

The Freeport News

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Grand gesture of politesse

On the front page of *The Freeport News* on Friday morning was a picture that would have surprised readers.

It was indeed an unusual situation. Across five columns at the bottom of page one were 10 of the political candidates who will be seeking election on May 10, to the House of Assembly. The group represented all sectors of the political arena.

There were four members of the Free National Movement, Deputy Leader Peter Turnquest the incumbent for East Grand Bahama, Marco City Candidate Michael Pintard, Central Grand Bahama Candidate Iram Lewis and West Grand Bahama/Bimini Candidate Pakesia Parker-Edgcombe; two Progressive Liberal Party representatives, Minister of Tourism and West End/Bimini incumbent Obie Wilchcombe, and Marco City Candidate Norris Bain; three from the Democratic National Alliance, East Grand Bahama Candidate Elkanah Pinder, Marco City Candidate Nevar Smith and Pineridge Candidate Leslie Lightbourne; plus, Independent Candidate Donald Mortimer.

It was an interesting gathering arranged by the Grand Bahama Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.

We applaud the chapter. The scene allowed some of the island's politicians who are in the spotlight at the moment, to show a level of civility and it is hoped that the message will get through to every Grand Bahamian. Their coming together should be appealing to voters.

Just this week, we lamented in this space, the way family members engage in a cold war during campaign times. They cease communications because of different political views. Harsh statements are exchanged.

Well, Delta Sigma brought together island politicians with different objectives. They are determined to conquer on the campaign trail, but demonstrated that there is much room for courtesy and commonsense practice.

We congratulate those candidates who seized the opportunity to be a part of a grand demonstration of politesse. Thus, we challenge voters to take heed and function accordingly during the last couple of weeks before the nation decides on the government, going forward.

Hopefully, when the dust clears, those who have succeeded and those who have failed at the polls, would still be of a mind to come together and show that while not always in agreement, we can still live together in a civil manner.

There is much about the political arena in our country that's not positive, but there are those who are politically matured.

That's a good thing!



RICHTON PARK, Illinois - The Honorable Michael C. Fountain, Bahamas Honorary Consul to Chicago, celebrated with the Honorable Richard Reinbold, President, Village of Richton Park, the second official flag raising ceremony in his jurisdiction on Thursday, April 27, 2017. The ceremony was held to install The Bahamas' flag for permanent display at the Village Community Center and to officially commemorate the Sister City relationship between the Village of Richton Park, Illinois, and Cat Island, Bahamas. (Photos by G. Jenkins)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Nomination Day: Time too short

Dear Editor,

Are you a busy person? I suspect that you are. What about your readers, Editor? Do you suspect that some of them might be busy people too? Yes? You, Editor, and they (your readers) no doubt have important things

to do during the course of each day. And in the performance of your daily routine, Editor, do you find that sometimes (often enough) your day does not go as smoothly as you had planned? I am going to go out on a limb here and say, "Of course this has happened!" I too have planned my days (in the past and even now), and they have not always played out the way that I had projected.

Let's take for instance — have you or any of your readers ever had a flat tire, or run out of gas, or had an accident, or some other type of vehicle malfunction at the most inconvenient time (on your way to work, to pick up someone, to catch an airplane flight, to retrieve your child from daycare, and on, and on, and on)? Have you or any of your readers experienced these courses of events, Editor? Again, I am going to say, "Of course you have!" Then can we agree, Editor, that it is true what The Bible says — "Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails." (Proverbs 19:21 (NIV). You may have planned out your day to be executed in a certain way, but some unfortunate happenstance occurs to throw things off kilter.

Tell me something, Editor, do you think that thwarted plans are a common occurrence in this unpredictable life? In my humble opinion, they are. And so, would it be altogether unreasonable of me to assume that this same unpredictability in this life can be experienced by the 175 persons who were presented as candidates on Nomination Day (April 20, 2017) as a prelude to Election Day (May 10, 2017) here in

The Bahamas? It is quite serendipitous that all the nominations went forth without a hitch (as far as I know).

But, that was not always the case. Several years ago a high profile candidate for nomination took it upon himself to pay the required \$400 deposit for nomination in coin currency. I can't remember why he chose to do that. It must have been some form of symbolic protest act, but it obviously exasperated the returning officer at that particular nomination location. Do you know how long it took to count such an amount, Editor? I can't remember that either, but I am sure it was not brief. It even made the news. After that tomfoolery, regulations were formulated that deposits were only going to be accepted in exclusively paper Bahamian currency.

My point is, Editor, that if this particular nomination candidate had been turned away, he would only have had a short period to return in time to be properly nominated, as the window of time for nomination is only from 9:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m. on one designated nomination day. In my humble opinion, the allotted time frame is too short!

In another incident, several years ago, another high profile candidate for nomination presented his deposit in U.S. currency; and the law dictates that one must make payment in Bahamian currency only.

That particular candidate had to scramble around town to convert his U.S.\$400 to Bahamian currency and return to the nomination location in order to be nominated in time. That too made the news. This lack of un-

derstanding by this particular candidate could have ended in disaster if he did not return in time with his B-dollars to be nominated. Again, I say, in my humble opinion, the allotted time frame is too short!

As a matter of fact, Editor, anything could happen to any candidate on Nomination Day that could cause him/her to miss the small window — flat tire, run out of gas, car accident, other vehicle malfunction, sickness, death in the family, out of the country, and on, and on, and on — anything! Furthermore, his/her nomination papers might not be properly completed. Would he/she have enough time to fill them out correctly? In my humble opinion it is an egregious practice to have such a small window, and if you miss it, you would have to wait five long years to remedy the situation. In my humble opinion, this small window is not taking into account the realities of life that can befall any candidate. There is precious little room for error.

Editor, I say that it is high time that we, in The Bahamas, amend our laws to accommodate the truism that potentially anything could happen to a candidate who wishes to be nominated to contest a seat in an election in this country, and that instead of Nomination Day it should be extended to "Nomination Week" or "Nomination Month;" that way all candidates would have the opportunity to nominate at their leisure. Enough said.

Thank you for your valuable time and space in your newspaper.

~Marvin G. Lightbourn

The Best of SIDEBURNS

ON DER 100TH DAY OF HIS PRESIDENCY...

