

# the Cayman Spirit



Cayman Islands Government Information Services

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## Container Discharge Now Current Post-Ivan Port Backlog is History

By Lennon Christian

Importers should now be relieved as port officials report that the discharge of imported containers is now current. The post-Ivan backlog had entailed a delay of up to four weeks before full containers could be cleared, but now importing companies are receiving them almost as soon as they are offloaded from the ships.

Port Director Paul Hurlston attributes this achievement to a combination of factors: the hiring of new staff, the move to round-the-clock operations at the port and 16-hour days at the warehouses, the streamlining of "less-than-container-load" shipments, and the use of additional space to sort and store containers. He thanks the public for its understanding over recent months, adding, "We're doing really well now."

But we mustn't become complacent, Mr. Hurlston advises: "The key to continued progress is the timely collection of smaller imports from the warehouse. Individual importers and small companies have been collecting these items faster, but this must continue if we are to preserve the limited warehouse space."

Other recent developments have been the launch of the Cayman Islands Port Authority's website [www.caymanport.com](http://www.caymanport.com) which allows retail companies, individuals and shipping agencies to check the real-time status of their imports, in addition to the arrival of a new heavy-duty container-handling machine. This new forklift – which brings the total to eight – is now being assembled at the Cargo Distribution Centre, and will be commissioned shortly.

## Pepper Sauce and the OT Minister

What do an undertaking by Overseas Territories Minister Bill Rammell and "Category Five Pepper Sauce" have in common? They were both star attractions at the recent black tie event held right in the heart of the British Parliament to raise hurricane relief funds for the Cayman Islands.

The pickle, blended and specially packaged as a gift to all attendees by CI Government London officer Kate Kandiah, spoke for itself. And what did the Overseas Minister have to say? "He was very impressed with how well organised the function was and the support it drew," said Cayman Islands UK Representative Jennifer Dilbert. Mrs. Dilbert said that she understood that Mr. Rammell is looking into relaxing the Cayman Islands borrowing guidelines, if necessary, to ease the Islands' hurricane budget burden.

The affair, held at Westminster Palace, home to the British Parliament, has raised some £52,000 (approximately C\$85,000), which will be channelled to the rebuilding of educational and cultural infrastructure.

Aside from raising funds, the event did much to raise awareness of the impact that Hurricane Ivan had on the Cayman Islands and of the resultant ongoing needs. Cayman resident Alastair Paterson, who spoke at the function, described both his Ivan experience and the recovery process.

The event, coordinated by the Cayman Islands Government Office in London, was attended by some 176 of London's most influential people. Guests were treated to a champagne reception in the Terrace Marquee at the House of Commons before moving to the

## Investing in our Future... New High School is Launched

By Lynsay Brown

Building of the new Clifton Hunter Memorial High School commenced this week (Tuesday, 1 March) with a ground-breaking ceremony at the 28-acre site in Frank Sound.

Paying tribute to the late Mr. Clifton Hunter, prominent educator and former Bodden Towner for whom the school is named, Education Minister Roy Bodden said: "This school is a symbol of all the excellence

he left behind. We are making history here and, by investing in education, we are investing in the future of our society."

Among those attending the momentous occasion, which took place on land located behind Frank Sound Fire Station, were His Excellency the Governor Mr. Bruce Dinwiddy; Minister for Education, the Hon. Roy Bodden; and Acting Permanent Secretary for Education, Mrs. Mary Rodrigues. They were joined by members of the Legisla-

Continued on Page 5

Continued on Page 2

## Pepper Sauce and the OT Minister *Continued from Page 1*

Members' Dining Room for the dinner, auction and raffle. The auction and raffle contributed approximately £34,000 to the profits.

"We are really very, very pleased," said Mrs. Dilbert. "Tables sold for £2,000 each and we quickly sold out to our many friends and contacts in London, and had to turn people away."

Mrs. Dilbert said that she had overwhelming support from Cayman Islands supporters throughout Europe, including Mrs. Carol Owen, wife of former Governor John Owen. Mrs. Owen's *Morning Walk* was auctioned for £4,750 (approx. C\$7,800), the prize carried off by Mr. Sikander Khan, a London resident and personal friend of Mrs. Dilbert's. Cayman artists who donated works to the auction included Messrs. Horatio Estaban, Randy Cholette and John Broad.

The Ritz Carlton Cayman donated a return trip for two, which auctioned for £10,000 (approximately C\$16,000). Attracting some impressive bids, tea for two at the House of Lords, courtesy of Lord Tim Clement-Jones, featured prominently. Mr. Michael Ryan and Ms Melissa Perkins of the Ritz Carlton Cayman were on hand to make the presentation to winners Robert and Marilyn Holt. Mr. Todd Bice from the Cayman Islands Shipping Registry won his bid for a bottle of whisky signed by Prime Minister Tony Blair and Mr. Michael Howard MP (the Leader of the Conservative (Opposition) Party). The signed bottle of whisky had been procured by Ian Davidson, MP, an active member of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Cayman Islands.

The event was so well supported that there was an excess of auction and raffle items. These are expected to become auction/raffle attractions at another function to raise funds for the Cayman Islands. This is to be hosted in Gibraltar by Chief Justice of Gibraltar Derek Schofield (a former judge of the Grand Court of the Cayman Islands) and Mrs. Anne Schofield.

The London office is hoping to have another similar fund-raising event for Cayman this summer.

The London Office was supported in this most recent event by both the Friends of Cay-

man group in London and the APPG. Mrs. Dilbert launched the Friends of Cayman group in December 2002, and has during her time in London rejuvenated the APPG, under the chairmanship of Lord Davies of Coity. Mr. Nigel Evans MP, vice chairman, served as host of the event, and Lord Keith Brookman represented the chairman, Lord Davies, who was unable to attend.

From its inception, Mr. Michael Hobson of Morval Bank has served as chairman of the Friends, and Mrs. Dilbert paid tribute to his hard work and determination in promoting the

Cayman Islands in London. At the Westminster Palace dinner, the chairmanship was passed to former Governor, Mr. Owen.

The recent event was coordinated and organised by London Office staff, Mary Chandler-Allen, Caroline Key and Kate Kandiah. Mrs. Dilbert paid tribute to their dedication, enthusiasm and hard work.

The Westminster Palace event was so successful, Mrs. Dilbert said, that thought is being given to making it an annual affair, with proceeds going to worthy causes in each of the overseas territories on a rotating basis.



*Jennifer Dilbert, Robert and Marilyn Holt, Melissa Perkins, and Michael Ryan*



*Sikander Khan with Carol Owen's "Morning Walk"*

# Dispelling Rumours...

## Planning Director Gives the Word

By Angelique Crowther

At a recent presentation to the Chamber of Commerce, the Director of Planning, Kenneth Ebanks dispensed some useful information concerning post-Ivan rebuilding. He also dispelled some rumours.

First on Mr. Ebanks' rumour list was that the Planning Department is no longer entertaining applications. On the contrary, he said, Planning is fully operational and is processing applications at their Grand Pavilion office. He advised that most post-storm rebuilding require planning permission or, at the very least, building inspection. Structural, plumbing and electrical repairs are all areas that require inspection.

Mr. Ebanks also addressed the rumour that suggests that sand and rock deposits created by Hurricane Ivan are free for the taking: "This is not true," he said. "These deposits are being returned to the beach and it is illegal to take them for any landscaping or other personal use."

### Useful Information: Development Requiring Planning Permission

1. Any structure that requires rebuilding external walls or rebuilding from the foundation.
2. All new structures.
3. All building material changes, e.g. changing a structure's external walls from wood to concrete block.
4. Any fence or wall above 3'6" in height.
5. All additions to existing structures of more than 10 %. However, a letter requesting a one time 10 % addition must be submitted to the department for approval.

### Development Requiring Building Control approval

1. All structures that require Planning approval require Building Control approval with the exception of docks, seawalls and small sheds;
2. Any structure that requires electrical and/or plumbing changes
3. Any structure that requires structural changes, including hurricane connectors, roof construction, closing of ingress/egress.

To illustrate the point that Planning approval is needed for rebuilding, Mr. Ebanks presented the example:

### How do you rebuild if you have lost part of your roof?

1. Have the structural integrity checked by a structural engineer or building inspector. This includes checking the plywood sheathing and nailing, rafters, ceiling joists and hurricane connectors.
2. Have a licensed electrician replace any receptacles covered with water; have the service, wire, light fixtures and receptacles checked; blow water out of conduits; have damaged weather-head replaced with 2-inch conduit (minimum). These items must be inspected by a licensed inspector before CUC will reconnect power.

### How long will it take to get approval?

Planning permission (estimated time frame): Houses, duplexes and other routine matters —

five working days or less; semi-routine applications or those requiring CPA approval — 3-4 weeks; major applications — 4-8 weeks.

Building permit (estimated time frame): Houses and duplexes — 2-4 weeks; major applications — 4-8 weeks;

Inspections (estimated time frame): Inspections will typically be completed within 72 hours from the time they are requested; contractors and tradesmen need to start requesting inspections in a timely manner.

If you have any questions about your rebuilding project call the Planning Department at 769-PLAN (7526) or visit their office at the Grand Pavilion Commercial Centre.

## Bodden Town Beach is Back

By Cornelia Olivier

Beach repair is continuing island wide, and with Bodden high on that agenda, residents are once again able to enjoy restored areas.

This is excellent news for residents, and equally fine for the turtles — the beach has been restored just in time for the start of the April nesting season.

It was through the efforts of MC Restoration that the sand has been restored to the town's scarred shoreline, but the rest will now be up to Mother Nature — it will be left to the wind and waves to stabilize the repaired beaches.

East Enders too will soon see their beaches restored to their former glory, as work teams apply themselves to the task in their district.

"The locations for priority beach restoration are chosen by considering turtle nesting habits, natural erosion cycles, and popularity with tourists and residents," said Department of Environment (DOE) Assistant Director of Research and Assessment, Mr. Tim Austin.

According to CIRO Operations Manager Mark Scotland, approximately 28,000 cubic yards of sand have so far been processed island-wide.



Putting on a few finishing touches, Mr Truman Minzett, lifetime Bodden Town resident, takes pride in the new beach.

# Building for the Future

By Cornelia Olivier

Many structures that failed during Ivan's onslaught could have survived with minimal or no damage and numerous residents could have avoided the trauma of seeing their homes destroyed—if only those buildings had been up to code.

Currently reviewing Cayman's building code to see how it compares to International Building Code regulations, the Planning Department urges residents to ensure that when they rebuild, structures comply with or even exceed, current requirements.

Looking at reasons *why* structures failed during the hurricane can also help people to avoid the same mistakes when they rebuild and repair:

- Where hurricane storm surge pushed out ground floor block walls, it was because they should have had additional reinforcing. Raising the house on open pilings could have prevented such catastrophic damage;
- Failure to tie down to foundations caused some structures to simply float away;
- Builders should provide at least 12-inch cover on footings; heavy rains washed away the backfill at some houses, exposing and possibly undermining the footing. (Residents should note that they require an engineer's report if their homes' footings were undermined);
- Where gable end walls and trusses failed, it was because they lacked proper bracing; correct bracing resists wind load and can prevent end-wall failure. It can also prevent trusses from lying down in a domino or ripple effect;



*The importance of rebuilding to standard: This building's roof was ripped off by a piece of debris from another structure.*

# Helping Parents Face Challenges

By Cornelia Olivier

"Parenting is one of the most challenging roles adults will ever face," says Department of Children and Family Services' National Parenting Programme (NPP) Coordinator Debra Webb.

The challenge is intensified with the added tensions that confront us in the struggle to recover after Hurricane Ivan: Families have been displaced; the school year has been altered, and now another hurricane season is fast approaching. Children are vulnerable like never before, leaving parents looking for all the help they can get.

"Parents can start by playing an active and consistent role in their children's lives, because youngsters of all ages need lots of support if they are to be successful students and, later on, productive adults," Ms Webb explains.

Talking to your children about their personal challenges, asking them how they are coping with the recovery and encouraging them to express their feelings are some of the things parents can do to alleviate stress in the home.

At a recent NPP parenting workshop, participants had a chance to gauge their roles as well as the challenges facing them. Discussion helped them identify the need for improved communication between parents and children, as well as more paternal involvement and increased parental participation in children's education.

Also identified as needing attention were quality childcare after school, employer sensitivity, an understanding of children's nutritional needs and a call for children to respect and accept figures of authority.

The NPP will soon establish focus groups in each district to give parents a platform to voice their concerns as well as express their needs. "Before parents can deal with their children's needs and problems successfully, they have to be aware of their own requirements," says Ms Webb.

The programme also aims at consolidating different resources available to parents: "Schools, churches and other organizations all have various projects to support them but parents don't always know what is out there. We would like to be a one-stop shop for parents — somewhere they can go when they need any kind of assistance. In the end, high-quality parenting comes down to good communication and support."

Ms Webb urges parents to take advantage of their own support network by drawing on the experience of family and friends, but also says that anyone in need of assistance should call the department at 925-5349 or 925-5350 to talk to one of the social workers on duty.

# “A Man’s Home is Still his Castle” Minister Weighs in on Easing Burdens

In a bid to ease the population’s post-Ivan rebuilding burden, Government has changed the Planning Law and the Building Code.

Among the key changes, planning permission can be extended beyond its original 12-month deadline for up to an additional six months where necessary after a national disaster and the CPA can grant a 50% reduction in Infrastructure Fees. Also, the Building Code now more specifically defines what constitutes an unsafe structure and the provisions for their restoration.

The Minister responsible for Planning, Communications, District Administration and Information Technology, the Hon. Julianna O’Connor-Connolly, JP, presented a bill containing the amendments to the law and the proposed changes to the Building Code to the Legislative Assembly on 10 February. The bill was passed by the Assembly on 11 February 2005, and will come into law once the Governor assents to it. The changes to the Building Code are now in effect.

In her address to the Legislative Assembly, Minister O’Connor-Connolly said: “The purpose of this legislation is to help ensure that recovery efforts are not made more onerous by planning requirements,” adding, “I am extremely grateful to the Planning department and Central Planning Authority. Not only was the Planning Department staff on the ground within two days of Ivan’s passing and assisting with restoration of electricity, but they were also meeting with the CPA to develop policy advice for Cabinet for recovery-oriented legislation. The new laws are the result of those efforts, and the Cabinet approved them without hesitation.”

## Main points of the new provisions:

(1) Define the term “national disaster” to include hurricane, fire, flood, earthquake or any other calamity.

(2) Define “recovery period” to indicate the length of time that HE the Governor would order that these provisions would apply. In the case of Hurricane Ivan the recovery period has extended through to 30 June 2005.

(3) Enable the Central Planning Authority (CPA) to extend planning permission beyond one year, for up to an additional six months, when necessary, after a national disaster.

(4) Enable the CPA to grant a 50% reduction in Infrastructure Fees, in any case where it deems the development necessary for the purpose of the restoration following a national disaster.

(5) Vary the composition of the Planning Appeals Tribunal and amend the definition of the term “development.”

Also passed were some minor amendments to the Building Code Regulations which more specifically define what constitutes an

unsafe structure; the manner in which building officials will record and give notice to property owners of an unsafe structure; and provisions for restoration of damaged structures.

“I have personally toured areas hardest hit by the hurricane and I can safely say that regardless of such devastation, a man’s home is still his castle. These revisions cover options to remedy situations which will encourage restoration and rebuilding over demolition,” the Minister said.

## Investing in our Future...

*Continued from Page 1*

tive Assembly and the Education Department, and the family of the late Mr. Hunter.

“The task before us is to turn this open field into a state-of-the-art educational facility by September 2007, which is no small challenge,” Mrs. Rodrigues said. Announcing plans for another high school in West Bay by 2007 and the re-development of John Gray High School two years after that, Mrs. Rodrigues explained: “These three high schools, located

strategically throughout the island, will ensure manageable numbers and adequate space to cope with growing enrolments for some time to come.

“As we continue to work to improve our school facilities, the Ministry of Education will give equal emphasis to initiating and supporting innovation and reform at all levels within the educational system.”



*Ground-breaking shovels at the ready: (L-R) Chief Inspector of Schools, Mrs. Helena McVeigh; Acting Permanent Secretary for Tourism, Mrs. Joy Basdeo; Chief Education Officer, Mrs. Nyda Flatley; MLA for North Side, Mrs. Edna Moyle; Minister for Planning, the Hon. Gilbert McLean; Acting Permanent Secretary for Education, Mrs. Mary Rodrigues; HE the Governor Mr. Bruce Dinwiddy; MLA for East End, Mr. Arden McLean; MLA for Bodden Town, Mr. Anthony Eden, and Minister for Education, the Hon. Roy Bodden.*