

# PANORAMA 2002 — Meet the bands campaign

By SEAN NERO

WITH NO easy passage in sight for Pan  
Trinbago's controversial proposal to have  
the preliminary round of Panorama 2002  
adjudicated in the pan yards of the  
contesting steelbands, President of the  
organisation Patrick Arnold intends to

embark on a "meet-the-bands campaign."

However, no date for the start of such a  
campaign has been announced.

The latest move comes in the wake of failed  
meetings between panmen and their respective  
regional executives (north, east and south/  
central) to reach an accord on the proposal.

The Tobago region, unlike its Trinidad

counterparts, has given its  
unconditional support for the  
plan.

Over the past four weeks,  
meetings were convened  
regionally, nationwide, more than  
once in some zones, but no  
consensus could be reached  
among steelbandmen and their  
leaders.

Richard Forteau, secretary of  
Pan Trinbago told *Sunday  
Newsday* while some  
representatives of steelbands in  
the northern region maintained  
skepticism towards the new  
concept, many showed signs of  
conversion having heard from the  
president Patrick Arnold at a  
recent meetings.

However, Keith Diaz, chairman  
of the northern region  
contradicted Forteau's remarks  
stating his entire membership was  
opposed to the judging bands in  
their pan yards or a venues close  
to.

Arnold said: "From what I have  
gathered only the northern of Pan  
Trinbago does want to buy the  
idea. I have been to eastern, south/  
central and northern regions  
talking to panmen. Only the north  
zone remained hung-up about  
going to the Savannah."

"North bands go to Savannah  
in any case," he added.

"They talk about going down  
this famous Savannah track and  
the ten minutes of glory.

"Bands in the other regions are  
deliberating on the suggestion and  
while they have reached no  
agreement they show signs of  
optimism.

"But the response and attitude  
on the issue is not the same in the  
north. I really don't want to  
express what I think about their  
attitude."

Apart from the suggestion to  
judge bands in their respective  
pan yards, in keeping with Pan  
Trinbago's reform efforts, the  
elevation of bands to the semi-  
final round of the National  
Panorama contest would not be  
done by order of merit across the  
twin island.

Rather, of the 33 bands  
expected to advance, ten would  
be selected from each of the three  
zones in Trinidad, while three  
would travel from the sister isle.

This has fuelled further  
aggravation among prospective  
participants, not only in the north  
but its sister regions in Trinidad.

Arnold said he was taken aback  
by claims from the northern  
region executive that it housed  
the best bands with the pan  
fraternity compared to the other



PATRICK ARNOLD — Pan  
Trinbago's President.

three regions and that the new  
format would leave them out of  
the spotlight.

"That attitude is not acceptable  
in this day and age. Quality bands  
are situated all over the country  
and are not exclusive to one  
region," said Arnold in a husky  
tone.

"The idea to embark on a meet-  
the-band campaign was  
recommended by band leaders  
from the eastern region. This  
latest move is not isolated. It's  
not just about Panorama.  
Panorama is not the only thing on  
Pan Trinbago's agenda. We  
would be addressing several other  
pertinent issues affecting all  
aspects of the steelband  
movement. One such programme  
addresses the need for pan yard  
development. Before Carnival  
2002 we would witness a lot of  
development among bands.  
Panorama is a one month activity,  
out of 12-month calendar."

"Bands have been in Panorama  
since 1963 and they have no  
money in their bank accounts," he  
added. "We want to talk about  
economic activity not ten minutes  
of glory."

He stressed that the northern  
zone boasted that it had 40-odd  
conventional and 30-odd Single  
Pan Bands. He criticised the  
region on this topic since an  
estimated 17 conventional and 27  
Single Pan Bands took part in the  
competition annually.

Arnold said steelband leaders  
are slowly showing signs of  
optimism about the proposed  
concept, which in effect has  
strengthened his confidence that it  
would be accepted in the final  
analysis.