

the Cayman Spirit



Cayman Islands Government Information Services

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Port Introduces Internet Tracking

By Lennon Christian

Retail companies, individuals and shipping agencies can now check the real-time status of their shipping imports, following the introduction last week of Internet tracking on the Cayman Islands Port Authority's website.

Once cargo has landed and is in the Port Authority's possession, a tracking system takes immediate effect, using several means of identification. By logging on to www.caymanport.com and searching by the Control Number or the shipping company's Account Code, importers can track the status of their goods. Alternatively, the location may be traced by entering the container number. These numbers and codes are known to the shipping agencies and are used on port documents. Searches can apply either to full containers or partial shipments.

This new web tracking service was cho-

sen by the Port Authority as a quicker alternative to printing the lists of ships and cargo movements in local newspapers. "The decision was made for several reasons: newspaper ads would have been several days behind and it would have been difficult to maintain access to current information as status changes so rapidly," said Port Director Paul Hurlston.

The web-based system is automated, allowing live updates as the cargo is moved from the port to the cargo distribution centre or to other holding areas.

Referring to the ease of finding and moving containers, Mr. Hurlston also noted that the three recently commissioned additional acres adjacent to the distribution centre have eased the sorting process.

Additionally, movement of the increasing volume of cargo will be simplified by the anticipated arrival of two new heavy-duty container-handling machines.

School Sites Restored by Summer

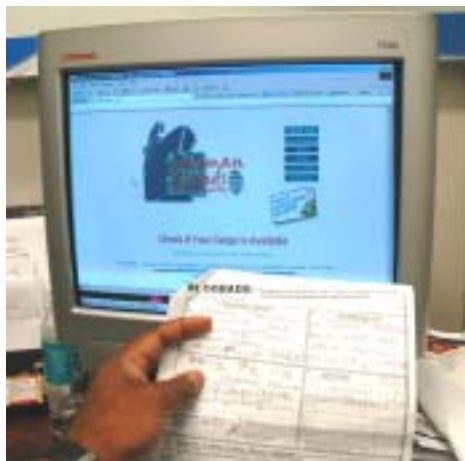
By Lynsay Brown

Over the last six months, reconstruction contracts have been put in place at nearly every school site, and repairs are proceeding apace. At this rate, all sites should be restored by this summer, with a few exceptions where the extent of damage requires either demolition or major renovation.

This achievement is against a background in which all government schools experienced the wrath of Hurricane Ivan — some more than others.

The reconstruction phase, however, is only one aspect of returning schools to normalcy. Schools had to recover in short-order to return children to the classrooms. Despite many challenges, including physical damage requiring a reconstruction programme of some \$18 million and losses in assets (books, teaching materials, etc.) of around \$6 million — all government schools were reopened on a sliding timetable culminating on 29 November, a mere two months after the hurricane. This was achieved

Continued on Page 2



The port's new web service allows imports to be tracked at home or in the office.

Debris Collection Continues into March

With continuing amounts of reconstruction/demolition debris showing up around Grand Cayman, MC Reconstruction will continue to be available for collection to the middle of the second week of March. The company will continue this service until it reaches its target of 300,000 cubic yards of collected debris. At mid-week, MC had collected some 250,000 cubic yards.

To assist in speedy pick up of reconstruction debris, residents are asked to place these materials on the roadside, as MC will not, as precisely indicated, enter private property.

Debris should be placed along the roadside in a manner that does not disrupt regular traffic flow.

Residents should arrange for pick up by calling 916-2625.

At press time, a decision had not been reached on extending the contract with MC Restoration. Government is investigating options relative to the ongoing need for debris collection. Residents are meanwhile urged to utilize the service provided by MC Restora-

Continued on Page 2

School Sites Restored by Summer

Continued from Page 2

with minimal disruption to a priority group — Year 12 examination students — who returned much earlier, on 21 October.

And with the reconstruction underway and the curriculum moving everyday closer to normalcy, schools officials this week reflected on what it took to arrive at this mid-point.

“To battle against the odds and open schools when we did was a remarkable achievement. We had to use every resource available to get students back into school as soon as possible,” said Deputy Permanent Secretary for Education Mary Rodrigues.

“From the beginning, we had a number of key priorities in place,” she explained. “These included providing a safe and healthy environment for our students; replacing equipment and educational materials; providing counselling support in schools; focusing on the curriculum and developing strategies for making up for lost school time.”

It was decided, explained Mrs Rodrigues, that the recovery efforts would be most effective if there were a central base for communication, along with a team to lead the recovery process. A base was established at the Schools’ Inspectorate and staff from the Ministry and the Education Department were redeployed to focus on a variety of tasks. These included establishing priorities and strategies; monitoring progress for the recovery process; carrying out surveys; pro-

viding press updates, and acting as link officers for schools. Schedules for health and safety checks on all schools, together with essential remediation work, were also put in place with the Environmental Health Department.

Mrs Rodrigues said that the Public Works Department (PWD) played a significant role in the recovery process. They carried out assessments on the schools and appointed contractors and the project managers monitoring the repair work. Mr. Jim Scott was appointed project manager to oversee all the repairs.

In spite of efforts to accelerate the recovery, delays did hamper progress at some sites: “We tried to cover all our bases, but there were aspects of the repair programme that were simply out of our direct control,” said Mrs. Rodrigues.

“These included the reconnection of key services such as electricity and phone lines; the usage of schools as hurricane shelters; shipping schedules and the availability of materials for repairs; the ability to secure contractors with sufficient labour. Delays were also caused by health and safety concerns,” she explained.

The process of putting contracts in place was a difficult one explained Jim Scott: “The local building industry has been faced with an enormous amount of work to be completed in a relatively short space of time, so we are competing with the many private sector projects.”

The RCIPS: Serving Against the Odds

By Cornelia Olivier

Battling staff shortages and still facing many equipment woes, the RCIPS nevertheless vows to keep on serving the community and cracking down on crime.

This commitment to serve and protect regardless of the situation is already paying off. Police have made many arrests in recent weeks and lower crime rates will soon bring statistics down to pre-Ivan levels, reported Deputy Commissioner Rudi Dixon.

“There were significant increases in theft, domestic violence and traffic offences following Hurricane Ivan, but after launching several crime prevention initiatives, the tide is turning,” he said.

He added that police officers have been working relentlessly since the hurricane and that burnout is a constant worry: “The force lost many experienced personnel following Ivan. We usually have 322 officers, but are about 35 short

now, which puts a lot of pressure on us, so we are actively recruiting, both locally and overseas.”

The Deputy Commissioner explained that the RCIPS is dogged by vehicle and equipment shortages and that working conditions are far from perfect. However, he remains upbeat about the future: “Although it takes time, everything will get back to normal,” he said.

Structural repairs to the George Town Police Station have been completed and it is currently being refurbished. Police Headquarters will also move to a new George Town location in the next few weeks, following the condemning of the Tower Building after the hurricane.

Seeking support from the community, Deputy Commissioner Dixon noted that even with a fully staffed and equipped RCIPS, it is still a case of only a few hundred officers policing thousands. “A police force can’t work in a vacuum; officers depend on the public to pro-

Continued on Page 3

Debris Collection Continues

Continued from Page 1

tion in order to minimize future long-term need for debris removal.

As part of the contract with MC Restoration, plans are being finalized to remove derelict vehicles from the island. Talks are currently being held with the Port Authority to determine the type of vessel that can be safely used for this purpose. Once all details have been finalized, MC will proceed with the removal.

While continuing collection, MC is also processing the debris at the various dumping sites. The aim is to restore the sites to their original state.

Community Support Agency Reaches Out

By Angelique Crowther

The *Neighbours Helping Neighbours* support programme is offering their services to all community-based organizations across the Cayman Islands.

Recognizing that many in Cayman are still struggling with issues caused by Hurricane Ivan, the Ministry of Health Services is reaching out to church-, business- or community-based groups that are interested in facilitating a support group for their membership. Support in the form of materials and trained facilitators will be offered to groups interested in this helpful programme.

The Ministry of Health Services under the guidance of locally based clinical psychologist, Dr. Karen Dunbar, developed *Neighbours Helping Neighbours*. It is a structured programme designed to provide emotional and social support to persons within the community who are experiencing post-Ivan difficulties.

Since the initial training of 30 facilitators in December 2004, the ministry has launched two *Neighbours Helping Neighbours* sessions in George Town and several facilitators have taken the initiative to develop their own peer support groups for their church and other community groups.

If your community group is interested in learning more about *Neighbours Helping Neighbours* and assistance that the Ministry of Health Services can provide, contact the Public Health Department, on 244-2648.

Cleaning House: Whose Responsibility?

By Cornelia Olivier

Under normal circumstances, government is responsible for providing waste removal and disposal services. Trash disappears into those large green containers with dependable regularity and none of us has to think of it ever again...

Then along came Ivan—and regular operations couldn't even begin to cope with the unprecedented amount of debris left in its wake.

Recognizing the enormous scope of the essential cleanup, the Cayman Islands Recovery Operation (CIRO) contracted MC Restoration to assist residents by carting away and processing hurricane waste free-of-charge to the public.

"CIRO undertook to remove all hurricane debris from public roads, right-of-ways, public areas, and private residences," said CIRO Operations Manager Mark Scotland. Since early November, operators have been in and out of neighbourhoods, hauling away hundreds of truckloads. But with this effort now in its final stages, yet with debris *still* seemingly in endless supply, the question is being asked: Who will be responsible for the cleanup once MC Restoration has gone?

Under the Public Health Law, "the accumulation of any garbage or refuse in or on any premises" is prohibited and responsibility for removal of such garbage falls to the owner of the property. Where repairs or construction is ongoing, the law stipulates that the contractor is responsible for removing all construction waste material.

Failure to conform with the law (enforced by the Department of Environmental Health), may result in legal action—and not only because debris piles are unsightly: "Uncollected heaps are health hazards because they are potential breeding grounds for rodents and other pests, and uncollected debris can also turn into flying missiles should we have another hurricane," said Envi-

ronmental Health Officer for George Town Garfield Ellison.

Accordingly, the department will be stepping up enforcement of the Public Health Law once the current cleanup effort stops. However, residents are assured that the DEH will visit each site and notify the owner of his or her responsibility to remove rubbish, prior to taking any legal action.

Meanwhile, Mr. Scotland urges the public not to wait for the department to do the cleaning: "The overall objective is to cleanup the island. The first stage was to clear the roads; we then focused on removing debris from public areas and we are now in the third stage of cleanup—the construction phase. But in this phase it is vital that the community takes responsibility," he said. "We are asking residents to continue efforts to beautify their homes and neighborhoods by securing loose items and properly disposing of litter."

Mr. Scotland encouraged residents to use this weekend to rid themselves of accumulated debris by placing it on the roadside for easy collection. But they must contact him to arrange pickup (call 916-2625). He also advised the public to examine contractor agreements to ensure they include a removal service, and reminded owners of vacant lots or commercial establishments, condominium or apartment strata, that they are responsible for the removal of their own debris.

"Anyone can use the temporary MC Restoration dumping sites when hauling debris. That way all waste will be processed instead of accumulating at the landfill," he concluded.

MC Restoration is expected to wrap up the waste removal aspect of their contract by the second week of March, extending the deadline to enable them to satisfy the 300,000 cubic yard target. The processing of debris will continue until dumping sites have been fully restored to their original condition.

Canada Offers Mental Health Support

By Angelique Crowther

As part of the launch the Ministry of Health Services "Mental Health Week" on 7 March, a five-person team from the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto, Canada, will visit the island to provide specialized training to aid and support emergency personnel.

Our frontline emergency workers confronted many challenges as they rescued and comforted distraught residents following Hurricane Ivan. Soon, local fire and police officers, hospital workers and 911 telecommunicators will learn how to cope with the emotional impact of Hurricane Ivan and how to better prepare emotionally for future disasters.

During the week of 1 March, the ministry will conduct special condensed sessions on disaster response training, guided by locally based clinical psychologist, Dr. Karen Dunbar. These sessions will be offered to emergency services staff and other first responders including prison officers, health and mental health workers, teachers, counsellors, heads of government departments and church representatives.

In preparing for the CAMH's visit, the ministry consulted with interested departments to help tailor training programmes to the needs of each group, with a focus on demonstrating strategies and techniques for addressing trauma-related symptoms and situations. Groups such as the local community mental health and public health workers plan to attend training on responding to crises, crisis intervention, treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, and self-care for workers.

Members of the CAMH team are: Mr. Akwatu Khenti, director of the CAMH mental health programmes and a specialist in substance abuse; Dr. Branca Edget, trauma specialist, children and families specialist, and developer of parent and teacher response programmes; Dr. Graham Vadhi, leader for critical incident stress debriefing and a crisis intervention specialist; Mr. Michael Taylor, provider of spiritual counselling; Dr. Barbara Dorian, trauma psychiatrist and head of Women's programme at CAMH.

With the assistance of the Ministry of Education and local schools, CAMH members also plan to consult with teachers and provide peer support training to students in the schools.

The RCIPS: Serving Against the Odds

Continued from Page 2

vide information and assistance, and we need the community's cooperation in telling us who the lawbreakers are."

Assistant Commissioner Anthony Ennis also called for people to help out by bearing some responsibilities themselves: "Residents should secure their property against opportunistic criminals. Although we are currently recruiting a crime prevention officer, people should still call us for advice on crime-proofing their homes and businesses. Those who suffer domestic violence can call the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) at 946-6254 or 926-2590."

Many specialist departments were integrated after Ivan to counter the added load on the force, but the DVU has been revived and is operating from the Traffic Unit's offices on Lyndhurst Road, while its original Smith Road location is repaired.

Referring to the traffic situation, the Assistant Commissioner urged people to practise "good Cayman courtesy" on the road. "We must remember that we are still rebuilding, and we should be exercising calm and patience," he said, warning that police will crack down on offenders.

Post-Ivan Art: Lifting the Spirit and Healing the Soul

By Ruth Smith

Many residents who experienced the traumatic events of September 2004 continue to experience an emotional build-up that needs to be released. Finding outlets for personal trauma allows room to heal — and it can be helpful to others who may be having similar feelings to know that they are not alone.

But what may be surprising for some is the realization that self-expression through art can be as therapeutic as they are enjoyable. Whether painting, singing, dancing or writing, the simple act of creating can help purge some of the pent up emotions that are Ivan's legacy.

Throughout the community, organizations such as the Cayman National Cultural Foundation (CNCF) and the National Gallery have striven to continue programmes that pre-dated the storm. Their efforts have provided a means to take a break from reality and enter the realm of art and culture in activities that lift the spirit and heal the soul.

The CNCF has managed to continue its scheduled events, albeit with modifications. Barely three months after the storm, the foundation hosted *Gimistory*, an annual event of storytelling and comedy, featuring artists from all over the region. Storytellers from Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago combined with a wealth of local talent to make it, some said, better than ever.

"We went to the West Bay show and it was pure comic relief," recalled one audience member. "It was lovely to just sit under the stars, listening to the comedians and storytellers poke fun at Ivan and seeing families enjoying themselves. We laughed and ate fish and fritters, we mingled with the crowd...It was nice to simply relax and enjoy ourselves within the community after being so stressed from the storm. I was glad they decided to have it still, because by then everyone needed some distraction!"

Gimistory ran from 27 November to 5 December, with shows in each district.

December also saw the continuation of auditions for the Aberdeen International Youth Festival, a prestigious event known internationally as the leading performing arts festival for youth aged 12-25. The CNCF held auditions and, once the 30 dancers were chosen, began workshops in preparation for their journey. The troupe will be practising four days weekly until July, when they leave for the festival in England. They will be presenting five locally choreographed dances, along with five more choreographed by overseas profes-

sionals. (For more information on this internationally renowned festival, please visit WWW.AIYF.ORG.)

The National Gallery also called on people throughout the community to express themselves through art by hosting an exhibition entitled *Emergence*. In her curator's statement, Deputy Director Natalie Coleman said: "Art has powerful therapeutic and transformative qualities and, in the wake of disasters and social upheavals, it is often used to help understand what has taken place and to further the process of recovery. As a cultural centre whose mission is to promote and protect the visual arts in the Cayman Islands, we felt that we could best serve the recovery process by providing a venue for people to express their reactions and, subsequently, by promoting healing through creative expression."

Emergence opened at the gallery in December and became one of the most popular exhibitions in terms of visits from residents, visitors and schoolchildren.

The CNCF also took part in the sixth annual National Gallery initiative called Art@Governors, a popular showcase of local artistry highlighting everything from painting and dance to drumming and dee-jaying. The theme for the 29 January event was "Art's Healing Properties," and over 2,000 people attended. As usual, children played a major role in the day as they participated in the "My Best Blue Dragon" competition, performed dances, and volunteered in various booths.

Neither the CNCF nor the National Gallery has reduced the availability of artistic programmes in the Islands; instead they are pushing forward with plans laid prior to Ivan and are creating new undertakings for people to enjoy.

The following are details of future cultural and art events.

Calendar March

Cayman National Cultural Foundation

Rundown opens 9 March and runs through 20 March, playing 5 days weekly at the Cayman Prep Hall.

Annual playwriting competition: the deadline is now 11 March.

Poetry Workshop: Local writer Leonard Dilbert will be hosting a literary arts workshop, from 14 to 18 March. Classes are free. Interested persons should contact the CNCF for further information.

National Gallery

1st March - ART TREK: The National Gallery presents Art Trek for primary school students. Learn all about China and create your own Dragon mask! West Bay Town Hall.

2nd - Voyage to the South Pole - Adventures in Antarctica (Lecture)

Amateur Adventurer Andrew Moon gives an insight into the journey of a lifetime as he and a team of seven battled the elements and temperatures down to -50 degrees to reach the South Pole on skis. Wednesday, 2 March, from 6:00-8:00pm, at the National Gallery. RSVP Jane Moon 945 4383/916 1504 janemoon@candw.ky

16th — Art Flix: The Impressionists - The Other French Revolution (Pt. I). Each month the Gallery presents a public screening of art films and documentaries relating to the history of art. Learn about the Impressionist movement that changed the course of art history. 5:30 pm at the National Gallery.

23rd — Art Flix: The Impressionists - The Other French Revolution (Pt. II). 5:30 pm at the National Gallery.

31st — WaterMarks. This new exhibition will feature some of the Cayman Islands' most renowned water colourists, capturing the vibrant flora of the Caribbean landscape. 6:00pm at the National Gallery.

April

Cayman National Cultural Foundation

Cayfest runs April 16-23. It is a multi-disciplinary exhibition featuring numerous initiatives from local artists. There will be between 12-15 components for the public, ranging from events and/or competitions in areas such as the culinary, performance, visionary, and written arts.

Contact Information

The **Cayman National Cultural Foundation** is currently located on 3rd Floor Elizabethan Square (until further notice). Persons may visit the office, call 949-5477 or fax: 949-4519. Programme Manager Michelle Mogg may be reached via email at cayfest@candw.ky. For general information, the public may also contact Managing Director Marcia Muttoo at CNCF@Candw.ky

The **National Gallery** is located on the ground floor of Harbour Place, George Town. For information on events or directions, call 945-8111.