

Hartford Schools, A Ship Without A Captain: Facing Budget, Enrollment Crises And School Closures

By Edgar Johnson

"Thank God," said a parent at Martin Luther King (MLK) School upon hearing that Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin had put on hold the contentious proposals targeted to close most of the schools in Hartford's Northend Promise Zone neighborhood—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; Thirman Milner; Simpson-Waverly; Clark (shut down because of PCB contamination); Wish, the only school to be left.

According to another parent, Mayor Bronin has the backbone to truncate the ill-conceived proposals shaped largely by barebones data generated by the outside consultants. Their proposals to close most of the schools in Hartford's Northend poorest neighborhoods show how far removed they are from the needs, dreams, hopes, and struggles of neighborhood parents and students who dream to attain quality education and access opportunities.

In fact, it might rightly be said that even though the majority of the schools in Hartford's Northend area are off the closing bloc for now, the outcry among parents, educators, and other stakeholders continue. "To close our schools, representing the core education value for them to secure a future is heartless and incomprehensible," said a taxpayer and voter.

Furthermore, that which was alarming was the fact that the consultants of Milone & MacBroon of Cheshire, did not engage members of Equity 2020 adequately. Many were stunned when the proposals were presented as coming from Equity 2020, and as members they had no input. Also, behind the scene was the stunning announcement of Hartford Superintendent of Schools Beth Schiavino-Narvaez's resignation and taking a position in Japan.

And in terms of planning, moving with the Board's agenda and tackling the goals of Equity 2020, so early in the school year, the "ship" has left without a captain. So what's up with the rush to close the majority of the schools in Hartford's Northend poorest neighborhoods when the Superintendent's last day with the district is December 8, and who is in place to guide the "ship" and be held accountable to ensure that the mission accomplished.

Furthermore, the time calls for all residents in the North Hartford Promise Zone—Taxpayers, voters, and community advocates to play a role in the destiny of their schools and in the education of students. "Come, let your voices be heard."

Where is the presence of the 100 black men, who welcomed, for example, MLK students on the First Day of School for the past three years? Why the parents and students in Hartford Northend impoverished pockets of the Promise Zone area schools are always bearing the brunt of the failed policies? The bad judgment made by educational leaders has carried huge consequences in the lives of many families. Why the disadvantaged students and families will be the ones to be dispersed to other school buildings and switched from schools to schools? Those who were once walkers are bussed from school to school and gradually become disconnected within their communities and their accustomed neighborhoods.

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Boy Scout Troops Reach Out To Hartford Youngsters



Participants Line-Up for "Scouting For Hartford"

By Stan Walker

Despite not getting the attendance that was expected, the "Scouting in Hartford" program was staged on the grounds of the West Indian Social Club on Saturday, November 5, to give members of the Hartford community and surrounding towns a first-hand understanding of what the movement is about and was considered a success.

According to Scout Leader Dean Rhoden of CURET Troop 1443, although the attendance was down, based on the

response of those who showed up, he is optimistic that the annual program that is set to try and recruit more members, will eventually help to get more youngsters from the community involved in the movement.

The event was held under the patronage of Troop 1443 and three other Hartford troops, along with representatives from the Police Department, including some of their cadets, and the Fire Department Explorers.

The attendees got the opportunity to learn about a few

scouting skills which included tying knots, first aid, axe safety, Dutch-oven cooking, camping and flag raising.

Among the attendees was Manny Martinez and Steven Smith, council executives of the Mark Twain District, Police Chief James Rovella, Fire Chief Reginald Freeman, Kiwanis President Linda King-Corbin, and Brian Fasci, director of Field Service.

Following their introduction, each made interesting remarks about the movement and expressed their feelings about how scouting

can help youngsters in the community.

During the program, they also saluted and paid respect to veterans Fasci and Councilwoman Rjo Winch, who were present, for their services to the country.

A highlight of the day was the performances of three magicians who delighted the gathering with a few of their tricks.

CURET Boy Scout Troop 1443, located on Albany Avenue, was started July 2009, with the dream of transforming young men to become better citizens, become self-

reliant and empowered with skills that will be useful to themselves and their community.

The Troop which was chartered by the Center For Urban Research, Education and Training Inc., (CURET), is a very functional structure and serves as an extended program to the regular school curriculum. The members of CURET Troop who reside in Hartford and the surrounding districts are involved in numerous community events throughout the Greater Hartford area. They

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Larson Discusses 2016 Election, Next Steps With Local Students

HARTFORD, CT: Rep. John B. Larson (CT-01) spoke with local students in an American Government class at Capital Community College about the results of the 2016 election and how to move forward.

"I am glad I had the chance to speak to these students about their concerns over the 2016 election results," said Larson.

"They echoed the sentiments of many of my constituents who have contacted our office about their anxieties. I will continue to fight for my constituents and their

rights. We will work with President-elect Trump on the areas we agree with, and fight any bigotry and injustices that occur."

In addition to discussing their concerns, they also discussed ways to move forward and be a change within their local communities. Larson encouraged the students to be active in their communities, because change begins there.

Larson often meets with local groups throughout the First District to discuss their thoughts and concerns.



Rep. John B. Larson speaking with students from Capital Community College

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After-Election Issues, Many Have Demographic Implications

By Jim Daniels

The November 8, 2016 Presidential Election is now history. And given the times in which we live, there are issues that will be front and center for the next president, and many of them are daunting.

Our national leaders will be challenged as never before to attempt to unify this country if we are to continue to offer hope and opportunity to all who seek it.

The list of rock hard issues is probably led by the difference in our national perspective of what kind of country we desire to be

There are those who believe we have over extended ourselves in reaching to meet the needs of countries around the world and in the process have made ourselves poorer for it.

There are those who believe that there has been a national agenda to favor one group of Americans over another. There are those who are not exactly sure what it is they desire. They only know there is need for change, whatever that change looks like. Finally, there are those who actually want to return to a past that will become their future vision of this country.

Virtually all of these issues have demographic implications. For example, in 2012 there were 142 million registered voters



Jim Daniels

including 9.3 million Hispanics. Based on data collected, voters were 80 percent White, 10 percent Black and 7 percent Hispanic. About 70 percent of Hispanics voted Democratic and 30 percent Republican. But if you listen to some of the discussion-noise you would believe that the only issue of concern to Hispanics is immigration.

It turns out that education and worker skills are as important. The Education Testing Service reported that the ongoing shift in the demographic profile of the nation, powered by the highest immigration rates in almost a century, is one of the three converging forces that could have dire consequences for the nation.

The other two are the inadequate literacy and math skills among workers and the continuing evolution of the economy and the nation's job structure requiring increasingly high-skilled workers.

Free college education is only a partial answer to this issue. Policy-makers need to address the

necessity of improving access and achievement rates in grades K-14 as the nation's top priority.

Did you notice that there was not much discussion of this issue during the campaign, even while some applauded the rise in graduation rates for minorities?

Your head would be in the sand like the proverbial ostrich if you had not observed or have been affected by the bias and bigotry evident throughout the electoral process. President Obama as the first Black president and his wife have been for 8 years the target of hostile and racist attacks that have demarcated a huge segment of Americans and some of our national leaders are complicit in that effort.

The effort by the Black Lives Movement and the rejectionist response by some is one of the issues that will need the attention of the next president if there is to be any semblance of a united country focused on making our democracy work for all. How to walk the line between support for responsible and balance law enforcement and a justice system that is fair is a top priority.

Attached to this is the need for an open and candid conversation on race. Many have argued that overt racism has virtually been replaced with hidden racial bias. It had in fact gone underground; hidden. Not the national mood I observed over the last 12 to 18 months.

There is no misunderstanding about the national mood of this country. Large numbers of our citizenry are angry. They are angry about the state of our country, dissatisfied with the system and fearful of global changes, and in that condition willing to suspend normal, informed judgment.

But if the country is to right itself and begin to put forward policies and recommendations to address these concerns, there will be a need for respectful and courageous give and take with the prospect of achieving national unity.

At the international level, there are the issues regarding the US role in the South China Sea and the Asia/Pacific region generally; the conflict in Syria and how to confront Russia; and the still active conflict in Afghanistan where the US has thousands of troops.

The current confrontation between Moscow and Washington has provoked many to discuss whether this geopolitical standoff might lead to an open conflict and a potential doomsday scenario. However, that's hardly a rational option, no matter how far diplomatic relations may have deteriorated.

The issues on the next president's plate are high and deep and will require strong and bold decision making and the support of all its citizens. The president will need our support.

As I See It: Politics

Many people are fascinated with politics. Arguably, politics is what makes us do whatever we do on a day-to-day basis. Distinction should be made, however, between partisan politics and 'parochial' politics.

In a broad sense, politics begins in the home. Parents use various strategies to



Christopher A. Service Sr.

accomplish what needs to be accomplished. Parents negotiate with their children and among themselves. If there in potential disharmony solutions are found to appease all concerned.

As I see it, the role played by each member of a household will vary depending on

how the family is structured and the age of each family member. The head of the family usually performs either in conformity to societal norms or according to tradition. Conforming to what society dictates or modifying certain norms to suit individual families is political decisions.

As individuals leave their homes on a daily basis and go to places of work, recreation, or to acquire knowledge, knowingly or unknowingly, they make political decisions. Does the father or mother who might be head of the household at home but a clerical person in an office have the same role? Is he or she able to make binding decisions at work? As I see it, conformity to the norms at work is a decision one has to make in order to keep ones job. That in my view is a political decision.

Partisan politics is what most people are familiar with and what sometimes causes friction among individuals. Individuals are sometimes courted, wooed and subtly cajoled into favoring one party over another. Various means are employed by party leaders to foster support and eventually get votes. In a two-party system the

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Hartford Extends Free On-Street Parking For Winterfest

HARTFORD, CT: In order to encourage more people to enjoy the benefits of Hartford and to help promote the planned activities for the annual Winterfest Hartford celebration, Hartford Parking Authority will modify the metered parking regulations and the posted on-street parking time restrictions on the streets surrounding Bushnell Park from Friday, November 25, 2016 through Sunday, January 8, 2017.

The specific street locations are:
 Elm Street from Trinity Street to Hudson Street
 Trinity Street from Elm Street to Jewell Street
 Jewell Street from Trinity Street to Trumbull Street (although please

note that parking along Jewell Street may be closed periodically through December until the completion of TIGER project construction)

The parking modification details are:
 No-parking from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m. restrictions on Trinity Street will be lifted for the duration of Winterfest Hartford from Friday, November 25, 2016 through Sunday, January 8, 2017. **(Restriction remains in effect on Elm Street)**

As always, when legally parked, on-street parking in the City of Hartford is free after 6:00 p.m. on weeknights and all day on weekends

Parkers are reminded to take note of any limitations noted by signage in close proximity to selected on-street spaces

Additional free off-street parking is available after 5:00 p.m. at the State of Connecticut surface parking lots located on West Street and along Capitol Avenue, which gives visitors easy access to the ice skating rink.

Additional paid off-street parking is available near Pulaski Circle.

Winterfest Hartford features the popular ice skating rink by the Pump House in Bushnell Park and a traditional holiday lighting display that extends to the Bushnell Park Carousel. Free ice skating and skate rentals will be available seven

days a week during the season.

“We would like to welcome everyone planning to attend Winterfest Hartford to enjoy free, convenient parking” said Eric Boone, CEO of Hartford Parking Authority. “We have also removed the weekday afternoon parking restrictions on Trinity Street so visitors can enjoy the convenience of parking close to the skating rink and holiday lighting display,” he added.

About the Hartford Parking Authority

The Hartford Parking Authority (HPA) meets the needs of parkers

Citywide by consistently providing convenient and affordable parking, and strives to be a leader by incorporating parking industry best practices and actively partnering with the City of Hartford in promoting economic and community development.

The HPA oversees metered and regulated parking spaces on Hartford streets, as well as operates and maintains the City-owned MAT Garage. For more information, contact the Hartford Parking Authority at 860.527.7275 or visit www.hartfordparking.com.

As I See It

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ultimate intent is to place one party ahead of the other. The average supporter of a particular party usually does not consider the organizational structure that political parties have and where the supporters fit into that structure.

As I see it, many who present themselves as candidates of a particular political party do so with self-interest in mind. Under the guise of helping to further the cause of the organization that they represent, they say one thing and do another.

A typical example is played out when the person running for political office says that he or she will effect certain changes when elected to a particular position. When a person is newly elected to an office, that person has to ‘learn the ropes.’ He or she has no power at the outset. One very rarely, if ever, hears a politician who is seeking office say, “if I get elected I will work towards getting . . . done.”

One person cannot implement change. A newly elected individual has to conform to what exists until he or she gets a chance to suggest change. Many who are elected think it is their right to do whatever they want once they get elected. Seemingly, there is no system that will ‘hold their feet to the fire’ and make them accountable for promises made.

At best what partisan politics does is swop one individual for another. Politicians tend to all say the same thing but in a different way. I liken what they say to coffee. It is all canned at the same factory but has a different label.

I think it was a politician that said “you can fool some of the people some of the time but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.”

As I see it, we should look at those who associate with us who appear to be soliciting our votes and ask ourselves, are they for real? That is as I see it.

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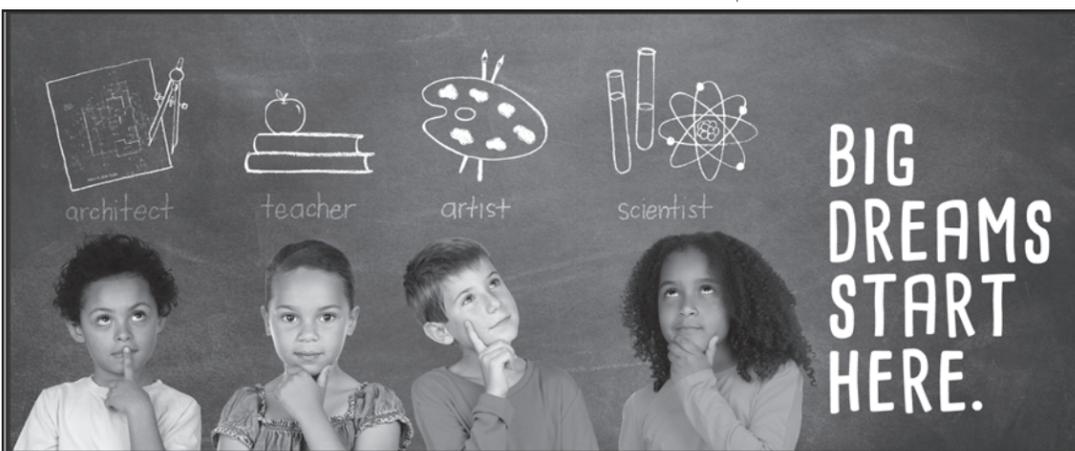
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WI Foundation, A Staple In The Community

By Stan Walker

For almost four decades, the West Indian Foundation has been a staple in our community investing and providing financial support to deserving students, Endia Decordova, dean at the Manchester Community College (MCC) said as she addressed the organization's 38th annual scholarship awards gala, which was held at the Marriott Hotel, Windsor, Saturday, October 22, 2016.

The keynote speaker at the event, Decordova congratulated the members, volunteers, and supporters of the organization, which she said work very tirelessly and give generously of their time, passion and resources to ensure that the community is better off than how they found it.

"The Foundation's mission 'Educating Today for a Better Tomorrow' is ever so critical, especially as we witness the current climate in our country," she said. "The political rhetoric that is prevalent everywhere you turn, reinforces the need for an educated society and workforce.

"Education has always been an important asset, but too often it was only limited to those with access to finances and resources. The dream of making a difference for themselves, their families or communities seems like an unattainable goal, but organizations like the Foundation

make it possible for hundreds of individuals by giving them the opportunity and encouragement to pursue their degree."

Sharing the story about her parents whom she said made many sacrifices to help her get her education. Decordova said that her father who arrived in the US on a farm worker's contract from his home in Jamaica in the 1950s, as a young man, faced racial discrimination and economic barriers while working in Florida farms and in the tobacco fields in Windsor, but because he worked in the tobacco fields did not mean that he did not understand the value and importance of education.

He later got married to a young woman who also believed in the value of education, she said, and it is because of their sacrifices, commitment, and the philanthropic generosity of community investors like the Foundation why I am in this position today.

Reaching out to the four scholarship recipients she said that I was just like you. "You see, I was the first recipient of the Foundation's Migrant Farm Workers Scholarship. Because of their generosity, I was the first member of my family to go to college, who went on to become the youngest and first black female to become the Dean at MCC.

"All of us have been called for service," Decordova said. "We each have a gift and talent that



Scholarship Recipients: From left are K'Ylah Flynn, Dylan Stewart, Treasurer Gordon, and Johyna Riley

makes us unique. So as we begin this journey at reaching our full potential, I challenge you to not only celebrate your uniqueness, but also to celebrate the unique qualities and talents of others."

The year's scholarship recipients were K'ylah Flynn (Marcus Garvey); Treasure Gordon (West Indian Migrant Farm Workers Memorial); Johyna Riley (Mildred & Fitzroy Parkinson), and Dylan Stewart (Keith L. Carr Sr. Technical & Vocational).

Five other individuals were also presented with awards at the function. They were Edwin W. Carty (Lifetime), Dr. Linda K. Barry, M.D., FACS (Education), Carol Reid (Business), Rohan A.

Freeman, PE, LS (Business), and James Michel (Community Service).

Flynn, who is currently attending Springfield College pursuing studies in biology and Gordon, who is also studying biology, aspire to become doctors, while Riley, who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Computer Science at the University of Connecticut intends to achieve a master's degree in that field. Stewart, who is presently attending the University of New Haven, is aiming to become a forensic scientist.

President Desmond Collins extended a very special welcome to all the attendees, thanked them for their support and said that

he hoped that at the end of the event they will become more knowledgeable about the Foundation and the community that it serves.

"To our longstanding supporters, for over 38 years your generosity has allowed us to fund, administer, and manage several programs within the Greater Hartford region and beyond our shores," he said.

He also spoke about the situation of the schools in the North End of Hartford, in particular the Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, which is in the plan to be closed. "We have adopted the school. It has a very strong and long Caribbean support and we would like to see it continue," he said.

Hartford Schools

Continued from Page 1

Educational leaders have been warned about the danger of "the robbing Peter to pay Paul" syndrome.

The State Department of Education with its marketing, recruiting, and public relations campaigns—building construction of some of the best and more attractive magnet schools centering on the landmark Sheff v. O'Neil desegregation case ruling.

And with the creation of some of the best magnet schools with all the resources and the best curricula aimed at attracting more and more white students, offering a wide array of classes for college

credits.

With strong marketing showcasing the benefits of magnet schools, students' success, continue attracting more students and their parents to magnet schools and at the same time stripped Hartford Public Schools of its students.

Now the Hartford School system is facing stanch budget crisis and enrollment problem to the extent that decision makers are targeting to close the most vulnerable schools—all the schools in the Hartford Northend impoverished pockets of the Promise Zone Area.

The warning was given long ago! But who listened!

Bruce Douglas, former magnet school creator of the Capitol

Region Education Council (CREC) for some 18 years gave a warning soon after he retired. "There are too many magnets now." In his tenure at CREC since 1998, Douglas opened 16 new magnet schools.

According to Douglas, "Every time you build a magnet school, you take children out of Hartford Public Schools.

Every time you engage in Open Choice, you're taking children out of Hartford Public Schools," Douglas said. "I think we have to be careful that we don't empty out the Hartford Public Schools," he added.

Connecticut Superior Court Judge Thomas Moukawshe's recent ruling outrightly stated that

the state is defaulting children in not providing adequate educational opportunities to all its students. Furthermore, even in the midst of its budget crisis, there is an imbalance in the funding of rich and poor schools amounting to millions of dollars.

What an alarming finding indicating that funding earmarked for the poor school districts are redirected to rich school districts.

And added to the preponderance of the mounting heavy burdens and neglect on the impoverished Northend schools and the outcries of the helpless parents and students, let's fix the problem, not by closing the schools.

Let's provide adequate

educational opportunities for all, including the poorest students, ensuring that the curriculum meets the same standard as that of the rich school districts.

The very presence of a school in the community plays a critical role and should not be easily glossed over as non-essential.

In fact, having schools in the community represent the very fabric that draws people to the community and makes a community prosper.

There is an ongoing education pipeline that shows growth and builds the economy. When people can read, write, understand math, and more—this builds the city's economy.

Our schools are where our students learn values and other skills, including civic skills. And the students represent the future taxpayers who will invest in the schools and want to ensure the best education for students. Students deserve the best. They are the future.

Stakeholders ought not to sit by and allow dollars and cents to crumble the most critical infrastructure.

Let's invest in the brainpower of our children and youth in our community; and continue to cut off the school to dropout prison pipeline, providing them with the infrastructure for them to succeed; ensuring their constitutional right to a quality and equal education.



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Foundation Celebrates 22nd Annual Celebration Of Giving

By Carol Johnson

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG) held its annual Celebration of Giving event with this year's theme—*The Power and Promise of Philanthropy*. The recent event was held at the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, 166 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT.

The keynote speaker was Leslie Crutchfield, co-author of two books—*Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-Impact Nonprofits*, and *Do More Than Give: The Six Practices of Donors Who Change the World*.

Unlike other annual nonprofit events, Celebration of Giving this year was not a fundraiser; rather, it was an opportunity to celebrate the generosity of the region's donors and the contributions made by dedicated and vibrant nonprofit communities.

In celebrating *The Power*

and *Promise of Philanthropy*, Yvette Meléndez, chair of the Hartford Foundation Board of Directors highlighted the work of the Hartford Foundation, and said this work “is only possible with the support of dedicated individuals in our community working together for good, individuals such as those of you here tonight—our donors, grantees, volunteers, community leaders, staff and Board Members.”

With her announced retirement effective in March 2017, this was the last Celebration of Giving presided over by Hartford Foundation President Linda J. Kelly.

“At this our 22nd annual Celebration of Giving, we celebrate the Power and the Promise of Philanthropy. This phrase holds special meaning for me today, just as it did 11 years ago in my first written message to the community,” Kelly said.



From left: Linda J. Kelly, president HFPG, Leslie Crutchfield, and Mishone Donelson

According to her, *The Power and the Promise of Philanthropy* continues to guide the work of HFPG, particularly in the areas of Learning, Advancing Family Economic Security, and Sustaining Vibrant Communities. These are actualized through the following:

Learning from early childhood development to strengthening family-community-school partnerships, to scholarships to more than 600 students, many of whom are the first college students in their family.

Advancing Family Economic Security, particularly through our newest Career Pathways Initiative, addressing the literacy and employment training needs of the region's hardest to employ, through collaborations with community-based organizations, community colleges and employers (to prepare for family-sustaining wage jobs).

Sustaining Vibrant Communities in so many ways, including the arts, behavioral health

networks, safe and affordable housing, community engagement, and green spaces.”

Kelly praised the Foundation for the privilege of allowing her to serve all the people of the region and reflecting on the mantle of leadership, which was passed from Mike Bangser to her 11 years ago, she looks forward to passing the baton in the coming months to a new leader, who will most assuredly take the Foundation and its impact in this community to even greater heights.

It has been a distinct honor and great privilege to serve as the steward of this tremendous community asset for the past eleven years, working alongside a truly dedicated Board and other volunteers, extremely talented staff from whom I've learned so much, and a caring, passionate and engaged community. To all of you I am deeply grateful. Thank you for this privilege to serve,” Kelly concluded.

“Over the past 11 years, she has led the Foundation's continued growth, with assets reaching an

all-time high of \$934 million, despite several years of severe, external economic turmoil. And, the Foundation has continued to set annual grant-making records, awarding \$33 million to area nonprofits in 2015,” said Meléndez.

Before Crutchfield's keynote presentation, a brief video featured some donors and their views on philanthropy, demonstrating the inspiration, hope, and catalytic power of giving.

Then Crutchfield shared her thoughts on philanthropy and interacted with the audience through a question-and-answer session led by Mishone Donelson, a member of HFPG's newly established Board of Ambassadors.

Approximately 400 members of the Greater Hartford region including nonprofit representatives, donors, and community leaders were in attendance. And members of the Manchester High School String Quartet presented the special music.



From left: Fire Chief Reginald Freeman, CURET Troop Leader Dean Rhoden, and Police Chief James Rovella

Troops Reach Out To Hartford

Continued from Page 1

perform civic duties, badge requirements, and attend boy scouts program. And CURET Troop 1443 received several citations.

Supporters and sponsors of the program included Mark Twain District, Connecticut Rivers Council, Troop 121 of Rocky Hill, Hartford Police Explorers, Hartford Fire Explorers, Hartford

Police Athletic League, Hartford Kiwanis, CURET, The West Indian Social Club, BCI Interiors, Airey Wilson Insurance (Allstate), Order of the Arrow, Sequassen Art & Home Improvement, Dave Pickett, Paul Nichols, Aquarius Graphics LLC, Living Word Imprint, Access TV, Hartford Public Library, Cricket Hall of Fame, Busy and Energy radio stations.

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The Choices We Make

By the time you are reading this article, many of you have voted or not voted in the historic 2016 Presidential Election. Regardless of your choice to vote or to abstain, and regardless which candidate you chose, hopefully you will be able to live with the consequences of the choice you made.

Remember the choice you make is personal and cannot be blamed on anyone or anything else. You and only you are responsible for every choice and decision you make.

Life is about making choices. Every day we make choices that affect our lives or a greater portion of it. Whether we were born with high IQs, or we operate on diminished mental capacities, we were all blessed with the *gift of choice*. I call it a gift because making choices is something that most of us have the ability to do freely, so it is the ultimate liberty of mankind.

However, there are situations where choices are pre-determined and entrusted upon us, and we have to make our selection under duress or other restrictive conditions resulting in discomfort and disappointment. Nonetheless, most of us are able to choose our lifestyle, our religious affiliation, and our political position, where we live, among other important decisions. So what is choice?

Choice involves the mental process of judging the



Thomas Aldridge, Ph.D

merits of the options available to us, and selecting one of them. Here the selection is often made to avoid difficulties or regretful experiences. Sometimes we question our own judgment, wondering what would have happened if we had chosen one option over another.

But in hindsight we come to realize that many of our decisions were influenced by our wish to remain in our comfort zone. As humans, we do not readily welcome decisions that will alter our "easy" lifestyles or interrupt our status quo. Hence, we think the best choice is the one that benefits our wellbeing. So what is the right choice?

Although choice is mostly a personal matter and we usually have to live the consequence of our decision, some perceive the right choice as one that benefits the person involved, as well as the society at large. Here, one is required to forget selfish motives and hidden agendas, and focus on a result that will be beneficial to all.

However, we do make choices in our own interest, even at the expense of others. So, who is going to judge us about what is right or wrong? The only right choice could be judged by what works for the one making the decision.

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Dr. Jewel Miller

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverb 3:5).
"From the rising of the sun until the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised" (Psalm 113:3).

To avoid the pitfall of making bad choices, the following are a few factors to keep in mind:

- Know the direction in which you want to go
- Spend time exploring what is important to you
- Try to figure out which choice will get you closest to your intended goal
- Try to evaluate the possible consequences of your action
- Try to exercise as much freedom as you can when making a choice

Regardless of how we look at making choices, there are some basic moral and ethical values to consider. We can choose love over hate, smile over frown, praise over curse, construction over destruction, forgiveness over judgment, perseverance over quitting, contentment over glutton, living over barely existing, and more profoundly, living over dying.

Therefore, whether the choices we make are for others, or ourselves we are ultimately responsible for the outcome. So like the spoken word, once uttered cannot be taken back, once the choice is made one has to live with the consequences. So remember we are who we are because of the choices we made.

For questions and comments, please contact me at thomasaldrige@yahoo.com

The Jamaica Diaspora Show

HARTFORD, CT:

Coming soon to Hartford Public Access Television (HPATV), Channel 5, The Jamaica Diaspora Show, featuring an exclusive interview with the prime minister of Jamaica, The Most Honorable Andrew P. Holness, ON, MP.

Holness cites the Diaspora as "Jamaica's Commonwealth" and calls on the Diaspora for greater economic involvement, investment, and parallel diplomacy.

In an interview he speaks to the Diaspora and discusses the "Economic Growth Council."

He established the Council upon taking office and commendations made by the council spending considerable time in the discussion on "Harnessing the Power of the Diaspora" with Jamaican-Canadian businessman, Michael Lee Chin.

Chin chairs the Economic Growth Council and is the founder and chairman of Portland Holdings, Inc. and chairman of National Commercial Bank (NCB) of Jamaica.

The interviews will air on www.hpatv.org and also the ECSTV, network www.ecstvnetwork.com, a global digital television network headquartered in Detroit, Michigan.

Stay tuned for the upcoming show date announcement in January 2017.



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Caribbean Tidbits

Jamaican scientist wins IDB Innovator Award

Jamaican scientist Dr. Henry Lowe, who has gained international recognition for his cancer research, brought further glory to the nation Monday, October 24, by copping the Local Innovator Award presented by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) at its 19th Forum for Markets Innovation and Capital (FOROMIC) in Montego Bay. The bank's president, Luis Alberto Moreno, and Prime Minister Andrew Holness presented Dr. Lowe with the award for his innovative use of the Jamaican Ball Moss, a plant in which he has found properties that have shown promise as potential treatment for cancers and as a neuroprotective agent for diseases such as Parkinson's.

Bahamian union leader elected president of CCL

Veteran Bahamian trade union leader Jennifer Isaacs-Dotson has been elected as President of The Caribbean Congress of Labor (CCL), the regional trade union of national workers organizations. Ms Isaacs-Dotson presently serves as both President of the Union of Tertiary Educators of the Bahamas and General Secretary of the National Congress of Trade Unions Bahamas (NCTUB). She is also a member of the National Tripartite Council and a board member of The Bahamas Development Bank.

UWI vice chancellor urges US president to exonerate Garvey

Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies (UWI), Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, has joined the call for United States President Barack Obama to grant a posthumous pardon to Jamaica's first national hero, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, for his 1923 mail fraud conviction in the US. "Marcus Garvey was the victim of trumped-up charges orchestrated by the late J Edgar Hoover, the famously anti-black director of the US's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)," said Sir Hilary. "We are calling on President Obama, himself the victim of racist campaigns, to delegitimize his presidency, to exonerate Garvey before he leaves office. It is the right and proper thing to do."

Six cops arrested in \$400,000 robbery

Six police officers who allegedly used a police vehicle and tactical gear to commit a \$400,000 robbery in Trinidad have been arrested. One of the six was arrested hours after the robbery. He allegedly confessed to the crime that same day and squealed on the identities of his five accomplices. CCTV footage shows the alleged robbery by police officers on businessman Wei Hui Zhu's home. The robbery was captured

on closed circuit television cameras which was posted and viewed on several social media sites.

Dr. Rodney's report delayed by 'lack of ink'

"Lack of ink" has stalled handing over of the Commission of Inquiry Report into the demise of Dr Walter Rodney, the Ministry of the Presidency said on Monday, November 14. The report was due to be handed over earlier in the day, but Attorney General Basil Williams said he was told by Commission Chairman Sir Richard Cheltenham that he did not have enough ink. The Attorney General said he found this totally unacceptable for any sitting president to be treated this way, especially given that President Granger had, in past months, been more than accommodating in granting time extensions requested.

Many Guyanese back as Barbados amnesty nears end

Many Guyanese, who had made Barbados their home, are now, reluctantly, back in Guyana, with the approach of the December 31 deadline for those undocumented. This is because of the new immigration policy being implemented by Barbados Prime Minister David Thompson, with effect from last June 1. It gave amnesty to all CARICOM nationals who entered Barbados prior to December 31, 2005 and remained for more than eight years without having regularized their status. Thompson had warned that, following the expiration of the qualifying period, those CARICOM nationals without lawful permission to remain would be deported.

Barbados' 50th Anniversary Of Independence

By Margo Eugene

On Saturday, November 12, 2016, a banquet was hosted at the Bond Ballroom, Hartford, CT in recognition of the celebration of Barbados' 50th Anniversary of Independence.

The power of 50 was in full force as over 200 people gathered at this event. This auspicious celebration renewed friendships, made acquaintances and shared memories.

Consul General of Barbados at New York, the Honorable Donna E Hunte-Cox delivered a profound message, including a letter from Barbados' Seventh Prime Minister, Freundel Jerome Stuart, PC, QC, MP.

Local Barbadian artist Suzanne Drakes and Chad Springer performed solos. Saxophonist Aaron Eddy played the US National Anthem. Oneil Ifill (bigO) and Mark Belgrave played the music to a packed dance floor.

The Mayor of Hartford, Luke Bronin and his wife joined the festivities. Other wellwishers includ-

ed friends from many of Barbados' neighboring islands. (St. Lucia, Guyana, Antigua, Jamaica, among others).

On Sunday, November 13, 2016, St. Stephens Episcopal Church under the leadership of Reverend Wilbourne Austin hosted a commemoration service. There were many people in attendance.

On behalf of Friends of Barbados in Connecticut, a special thank-you is being extended to everyone who participated, supported, and attended.

Special thanks go out to the planning committee (Marlo Smith, Diba Lowen, Brenda Ifill, Juliet Relph, Pat Clark, Margo Eugene, Gail Ellis, and Curtis Clarke), and to Emcee's of the evening Egan Bovell and Sandra Taitt-Eddy.

Proceeds from the event are being contributed to the Barbados Vagrant Homeless Shelter in Barbados. The Consul General of Barbados at New York, the Honorable Donna E Hunte-Cox, will present the contribution during the holiday season.



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St. Martin's Celebrates 24th Community And Scholarship Awards Banquet



Rev. Miguelina Howell



Lew Brown



Frank Carmon



Dr. Schuster Christie



Dr. Olusegun Sogurno

HARTFORD, CT: Recently, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, located on Cornwall Street in Hartford, celebrated its 24th annual Community and Scholarships Awards Banquet, honoring the contributions of the late Rev. Collin B. Bennett and Hon. Marcus M. Garvey and calling upon leaders of today to emulate and carry on their legacies. The event was convened at the Radisson Hotel. The Rev. Miguelina Howell, dean of Christ Church Cathedral, was the keynote speaker.

The well-attended event kicked off with the singing of the National Anthem of the United States of America and the Black National Anthem. And the Rev. Judith Alexis gave the invocation. These renditions were sources of inspiration. Continuing with the inspiration backdrop, the Rev. Howell in her presentation, offered a view on what ought to happen in honoring the legacy of Bennett and Garvey. There are benefits in doing so; for instance, the nurturing of leaders at St. Martin's Church. They need support as they lead now and into the future. In

putting the emphasis on leadership, Howell cited a biblical text from the book of Hosea: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." In this connection, she pointed out the merits of leadership, service, education, and economic independence. These are traits exhibited by the scholarship recipients, community service awardees, and church service honorees of the evening; hence the reason for their recognitions. The 2016 scholarship recipients were: Aayilah Campbell and Brandon Hall. Aayilah Campbell graduated from Bloomfield High School and plans

to attend the University of Connecticut. Service is her long-term goal—to work in third-world countries after graduation. She has a tradition of rendering service in many capacities—acolyte at St. Martin's, member of the Junior Choir, role model for younger children; in addition, she won many service awards during her high school career at Bloomfield High School. Brandon Hall is a college student; he excelled in sports and traveled extensively throughout the US. Also, spent some time in Costa Rica, where he attended a leadership conference and participated in activities related to preserving natural resources.

community in which he lives and serves. Dr. Schuster Christie started his private practice in General Surgery in Hartford, CT in 1986, and since then has continuously served the Greater Hartford community. He is currently in group practice with Saint Francis Medical Group, a specialist in Trauma, Breast, and General Surgery. He also participates in several medical foreign missions to Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. Dr. Olusegun Sogurno is professor of Educational Leadership at Central Connecticut State University. His love of education extends to his work with Jamaican students as his painstaking efforts culminated into the formation of several associations. He is a recipient of numerous awards, including Excellence in Teaching, Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship, among many others.

Recipients of the Community Service Awards were: Lew Brown, Frank Carmon, Dr. Schuster Christie, and Dr. Olusegun Sogurno. Lew Brown is a retired broadcast journalist in both radio and television. In rendering services, he is cited as saying that he was a "third-world correspondent on the home front," covering issues that plagued the community, including crime, gangs, drugs, and housing issues. Now he provides needed assistance to aspiring journalists at Quinnipiac University. Frank Carmon is a third-generation funeral director. His interest in funeral service started at a young age and worked at the Windsor-based family business since 1994. He has embraced his family's long tradition of giving back to the community—a com-

Church Service Honorees were Sheila Clarke and Mavis Jackson. The evening's musical entertainment was well received. The following were the presenters: Kevin Flynn, Children of St. Martin's, and Caribbean American Dance Company. And to closeout the celebration, Mark Bailey, chairman of the St. Martin's Event Committee, gave the vote of thanks, and The Rev. Judith Alexis, the benediction.

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