

## EDITORIAL

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**Greater visibility  
of GB uniformed  
police imperative**



MARVIN DAMES  
National Security Min.



EMRICK SEYMOUR  
Sr. Act. Commisioner

# JURY LIST INSIDE



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## Laments young girls/older men relationships



SWEET 16, LEGAL 18 – Brennae Cooper, VOPE Founding President (center) served as the guest speaker at the Rotary Club of Lucaya weekly meeting at Ruby Swiss Restaurant where she discussed an ongoing campaign to increase the age of sexual consent from 16 to 18 years old. Cooper received congratulations from RCL President Kyle Smith (right) and Rotarian Tammi Mitchell (left) on an inspiring and noble cause. (PHOTO: SHARELL LOCKHART)

## Librarians advised by National Director

ABRIA COOPER  
FN Reporter  
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Dorcas Bowler National Director of Librarians in The Bahamas had what is regarded as a meaningful and proactive meeting, this past Wednesday with local librarians at the Sir Charles Hayward Library (SCHL).

Bowler told *this daily* that the session was the end of a workshop that actually began in April 2017.

The workshop's purpose was to educate librarians on how to improve service to those searching for knowledge through books and other like data. The usage of technology in the library system is highly advised by Bowler.

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What we are trying to do is mix the traditional or conventional library routine with technology. This is important if librarians want to be able to successfully cater to young people. Technology makes doing reading and conducting research more efficient.

"We would also want them to read e-books and also to search databases to get accurate and current information," she said.

Bowler further disclosed that librarians ought also wish to teach persons how to complete applications and résumés, digitally along with the processing of documents.

"We know that there is a trend to pursue partnerships with businesses. So government and private partnerships, we are going to pursue that as well, but we need the tools with which to complete grants (documents) or proposals so that they could be acceptable," she said.

She challenged librarians also (Continued on Page 3)

# Social Worker Cooper wants Sexual Offences Act revisited

SHARELL LOCKHART  
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Children are a heritage from the Lord and no one believes this biblical truth more than Brennae Cooper, Vessels of Purpose Elite (VOPE) Girls Mentoring Organization Founding President, who recently informed the Rotary Club of Lucaya of the pending launch of the *Sweet 16, Legal 18* Campaign.

Possessing over two decades of experience as a Social Services caseworker, Cooper, through the campaign, hopes to protect the innocence of minors as it regards the law and the age of sexual consent.

"The *Sweet 16, Legal 18* Campaign was formed by VOPE in collaboration with several

private citizens and non-profit organizations which include Sisters of Strength, SPARKLE: Girls Shining for God's Glory; Rachel's Daughters; and the Princess Court Ministries; to tackle serious concerns in relation to the Sexual Offences Act of The Bahamas.

"As a matter of fact, the *Sweet 16, Legal 18* Campaign aims to specifically address Section 10 of the Sexual Offences Act, which permits a child aged 16 years old to give consent to sexual intercourse.

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"Indeed we are determined to see that the government repeals certain sections of the Sexual Offences Act, allowing for the broadening of parameters under which persons can be charged for engaging in sexual intercourse, as we desire an amendment in the age of consent to be raised to 18 years old," stated Cooper, who noted that discussions and debates continue to

raised to 18 years old," stated Cooper, who noted that discussions and debates continue to

rage on regarding sexually active minors and the consequences adults who prey upon them are to face.

Oftentimes, Cooper told Rotarians she is faced with cases in which a parent learns that a daughter is engaged in sexual intercourse with an adult male (predator) and efforts are exhausted to have the man prosecuted. She admitted that "the stark reality is nothing can be

done as legally the child is 16 years old and can give consent."

Therefore, while the child can give consent, her parents are still responsible for her rearing, as she is by law a minor until she reaches her 18th birthday.

Should she become pregnant, her parents are not only responsible for raising her but also her baby as well.

"We need to act now to save our children, as the current age of consent poses a number of concerns as at the age of 16, minors are not fully developed cognitively, physically or psychologically to handle the potential issues that could arise from engaging in sexual intercourse and relationships.

"Among the issues of serious concerns are teen pregnancy, abortion, parental disapproval, lack of parental support and the inability for the minor to secure gainful employment.

"For a child at 16 years old, parents still have to provide consent for marriage. Furthermore, the children cannot represent themselves in the court of law without an accompanying adult, among other things. So, why (Continued on Page 3)

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\$25.00 for Child Passports (0-15 years). Additionally, if passports are needed urgently there is a \$200.00 Expedite or Rush Fee that must be paid in addition to the Regular Fees.

Persons who do not have a valid passport are also encouraged to come in and apply.

Persons can apply between the hours 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday at the Passport Office, second floor of the Cornelius A. Smith Building on the Mall Drive. You may contact the office at 602-9850/51 or 602-9858 or 602-9875 for appointments if necessary.