

No pan in Savannah ...Panmen meet today

By JOAN RAMPERSAD

THE URBAN Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago (UDE-COTT) has informed Culture Minister, Joan Yuille-Williams that the Savannah is altogether out of the question for the 2007 Panorama competition, even for the semi-finals.

The news came after a feasibility study of the Queen's Park Savannah on Tuesday. *Newsday* understands that Pan Trinbago president, Patrick Arnold was subsequently called by Yuille-Williams who advised him to find another venue.

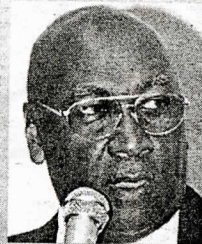
Reports yesterday were that Pan Trinbago will be holding an emergency extraordinary general meeting of all steelband heads this afternoon.

In immediate reactions to the latest development, Beresford Hunte, manager of Trinidad All Stars Steelband

told *Newsday* yesterday, "It is a real problem for us. I am now checking the trailer thing and we have to get 15 to 16 trailers and up to now I don't know what is the cost or if we have to pay for that. We are going to make a statement tomorrow because it is a serious problem. I know we have to make changes at times but if this thing came up in June, July or August, you could have planned for it. But now with eight weeks to go it has us confused."

Exodus' manager Ainsworth Mohammed was totally for the Savannah stading. "That is where our heads are at. If it was that the Grand Stand was not available we would have adjusted. But it is available and we would prefer to have it in the traditional place."

An extremely peeved Ray Holman, arranger for Starlift said, "I think it is a ridiculous thing to move Panorama out of the Savannah. San Fernando is cramped, the Grand Stand is there so what is the haste to take it down now after they had from March to take it down? Why not leave it for Carnival just two months away? It is insensitive and it will take away from the show. I'm not in favour of it at all." Panorama champions



PATRICK ARNOLD

Phase II Pan Groove's arranger Len "Boogsie" Sharpe declined to comment, wondering aloud if what he had to say would alter the Minister's plans. But another representative of the band stated, "We want everything in the Savannah. It is difficult to go South. I don't think those people know what

they are doing or what really needs to be done. It is madness." The usually quiet and shy Jit Samaroo, arranger for the Renegades Steel Orchestra said, "I think PoS is the pan capital. There are more people in this area so I find it strange to move it and carry it South. I don't like controversy but that is my take on it. By far the majority of bands are on this side. I don't know, that is just how I feel."

Edwin Pouchet, the Silver Stars arranger said that they had to be neutral in this because they've never performed in San Fernando and can't condemn something that they've never tried. However, looking at it a different way, he said, "They probably will be spending more money to take bands to South. I would like it to be in the Savannah but that is a whole different issue. Why can't they wait two more months before tearing down the

stands? I don't understand. Skinner Park doesn't have the infrastructure for that, and female members of the band are voicing concern about going South. And where am I parking? Lets face it. It is not a nice feeling with all this crime around going back to your car after the show. So I feel it will deter a lot of people from going. Really, the best thing is to leave up the stands for Panorama and break it down right after Carnival."

However, to the pannists from San Fernando it is a welcome change. Captain of Skiffle Bunch, Junia Regrello said, "I think that Panorama is a national festival and as a consequence the entire country is entitled to it. For the past 43 years only one part of the country has benefitted from it. Once the infrastructure is put in place I think San Fernando is capable of holding the competition." (See Page 13A)

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