

VOTERS GO TO THE POLLS IN TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

VOTERS in the Turks and Caicos Islands went to the polls yesterday to choose their new government in elections being touted by all sides as the most important in the British territory's history.

The governing Progressive National Party (PNP) has campaigned that it has more than fulfilled its promises and is ready to take the territory to "the next level", a view with which the opposition People's Democratic Movement (PDM) naturally disagrees and with a newly-formed third party, the Progressive Democratic Alliance (PDA), calling for a new beginning.

Going to the polls, voters appeared to be split more or less equally between the two main parties. In the 2012 general elections, which the PNP won with a single seat majority, the PDM won the popular vote. However, this time many local observers consider the waters more muddied than ever.

In addition to the new PDA, there are ten independent candidates who could siphon off sufficient votes from their traditional party to affect the final outcome.

Among them is former premier Michael Misick, who is seeking to make a

political comebacks despite being currently on trial for alleged corruption, fraud and money laundering. Misick, who had to be extradited from Brazil to stand trial on the various corruption-related charges, has not seen fit to run in his old constituency and some believe he realised that he would not have been accepted there this time around.

Another former minister running as an independent candidate is McAllister 'Piper' Hanchell, who is also currently on trial along with Misick, accused of similar corruption-related offences in an ongoing trial that could continue well

into 2017 and is costing the taxpayers many millions of dollars.

What is therefore being closely watched is what the election result might show about the TCI people's perception of the "systemic corruption" conclusion by a 2009 Commission of Inquiry, resulting in the eventual indictment of Misick and Hanchell along with three more former cabinet ministers. Those involved are all members of the PNP. It is not known how widespread the belief is that those charged on numerous counts of "systemic corruption" in PNP governments led by Misick between 2003

and 2009 have done nothing wrong.

Current Premier Dr Rufus Ewing told Britain's Economist magazine that "the blame should be laid squarely at the feet of the British government" for failing in its responsibility for "maintaining and highlighting good governance".

Another dynamic is the Haitian vote, counted upon in the past by the PNP, but now seems to not be as committed judging from their numbers at PDM rallies. Misick has wooed the Haitian support in his independent bid for an at-large seat, to the extent of bringing in former Haitian presi-

dent and entertainer Michael Martelly, who openly endorsed him.

There have also been some defections from the PNP, most notably former minister Lillian Boyce, who is also on trial along with Misick and Hanchell. Her endorsement of opposition leader Sharlene Cartwright-Robinson was made during what many described as the largest campaign rally ever during this campaign season, held in Boyce's old constituency and, incidentally, where the largest number of Haitian TC islanders reside.

Caribbean News Now



SOME of the youngsters in Grand Bahama celebrating at the pre-Christmas party.

CRUISE SHIP HELPS KIDS CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

By DENISE MAYCOCK
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ABOUT 150 school students in Grand Bahama attended a pre-Christmas party and gift giving hosted by the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association at the Freeport Harbour.

The event catered to students from five schools - West End Primary, Holmes Rock Primary, Martin Town Primary, East End Primary, and the Beacon School.

The students were greeted by crew members of the Norwegian Sky, which has partnered with FCCA and the Ministry of Tourism.

This is the fourth time the event was held in Grand Bahama, complete with Santa Claus and his helpers, lots of food, fun, toys and gifts.

Each gift was courtesy of the members of the FCCA, which included hosts from the Norwegian Sky.

Jean Michel Dhelin, member of the FCCA, said every year they look forward to the event and believe that the tradition should always be continued.

Captain Nicholas Persson of the Norwegian Sky, said: "This time of year is all about giving back and making a better world through a great event for the kids."

Nuvolari Chootosingh, manager of Maritime Tourism at the Ministry of Tourism, said to hold the event this year is particularly special.

"Hurricane Matthew which would have impacted so many of the kids, especially those from the western district of Grand Bahama. It was nice to see children come out and enjoy themselves," he said.

Each child not only received a hot meal, but also shared a special moment with Santa Claus, his elves, and fellow classmates.

Thanks were extended



THE CREW of the Norwegian Sky partnered with FCCA and the Ministry of Tourism to host the party.

to Leno's Catering, NTS Productions, Norwegian Cruiseline/Norwegian Sky, TT's Party, St Mary Magdalene Church, S&D Coach Tours, Forbes Charter.

The FCCA is a not-for-profit trade organisation composed of 19 Member

Lines operating over 100 vessels in Floridian, Caribbean and Latin American waters. Created in 1972, the FCCA's mandate is to provide a forum for discussion on tourism development, ports, safety, security, and other cruise industry issues

and to develop bilateral relationships with destinations' private and public sectors.

By fostering an understanding of the cruise industry and its operating practices, the FCCA works with governments, ports

and private sector representatives to maximise cruise passengers, crew and cruise line spending, as well as enhance the destination experience and increase the number of cruise passengers returning as stay-over visitors.

RE COOPER AWARD FOR SENATOR BURROWS

SENATOR Greg Burrows, the founder of the Freedom Farm Baseball League, receives his R E Cooper Sr National Meritorious Award this week after missing the awards ceremony last week due to a prior commitment.

The National Meritorious Award was a success last Friday night at the Atlantis Ballroom, when 22 outstanding people were honoured and recognised for their unselfish achievement and helping to elevate their fellow man.

Mr Burrows, who has facilitated hundreds of Bahamian young people achieve college scholarships through Freedom Farm, some of whom have gone on to play professional baseball, was presented his award on his return by Dr R E Cooper Jr, chairman of the awards committee.



DR R E Cooper Jr presents Senator Greg Burrows with his eagle award

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NOTICE TO SHAREHOLDERS

NOTICE is hereby given that the Directors of APD Limited have by resolution declared a half-yearly dividend to Shareholders of Class A Preference Shares, of record date 31 December, 2016, the dividend is payable 31 December, 2016, through its Registrar & Transfer Agent, Royal Fidelity Merchant Bank & Trust Limited.

Christopher Lightbourn
Secretary
APD LIMITED