copy of the "Fiscal Year 2005 Budget of the U.S. Government" after its release at the Government Printing Office in Washington, on Monday.

## Democrats slam Bush budget, Republicans eye more cuts

WASHINGTON—Democrats on Monday criticized President George W. Bush's plans to slash funding for scores of U.S. government programs and some Republicans said the cuts are too small to dent the record budget deficit.

In his \$2.4-trillion fiscal 2005 budget, Bush asks Congress to kill 65 major domestic spending programs and reduce another 63, while also calling for big boosts in homeland security and defense funding and the extension of his 2001 and 2003 tax cuts at a cost of around \$1 trillion over the next decade.

That will likely set the stage for a bitter fight over tax and spending priorities in the run-up to November's presidential election and provide fresh opportunities for Democratic rivals to attack Bush's fiscal record. "The new Bush budget is more of the same—record deficits, tax cuts for the wealthy and special interests,

and cuts in areas that matter to families—such as health care and education," Massachusetts Democratic Sen. John Kerry said.

Other Democratic presidential hopefuls took a similar tack, with former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean accusing Bush of "fiscal insanity" and retired Gen. Wesley Clark characterizing his priorities as "tax cuts for the rich and tough luck for everyone else."

But the massive fiscal reversal that has taken place on Bush's watch—with a record budget surplus of \$236 billion in 2000 giving way to a record deficit of \$521 billion this year—has also goaded Republican fiscal conservatives into near revolt and spurred calls for even tougher curbs on spending.

"We want to move further, we want to move faster with regard to deficit control, with regard to spending control," House of Representatives Budget Committee Chairman

Jim Nussle, an Iowa Republican, told reporters on Monday.

Bush has proposed to hold the growth of the spending Congress controls, outside of homeland security and defense, to 0.5 percent next year—well below the rate of inflation—as part of an effort to halve the deficit over five years. But many conservatives would like a complete freeze, Nussle said.

Some other Republicans, though, note the spending targeted by Bush makes up less than a fifth of the budget, and that even a freeze will cut the deficit by a "minimal" \$3 billion. "No one should expect significant deficit reduction as a result of austere non-defense discretionary spending limits. The numbers simply do not add up," said Florida Republican Rep. Bill Young, the House's chief overseer of federal spending.



Democratic presidential candidate North Carolina Senator John Edwards supporters hold signs at a Columbia, South Carolina campaign rally on Monday. Edwards is a South Carolina native.

## Edwards loses voice, vows Carolina win

SENECA, South Carolina—Sen. John Edwards widened his lead over other Democratic presidential hopefuls in South Carolina on Monday but lost his voice as he predicted victory in the state where he was born.

Edwards was hoarse and straining to speak, cutting his stump speech short as he rallied supporters at the South Carolina colleges. "I've been giving too many speeches. This voice is starting to fade on me," he said.

"I will be back here to your president to have one heck of a celebration," Edwards told students at Charleston College.

Edwards, a senator from North Carolina, increased his lead over front-runner John Kerry in South Carolina from one to five points in the latest three-day tracking poll, according to a Reuters/MSNBC/Zogby poll released on Monday, South Carolina, which Edwards says he must win to stay in the race, is one of seven states voting today in the Democratic contests for the right to challenge U.S. President George W. Bush in November.

He sounded familiar themes on his last day of campaigning, that America is divided into two countries—one for the affluent who wield power in Washington and one for those struggling to pay their bills—and promised to bring jobs to a state that has been bleeding them for three years.

Art Alexakis, lead singer from the band Everclear, endorsed Edwards and traveled with him on his swing through the colleges. Alexakis, describing himself as "just a basic average American" who grew up in a housing project and did well in a tough business, said he admired Edwards' ability to communicate and his rise from humble beginnings.

"I believe in John Edwards," he said. "He connects with me. When I see him talking to people, he connects with them."

Edwards also traveled to Seneca, the mill town where his parents were living when he was born. He later worked his way through college unloading tractor trailer trucks before becoming a wealthy trial lawyer.

Edwards said his father had to borrow money to pay the hospital when he was born, adding that he understands people struggling to pay bills. "I have lived it. It is personal for me. I saw the devastation that was created in my home town when the mill closed," he said. "I haven't forgotten where I came from."

In 13 months of campaigning, Edwards has been steadfastly sunny and enthusiastic. Asked after the rally how voters could differentiate between him and Kerry, Edwards said the chief difference was that he did not accept money from lobbyists.

"If we want real change in Washington, we need someone who hasn't been there

# Sharon stuns party, says Gaza settlements will go

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon stunned friends and foes on Monday by saying he planned to evacuate almost all the Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip.

"I have given the order to plan for the evacuation of 17 settlements in the Gaza Strip," the right-wing prime minister told the Haaretz newspaper.

"I am working on the assumption that in the future there will be no Jews in Gaza."

Sharon, once considered the godfather of the settlement movement, later told his pro-settler Likud party the proposal he will take to Washington later this month would also call for the removal of a

smaller number of Jewish enclaves in the West Bank.

He gave no time frame but Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said he expected the plan, part of a strategy of disengagement with the Palestinians, would be implemented by mid-year if peace talks hit a dead end.

It was the first time Sharon had revealed plans for such an extensive pullout from land Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war. "I am in shock," Likud lawmaker Yehiel Hazan said.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan said it was "encouraging that Israel is considering bold steps to reduce tensions between Israel

and Palestinians."

But Palestinians and Israeli opposition legislators were sceptical. "Usually when the Israeli government speaks about evacuation of settlements, it aims only at public relations. If Israel wants to leave Gaza no Palestinian will stand in its way," Palestinian cabinet member Saeb Erekat told Reuters.

In a sign of difficulties ahead, Sharon narrowly survived a no-confidence vote in parliament when members of his ruling Likud party and two pro-settlement coalition partners stormed out in protest at the Gaza plan, taking their votes with them.

A surge in violence over the

past week has cast further doubt on the prospects of a U.S.-backed "road map" to peace. Israeli troops killed four Palestinian militants in a battle in the Gaza Strip on Monday. Security sources said a commander of the Hamas faction, behind a suicide bombing that killed 11 in Jerusalem last

week, had died in an shootout in Bethlehem.

Despite the bloodshed, Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie said preparations were under way for his first meeting with Sharon since he took office in November.

Shortly after Qurie spoke,

Sharon's words appeared on the Haaretz Website. His plan entails removal of all but two or three Jewish enclaves in the 360-sq-km (139-sq-mile) coastal strip, where over a million Palestinians live in poverty beside a few thousand settlers who control 21 per cent of the land.

## European stomach cancer rates dropping fast, report shows

LONDON—Deaths from stomach cancer in Europe fell by 30 percent from 1980 to 1999 due to better diets, food preservation and control of bacteria linked to the disease, an international team of researchers said on Tuesday.

They predicted the number of cases will continue to fall but that the illness will remain a major public health problem in Eastern Europe and a priority in Russia.

"We are seeing a steady and persistent fall in rates across various major geographical areas of the continent and there is little systematic indication of it levelling off over the most recent years, indicating that the decrease is likely to continue in the near future," said Professor Fabio Levi, of the University Insti-

tute of Social and Preventive Medicine in Lausanne, Switzerland.

"In fact, if anything, the downward trend has been even steeper over the most recent calendar period," he added in a statement.

The research published in the *Annals of Oncology* journal show death rates from stomach cancer are falling throughout the European Union and six central and eastern European countries and Russia that were included in the study.

In EU countries rates dropped from 18.6 per 100,000 to 9.8. In Eastern Europe it slumped from 27.9 per 100,000 to 16.1 and in the Russian Federation from 51.6 to 32.0 in 1998.

Rates of the disease are five

times higher in Russia than in Scandinavia or France, and elevated in eastern Europe, Portugal and Spain, compared to other countries.

The reasons for the drop are varied and not completely understood. "Almost certainly these include a more varied and affluent diet and better food conservation, including refrigeration. In addition, there is better control of *Helicobacter pylori* infection—a bacterium linked to stomach cancer—and reduced levels of smoking, at least in men," he said. "However, whether improved diagnosis and treatment has also played a role, particularly over the most recent period, remains open to question."



French President Jacques Chirac delivers a speech in Marseille, on Monday.

## Corruption saga revives old ghosts for Chirac

PARIS—President Jacques Chirac has eluded French investigators for years but the whiff of scandal has returned since a court convicted his close ally, Alain Juppe, of political corruption.

Juppe was found guilty last Friday of misappropriating funds at Paris city hall to pay the wages of allies from Chirac's RPR political party who had fake jobs in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when Chirac was mayor and Juppe worked directly for him.

Opposition leaders and some newspapers say the buck should not stop with Juppe and that the verdict was an indictment of an entire system put in place by Chirac. "Alain Juppe was condemned criminally speaking but it's Chirac who was sanctioned morally," said Francois Hollande, chief of the opposition Socialist

Party.

He also questioned the conservative government's adoption of a law in 2002 which protects the head of state from legal pursuit while in office.

The mayor of Paris, Socialist Bertrand Delanoë, said not only Juppe was responsible. "This is all about an entire team where Chirac was the leader. A whole team, a whole system that was deficient in terms of democratic culture," he said. "The responsibility is collective."

Juppe, a former prime minister, received an 18-month suspended jail sentence and was barred for 10 years from holding elected office. His lawyer has appealed against a verdict that appears to have ruined his presidential ambitions.

Media attention has focused since Friday on sup-

port Juppe has won from party allies, on whether he will quit politics and on allegations by one of the judges that her phones were tapped and her office broken into during the case.

A few newspapers have also gone on to discuss the implications of the case for Chirac, who has ordered an inquiry into the judge's charges and could yet be dragged into the party financing scandal.

"What the court in Nanterre condemned was the entire covert funding system of the RPR party via Paris city hall," the influential *Le Monde* newspaper said in an editorial. "The only person missing is the person who presided over the Gaullist (RPR) party and who was mayor of Paris: Jacques Chirac. Jacques Chirac is protected by his status as president but he is in no way



# Iraq, constitution rifts cloud Prodi's succession

BRUSSELS—Unhealed rifts over the Iraq war and a stalled European Union constitution are complicating the search for a successor to Romano Prodi as president of the European Commission, diplomats say.

That has prompted EU outside Ireland to look outside the small circle of heads of state and government. As a result, an outsider is gaining credence as a possible compromise candidate—Antonio Vitorino, a moderate Portuguese socialist in charge of justice and home affairs in the EU ex-

ecutive.

Prodi, a centre-left Italian prime minister, was chosen swiftly in a show of unity in March 1999 as the first NATO bombs fell on Kosovo. He replaced Jacques Santer of Luxembourg, forced to resign in a scandal over mismanagement and nepotism. The former economics professor had led Italy from financial profligacy to qualify as a founder member of the euro and was on good terms with Europe's Socialists and Christian Democrats.

No such consensual figure

is likely to stand out when the 25 EU leaders decide at a mid-June summit on a president to head the Commission for the next five years from November 1. "This will have to marinate for a good while. No candidate is emerging clearly," one current commissioner said.

The Commission, with some 20,000 civil servants, proposes European laws and supervises their implementation. It has extensive powers in trade, competition and market regulation and a leading say in economic, transport and environment policy.

## Anti-War Federalists

After a centre-left figure from a big country, EU tradition would call for a centre-right president from a small state.

But among serving centre-right leaders, Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt and Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker seem tainted by membership of the anti-war camp led by France and Germany, and are seen as too integrationist by several countries. Britain vetoed then Belgian Prime Minister



Yona Metzger (R) Grand Rabbi of the Ashkenazis blesses European Union Commission President Romano Prodi of Italy during the opening of a Jewish school in Vienna, Austria on Monday. Metzger awarded Prodi with the "Humanitarian Achievement Award" of the Rabbinical Center of Europe.

Jean-Luc Dehaene in 1994 after "federalist". Dehaene is still a contender.

Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who ran a highly successful EU presidency in 2002 finalising the bloc's eastward enlargement, has shown no desire for the job. He is probably too pro-American for the Franco-German camp, diplomats say, and his country is not a member of the single European currency.

Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel, a Christian Democrat with solid European credentials, has some backers, but France and Germany may not have forgiven his 2000 political alliance with far-right anti-immigration leader Joerg Haider. At a time when

French and Belgian leaders are trying to hold the line against local or national coalitions with the extreme right, choosing Schuessel could send the wrong signal.

Outgoing Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar has set an example of successful economic reform but alienated many by his firm backing for U.S. President George W. Bush in the Iraq war.

He also helped block agreement on a new EU constitution in December to defend Spain's disproportionate voting power. He has said she will not seek a European job.

Party politics are a complicating factor. Several potential candidates are left-of-centre, including former Finnish Prime Minister

Paavo Lipponen and outgoing Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis, while most EU governments and the majority in the European Parliament are on the centre-right.

## Technocrat

Under the Nice treaty, the Commission president no longer has to be chosen by unanimity but by qualified majority vote. But in practice, the choice will require broad consensus.

Although the draft constitution stipulates that the head of the EU executive must be a former or serving national leader, Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern said on starting his six months in the EU chair that he may recommend a "technocrat". Ahern recalled that Frenchman Jacques Delors, the Commission's strongest president, was never a national leader. Several diplomats and commissioners said Vitorino, although little known outside Brussels, seemed the best placed outsider. A multilingual policy expert and competent administrator, he could be an obvious choice if EU leaders are looking for a low-key manager rather than a high-profile political leader.

Although a socialist, he would be proposed by Portugal's centre-right government, giving his nomination a bipartisan flavour that could ease European Parliament confirmation.

## Long-lost wallet returned to Swede

STOCKHOLM—A wallet lost in southern Sweden more than 40 years ago has been returned to its owner—with her cash still in it.

Gulli Wihlborg was 18 when she dropped it while cycling in the town of Trelleborg in the summer of 1963.

The wallet contained 45.54 crowns—a sum she said was half her monthly rent at the time—receipts and photographs. Its equivalent in

today's money is about 412 crowns (\$56).

It arrived in the mail at her home of 25 years in the nearby city of Malmo with a handwritten note, saying: "Dear Gulli, never give up hope. Here is the wallet you dropped on Ostersjogatan (a street) many years ago. Greetings from Trelleborg." "I find it quite fantastic," she told regional newspaper Trelleborgs Allehanda. The sender remained unknown.

## Russia says could speed up Georgia bases removal

MOSCOW—Russia gave the first sign on Monday that it was prepared to speed up the closure of two military bases in neighbouring Georgia, saying it could envisage them being removed in seven to nine years.

The presence of the bases, vestiges of the Soviet era, has become a major irritant in relations between Moscow and the new Georgian leadership which wants them removed in three years. Until now, Moscow has said it could not close them for at least a decade.

But, in comments to Interfax news agency that showed a softening of its position, Colonel-General Yuri Baluyevsky, first deputy head of the General Staff, said: "We have to look for a middle way here. Maybe the process could be realised over 7-9 years. This depends on when we can start

to create infrastructure for the removed troops."

But he insisted that Georgia's call for them to be removed in three years was "unrealistic." Georgian officials were not immediately available for comment.

The future of the bases, which house around 8,000 soldiers, has become a hot issue since former President Eduard Shevardnadze was overthrown in a "rose revolution" in November, and replaced by a more Western-oriented government.

New President Mikhail Saakashvili has called the bases a "colonial" relic and has linked their removal to cracking down on Chechen rebels who, Moscow says, use Georgian territory as a base for attacking Russia.

He has won backing from Washington—which has military advisers with the Geo-

rgan army—for the bases' removal, but Russia has stressed it cannot afford to close them quickly. The United States has indicated it would be prepared to contribute financially to the early closure of the bases at Akhalkalaki in the south and Batumi on the Black Sea coast.

Most analysts think Russia is dragging its feet on the issue to keep influence over its neighbour and maintain a strategic line of bases along NATO-member Turkey's border.

"Russia could withdraw the bases within three months," said independent defence analyst Pavel Felgenhauer. "There are not a lot of weapons there, probably only 300 tanks, and only around 300 Russian officers. The rest of the soldiers are locals."

## Pakistan scientist admits selling nuclear secrets

ISLAMABAD—The father of Pakistan's atomic bomb has confessed to selling nuclear secrets to Iran, Libya and North Korea, but authorities have yet to decide if the national hero will go on trial, officials said on Monday.

Top scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan was sacked as adviser to the prime minister on Saturday and is the main suspect in a two-month investigation into allegations that individuals passed on Pakistan's nuclear weapons secrets to third countries.

Seven suspects are still under investigation, but senior former military and intelligence officials—who experts say must have known about Khan's activities—are not being questioned. Putting Khan on trial is a sensitive issue in Pakistan, where he is revered as a national hero and the father of not only the country's, but the Islamic world's atomic bomb.

"He (Khan) has admitted these things," said a military official on condition of anonymity, referring to allegations Khan peddled nuclear secrets to Iran, Libya and North Korea during the late 1980s and early 1990s. "It has yet to be decided whether he goes on trial or not."

Intelligence sources said the evidence against Khan was strong enough to formally charge him, and included a statement from a key middleman in Dubai that could prove damning.

His lavish lifestyle, minutely detailed in the English-language local media, may also be used against him. But Western diplomats and analysts say a trial would open a "Pandora's box" for Pakistan and in particular its powerful military, which was likely to be implicated in any case.

The intelligence community also believes Khan's daughter may have gone abroad with material that could compromise the military. The 69-year-old Khan has been kept under 24-hour watch and has yet to speak publicly since the probe began.

Pakistan launched its investigation more than two months ago after the U.N. nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, found evidence

pointing to Pakistani involvement in Iran's nuclear programme. Designs used in Libyan and North Korean nuclear programmes are also believed to have come from Pakistan.

The international community hopes the probe will help expose a global network of secret nuclear proliferators amid fears sensitive technology could fall into the hands of terrorists.

The decision to single out Khan marks a major turnaround in Pakistani policy. In January, 2003, the government rushed to his defence,

dismissing as "concocted and fabricated speculation" newspaper reports linking him to illegal proliferation.

The widely read Urdu-language press has criticised the handling of the case, and accuses President Pervez Musharraf of blindly following America's agenda after he supported its war in Afghanistan and vowed to crack down on Islamic militancy. "Whatever reason the government gives to justify its actions, the nation will consider it a step toward completion of the American agenda in this region," the Nawa-i-Waqt daily



Khan

wrote. But senior officials say that public opinion may swing behind the government if Khan's guilt can be proved beyond doubt. Musharraf is expected to address the nation, probably early next week, once the investigation is completed.



German paramedics carry an unidentified patient on a stretcher at the entrance of the German tropical diseases institute in Hamburg, on Monday.

## Germany checks women for suspected bird flu

HAMBURG. German health authorities examined two women for possible bird flu infection on Monday but said tests suggested they were most probably not infected with the virus now sweeping Asia.

One of the women had returned from a trip to Thailand on Saturday and been taken to hospital complaining of sickness, dizziness and fever. Her companion, who had no symptoms, has also undergone tests.

"There is nothing to suggest it is bird flu," Professor Bernhard Fleischer, director

of the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine in the northern city of Hamburg, told reporters after receiving the first results of clinical tests. "At this point it seems bird flu is unlikely."

Fleischer later gave an update on the woman's condition, saying she no longer had fever. "It's probably not such a severe illness, the patient is doing well," he said, adding further tests were being conducted to rule out bird flu.

Shares in Deutsche Lufthansa AG and tour operator TUI had fallen on the news of possible bird flu cases, which could affect bookings from German tourists. The infections would have been the first in Europe in the latest epidemic, which has so far killed 12 people and affected 10 countries in Asia.

Officials from Hamburg's health authority and from the Robert Koch Institute in Berlin, Germany's top health institute, said the women were unlikely to be infected with

bird flu.

Gerd-Dieter Burchard, the doctor treating the woman at the Hamburg institute, said she was a young German who had had no contact with poultry in Thailand. He gave no further details.

"It's a very low level of suspicion but we cannot rule it out and can take no risks," Burchard said.

Scientists fear the virus in Asia may now be transmitted from person to person. The European Union's health chief said he was monitoring the possible spread of bird flu from human to human in Asia but no immediate additional steps were planned within the bloc.

"The World Health Organisation hasn't confirmed the human-to-human transmission in Vietnam, but it's very worrying," EU Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner David Byrne said.

## Apartment block collapses in central Turkey, 3 die

KONYA, Turkey—A 10-storey apartment block collapsed in central Turkey on Monday, killing a two-year-old girl and at least two other people and trapping many more under the rubble, officials said.

Rescue workers and residents covered in white dust used their bare hands to dig through the debris in a desperate attempt to find any survivors of the 36-apartment block in Konya, a city 250 km (155 miles) south of the capital Ankara.

As many as 120 people may have been in the building in Konya's Selcuklu township. Shops on the ground floor were closed for the Muslim holiday of Eid-al-Adha when the building collapsed around 8:30 p.m. (1830 GMT).

"Some of the families had visitors over to celebrate the holiday, others had gone away, so it's hard to say how many people were inside," Mustafa Torosoglu, who lived in the building, told NTV.

Doctors were treating more

than 25 people, an official at one hospital told Reuters, and state-run news agency Anatolian said some suffered injuries after jumping out of their apartment windows as the block crumbled into a five-metre (16-foot) pile.

Panicked relatives and others rushed to the scene seeking news of casualties, and rescue workers complained the huge crowds were making it difficult to listen for the sounds of any who remained buried alive.

The teams were searching for one woman who had used her mobile telephone to call for help. A young man was pulled out of the rubble alive before workers reached his mother who had died, witnesses said.

Rescuers scrambled on top of the pile of concrete blocks, broken furniture and twisted metal, but large earth-moving equipment was not being used for fear of unsettling the mound of debris and crushing any survivors trapped beneath.

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**Philippus:** Commercial for sale. Unavailable price. 49181MP \$64,750, not negotiable, next to Vinograd building, direct access from w.g. bumper car park. Call now or never. 5252131. Thanks.

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**Pointe Blanche:** 3bedrooms, pool, fully furnished generator. Available Feb. 1st info. call: 5521721

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# Witness recounts call for harsh Martha Stewart

NEW YORK—A "hurried and harsh" Martha Stewart called ImClone Systems Inc. the day after suspicious stock trade and unsuspected know what was happening at the biotech company, a former executive assistant testified in court on Monday.

Emily Perret, ImClone founder Sam Waksal's one-time assistant, told jurors that Stewart called the company's offices in late December 2001 and ordered her to "Get Sam" or "get the stock" normally about twice of view.

Todd Waksal was unavailable, Stewart left a message that Perret recorded in her phone log as, "Martha Stewart. Something is going on with ImClone and she wants to know what," according to Monday's testimony.

Stewart is on trial for lying to authorities who were investigating her on December 2001 sale of ImClone shares, which prosecutors believe was based on an inside tip. The lifestyle trendsetter had placed the trade before there was a public announcement that caused ImClone shares to tumble.

The case against Stewart, who appeared in New York court wearing black pants and an orange jacket, was the 2001 sale of ImClone shares. She was joined in court by her daughter and supporters, including comedian Rosie O'Donnell.

Prosecutors believe Stewart sold the shares after learning that the company's founder, her friend Sam Waksal, was dumping stock. Stewart and her former Merrill Lynch broker Peter Bacanovic are charged with scheming to hide the reason for her trade.

Brian Schimpfshauer, a government witness who works in Merrill Lynch's market surveillance department, testified that Bacanovic told securities regulators that he had spoken to Stewart on Dec. 27 and advised her to sell her shares in ImClone stock.

The government maintains that conversation never took place. Bacanovic's statement to the Securities and Exchange Commission came during a conference call at the early stages of their investigation. Federal prosecutors claim that Bacanovic lied to the SEC during that call, saying in their indictment that Bacanovic and Stewart never spoke on Dec. 27 and that he misled the regulators as part of a cover up.

## Higher corporate profits aren't leading to hiring

NEW YORK—When Philip Gardner took a research position at Michigan State University in 1985, big corporations were snapping up graduates.

As the U.S. economy rebounded from a recession, he recalled, Midland, Michigan-based Dow Chemical Co. was hiring more than 100 graduates a year, while automakers hired even more. Two recessions later, the economy is rebounding again, but the university's once-vast job pipeline is gone.

"Even though earnings are up for a company like Dow Chemical, they're just not hiring that many people any more," said Gardner, who directs the Collegiate Employment Research Institute.

Anecdotal evidence like this doesn't just worry the jobless, their families and friends. The lagging job market could become a key trippier for President Bush in this year's election. An economic recovery without jobs may not sit well with voters, who could side with Democrats suggesting that Bush has favored big business at the expense of workers.

And without a pickup in employment, consumer confidence and spending on Main Street may take a hit. Indeed, even companies with quarterly profits soaring are shy about adding workers—if they're not laying people off.

"We listened to over a hundred quarterly earnings conference calls and we have

not heard from anybody who says they are picking up the pace of hiring," said Richard Yamarone, director of economic research at Argus Research. "Not one."

### Job Export Worries

U.S. companies continue to look toward India and China for cheaper labor, adding to the worries of some that new jobs are headed to Guangzhou and Bangalore rather than Chicago or Boston.

Confirming these fears, factory closures and mass layoffs made headlines this earnings season. Just last week, Eastman Kodak Co. said it would cut 15,000 jobs as it redefines itself to keep pace with the market for digital products. Kraft Foods Inc. said it would cut 6,000 jobs and close 20 plants as it reported lower fourth-quarter earnings.

Such cuts are inevitable as products go out of fashion or companies run into trouble. But even companies with soaring profits are cutting back their work force.

Both Dow Chemical and rival DuPont Co. reported higher-than-expected fourth-quarter earnings and gave optimistic forecasts for this year—but still announced plans to cut more jobs.

And in a trend consistent across the banking industry, Wells Fargo & Co. last month reported strong fourth-quarter profit, but said it cut 7,500 of its 10,000 temporary mortgage positions since September. More layoffs are on the way, the



According to the most widely accepted measure of U.S. employment, public-speaking coach and consultant Lee Andra Temescu was not among the 130 million Americans who had a job in 2003. But don't try telling her that. Because she is one of more than 15 million self-employed workers in the United States, Temescu is on nobody's payroll—and thus does not show up on the Labor Department's employer survey used each month to assess the strength of the job market.

company said.

Meanwhile, only 1,008 new jobs were created in December, the Labor Department said. Last week, initial claims for state jobless benefits fell by 1,000, to 342,000, from the previous week.

John Lonski, chief economist at Moody's Investor Service, predicted job growth could start as early as March, based in the rapid increase nationwide in company productivity. Henry Willmore, head of U.S. economics at Barclays Capital, agreed.

"We've already started to see this happen," Willmore

said, as the financial-services industry has started adding jobs for the first time in years.

Expect more job postings this quarter, he added, but not the glut of hiring in the post-recession mid-1980s. Willmore attributed the hot job market in that period to the U.S. economy's sudden growth—unlike today's sluggish growth.

But Gardner, of Michigan State, remains skeptical of an imminent job comeback. "Economists keep saying that these companies should be hiring," he said. "But they're not."

## US factories surge to 20-year high

NEW YORK—Manufacturing in the United States surged to a 20-year high at the start of the year as factories scrambled to meet demand, while consumer spending increased modestly during the holidays, reports showed on Monday. Even with improved factory production, however, manufacturers remained cautious about hiring, dampening hopes for a turnaround in production jobs.

The closely watched Institute for Supply Management's manufacturing index rose to 63.6 in January—the highest since late 1983—from a revised reading of 63.4 the prior month. That was shy of economists' expectations of a rise to 64.0.

"Manufacturing is at a cyclical upswing at the beginning of 2004, and is poised for further growth over the coming months," said Bear Stearns Chief Economist John Rydning.

Stocks initially fell and Treasuries rose on the slightly softer-than-expected report. But they reversed those moves in afternoon trade. The broad S&P 500 index ended up 37.37 percent at 1,135.26.

The ISM survey's new orders measure, a key barometer of future growth, was at the best level since the early 1970s. But the surge in factory output has yet to translate into jobs, and the employment index slipped to 52.9 from 53.5 in December.

Even though the economy has picked up in the past six months, robust hiring has been the missing link in the recovery. The risk is that if the job market does not improve, consumer spending could falter.

Economists have been surprised that the national payroll report has not shown an improvement in factory hiring after three years of declines. In December, 26,000 manufacturing jobs were lost. Analysts will look for signs of improvement in the January payroll report, due Feb. 6.

Most of the 2.4 million jobs lost over the past three years have been in manufacturing. "The economy is going to accelerate in some areas and decelerate in others and the labor market is going to be the one that keeps getting squeezed," said Lehman Brothers economist Drew Matus.

## Stock Market Report

Key Stock Movements February 2, 2004

	DAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE IN POINTS	2003 YEAR HIGH	2003 YEAR LOW
NEW YORK	10,499.18	+11.11	12,251.51 (Sep 29/03)	7,524.10 (Mar 1/03)
LONDON	4,381.4	-9.3	4,518.1	3,287.0 (Jan 19/04)
TOKYO	10,776.73	-6.88	11,161.71 (Oct 23/03)	7,407.88 (Mar 12/03)
FRANKFURT	4,071.76	+13.0	4,151.83 (Jan 23/04)	2,202.96 (Mar 12/03)

London Currency Fixing Rates February 2, 2004

Following are the middle exchange rates for leading currencies against the dollar:

	CURRENT	HIGH	LOW
Euro	1.2427	1.2486	1.2383
Japanese Yen	105.59	105.8	105.41
British Pound	1.8192	1.8269	1.8139
Australian Dollar	0.758	0.7651	0.7563
Brazilian Real	2.9225	2.963	2.93
Canadian Dollar	1.337	1.3426	1.3249
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7762	7.7779	7.7731
Mexican Peso	11.013	11.021	10.883
South African Rand	6.9601	7.1	7.0073

Gold (ounce) \$395.55 (401.48)

## Old general of French class warfare bows out

PARIS—Marc Blondel, the pugacious French labour boss behind the 1995 strikes which brought down the last conservative government, was taking part in his final trade union congress on Monday before hanging up his megaphone for good.

His retirement comes at a critical moment for France's trade union movement, with membership dwindling and President Jacques Chirac seeking to limit its right to call strikes on essential services such as public transport. But Blondel, known as "The General," pledged his Force Ouvriere (FO) union would take to the streets to defend healthcare reforms

this year which the left insists will make treatment less affordable for the poor.

"The French didn't get worked up about state pension reforms (last year) but on health there will be a real, hard battle," Blondel, 65, told Le Parisien newspaper. "At the congress, when I say healthcare deserves a strike, they will applaud," he said before Force Ouvriere (Worker Power), France's third-largest union, started its meeting just outside Paris.

Draft legislation to repair the widening deficit in France's generous health system is due by end-June. Options include hiking taxes,

cutting the amount the state reimburses for treatment or cutting back on available healthcare.

Blondel will step down on Saturday. Barring an upset, his successor will be named this weekend as Jean-Claude Mailly, the former right-hand man he calls "son" and who enjoys the backing of an influential far-left faction within the union.

But critics say Mailly, 50, has none of the media skills or force of character of Blondel. They predict a backlash by reformists in the union who believe it can achieve more by fostering negotiation with government and industry.

Named FO head in 1989, Blondel became one of France's most easily identifiable public figures, with his no-holds-barred rhetoric, Cuban cigars and black polo sweaters. But while a poll on Sunday ranked him as France's favourite trade union leader—with a 48 percent popularity rating more politicians can only dream of—his record has been mixed. It was Blondel who seized the initiative against Chirac's prime minister Alain Juppe in 1995, spearheading a vast public services strike against a first attempt to trim France's welfare state and public spending. As the protest

mushroomed into the worst social unrest seen in France since the 1968 student riots, the government ditched its plans and Juppe was finally forced out of power in 1997.

But Force Ouvriere's influence has declined during Blondel's reign. While actual membership figures are secret, estimates suggest it has nearly halved in a decade to barely 250,000.

Blondel's call last year for a general strike over year-to-year pay raises against Chirac's move to raise the retirement age was ignored by the private sector. The protest fizzled out when a group of moderate unions signed a compromise accord with the government.

# The right choice

WASHINGTON — Before the great hunt for scapegoats begins, let's look at what David Kay has actually said about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

First, and most trumpeted, he did not find "large stockpiles of newly produced weapons of mass destruction." He did find, as he reported last October, WMD-related activities, from a very active illegal missile program to research and development ("right up until the end")

on weaponizing the deadly poison ricin (the stuff found by London police on terrorists last year). He discovered "hundreds of cases" of U.N.-prohibited and illegally concealed activities.

Significant findings, but still a far cry from what the administration had claimed last March. Kay has now offered the most novel and convincing explanation for why U.S. intelligence — and, for that matter, U.N. inspectors and the intelligence agen-

cies of every country that mattered — had misjudged what Iraq possessed.

It was a combination of Iraqi bluff, deceit, and corruption far more bizarre than heretofore suspected. Kay discovered that an increasingly erratic Saddam had taken over personal direction of WMD programs. But because there was no real oversight, the scientists would go to Saddam for money, exaggerate or invent their activities, then pocket the funds.

Scientists were bluffing Saddam. Saddam was bluffing the world. The Iraqis were all bluffing each other. Special Republican Guard commanders had no WMDs, but they told investigators that they were sure that other guard units did. It was this internal disinformation that the whole outside world missed.

Congress needs to find out why, with all our resources, we had not a clue that this was going on. But Kay makes clear that Bush was relying on what the intelligence agencies were



By Charles Krauthammer

telling him. Kay contradicts the reckless Democratic charges that Bush cooked the books. "All the analysts I have talked to said they never felt pressured on WMD," says Kay. "Everyone believed that [Iraq] had WMD."

Including the Clinton administration. Kay told The Washington Post that he had found evidence that Saddam had quietly destroyed some biological and chemical weapons in the mid-1990s — but never reported it to the U.N. Which was why Clinton in 1998 declared with great alarm and great confidence that Iraq had huge stockpiles of biological and chemical arms — "and some day, some way, I guarantee you, he'll use the arsenal."

The intelligence failure

is quite spectacular, but its history is quite prosaic. When the U.N. inspectors left in 1998, they assumed that the huge stockpiles of unaccounted-for weapons still existed. What other assumption could they make? That Saddam had destroyed them and not even reported that to the very agency that could have then vindicated him and gotten sanctions lifted?

Secretary of State Colin Powell correctly makes the case that this very fact — the concealment of both the weapons and their possible destruction — clearly justifies the legality of the Iraq War, since the terms of the 1991 cease-fire placed the positive obligation on Iraq to demonstrate its own disarmament. And that it clearly and repeatedly failed to do.

But beyond the legal question is the security question. People forget that when the Bush administration came into office, Iraq was a very unstable situation. Thousands of Iraqis were dying as a result of sanctions. Containment necessitated the garrisoning of Saudi Arabia with thousands of "infidel" American troops — in the eyes of many Muslims, a desecration (cited by

Osama bin Laden as his No. 1 reason for his 1996 Declaration of War on America). The no-fly zones were slow-motion war, and the embargo was costly and dangerous — the sailors who died on the USS Cole were on embargo duty.

Until Bush got serious, threatened war and massed troops in Kuwait, the U.N. was headed toward loosening and ultimately lifting sanctions, which would have given Saddam carte blanche to regroup and rebuild his WMDs.

Bush reversed that slide with his threat to go to war. But that kind of aggressive posture is impossible to maintain indefinitely. A regime of inspections, embargo, sanctions, no-fly zones and thousands of combat troops in Kuwait was an unstable equilibrium. The U.S. could have either retreated and allowed Saddam free rein — or gone to war and removed him. Those were the only two ways to go. Under the circumstances, and given what every intelligence agency on the planet agreed was going on in Iraq, the president made the right choice, indeed the only choice.

## To the parents and friends of the girls on the Internet

I am a parent. I have two teenage daughters. Like the rest of St. Maarten I was shocked and appalled by the e-mail that is now circulating the island. An e-mail that graphically depicts young ladies in pornographic poses.

When I say young ladies I mean below the age of 16. This e-mail is spread all over the island and it has caused ripple effects in this community. I have a simple message to the parents and friends of the girls in the e-mail, press charges against the person who took the pictures and released them for the world to see.

Somebody has to be made an example so sick

nonsense like this can stop. The most disappointing part is the fact that the pictures were taken by a son of the soil, who nobody would expect. Someone the newspapers lauded for his academic achievements, the first from St. Maarten to do this and that, and someone who has a lot of musical talent. I realize that is broad, but I will not name names.

Young ladies should have some sense of self respect yes, but whoever is taking these pictures, a grown man, should be punished, fined, exposed publicly, something like that. Many parents still trust their children around him with the one

activity he does.

Parents, this will teach you a lesson to always know where your children are and with who they keep company. As a parent myself I was so upset when I saw those pictures and it was my teenager daughters who showed them on their computer. So I urge all of you or any of you who know the facts, to report this man and end his reign of terror over our children. Rumor has it this was not the first time.

Well, it should be the last time. Do the right thing.

**A concerned parent**

# Mongoose Menace

Years ago I realized the mongoose posed to the natural habitat of St. Maarten. This rodent might be shy when it comes to people, but it is the deadliest animal among the island's wildlife. I could not agree more with my friend Andy Caballero that mongooses are pests and should definitely be eradicated.

My first real close encounter with a mongoose was around January 1994. My stepdaughter and myself were on a hill overlooking Genevieve Bay when she told me that she had seen a cat crawl through the car window. Upon closer investigation I was stunned to find a mongoose in the car eating my fried chicken. With 16 razor sharp teeth, their two front canines can cut through bone. As a boy I always wondered why the local folks had such a deep hatred for the mongoose.

They used some of the crudest methods against this animal. I can vaguely re-

member but, about 40 years or more ago, a Sunday pastime by some people was putting a ram cat in a tank with a mongoose. Covered with chicken wire, those two critters fought to the death-like two pitbulls. But the cat usually won.

Another despicable way of dealing with this pest was to pour gasoline over the mongoose while it was in the trap, light a fire in front of the little wooden box and release the door. The mongoose bursts into flames as it rushed through the fire.

Many wooden homes were burnt to the ground as the blazing animal headed for the closest cellar, so this maniacal pyromania was discontinued. Ramming a piece of steel in the animal through a chicken wire cage seems to be the execution of choice lately. Being such a sucker for the egg the mongoose is easily poisoned by making a nail-sized hole in the egg shell and lacing it with rat poison. This is the easiest

way to do in this menace. However, not only mongoose eat eggs. An egg laced with Souricid might not kill your pet dog, but it will certainly make them very sick.

But one can hardly feel sorry for the mongoose. With young ones, the females can be just as ill-tempered and foul-smelling as a wolverine - to which species they are related. This also includes the weasel, another flesh eating mammal that will also hold its ground against all comers.

But how did this strange creature end up in St. Maarten? This species is most common to Africa and India. Half way around the world. There are none on Anguilla, our closest neighbouring island. The answer to this question was disclosed to me by the now deceased old timer, Long Geese. More than a hundred years ago St. Maarten was infested with snakes and rats of which the mongoose is a natural predator. So the animal was introduced by the early settlers. The reptiles were eradicated but the rats are still here.

But by solving one problem, the settlers created another. The mongoose is a poultry meat fanatic, and they can smell a freshly laid egg from a mile. I have stood by helpless and in dismay as mongoose devoured dozens of broiler hens, ducks, geese, turkey and guinea bird. They even kill young goats and sheep. I have seen mongoose in nests in trees eating the eggs and the young of birds. The mongoose usually gets to your trapped mountain doves before you do. You will find nothing more than the doves' two little red legs and a pile of feathers.

But I have learnt that having a couple of good dogs will usually keep the mongoose at bay. As to why there seems to be more mongoose in the Pointe Blanche and Genevieve Bay area, the story goes that the colony of mongooses that were introduced to the island were released in the area of Signal Hill in Pointe Blanche. I have trapped or killed up to seven mongoose in one day in the Genevieve Bay area. I still have several skulls. If Mr. Newton would like to have them for his Biology studies, Andy has my number and can feel free to call me.

## Wake up William before it is too late

It has been approximately four weeks since you spoke about your intention to support the Louisa-Godett government.

During your last radio interview, you said that Mr. Komproue was the spokesperson for the negotiation talks. Since then your constituents have not heard a word from you. Let me remind you that your constituents on St. Maarten did not vote for Komproue, they voted for you. Thanks to the Papiamentu news on GBBC some of us were able to pick up on what was happening. One thing for sure Jopi Abraham of Bonaire kept his people informed.

Mr. Komproue informed the governor general that he has a government in place and he is giving the NA until Monday to sign up. It is rumoured that the NA wants GEBE from DP-St. Eustatius and that is your reason for not signing.

It is also rumoured that your board has instructed you to go ahead and sign up, because you can still appoint three persons to serve on GEBE board.

If this is really the case,

then you were not sincere when you mentioned that joining the government is not about positions, it's about St. Maarten. Why the sudden change? The last two elections I supported the NA, because of what the party stood for. Now I am getting mixed feelings on how the party is operating by just ignoring the people who voted for them.

I am not a fan of the Democratic Party, but I respect the leader's position when she called Russell and Janchi home in the interest of St. Maarten. It was not in the interest of their salaries. That is what I called "country above self."

My advice to you is: Get a copy of attorney Richard Gibson's speech, read it, and get off the sinking ship before it goes down with you. Now that Holland is listening, the two biggest parties in the Island Council, namely the Democratic Party and the National Alliance should travel to Holland to fight for St. Maarten's interest.

We need you on St. Maarten not in Willemstad.

**Manuel Joe**

**Joseph Rudy Brooks**



Channel 15 (local)  
St. Maarten Cable TV

Local time	Programme
Tuesday, February 3	
8:00am	Replay AVS News
8:30am	Replay GIS Bulletin
6:00pm	GIS Productions
6:30pm	Caracao Week in Review
7:00pm	In Depth
7:30pm	AVS News
8:00pm	The Peacock Dance
8:30pm	Oral Gibbs Live
9:30pm	Westwood Park
10:00pm	St. Maarten Lottery
10:05pm	Caracao Week in Review
10:35pm	AVS News

BVN (Dutch/Flemish) TV  
Channel 46 St. Maarten Cable TV

Local times	Programme
Tuesday, February 3	
11:00am	NOS Journaal
11:05am	Tik tak
11:10am	Sesamstraat
11:25am	Preeffier
11:40am	Bijbaanjet
11:50am	Het klokhuis
12:05pm	Hans Kazan en magie unlimited
12:35pm	Lingo
1:00pm - 7:00pm	NOS Journaal
1:20pm - 7:20pm	Twee vandaag
2:05pm - 8:05pm	VRT Journaal
2:40pm - 8:40pm	Muziek clip
2:45pm - 8:45pm	Man bijt hond
3:05pm - 9:05pm	B & W
3:30pm - 9:30pm	NOS Journaal
3:50pm - 9:50pm	Weerbericht
3:55pm - 9:55pm	Met het mes op tafel
4:20pm - 10:20pm	Taxi
4:45pm - 10:45pm	Het geluk van Nederland
5:00pm - 10:00pm	Film: Kort
5:25pm - 11:25pm	Nova/Den Haag vandaag
6:15pm - 12:15am	NOS Sportjournaal

## Rappers the new athletes for sneaker companies

NEW YORK—Rapper Nelly, one of the performers on Sunday's Super Bowl-half-time show, isn't on Nike Inc.'s payroll. But some might say he should be after "Air Force Ones," his 2002 hit song named after Nike's top retro-style basketball shoes, sparked a frenzy of demand for them.

Athletic shoemakers have long relied on cream-of-the-crop sports figures like Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods and David Beckham to pitch their products and help differentiate them in their \$16 billion industry. But as Nelly's unsolicited endorsement demonstrated, top jockers aren't the only ones who can sell sneakers.

Reebok International Inc., the No. 2 U.S. sports shoe-maker behind Nike, has hired several rappers as its pitchmen. In 2003, privately held Lutz worked with hip-hop DJ Funkmaster Flex to launch his fashion-oriented signature shoes. And rapper Master P once endorsed sneakers for Converse, now a subsidiary of Nike.

It's hardly a risk-free strategy, given that the music is often associated with drugs, violence and exploitation of women. Still, experts agree



Nelly

that rap, a music genre second only to rock in the United States, is the way to reach youth, especially in the inner cities.

"(Young people) are such a unique and different market that you have to speak directly to them," said Que Gaskins, vice president of global marketing for Reebok's Rbk brand. The Canton, Massachusetts, company is teaming with well-known hip-hop music producer Pharrell to launch his signature footwear this summer.

Last year, Reebok also signed up rising rapper 50

Cent and Jay-Z, a hip-hop mogul whose Rocawear clothing line is popular among inner-city youths, to endorse their respective sneaker lines. The company said both Jay-Z's "5. Carter" and 50 Cent's "G6" shoes have fared well in stores. The two entertainers often wear and rap about the sneakers in their music videos, concerts and television performances.

"This gives exposure to a manufacturer's products," said David Synwoka, a sports marketing professor at Robert Morris University in central Pennsylvania. "It's better than commercials."

### Urban Youth Market

Synwoka said consumers often buy sneakers for other reasons besides their effectiveness on the playing field. "A lot of people buy these products as a fashion statement," he said.

Reebok saw the opportunity of tapping into the urban youth market in 2001, when it signed a lifetime sponsorship contract with Philadelphia 76ers guard

Allan Iverson, whom many also view as a hip-hop icon.

Relationships with rappers connect Reebok with new urban consumers, said Michael Atmore, editorial director of Footwear News, a weekly trade magazine. "It gives the brand an instant hip status," he said.

Nike, whose endorsement contracts totaled \$200 million this year, has supplied hip-hop stars like Eminem and Nelly with its products, but never formally sponsored them. The Air Force Ones sneakers have sold more than 8 million pairs since they were first designed in 1982.

"There is a definite crossover in terms of teenage consumer interest and these hip-hop artists," said Wells Fargo Securities analyst John Shanley. "It's an important part of the whole fashion wave."

Shanley said the endorsements would help drive up Reebok's sales, although the lift may be small. The name of the artist alone won't sell, he noted, since the shoes' price, look and color are equally important.

### Gangsta Rappers

Even though hip-hop has helped shape American culture for more than two decades, some contend that the endorsements may undermine the shoemakers' squeaky-clean athletic image.

"The rappers have the hoodlum, gangster image," said Jack Trout, president of Trout and Partners, a marketing strategy firm. "It's quite different than the athletes."

Given the changeable nature of young people's musical tastes, Trout said using rappers in the fashion-driven footwear market could have volatile results. "You're in today, and you're out tomorrow," he said.

Some rappers have a history of legal problems. In 2001, Jay-Z, whose real name is Shawn Carter, was sentenced to three years of probation for stabbing a record producer at a Manhattan nightclub.

Synwoka, the sports marketing professor, said the shoemakers risk scaring away more conservative customers. "It probably won't go side by side with the athlete's image," he said.

At the same time, he said, bad publicity about the endorsements can sometimes translate into good sales for their sponsors.



Actress Holly Hunter (L), Academy Award nominee for best supporting actress for her work in "Thirteen", poses with Alicia Silverstone before they receive the Cosmopolitan magazine's Fun Fearless Female of the Year Award for 2004, in New York on Monday.

Mel Brooks:

# Thanks for the hit Adolf

LONDON—Hollywood legend Mel Brooks thanked Adolf Hitler on Monday for inspiring his greatest hit and told Jews not to worry—“The Producers” is a joke.

At the ripe old age of 77, Brooks is enjoying a renaissance with his first film transformed into a theatre hit and now being made into a movie all over again. In the original 1968 movie, Brooks immortalised bad taste with the tale of two producers putting on the outrageous musical “Springtime for Hitler,” conceived as a deliberate flop to allow them to take the backers’ cash and flee.

“Come the 21st century, Brooks is as defiant as ever. “Whoemsoever wants to be served by my wit and my bad taste, please be my guest. If you don’t like being in the Bible belt, then buckle it,” he told Reuters Television.

Political correctness never stopped Brooks before and he is not going to start reinventing himself in now. In Britain to publicise the show’s London launch, he had a word of advice for his fellow Jews.

“May I warn some old Jews,” he said of the outrageous show. “It is make be-

lieve. Hitler is not really on the stage. We are making fun of Hitler.”

And then he offered tongue-in-cheek thanks to his inspiration. “In this show we have a lot of laughs at the expense of Mr Hitler and I am very grateful to him and

his family for allowing me to knock the shit out of them and make a couple of bucks,” he said.

Success second time around is that much sweeter for Brooks who said: “it’s like Groundhog Day.” “I feel like a punch drunk

prizefighter. When I went out to the ring, my first movie was The Producers and it was a knockout. I was a champ. I won an Academy award,” he recalled. “I went on to do Blazing Saddles and Young Frankenstein. I did very good movies but I was last year’s news. Nobody cared.”

Then came the stage version of “The Producers” which won a record 12 Tony Awards and is still running on Broadway after three years. Three companies are also playing across North America and Hollywood star Richard Dreyfuss is to join up with British comedian Lee Evans for the London production in November.

And Brooks is going to the well a third time with another film version of The Producers. Shaking his head in wonderment, the diminutive director said: “Here I am practically 100 years old and I have got this enormous hit.”

So does retirement beckon? No way. “Do I lift, do I drive, am I bagging groceries at a very busy supermarket? No. I sit with a little pencil and if I have an idea, I write it down. It’s light work. I can do that forever.”



Hollywood legend Mel Brooks poses for pictures with showgirls at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, for the launch of his musical “The Producers”, which will star U.S. actor Richard Dreyfuss and British comedian Lee Evans.

## Kobe Bryant too sick to attend court hearing

EAGLE, Colorado—Los Angeles Laker Kobe Bryant, charged with raping a 19-year-old hotel employee, failed to appear for a pre-trial hearing in a Colorado courtroom on Monday because he was sick, court officials said.

“Mr. Bryant is ill,” district court spokeswoman Karen Salaz told reporters outside the courthouse. There was a chance he would show up later in the day, she said. “He’s in the area,” she added.

No details were available on what ailed the 25-year-old star athlete. Eagle County District Court Judge Terry Ruckelriegel excused Bryant, Salaz said.

But his pre-trial hearing went ahead anyway, taking testimony behind closed doors on whether Bryant’s accuser’s medical and psychological records should be presented at Bryant’s trial. No trial date has been set and Bryant has not yet entered a formal plea.

The defense, which wants to cast doubt on the woman’s credibility, has said she tried to commit suicide twice to attract attention from an ex-boyfriend and her accusations against Bryant are just a repeat of that pattern.

At least four witnesses subpoenaed by the defense testified behind closed doors on Monday, including her close friend Lindsey McKinney. The defense has argued that the accuser’s right to keep her medical records confidential no longer applies because she spoke to friends about her medical problems.

Another person who testified in the closed session was a dormitory assistant at the University of Northern Colorado, where the accuser had gone to school. A year ago and several months before the June 30 Bryant incident, campus police took the young woman to a hospital because they considered her a danger to herself.

Bryant’s attorneys, Hal



Lindsay McKinney (L), witness for the Kobe Bryant defense, enters court alongside a Bryant defense team member at the Eagle, Colorado Justice Center to testify during the motion hearings on Monday. McKinney lived in the alleged victim’s parent’s home in Eagle, Colorado.

Haddon and Pamela Mackey, also want the judge to throw out statements the basketball star made to police a day after his accuser said she was raped. The judge ruled on Thursday that testimony about the statements will be heard in a closed-door session because any reporting on them in the high-profile case could jeop-

ardize Bryant’s right to a fair trial.

However, the judge will keep open a portion of the hearing that examines whether police acted legally when obtaining statements from Bryant because that issue “is rightfully a matter of public and media concern,” the judge wrote.



Janet Jackson (L) reacts after fellow singer Justin Timberlake ripped off one of her chest plates at the end of their half time performance at the XXXVIII Super Bowl in Houston, on Sunday.

## US watchdog investigates Jackson breast incident

WASHINGTON—The U.S. media watchdog on Monday promised to investigate whether indecency rules were broken during the broadcast of the Super Bowl halftime show when pop diva Janet Jackson’s bodice was ripped to expose her right breast.

During the break in the National Football League’s championship game, singer Justin Timberlake reached for Jackson as they sang a duet and tore off part of her black leather bustier, prompting widespread outrage.

U.S. Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael Powell promised a “thorough and swift” investigation of the stunt aired during one of the most popular American television broadcasts, which also attracts a major worldwide audience.

“The game garnered the best ratings in six years and the incident provoked wall-to-wall coverage on cable news networks. President George W. Bush was asked to comment but said he fell asleep before the halftime show.

“That celebration was tainted by a classless, crass and deplorable stunt,” Powell said in a statement that was echoed by others on the panel. “Our nation’s children, parents and citizens deserve better.”

Television networks are already on the defensive, with the FCC taking a more aggressive stand against indecency and Congress threatening to sharply raise fines for incidents. Viacom Inc.’s CBS, which aired the show, has been under fire for refusing to air political advertisements during the game and for shutting a controversial movie about

former president Ronald Reagan to cable from the network.

CBS and Viacom’s other unit, MTV, which produced the American football half-time bonanza, apologized for what they described as an unscripted moment. While Timberlake said it was a “wardrobe malfunction,” Jackson capitalized on the attention.

Virgin Records, said that her new single, “Just a Little While,” was being delivered to U.S. radio outlets on Monday, ahead of schedule. The track from her upcoming album “Damita Jo,” was released early due to a “firestorm of interest” fueled by unauthorized Internet downloads of the song, Virgin said.

“We attended all rehearsals throughout the week and there was no indication that anything would happen,” CBS said. “The moment did not conform to CBS broadcast standards and we would like to apologize to anyone who was offended.”

A spokesman for CBS had no immediate comment on the probe and a Viacom spokesman was not immediately available for comment. The NFL said it would not likely allow MTV to produce another halftime show.

Some questioned whether it was unplanned since MTV’s Web site promised ahead of the show “shocking moments” and Timberlake sang the line “I’ll get you naked by the end of this song,” moments before the incident.

“I don’t really see what the big deal is all about. It’s just a boob,” said Judy Reeves, 24, who is in public relations.





## By Linda C. Black

**Today's Birthday** (Feb. 3). You can learn from your experience this year, but don't be stifled by it. You might do quite well at something you've failed at before. Separate your fears from your fantasies. Empower the thoughts that ensure your success while remaining pragmatic.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

**Aries** (March 21-April 19) - Today is a 5 - You have lightning-fast reflexes, and they'll be even faster if you've been practicing. Hopefully you're prepared to deal with last-minute changes. You'll find out soon enough.

**Taurus** (April 20-May 20) - Today is an 8 - You'll have a compulsion to study during the next few days, so minimize distractions. You're liable to discover something that seems to contradict an old belief. Don't worry. The truth includes it all.

**Gemini** (May 21-June 21) - Today is a 6 - You may be anxious to get ahead, but don't put pressure on others. The lesson for you to learn now is how to be passively effective. Master this skill and then profit from it.

**Cancer** (June 22-July 22) - Today is a 7 - Even if you feel lucky and savvy, don't throw caution to the wind. You'll need to justify yourself when you present plans for a critic's review.

**Leo** (July 23-Aug. 22) - Today is a 6 - Don't knock yourself out doing something that doesn't have to be done. Reconfirm every order, appointment and assignment. The request may have been modified.

**Virgo** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) - Today is an 8 - You're great at keeping track of what should be done next, and how. The others may crumble under the stress unless you help them stay on track. They need you.

**Libra** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) - Today is a 7 - Conditions are rather unstable now, so may have noticed. Stay out of an argument if you can. Treat everyone with respect.

**Scorpio** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) - Today is an 8 - Going out is an option, but a quiet evening at home with the people or person you care most about could be more fun, and it could also save you some cash. You could put it toward your next cruise.

**Sagittarius** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) - Today is a 5 - You're right: There isn't enough money for everything you'd like to buy. This is not the end of the world, however. You're due for a happy surprise.

**Capricorn** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) - Today is a 7 - Go over the instructions one more time in order to minimize misunderstandings. There may be a disagreement you can't do much about, but at least know everything you can.

**Aquarius** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) - Today is a 7 - Discipline is the key to your success, so don't whine if a stickler makes you follow the rules to the nth degree. Instead, thank this person. He or she will help you become the best you can possibly be.

**Pisces** (Feb. 19-March 20) - Today is a 7 - You know which side your bread is buttered on. You also know who loves you. But don't ignore a critic who might help you grow stronger.



Speak your  
mind

By Queenie

## SEND LETTERS TO P.O. BOX 828

### Dear Queenie,

I had a baby for my boyfriend a couple of months ago. He seemed okay about the baby while I was pregnant, but since she was born he acts like he hates her.

He never talks to her except when she cries and he yells at her to shut up. Even when she doesn't cry, he doesn't want to hold her and he talks about her as if she was some kind of animal. He never calls her by her name, just refers to her as "that brat" and "the baby."

Queenie, what's wrong with him?—**New mother**

### Dear New mother,

You don't say how old you and your boyfriend are, but I get the impression that you are both very young and that he, at least, is VERY immature.

Apparently your boyfriend is not ready for fatherhood. He may very well be jealous of the baby and feel threatened by all the time and attention you spend on her.

It is pointless to yell at a baby and to tell her to shut up, of course, and for him to do so is abusive. It is quite possible that this behaviour could escalate into physical abuse of both you and the child, but even if it doesn't, your daughter should not be subjected to verbal abuse either.

Try to talk this over with your boyfriend. If he is not receptive, or if you are afraid to do so, it is time for you to start thinking about ending your relationship with him, for the child's sake if not your own.

If necessary, go to the Women's Desk for help, or call the Safe Haven hotline 333.

Only notices of fundraising events, non-profit or educational organisations will be placed in the Events/Notices column. Notices must reach The Daily Herald by 4:00pm to be published in the next edition.

## Events

### Tuesday, February 3

CINECLUB ST. MAARTEN SHOWING

"Y TU MAMA TAMBIEEN"

directed by Alfonso Cuarón

Place: Anton Café, Front Street

Time: 8:00pm.

As Cineclub is a foundation, one must become a member for US \$10. Each movie costs \$7 (as a 5-time card for \$35).

### Tuesday, February 3 and

Thursday, February 5

BASKETBALL SEMIFINALS

organised by St. Maarten Basketball Association.

Place: L.B. Scott Sports Auditorium

Tuesday time: 7:00pm, Mid Rangers vs Pioneers; 9:00pm, Razor-backs vs Trotters.

Thursday time: 7:00pm, Thunders vs Sunz.

### Wednesday, February 4

WEALTH BUILDING SEMINAR

Place: Philipsburg Jubilee Library

Time: 7:30pm

Price: Free

### Friday, February 6

PRE-VALENTINE DAY

DINNER AND SHOW

organised by Sundial School to raise funds for the Graduation Fund. Many old favourite and new games.

Place: Sundial School

Time: 7:00-11:00pm sharp

Price: NAf. 25 or US \$15

### Saturday, February 7

FUND-RAISING CAR WASH AND BBQ

organised by Learning Unlimited Student Council. Part of proceeds will be donated to the St. Maarten Science Fair Foundation. Place: Learning Unlimited parking lot

Time: 11:00am to 3:00pm

Price: Car wash or BBQ, US \$6; both, \$10.

Tickets available from students and on the day at the school.

### Saturday, February 7

FUND-RAISING FLEA MARKET

organised by Carib Swim Team Association.

Place: Tropicana Casino parking lot

Time: 7:00am to 12:30pm

For more information or to donate items in good condition, call 522-9575, 522-4045 or 559-0900.

### Saturday, February 7

VALENTINE DAY BINGO

organised by St. Dominic High School. Proceeds will go towards the purchase of 25 new computers.

Place: Sundial School

Time: 8:00pm sharp

Price: NAf. 18 or US \$10

Tickets available at St. Dominic High School and from the staff and students.

### Saturday, February 7

TEENS OF COMEDY

organised by Andrew Dick. Proceeds to Andrew Dick Show. Special guest: Fernando Clark.

Place: Philipsburg Cultural and Community Center

Time: 8:00-10:00pm

Price: US \$5 in advance, \$10 at the door.

Tickets available at Photo Gumbs and Van Dorp.

### Saturday, February 7

PRE-ARUBA 50TH CARNIVAL DANCE

organised by Chuchubi Foundation. DJ Ruby. Aruba 50th Carnival T-shirts will be on sale. Everyone travelling to Aruba must have this St. Maarten-Aruba Carnival T-shirt.

Place: Senior Citizens Recreational Center

Time: 9:00pm to 3:00am

Price: NAf. 10 or US \$5

### Saturday, February 7

and Sunday, February 8

CLASSICAL BALLET:

LA FILE MÀL GARDÉE

presented by the classical ballet students of Motance Dance School.

Place: Maho Casino Royale Theater

Time: Saturday, 8:00pm; Sunday, 6:00pm

Price: Adults US \$15, children under 12 years \$10.

Tickets available from the dancers and at Van Dorp. The Giftbox at Le Grand Marché Shopping Center, CD Mania, and Brasserie in Marigot.

### Wednesday, February 11

WEALTH BUILDING SEMINAR

Place: Philipsburg Jubilee Library

Time: 7:30pm

Price: Free

### Saturday, February 14

VALENTINE DAY LAGOON CRUISE

organised by Junior Chamber St. Maarten "Jaycees." Music by DJ Ruby, exquisite menu.

Place: Opposite Sunset Theatres

Time: 7:00pm to 12:00 midnight

Price: US \$25 per person, \$45 per couple

Tickets available at St. Peters Pharmacy, Majestic, The Druggist and from members of Jaycees.

### Saturday, February 14

FUND-RAISING

VALENTINE DANCE

organised by Jolly Jumpers Foundation. Music by DJ Ruby.

Place: Boo Boo Jam

Time: 8:00pm to 2:00am

Price: NAf. 10, US \$5 or 5 euros.

Tickets available from Jolly Jumpers members or at the gate.

### Sunday, February 15

KANGAROO SWEETHEART SWIM MEET

organised by Carib Swim Team Association, sponsored by Kangaroo Court. Teams from St. Maarten and St. Barths.

Place: Carib Swim Pool, Cole Bay

Time: 9:00am

Admission: Free

## Notices

### Red Cross Meeting

The St. Maarten Red Cross informs Junior Brigadiers that there will be a very important meeting at Red Cross Headquarters, #34 Airport Boulevard, Simpson Bay,

on Thursday, February 5, 3:30pm. Activities for the year 2004 will be discussed. Please make an extra effort to attend.

The St. Maarten Red Cross informs the general public that the Basic First Aid Course will start on Monday, February 16, 7:00-9:00pm. Interested persons are asked to call tel. 551-4357, fax 545-2333, or e-mail redcross@stnmaarten.net for more information.

### ACT Test

The ACT test is scheduled to be given at The International School of St. Maarten on Oyster Pond Road, Saturday, February 7. To register, call 543-7965.

### SCDF Announcement

St. Maarten Carnival Development Foundation informs all booth holders that registration will close on Monday, February 18. Old booth holders are advised to register by this date or they will lose their booths for Carnival 2004. Potential new booth holders should also register by February 16 to be considered for a booth. Register with Michael Granger or Fabiana Amel at 522-5133 or 523-4131.

### Safe Haven Needs Volunteers

Safe Haven Foundation is looking for volunteers. If you are reliable and committed to helping your community, call the Safe Haven office at 177 and join the next training session.

### Sewing Classes

St. Maarten Crafters Cottage Industry Foundation started sewing classes on Monday, February 2. Learn to make dresses, skirts, tops, pants, underwear, etc. Freehand cutting. To register, call 556-9667.

### SIMVA Meeting

St. Maarten Volleyball Association invites all members to a general meeting and election of new board, at L.B. Scott Sports Auditorium, Tuesday, February 3, 7:00pm. Members are asked to make a special effort to attend and be on time, as this is a very important meeting.

### B-Class Basketball Meeting

All basketball teams that want to participate in the B-Class of the St. Maarten Basketball Association are advised that they should send a representative to a meeting at L.B. Scott Sports Auditorium, Wednesday, February 4, 6:00pm.

### Cake Crafters Meeting

Cake Crafters Friends Foundation announces its monthly meeting at Auror's Shop, Cannegieter Street next to Plaza 21, Friday, February 7, 8:00pm.

## SISTER BRITE Spiritualist

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The horn sounded and the boats took off in the second annual Electec Regatta this weekend. Fourteen teams competed in a series of races in Simpson Bay Lagoon Saturday and Sunday. Team Lambda Carib Beer won the competition.

## Lambda Carib team wins Electec Regatta

SIMPSON BAY—The Lambda Carib Beer team sailed away to win the second annual Electec Lagoon Regatta this weekend.

The team of Frits Bus, Korteknie and Garth Steyn bested 13 other teams to take top honours in the two-day-long regatta. The teams competed with seven identical Sunfast 20 keelboats. After every race the teams switched boats to ensure a level playing field.

The teams sailed a qualify-

ing match Saturday. Based on the results, the group was divided into two fleets. The Lambda Carib team took top honours in the Gold fleet.

"There are two slow boats," said Bus. "The key to winning the regatta is to concentrate and do well in the slow boats."

The Lambda Carib Team demonstrated the point in the final race of the day. They started out in sixth place and slowly worked the

boat, they sailed through the fleet and crossed the line in first place yet again.

The Scuba Shop team placed second. Led by Simon Manley, the Scuba Shop team had the lead at the close of racing Saturday. However, fresh winds and the change of boats allowed Bus and crew a few first places and the win.

The team of Luc Knol and Olivier Bernaz was third. An early start in race three cost them dearly. They ended the heat in seventh. They had already scored a first and a second before they miscalculated the start and crossed early.

In the Silver fleet the team skippered by Ian Martin finished first. Known as Team Quantum, the captain and crew had five first place crossings, one second and a third.

Second place went to the Formula 1 sailing crew. Although the Electec Regatta is primarily for local sailors, four teams from visiting yachts were allowed to enter.

Third place went to the Nepal team. Led by Andrew Rapley, the team had one first, one second and a third place finish.

The keelboats are available for rental at Uncle Harry's Bar. Weekly races are also organized for sailors who would like to try match racing. The use of identical boats in short heats allows sailors to compete on the water and not from the wal-

let, where the sailor with the biggest paycheck can often buy victory.

## Draws dominate boards in Presidente Darts League

PHILIPSBURG—The top three teams in the Presidente Darts League drew this week.

The league leader Sugar-cane faced the defending champions Vermeer at home. The two teams split the 10-game series. Sugar-cane retains its first place advantage based on individual games won. Both Sugar-cane and Vermeer have 15 match points. However, Sugar-cane has won 62 games. Vermeer has won only 59 in the nine-week-old season.

Each team consists of six players. The teams play six singles, three doubles and a team game. Ten games are played in total. The team that wins the most games wins the match. A match win is worth two points. A draw nets both teams one point.

In the second draw of the week, Ric's Place took on the Time Out team of Paradise Plaza Casino. Ric's retains its third place standing. However, Sandbar in fourth place has gained ground. Ric's has 13 match points and has won 53 games.

Sandbar has 10 points with 46 games won.

Sandbar was one of the few winning teams this week. They faced Bavaria and won the match 6-4.

Chesterfields also won. Last season the team from Great Bay Marina became the competition's sub-champions. This year the squad is struggling to maintain fifth place. This week, Chesterfields defeated the Dinghy Dockers 6-4.

The Pegleg team got hobbling this week too. They started the night of darts in eighth place. They faced the sixth place Cool Heure of St. Martin. Pegleg won the match 7-3. The win elevates the Pegleg team to seventh place.

Darts will continue Tuesday. Pegleg will travel to Sugar-cane. Chesterfields will go to Simpson Bay to face Ric's Bavaria, with just one win and a draw, will take on Vermeer, while Sandbar faces Time Out. Cool Heure will go to Oyster Pond to shoot it out with the Dockers.



Left to right: Gladis Robins, Nildo Wever, Amanda Schmidt and Wilfred James are among the volunteers in St. Eustatius who are working to expand the Pony League baseball and softball programme on the island. The group met with Eastern Caribbean Zone Pony League director Gabriel Brown this past week to discuss how best to improve the local organization.

## Statia expands Pony League board, looks to compete internationally

ST. EUSTATIUS—Baseball and softball enthusiasts in Statia are in the process of expanding their Pony League on the island.

Members met with Eastern Caribbean Zone Pony League director Gabriel Brown recently, to help set up the organization and begin training children for international play.

Kocky Tolentino and Nildo Wever took the first steps in joining the internationally recognized youth baseball and softball organization last year.

Statia has already sent a female team to participate in a

regional softball competition in Saba.

Now more adults have volunteered to help train the children and serve on the organization's board. Among the volunteers are Gladis Robins, Amanda Schmidt, Wilfred James and Aisha Gibbs.

"I went over to Statia to help answer questions about the Pony League," said Brown. "I talked with the group and emphasized the importance of the programme in helping keep children off the streets." Brown said the group had

talked about how baseball and softball could be used as vehicles to afford young players the opportunity to work hard and be rewarded with a trip abroad to play.

The Statia organization has agreed to host the Eastern Caribbean Zone meeting which will be held March 6 to 7. Already the Statia Pony League has expressed interest in sending a softball team to the zone's softball tournament in Anguilla March 26 to 28 and perhaps fielding a baseball team in the Caribbean championships this summer.

PHILIPSBURG—The St. Maarten Little league is gearing up for the new baseball season.

Applications are now being accepted for young ballplayers ages five to 16 to register to play. Parents can bring their children to the Little League stadium on the Pondfill to register from 3:00 to 5:00pm Monday to Friday or on Saturdays from 9:00 to 11:00am.

The Little League programme is divided into several divisions based on age. The Pee Wees, who learn basic ball handling, throwing, hitting and base running, meet Saturday mornings from 9:00 to 11:00am. The Pee Wees are ages five to eight.

Little League is for children nine to 12. Last year

the division fielded six teams with names like Scottiabank, Simpson Bay Diesel.

The Junior division is for ballplayers 13 to 14. Four teams competed in the Junior class last season.

In the Senior division, ages 15 to 16, teams like Nagico, International Airport and Fast Shoe Repair participated in the annual competition. The ones registered to play, the athletes are welcome to attend practice every weekday afternoon until the season starts.

In other Little League news, the RBTT Bank Secondary Schools Competition continues Saturday at 5:00pm. Milton Peters Warriors takes on the Mixed School team for the championship. The best of three series is tied at one all.



Everyone is going for the ball as Nitro challenges Super Six in the St. Maarten Volleyball Association female division finals last night. Super Six won. They lead the best of three series 2-1.

## Super Six defeats Nitro, up 2-1 in volleyball final

PHILIPSBURG—Super Six female volleyball team was down eight points. The score was 14-6.

They faced Nitro in game three of the best of five final series for the championship. The series was tied at one.

Nitro had won the first set 27-25 at L.B. Scott Sports Auditorium last night. Super Six bounced back to take set 25-10. The third set went to Nitro. They won 25-19.

If Nitro took the fourth set they would have the match. It was Super Six's serve. Super Six scored nine unanswered points. The score was now 15-14. The match had turned around.

Part of Nitro's problem was an empty bench coupled with

a twisted ankle. Number 12 Georgette Henderson was in pain. Her ankle was swollen. She was nearly in tears. She played on.

Nitro scored a point. The game was tied at 15. Super Six rallied for three more points. They jumped out to an 18-15 lead.

Nitro setters kept feeding the ball to the right side of the net. Henderson would go up and make the smash. As she landed she grimaced in pain.

If she had to be sidelined, the game would be forfeited. Nitro battled back. The score went 18-17. Super Six still had the lead.

Now it was time for Super Six to make their move. The older more experienced

team went on to score seven unanswered points to win 25-17.

The match was tied at two. Super Six went on to win the tiebreaker. Super Six is just one win away from claiming the female volleyball championship. The two teams will continue their battle on the court at the Sports Auditorium Wednesday. First serve is scheduled for 7:30pm.

The men took to the court in the late game. Go For It had a 2-0 lead going into game three of their best of five series.

It took four sets last night, but Go For It won the fourth set 25-23. They are the 2003-04 Volleyball Champions of St. Maarten. They defeated United.

## Carib promises more cricket will be played in St. Maarten

PHILIPSBURG—Round five of the Carib Beer Cricket Series begins February 6.

The Leewards will face the Windwards at Carib Lumber Ballpark.

"This is a first class match," said Rajesh "RK" Jurup of the St. Maarten Cricket Association. "Top players from around the region will be here."

While local cricket fans are excited about the four-day match being played here, the local cricket association is more excited about the future of the game in St. Maarten.

"Carib has already promised St. Maarten would host a first class match next year," said RK. In addition to being an avid cricketer, RK works for Netco N.V., the local distributor for Carib Beer. "We've already been told we will be able to keep hosting tournaments like this."

Carib Beer is produced in Trinidad. St. Maarten is the company's second largest beer outlet, second only to Trinidad, according to RK.

The local cricket association has been preparing Carib Lumber Ballpark for the upcoming competition. Not only has it redone the pitch, enlarged the player pavilion and constructed the commentators booth, the association also had the practice pitches improved.

Members of both teams are

scheduled to begin arriving today. By this afternoon, Carib Lumber Ballpark is expected to be buzzing with action as the squads inspect and then practice on the grounds.

Eight teams are participating in the competition. Games are being held throughout the region. In addition to the Leewards and Windwards teams, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica,

Trinidad and Tobago, Kenya and the West Indies Esquads are all participating in the Carib Series.

The competition will be seven rounds long, followed by the semifinals, which are scheduled to be played February 26 to 29.

The venue of the semifinals has yet to be announced, as well as the date and venue of the finals.



The Caribtrans Rising Stars honoured their top players at an awards dinner held at Mark's Place this week. Among the top players honoured for their contributions to the female windball cricket team were Gracelyn Mayers, Mary Joseph and Onika Edwards.

## Caribtrans Rising Stars honour 2003 teammates

PHILIPSBURG—The Caribtrans Rising Stars have already begun the 2004 cricket season, but this past week the team took time to reflect on last year.

Gracelyn Mayers scored the most runs for the team. She was good for 680.

Mary Joseph, who also pitches softball for the Coca-Cola Steelers, collected the most wickets while bowling. She had 33.

Onika Edwards was named the most disciplined player of the year.

The team honoured its top players during an awards dinner at Mark's Place Satur-

day night. "Our goals for 2004," said team treasurer Dian Nisbett, "are to win more games. We plan to travel more this year and represent our Island abroad."

The Rising Stars are sponsored by Caribtrans Shipping Company. The female windball cricket club sports green jerseys with yellow pants.

The team is relatively new. They are a breakaway squad from the Female Adult Cricket Team.

The Stars team captain is Linette McFarlane.

## Wildthing departure delayed, still hopes to race Heineken

PHILIPSBURG—Lex Ruijter on board Wildthing is preparing to leave Portugal for a solo crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. Ruijter hopes to have his 35-foot Kiwi racing sailboat in St. Maarten in time for the Heineken Regatta that begins March 5.

He expects his racing yacht capable of achieving speeds in excess of 20 knots, with a retractable keel and wing-like outriggers for the crew to sit on, to do well against the

more than 200 sailboats expected to enter 24th edition of the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta.

The vessel is little more than an asuper-fast surfboard. It was not designed to cross the Atlantic.

Ruijter hopes to make the crossing in as little as 10 days. He hopes to break the boat's speed record of 28 knots. He hopes to hit 30.

Thus far Ruijter's self-imposed timetable has been a

bit off. He had hoped to start sailing January 15 and be in St. Maarten by January 25.

Getting the boat ready took longer than expected. Ruijter needed a new set of sails. Wildthing normally carries a crew of 10 to counterbalance the wind's action on the sails. As Ruijter will be alone, he needed to design and build a water ballast system. He will pump water into cans on either side of the boat to help keep Wildthing on an even keel.

Built in 1988 Wildthing was a prototype boat designed from the latest materials of the time. Today it is still one of the fastest boats on the water in its class. Kiwi was originally designed to fly a traditional spinnaker. The sailboat has been modified to carry an even larger asym-

metrical chute on a carbon pole that extends out from the bow to give the boat even more speed.

The boat was in the Netherlands. Ruijter had planned to have the vessel trucked to Portugal. When the truck arrived, Ruijter found Wildthing did not fit. To make matters worse, the driver who was to help load the sailboat spoke Portuguese. Ruijter did not.

Eventually the language barrier was solved and Wildthing was disassembled a little more so it would fit. Now boat and captain are en route to Portugal.

After a brief shakedown Ruijter hopes to point Wildthing toward St. Maarten and begin his odyssey by week's end.

# Tour badly needs lift for revamp season

PARIS—Cycling's new season sets off today in the south of France with the sport badly in need of the right sort of shot in the arm.

News last month of a police raid and a later confession of doping from a member of the French-based Cofidis team cast cycling further into the doldrums just as plans to present itself as newly cleaned-up were being announced. Sources at the International Cycling Union (UCI) which governs the sport suggested last week that it finally planned to sign up to the World Anti-Doping Agency code of conduct—the last major sport along with soccer to do so.

Cycling has long been tainted with allegations—and plenty of proof—of endemic doping and the Cofidis episode appeared to confirm that the problem was still very much in existence.

One of their riders, Philippe Gaumont, was arrested and told local French radio France Bleu Picardie last week that "it may be that 90 percent of the cyclists are not clean. I can't blame them because we are the victims of a rotten system."

The 1992 Olympic bronze medalist admitted to police that he had used the red blood cell-boosting drug

erythropoietin (EPO). The UCI are determined that the time is right to get tough on the cheats and Tour de France organisers insisted the sport should follow to the letter the strict guidelines of WADA which advocates two-year bans for offenders.

Ironically, some within the sport fear the new Pro-Tour circuit starting in 2005, with its extra emphasis on team competition could drive more cyclists to seek extra help from drugs. At present, the tour features 30 teams in its "first division" of all the leading classic races but from next season that number will be cut to 20.

UCI president Hein Verbruggen dismissed fears that riders competing for the bottom 10 teams would be put under increased pressure to cheat. "I even think it will be a better way to control doping," he said in a recent interview. "I cannot see big team chiefs taking the risk of hiring a rider with a doping record."

The sport is undeniably, though, in need of some brighter news and that would come in spades in July should American Lance Armstrong claim an unprecedented sixth Tour de France title. Armstrong has already ensured an enduring place in the sport's annals after overcoming testicular cancer to win the biggest race in cycling—arguably in sport—five times on the trot from 1999.

Another success would be an almost super-human achievement but even the amazing Texan cannot continue for ever and at 32 time must surely be running short for him. In 2004, he is likely to face the toughest challenge of the lot with 1997 winner Jan Ullrich now restored to full health and vigour and Alex Vinkovour, Santiago Botero, Paolo Salvadori and Cadell Evans all waiting in the wings to steal Armstrong's crown.

But before the Tour show-down, the one-day classic specialists will take front stage, starting with the Grand Prix d'Ouverture and Etiole de Besseges races this week. The rivalry between ageing Italian sprint ace Mario Cipollini and his young compatriot Alessandro Petacchi should be one of the highlights of the season.



The season for cycling team presentations is taking place amid a cloud of pessimism in France, but Australian rider Bradley McGee, pictured here, insists the fight against doping can be won.

## Shaq suspended one game for cursing on live TV

INDIANAPOLIS — Shaquille O'Neal was suspended without pay by the NBA on Monday, one day after using obscene language and publicly criticizing the officials during a television interview.

The suspension was announced just hours after O'Neal issued a statement apologizing for the comments he made following the Lakers' 84-83 victory over the Toronto Raptors on Sunday. O'Neal served the suspension Monday night, sitting out a game against the Eastern Conference-leading Indiana Pacers. It will cost him nearly \$295,000.

Lakers coach Phil Jackson called the punishment "rather severe and childish in some ways."

Jackson said he thought a fine would have been appropriate and that the fans would be penalized by not being able to see O'Neal in the Lakers' lone trip to Indianapolis. "The league is known for its vindictiveness," Jackson said. "But

we didn't anticipate a suspension."

O'Neal scored a season-high 38 points against the Raptors in his third game back after missing 12 because of a strained right calf, but was angered by the officiating. He made that clear in his post-game interview on KCAL-TV—conducted almost immediately after the game.

"My message to (commissioner) David Stern is get some people in there that understand the game and don't try to take over the ... game because people pay good money to see good athletes play," O'Neal said.

When reminded he was on live TV, O'Neal responded with another profanity before the interview continued. "My comments were made out of frustration in the heat of the moment," O'Neal said in the statement released Monday by the Lakers. "But I realize that my choice of words was inappropriate and again, I would like to apologize."



Carolina starting quarterback Jake Delhomme reacts at the end of Super Bowl XXVIII as his team loses to the New England Patriots in Houston, on Sunday.

## Impressive Delhomme proves mettle but comes up short

HOUSTON — Jake Delhomme made it to the NFL the hard way so he was not about to give in after a dismal start to Sunday's Super Bowl.

A refugee of NFL Europe—often considered the league of last resort—the soft-spoken Carolina Panthers quarterback hit only one of his first 10 passes for just one yard. "We had some trouble throwing it," Delhomme said in an understatement.

But he rebounded in a big way, and although the Panthers lost a 32-29 heart-breaker to the New England Patriots, Delhomme proved his mettle. The 6ft 2in, 215-pound Louisiana native finished with 16 completions in 33 attempts for 323 yards, three touchdowns and no interceptions.

The first-year Panther ral-

lied his team for 19 points in the final period on nine of 14 passing for 211 yards and two touchdowns—only to finish on the losing side.

"It's one of the worst feelings in the world," Delhomme said after the game. "You can't explain what you feel right now. It's been a great ride, understand that, but right now it's just hard."

Panthers coach John Fox praised Delhomme for turning it around. "He kept us in the game and gave us an opportunity to win it. He played outstanding," he said.

The fourth quarter was a wild affair, with a combined 427 yards of offense. Patriots kicker Adam Vinatieri kicked the game-winning 41-yard field goal with just four seconds left.

"It's frustrating that we didn't get another chance,"

said the 29-year-old Delhomme. "That's the thing that was tough for us. We were hoping to go into overtime and be the last one with the ball."

"We found a rhythm throwing the football, the line was blocking well and receivers were making unbelievable catches," he added. "It's disappointing that we didn't get another chance to go back and get it and try to win it."

Patriots quarterback Tom Brady won the Super Bowl MVP vote after completing 32 of 48 passes for 354 yards. But Delhomme's numbers were equally impressive.

When asked how he felt as the game ended, he said: "I just wanted to watch the celebration and let it hurt even more. You just want to keep working to try to get back here and be on the other side of that rope."

## RODRIGUEZ

Continued from page 32.

deal with the Tigers, said his client was excited about playing in the AL Central. "Pudge said to me, 'I know that division. That division could be mine,'" Boras said.

Rodriguez also said the personal involvement of Detroit owner Mike Ilich played a part in his decision. "It kind of evolved where I started to get into the process a little bit more," Ilich said. "Before, things weren't working well. We weren't getting the right players in. We weren't performing well."

## Door to French squad could still be opened for Anelka

PARIS—Two French sayings sum up Nicolas Anelka's position as he tries to restore his image with the French public just at the right moment to claim back a place in France's squad for Euro 2004. "Impossible is not French," Napoleon Bonaparte is supposed to have said.

The prospect of Anelka, who will be 25 next month, playing for France under manager Jacques Santini had seemed impossible since the Manchester City striker turned down a call-up in October 2002 before qualifiers against Malta and Slovenia. Anelka was angry at being summoned only as a second choice and Santini made it clear he was closing the door on any future selection.

"Nicolas banned himself from the team by turning down a selection. As long as he does not change his comments and attitude on his own initiative he remains unpickable in my view," Santini said.

Another Gallic saying goes: "Only fools don't change their minds," and Santini might well be forced by cir-

cumstances to prove he is no fool.

While Thierry Henry and David Trezeguet are the automatic first-choice strikers for the finals in Portugal, UEFA's decision to uphold Djibril Cisse's five-match ban for kicking an opponent in an under-21 match has given Santini a serious headache. UEFA said on Friday it had rejected Cisse's appeal against the ban, which will come into effect at the start of Euro 2004.

### Seduction Campaign

The Liverpool-bound Cisse's absence leaves France with few outside choices. In recent months, all Santini's third-choice strikers have been through hard times—Olympique Marseille's Steve Marlet has been injured for months while RC Lens Daniel Moreira and Olympique Lyon's Sidney Govest have been inconsistent at best. This is where Anelka might come in. Although Manchester City are having an inconsistent season, Anelka has scored 20 goals including eight in his last eight matches. He scored an ex-

cellent last-minute goal in a 2-1 defeat against his old club Arsenal on Sunday, before being sent off seconds before the final whistle for a bust-up with his old club mate Ashley Cole.

Santini himself has made no comment on the idea of Anelka's international rehabilitation but his boss, French Soccer Federation chief Claude Simonet, hinted that an Anelka return was possible.

Simonet has blamed Anelka's decision to turn his back on France on his relative youth and said he would not rule out a comeback when the time comes and if need be. "Maybe his youth led Nicolas to outburst we should leave behind and forget," he said.

Anelka, whose portfolio of previous clubs includes Paris St Germain (twice), Arsenal, Real Madrid and Liverpool, has also made it clear he would be prepared to reconsider.

Anelka had shunned French media since leaving Paris St Germain to move to England two seasons ago but he has been all over French television in recent weeks,



Manchester City's Nicolas Anelka shown in action in this file photo.

taking part in talk shows and sports programmes he had turned down in the past. Anelka insisted "the door was open" and hinted that a misunderstanding was at the root of his row with Santini.

"The whole thing is a problem of communication. I've never understood what he (Santini) is trying to say to me," he added.

### No Choice?

The player's brother and agent Didier admitted Anelka was trying to improve his image but denied Santini was the target of his recent seduction campaign.

"Since he has returned to England he has felt good and does not want to be cut off from France any more," Didier told soccer weekly *But*. "It's the right time for him to speak. But we don't think it's going to influence Santini," he added.

Anelka can count on the support of some of France's most influential players such as defender Lilian Thuram and Arsenal's Robert Pires, who recently said: "Onshere

talent alone, Nicolas deserves a place."

The mood and stoop of Anelka has 28 caps for France and has scored six goals for his country, international experience which could prove crucial. Manchester United's Louis Saha and Lyon's Peguy Luyindula have been mentioned as possibilities to make up for Cisse's loss. But neither has played for France before and Santini is unlikely to call up total rookies for the defence of their European crown unless he wishes to emulate 1998 manager Aime Jacquet, who repeatedly turned down Eric Cantona and David Ginola in favour of young players such as Trezeguet and Henry.

So does Santini really have a choice? "If he kneels in front of me and apologises, I will think it over," Santini recently told French magazine *Paris Match*. Will Anelka go that far? "If we agree to discuss, everything can be solved," the player said.

## Four PSV players selected for Dutch national squad against US

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands—Four PSV Eindhoven players have been selected for the Netherlands' friendly against the United States on Feb. 18, the club said Monday.

Forward Arjen Robben, halfback Mark van Bommel, defender Wilfred Bouma, and goalkeeper Ronald Waterreus would be named to the Dutch squad, PSV said in a statement.

The Dutch national soccer association won't release its full roster until Feb. 13. PSV's list is noteworthy for the absence of defender Andre Ooijer, who recently underwent a minor knee surgery.

Ooijer replaced Dutch veteran Frank de Boer in the Netherlands' 6-0 victory over Scotland during Euro 2004 qualifying, and he is regarded as a candidate to play alongside Jaap Stam in the center of the Dutch defense in the finals in Portugal. In Ooijer's absence, De Boer is likely to play against the United States, and will remain in contention for the center spot.

According to Dutch media reports, De Boer left Turkey's Galatasaray last week for Scotland's Rangers in part to satisfy Dutch coach Dick Advocaat that he will receive enough playing time ahead of the championship this summer.

The United States announced a provisional roster of 17 MLS players last week. A spokeswoman for Ajax said Monday that John O'Brien was also provisionally selected for the U.S. squad, which he will join when it arrives in Europe.

## Irish investors to keep heat on United board

DUBLIN—Manchester United's major shareholders, John Magnier and J.P. McManus will keep up pressure on the board over corporate governance even if a legal dispute with manager Alex Ferguson is settled, sources said on Monday.

British and Irish newspaper reports at the weekend said Ferguson, who is suing billionaire bloodstock tycoon Magnier over ownership rights to record-breaking racehorse Rock of Gibraltar, was working with his lawyers to hammer out a compromise deal. The battle between the most powerful figure in the world bloodstock business and British soccer's most successful coach has caused severe turbulence at Old Trafford.

However, a source close to Cubic Expression, the off-shore investment vehicle through which the Irishmen hold just over a quarter of the club's shares, made it clear the two issues were completely separate. "Cubic's correspondence and dealings with the Manchester United board

will be unaffected by the quite separate issue of Rock of Gibraltar," the source told Reuters.

He pointed out that McManus, a hugely successful gambler and currency speculator, owned half of the Cubic holding but was not involved in the dispute with Ferguson. Cubic had not yet received a reply to a letter sent to the United board earlier this month which raised "very significant corporate governance issues," the source added.

The letter, sent on January 16, included a catalogue of questions relating to corporate governance, compliance with regulatory guidelines, the conduct of player transfers and fees paid to transfer agents.

After the Irish pair warned they might demand an independent audit of recent transfers, Manchester United last week announced it would conduct an internal review. However, this did not go far enough for Magnier and McManus, who also demanded limits on a new contract for Ferguson so as to

curb compensation due to him if he left. The board later appeared to bow to this pressure, awarding the 62-year-old Glaswegian a one-year rolling contract.

Most media coverage of the flak exploding around Old Trafford has been based on speculation that Magnier's motive is a desire for revenge on one-time friend Ferguson, who issued a writ last year claiming full ownership of the Rock. Ferguson said he was given half a share as a gift from Magnier and was entitled to half of the stud fees.

The five-year-old thoroughbred, which won seven successive Group One races, could generate more than 100 million pounds (\$182 million) in fees over the next 15 years.

According to Irish legal sources, the Ferguson-Magnier case could take up to two years to reach Dublin's High Court, during which time press speculation could pile up on the United manager who last week hit out at his "distressing" treatment.

## Veron hopes to play again in two months

Buenos Aires—Chelsea midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron hopes to make a playing return in two months' time after surgery on a herniated disc in his back last week.

"I will spend the first 25 days of my recovery here (in Argentina). If all goes well, I shall be back playing in two months," Argentine newspaper *El Dia* quoted Veron as saying in its online weekend edition.

"But I'm more worried that the injury heals well and that there are no complications of any kind," he added. Argentine media had estimated Veron would be out of action until May. His doctors have refused to comment.

Veron is now convalescing at home in the city of La Plata, 40 miles (60 km) southeast of Buenos Aires. Witnesses say Veron is closely guarded by a team of bodyguards.

He has been sidelined for two months after returning from international duty with Argentina last November suffering from back pain. Veron said it was time for payback from his injuries and past form.

"I wasn't in good shape either physically or in terms of my football for the last World Cup," he said. "Now I want my revenge and I'm going to have it, by working calmly."

# SPORTS ARENA



## Super Bowl trophies becoming a Brady bunch

HOUSTON—A blurry-eyed Super Bowl MVP Tom Brady stopped to pick up his new car and a trunk load of praise Monday, following his masterful performance guiding the New England Patriots to a dramatic 32-29 victory over the Carolina Panthers.

Operating on less than one hour of sleep, a grinning but clearly weary Brady can expect little in the way of rest

### Anastasiou makes switch from Roda to Ajax

AMSTERDAM—Ajax have signed Greek striker Yannis Anastasiou from Roda JC Kerkrade, the Dutch first division leaders announced on Monday.

The 30-year-old has agreed on a deal that runs until the summer of 2005 and is expected to make his debut against second-placed PSV on Sunday. Ajax have a number of injury problems going into the top-of-the-table clash as Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Wesley Sonck and Rafael van der Vaart are all likely to miss the tie.

Anastasiou joined Roda from Belgian side Anderlecht four years ago after spells with Greek sides Ethnikos Piraeus and OFI Crete. He has scored eight times this season and has an overall record of 48 goals in 114 appearances in the Dutch league.

over the next few days as he makes a triumphant return to New England where more parties, more celebrations and more accolades await the quarterback.

With two Super Bowl rings and two MVP awards Brady must now be ranked among the NFL's quarterbacking elite, underlining his credentials with a record performance against one of the league's most feared defenses.

It was on the Super Bowl stage two years ago that Brady first shot on to the NFL radar screen by leading the Pats to a stunning upset win over the heavily-favored St. Louis Rams. While the Patriots were the favorites this year, Brady's performance may well rank as his best, the 26-year-old completing a record 32 passes for 354 yards (fourth best in Super Bowl history) and three touchdowns against a ferocious Panthers defense.

Only nine quarterbacks have won two super Bowls



New England Patriots QB and Super Bowl MVP Tom Brady describes how big linebacker Mike Vrabel's eyes got when he saw the pass coming to him on his fourth quarter touchdown reception, at a news conference in Houston on Monday.

(Joe Montana 4, Terry Bradshaw 4, Troy Aikman 3, Bob Griese 2, John Elway 2, Jim Plunkett 2, Roger Staubach 2, Bart Starr 2) and all but Aikman and Plunkett are members of the Football Hall of Fame. An even smaller select group of three

players (Montana, Bradshaw and Starr) has two Super Bowl MVP awards in their trophy case.

"There are a lot of great players in this league and they certainly deserve the recognition they get," said Patriots coach Bill Belichick.

"But for a guy like Tom Brady to do what he's done this year, including the postseason, and again last night, he certainly deserves all the recognition he gets." Brady said his second MVP award will find a place beside his first one on the night

table in his bedroom. But it is unlikely Brady will be seeing much of his bedroom in the next few days.

In the aftermath of his first Super Bowl win Brady went from an unknown third-string quarterback to A-list celebrity and one of America's most eligible bachelors.

He has appeared on magazine covers, commercial and television shows. He was a judge for the Miss Universe pageant, a passenger on Donald Trump's private jet and a guest at the Playboy Mansion.

"Excuse me if I stutter a little bit today, I'm working on about one hour of sleep," apologized Brady as he picked out his new Cadillac. "It's a great trophy and since the last time I won it, it's sat next to my bed."

"It's a great, great honor but I think more important is holding up the Lombardi trophy we held last night," he added. "It is really the reason I go out there and play every day."



Ivan Rodriguez stands in front of a mural of former Detroit Tigers' great Bill Freehan during a Monday news conference at Comerica Park announcing his \$40 million, four-year contract with the Detroit Tigers.

## Tigers, Rodriguez complete four-year \$40 million deal

DETROIT—Ivan Rodriguez finalized his \$40 million, four-year contract with the Detroit Tigers on Monday, leaving the World Series champion Florida Marlins to join a team that last year set the American League record for losses.

"This is an exciting day for me," he said. "I know they had a bad season last year, but I think this is going to be a completely different season."

The signing of the 10-time All-Star catcher was the latest high-profile move by the Tigers, who went 43-119 last season. Detroit won five of its final six games to avoid tying the post-1900 major league record of 120 losses, set by the 1962 New York Mets.

"If you don't mind for a moment I'm going to soak

this up a little bit," said Tigers manager Alan Trammell, who indicated Rodriguez could hit in the No. 3 spot in the lineup. "This is how it starts. This is how we get better."

Rodriguez, a 10-time Gold Glove winner and MVP of the NL Championship Series, gets \$7 million this year, \$8 million in 2005 and \$11 million each in 2006 and 2007, according to contract information obtained by news media. The Tigers have a \$13 million option for 2008 with a \$3 million buyout.

Detroit will defer \$2 million of his salary in 2004 and \$3 million each in 2006 and 2007, all at 1 percent interest.

If Rodriguez goes on the disabled list for 35 or more days in 2004 or 2005 because of a lower spine injury, Detroit could void the

rest of the contract by paying a \$5 million buyout. If he goes on the DL for 35 or more days in 2006 because of a lower spine injury, the Tigers could terminate the deal by paying a \$4 million buyout.

Rodriguez would get a \$500,000 bonus if he's voted the American League MVP, an award he won with Texas in 1999. If he wins the award twice under the contract, he would get \$1 million the second time.

Rodriguez had a \$10 million, one-year deal with the Marlins last season. He asked for a \$40 million, four-year contract from Florida, which broke off talks Dec. 7.

Scott Boras, Rodriguez's agent who negotiated the

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