

## STEELBAND

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# Panorama 2002:

## Panorama in pan yard — a hard sell for Pan Trinbago

By SEAN NERO

A SECOND attempt by Pan Trinbago president Patrick Arnold and his executive to convince steelbands to accept a proposed plan to have the preliminary round of Panorama 2002 judged in their respective pan yards, has yet to yield a change of heart among defiant leaders.

Even though Arnold equipped his four regional executives with a two-page document that outlined the list of benefits to be derived from such a move. The regional executives were mandated to discuss the proposal with their membership for consensus.

In it, the national executive communicated to its membership that judging in the pan yards or a venue within their communities would earn them extra revenue, as each would receive the usual appearance fee and assistance to bands.

Once again, Pan Trinbago drove home the point that bands now stood a greater chance of advancing to the national Panorama semi-final round at the popular "Big Yard" Queen's Park Savannah, Port-of-Spain, since they would first square-off with 17 to 19 bands in their respective zones.

It has been recommended that ten steel orchestras from each of the three regions in Trinidad (north, east and south/central) advance to the semi-final round of the contest, while Tobago would field a total of three at this level of the event.

The process of advancement from this stage of the National Panorama competition to the final would be based on merit.

However, steelband leaders in Trinidad remain opposed to the novel concept that would bring the first revolutionary change in the Panorama format since 1963.

Members of the Tobago region have already grasped the idea; so much so that its regional executive has completed an extensive plan to be implemented in the island's tourism package for Carnival 2002.

A former Pan Trinbago official told *Newsday* he noted with particular interest the fact that bands with the necessary infrastructure in place to accommodate such a format were the ones in "bitter opposition" to the proposal.

"If that's the case then Pan Trinbago has a serious battle on its hands," he said.

At a recent meeting of northern region bands, Arnold attempted to dispel skepticism from those present about the recommendation.

Incidentally this was the region that threatened a no confidence motion against Arnold and his



PAN TRINBAGO president Patrick Arnold.

executive should they move forward with the existing proposal.

He again took issue with the \$1M transportation bill associated with the staging of the pan programme to get contestants to and from the competition venue.

"Are we serious?" he asked.

"That amount of money could be put to better use. Un-sponsored bands would get help towards building their pan yards and other areas of assistance. This idea is an opportunity for two of three orchestras to get together, organise a venue and ensure that revenue is made and shared between them.

"When we look at the small bands on Panorama days it is believed they are not being judged properly at the regular venues because of the distance between them and the panel of judges. We care about all steelbands; particularly the smaller ones that require greater attention. Every year participating bands complain about the quality of adjudication at the Savannah, where the judging panel had to sit through more than 18 hours of performances."

Competing bands have charged that judges on the panel were seen sleeping during some of the performances. In addition it is believed that judges have a bias for bands from certain zones.

"This is why I have suggested that the regions choose their own panel of judges. That way they can select judges from within their districts and alleviate that fear," stated Arnold.

Withfield Weekes, chairman of the south/central region said after meeting with his membership recently they remain undecided.

"However, I think the majority believe they may have no choice but to adopt the concept. I intended to convene another meeting this week with these leaders, where we could better gauge their positions on the matter," he said.

With respect to the northern region

bands zone chairman Keith Diaz said: "Except for a handful of bands, most made it clear that they intended to go to the savannah."

The president was in that meeting and heard the opposing views.

Speaking on behalf of the eastern region Peter Kanhai, its vice-chairman said a general meeting was convened two Thursdays ago and it is clear that a lot of panmen don't understand what was being put forward.

"At that meeting the president of Pan Trinbago was present. The next option is to embark on a meet-the-bands campaign to sell the idea."