Turtles get new LEASE ON LIFE

Jombo still entertains guests after three decades Pg 8 & 9

My free village journeys Pg 14 & 15
ADLY, ONLY an estimated one in 1,000 to 10,000 turtles survive to adulthood because of predators, particularly humans, who have contributed to their extinction.

Now among the endangered species of this world, each year thousands of hatchlings emerge from their nests on the Gibralta Beach in Oracabessa, St Mary, where they are monitored, protected, then released by a retired English educator, Melvyn Tennant, who has dedicated his life to saving theirs.

Tennant, a game warden 10 years ago, started releasing turtles into their natural habitat – the ocean. In 2013, he released 14,600, an exploit that is now being celebrated by tourists who visit the legendary Island Outpost Goldeneye and the elegant Jamaica Inn resorts.

Tennant approximates that about 2,000 visitors now watch the phenomenal turtle releasing on the island’s north and east coasts, between St Ann, St Mary, and Portland.

“Coming all the way from zero, we now give up to 90 per cent of them born on this beach, a chance at survival from land-based predators,” Tennant told Hospitality Jamaica during a hatching session on the beach once frequented by Jamaican men who were convinced that turtle punch and soup could help spruce up their sex lives.

It was education and not threat that the game warden said he used to communicate the importance of contributing to the preservation of the turtles, “and today, we haven’t had a turtle or eggs taken”.

Humans, he could educate, but for the crabs who would grab the turtles en route to the ocean, and the birds that would swoop down and steal them as quickly, Tennant said he implemented other methods.

“Before we do anything on the beach, we search for the holes made by crabs and ensure they are covered, ensuring safe passage for the turtles,” Tennant pointed out, adding that already 9,400 turtles were released this year and the season, which is busiest in September, October, and November, had just begun.

He and his team of young students – siblings, Niall, Jordan, and Alanna Williams, were tending about 90 nests on the beach when Hospitality Jamaica visited in August. The 90 nests, he said, equates to approximately 12,000 hatchlings.

Three weeks later, on Monday, September 15, that number multiplied to 161 nests, with the expectations of sending 20,000 of them back to their homes this year.

Excited by the prospects, Tennant described the process: “After the turtles are released from their nest, they are placed in a bucket where they exercise for approximately five minutes before being released onto the sand and they make their way into the ocean.”

According to him, the turtles navigate by magnetic forces of the earth and, like birds, they orientate themselves to the beach on which they were born, coming back to lay their eggs up to 16 years later.

“They go into the ocean, some ending up in the Gulf of Mexico, Nicaragua, and Central America. Eventually, the current brings them back to their place of birth,” said Tennant, adding that the turtles will lay up to seven nests in one season. However, they must be 16 years old before maturity to nest and lay eggs.

The game warden, who is calling for training for persons in the industry, said there was a need for others to take over, because he has been doing it for 10 years and will soon retire permanently.

Currently, he has put back 6,000 hatchlings at Laughing Waters, near Mamee Bay, St Ann and goes to local businessman, Charlie Johnson’s Turtle Cove property in Portland, where he replicates what he does at Pearly Beach.

Holland Bay in St Thomas is one of the only places in Jamaica where turtles are still being killed, said Tennant. “Humans dig up the eggs for punch and kill the adults for meat.”

He warns against the consumption of the Hawksbill turtle, which he says ingests sponge, which is toxic. “This poisons the meat, and cooking does not remove it.”

There is also a 30 per cent threat to children under 10 who may die after eating the Hawksbill meat.

In fact, research by the Sea Turtle Conservancy in Gainesville, Florida indicates that turtles are affected by marine debris – “trash in the ocean” – because they commonly swallow plastic bags,
mistaking them for jellyfish. They are often found off the Florida coasts entangled in discarded nets and fishing lines, and are frequently found with ingested fish hooks, says the organisation.

**DIFFERENT TYPES OF TURTLES**

Scientists recognise seven living species of sea turtles which have been around for 150 million years. Four of these species can be found in Jamaica – the Hawksbill, Green, Loggerhead and Leatherback.

The Leatherback is the champion of the group. It grows the largest, dives the deepest, and travels the farthest of all sea turtles. Populations have declined in Mexico, Costa Rica, Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, and Papua New Guinea. The Leatherbacks are seriously declining at all major nesting beaches throughout the Pacific, says the Sea Turtle Conservancy.

These factors are among the compelling reasons that there has been an interesting development in relation to turtle releasing in Jamaica says Tennant.

"It is one of the things that tourists who are environmentally conscious want to see now, which means we could be attracting many during our low season, which is September, October and November," he noted.

Guests at Goldeneye and Jamaica Inn are regular at what has become somewhat of a turtle-releasing exhibition at Pearly Beach, which is located on the same property the former Golden Seas hotel operated.

“They (tourists) describe it as the most awesome thing they have ever seen,” said Tennant, who rejoices in the thought that so many persons are capable of celebrating the sparing of a life, giving the air-breathing reptiles that inhabit tropical and subtropical seas throughout the world a chance at survival.

Sometimes, only six or eight persons come out to watch the phenomenal process, while at the times the groups could swell to 25, but this is obviously an event that cannot accommodate large groups.

In the Dominican Republic, hotels are known to charge more for their rooms during the turtle season.

Melvyn Tennant is convinced that the turtles could be combined with the fish sanctuaries and reef restoration projects in the Oracabessa Bay, providing employment to locals in the area.

He sees this as a Tourism Enhancement Fund, Jamaica Tourist Board and National Environmental Planning Agency project that should be encouraged.

He is currently writing a smartphone application that will help to educate more persons about the importance of sustaining the development of the lives of the turtles.

In our next issue, we will look at the work of the Oracabessa Foundation in sustaining its fish sanctuary while restoring the coral reefs in the bay.

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**PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA**

Warden Melvyn Tennant assists student Alanna Williams during a turtle-releasing session at Pearly Beach in St Mary.

From left: Siblings, Niall, Alanna and Jordan Williams removing turtles from their nesting place and releasing them into the environment so they will have a chance of living.

Several turtles placed inside a bucket, just before being released into the ocean.

Turtles released and given a chance at life.

Turtle eggs scattered on Pearly Beach.

Visitors to the island watching the turtle releasing.
Jamaica's Iberostar awarded best all-inclusive hotel by Apple Vacations

JAMAICA'S IBEROSTAR Grand Hotel Rose Hall was awarded the best all-inclusive hotel by Apple Vacations. The announcement was made during Apple Vacations' black-tie Crystal Apple Awards gala held at the Art Institute of Chicago on September 8. This is the second year in a row that the hotel is receiving the coveted award. Apple Vacations President Jeff Mullen made the presentation to the awardees that were honoured for receiving the highest rated properties and destinations chosen by their customers.

“We are delighted that one of Jamaica’s top all-inclusive resorts was selected by Apple Vacation’s customers as their favourite all-inclusive resort,” said Paul Pennicook, Jamaica’s director of tourism.

“Being the recipient of this award for a second year in a row is a testament of the high calibre of tourism products that Jamaica has to offer. We commend Iberostar Grand Hotel Rose Hall for their continued success.”

Jamaica strikes the right note with UK holiday makers

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) has announced that visitor numbers from the United Kingdom (UK) rose by an impressive 18 per cent year on year at a time when many destinations experienced a summer slump in visitor numbers due to the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil. The number of visitors to Jamaica’s shores from the UK rose by nearly a fifth in June 2014, making it the 14th month of successive visitor growth for the island.

A number of the JTB’s initiatives have contributed to this impressive increase in visitor figures. Over the past 12 months, activities ranging from sponsoring the JAMAICA Get All Right yacht during the Clipper Race 2013/2014, to hosting Jamaica House 2014 in Glasgow have bolstered the island’s appeal.

The JTB sponsored the JAMAICA Get All Right yacht in the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race, the world’s longest yacht race. During the course of the almost yearlong event, the new JAMAICA Get All Right branding was promoted around the world on both land and sea. The race showcased Jamaica and its extensive tourist offerings as the yacht circumnavigated the globe, visiting major tourism destinations such as Africa, Australia, China and the USA.

During the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games in July and August, the JTB hosted the hugely successful Jamaica House 2014 in Glasgow. Partnering with industry players Barrhead Travel, Virgin Atlantic, Sandals Resorts, Jewel Resorts, and Secrets Resorts, Jamaica House was the place to be for all things Jamaican while watching the nation’s athletes dominate the track. The celebrations, which took place at private members’ club, 29, provided further exposure for the new Jamaica branding and destination.

Jamaica to more than 300 specially invited guests and tourism partners. Sponsors have already seen bookings increase out of Scotland one month after the campaign, with Barrhead Travel sharing bookings for Jamaica were up for July and August by 62 per cent year on year.

Kicking off the autumn’s activity, Jamaica will host four major UK regional radio stations as part of a major broadcast initiative that will see stations from all over the world broadcasting from Jewel Runaway Bay Beach and Golf Resort. Leading UK radio stations, Magic FM, Scotland’s Greatest Hits, Juice Merseyside and KM FM will head to Jamaica’s shores to broadcast shows live for a week in September. Their listeners will get a taste for Jamaica across the airwaves and will also be in with the chance of winning a luxury holiday for two to Jamaica.

Visitor numbers are expected to show further increase during Jamaica’s peak winter travel period. This is due partly to the platinum cruise ship Thomson Dream making Montego Bay its base from the end of 2014. This will be the first time a British cruise ship has made Jamaica its home port. In support of this new Caribbean cruise hub, Thomson Airways will operate flights to Jamaica from November 2014 until March 2015 from destinations including Glasgow, East Midlands, Doncaster, Cardiff and Newcastle. According to Thomson Holidays, both flights and cruise are currently selling well.

Elizabeth Fox, regional director UK/Northern Europe for the Jamaica Tourist Board, said: “We are extremely pleased with our increase in visitors – the first half of 2014 has been very good for tourism to Jamaica. With increased airlift and the expected ‘Commonwealth Games effect’, the opening of the Sensatori Resort Jamaica in Negril this spring and Hyatt Ziva and Zilara properties opening in Montego Bay later this year, Jamaica is sure to see an uplift in visitors for the rest of 2014 and retain its title as the UK’s favourite Caribbean island.”
Tourism Linkages Hub to build and strengthen business relationships at JAPEX 2014

MORE THAN 60 local suppliers of goods and services, including manufacturers, will participate in the upcoming Jamaica Product Exchange (JAPEX) 2014 trade show, through the coordinated efforts of the Tourism Linkages Hub and other partner entities. The initiative is in keeping with ongoing efforts to improve the linkages between tourism, manufacturing, agriculture and other sectors of the economy.

The linkages hub has partnered with the Jamaica Promotions Corporation, the Jamaica Manufacturers’ Association, the Jamaica Business Development Corporation, and the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA), to facilitate the participation of the suppliers.

JAPEX, the single most important travel trade show for Jamaica’s tourism sector, brings together hundreds of travel agents, wholesalers and tour operators from Europe and the Americas, as well as leading suppliers in the island’s tourism sector, for important business negotiations. The annual event is staged by the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association in association with the Jamaica Tourist Board. The three-day trade show will be held from September 21-23, at the Montego Bay Convention Centre, St James.

Speaking recently at the JAPEX 2014 press conference, chairman of the Tourism Linkages Council, Donovan Perkins, said the primary focus of the linkages initiative at the event will be on the procurement needs of hotels, restaurants, attractions, gift shops and spa facilities. “In preparation for this, over the months since its inception, our linkages hub has been meeting directly with procurement officers in the market and encouraging their support for local sectors,” said Perkins.

VARIETY OF PRODUCTS

Through the efforts of the Tourism Linkages Hub, some 33 manufacturing companies will showcase a variety of products, including furniture and bedding, food and beverages, textile and sewn products, chemicals, industrial supplies, cosmetics, printing and packaging, windows and doors. It was also noted that 30 suppliers of art, gift, craft and aromatherapy products will also participate in the event; while RADA will feature suppliers of agricultural produce and other value-added products.

Similarly, the linkages hub is working with the Entertainment Division of the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment to incorporate the entertainment sector in the event, which will entail a showcase of high-quality Jamaican entertainment during the event’s opening ceremony.

Underscoring the significance of the Tourism Linkages Hub, the chairman said, “In today’s economic environment, it is clear that for countries to thrive, they need to have coordinated activities that result in greater cooperation between established economic segments, as well as emerging ones.”

Perkins pointed out that central banks in significant economic zones have been pumping trillions of dollars into their economies, all in an effort to create jobs, revive growth and instil market confidence in the future.

“Unfortunately, Jamaica does not have this option in its arsenal to encourage growth. However, I think many will agree that business opportunities can develop and become sustainable, if good working relationships can be established and encouraged between key interest groups,” he said.

Perkins added that, “Good business is based on strong relationships, and JAPEX provides the opportunity to build, strengthen and sustain local relationships. JAPEX is effectively our first linkages tool, created years ago, and its success is now well recognised.”

“Our objective is to become as effective and as successful as JAPEX. In doing so, Jamaica’s future will be brighter,” said the linkages council chairman.
THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

Campaign needed to promote Caribbean destinations

David Jessop
Contributor

QUICK look at any travel section in newspapers in North America, Europe or those in emerging economies like Brazil, and it is clear that almost every country or major destination in the world is now vying to promote their uniqueness to visitors.

Most Caribbean nations and hotels have recognised the importance of meeting this challenge and either individually, or in co-operation with others like the airlines and tour operators, have with various levels of financial commitment developed advertising, marketing, public relations and other campaigns using new media.

However, what remains missing is anything much beyond lip service on the part of Caribbean governments and the industry, that there ought to be a parallel regional marketing campaign.

While there may be reasons for this no longer being considered – weakened budgets, austerity, the failures of a regional integration process that is unable to deliver – it is still surprising, as there is previous evidence that suitably tailored campaigns work.

Looking back, Caribbean heads of government approved in 1992 the first ever cooperative regional marketing campaign. Funded with both public and private-sector support and led by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation and the Caribbean Hotel Association (now CHTA), a television commercial aired a year later, largely in North America and Europe through pictures of clear tropical waters, white-sand beaches and ever more special or luxurious hotels.

What this points to is the need for a regional campaign that sets out to portray the Caribbean’s diversity, its people and its environment, making use of new media otherwise, it will as a region come to be seen as a tired and old destination.

In many respects this may be seen in Jamaica or a few other regional destinations which have successfully branded themselves, created a global image, encouraged new airlift and are seeing visitor numbers increase, as no longer being an issue.

However, it would be short-sighted for any nation to rest on its laurels and not recognise the way the visitor market is changing, particularly among those with the most disposable income such as global young professionals who see anywhere in the world as their vacation destination.

The world has moved on, the Caribbean as a region has to find new ways to connect with a new generation who, in addition to beaches, want high-quality cuisine, heritage, spas and a chance to meet local people to understand what a country is really like. That is to say, they are seeking multiple experiences in one vacation and need to know the Caribbean as a region that can be visited and revisited. The concerns revolve around how this should be funded, who should coordinate such a campaign and how it should be run. There was also a sense that because most Caribbean destinations are seeing increases in visitor arrivals and yield, it is less necessary than in the years following the global economic crisis.

Despite this, selling the concept of the Caribbean region as a holiday destination, particularly using much cheaper new media to a new generation, remains important. It ensures that the Caribbean and what it has to offer remains at the forefront of the minds of both stay over and cruise visitors alike, and is a vital adjunct to country-specific national campaigns.

The issue is now of particular importance as warm-weather destinations from the Indian Ocean, through nations on both coasts of Central America to the islands of the Pacific are promoting themselves to the same stop-over and cruise passengers from North America and Europe through pictures of clear tropical waters, white-sand beaches and ever more special or luxurious hotels.

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The Family

Established in the 1940’s by Italian immigrant brothers, Cesare and Rosa Mondavi; C. Mondavi & Family remains a family owned business.

Currently under the stewardship of Peter Mondavi Sr., the winery handcrafts a selection of the most popular wine varieties around the world. Using a large portion of their own grapes from the family estate, the wines are very high quality with consistent, vintage-to-vintage excellence.

The Wines

With over 70 years of production under their belts, CK Mondavi has perfected their winemaking using the following key methods:
- Grapes are sourced, crushed, blended and bottled in St. Helena, Napa Valley
- All grapes are hand sorted, fermented in smaller tanks, and aged in French Oak
- Whites – Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc
- Reds – Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel
- Sweets – White Zinfandel, Moscato
Barbara Simpson delights with her winning smile

Karrie Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

Simpson, who works as a dining room staff and he gets around and helps members of her team are very hard-working and committed to her job. “She is really hard-working and pleasant character, it is really hard for someone not to be immediately drawn to her and to say it all off, she is really hard-working and committed to her job. Simpson, who works as a dining room supervisor, is relied on for ensuring that entertainment supplied always keeps up to stock and that service is given at an optimum of the hotel’s bars, sports bars and restaurants. She supervises eight team members on a daily basis and has specific responsibility for the training of new employees.

Though her days end on the edge-of-the-world, she is on duty until she gets her hours through all day. Simpson always has a smile on her face.

Hospitality Jamaica

That she is a special character in her interaction with the never-ending influx of new guests is the one which finds most enjoyable, as this enables her to communicate with persons from all over the world.

It’s a pleasure to meet and interact with guests all over the world. Every day brings in a host of new experiences because you are constantly meeting new people and enjoy that for a little costuming is her way of life. When the service received is above and beyond slightly outstanding, the staff.

Simpson credits her two mentors, Christopher and Francine Simpson for being an engaging and dedicated managerial role, which she has planned and known of Barbara Simpson.

“My biggest in-me-childhood was, she’s the people time with his real and people of a sort. He is not a host that does down and orders, he is very hands-on, and he is with friends, she said.

Simpson admitted that all numbers of bars and restaurants are up in numbers and that they are better equipped to handle their guests. Whenever there are too many they say, ‘humble, dedicated and always ready with no extra note. When the dining room supervisor suggests guests, she is able to situate the hotel with bananas and Berries Clink, 22, and Barbados Cricket, 13.

Cito Caribbean Travel Journalism Awards 2014

Barbara Simpson wears a consistent smile on the job.

PEOPLE IN TOURISM

Jomto still entertains guests after three decades

Clausia Gardner
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

M
to Blackhall of Sand Bay in Harbour has been singing for more than three decades, a task that gives him the chance to show the guests the life on the neck of Negril Beach for more than three decades. According to Blackhall, it is a perfect environment to show the guests the past and present as a young boy at the feet of a world-famous calypsonian who lives in Sand Bay.

After leaving the Sand Bay Primary School, he worked as a drummer alongside the calypsonian in place such as Deno, Jenkins and Blackhall himself. According to Blackhall, his smile on his face. He tells the job can become hectic at times, but he is willing to go that extra mile. "People can make a living on the Negril Beach, but they have to be disciplined. The tournament would have to be the campaign but control or what you will think that everybody will live near on the beach and treat it as a marketplace. That would be good, because now people come to the beach to listen. Blackhall said.

When I am playing music, I stay very far from the people, so whoever like it, always come and put something in my cup," he said.

The CARIBBEAN Tourism Organization (CTO) is delighted to announce the winners of the Caribbean Travel Journalism Awards, 2014, which will take place during World Travel Market, November 9-12, 2014.

Carrie Field, CTO’s director of marketing for the United Kingdom (UK) and Europe, commented, “The annual Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) Awards is a highly anticipated event and a fantastic opportunity to acknowledge the top-quality writing of the UK media about the Caribbean, and to thank the media for its ongoing support of the region. We are much look forward to welcoming the winners in November.”

The Caribbean Travel Journalism Awards will include eight categories:

1. Best travel feature writer
2. Best travel website feature
3. Best editorial newspaper feature
4. Best regional newspaper feature
5. Best consumer feature
6. Best broadcast TV and radio feature
7. Best online feature
8. Best Bog feature

The awards will be judged by a panel of distinguished judges from media, tourism, academics and journalists, as well as notable tourism and industry leaders. Entries can be in one or more feature categories and no person can enter more than two categories in each region.

All submissions must be published between January 1, 2014 and August 31, 2014. Submissions for the photojournalism award must be submitted at 300dpi resolution or as a high-quality print for consideration. The winners will be announced at the Caribbean Tourism Organization (Princesse-Antoinette Grondin) Grand Prize.

International tourism up by five per cent in the first half of the year

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INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

The Americas Leads Growth

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THE AMERICAS LEADS GROWTH

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INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

The Americas Leads Growth

Growth in Latin America and the Caribbean was stronger than in the Caribbean in the first half of 2014, according to the latest WTO World Tourism Barometer. Destinations worldwide received some 1.171 million international tourists between January and June 2014, 22 million more than in the same period of 2013. Closest was strongest in the Americas (+ six per cent) followed by Asia and Pacific and Europe (+ five per cent). By subregion, South Asia and Northern Europe (+ eight per cent) were the best performers, together with South East Asia and Southern Mediterranean Europe (+ seven per cent), consolidating the positive performance of many regions, developing economies and economic opportunities worldwide and the South-Western Mediterranean, Balkans, India, Middle East, Australasia and other Regions (+five per cent) who were the best performers. According to him, the Negril Beach has provided a source of legitimation for himself and for others and should be protected from abuse. "People can make a living on the Negril Beach, but they have to be disciplined. The tournament would have to be the campaign but control or what you will think that everybody will live near on the beach and treat it as a marketplace. That would be good, because now people come to the beach to listen. Blackhall said.

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Work is to begin this month on a $25 million project to renovate the Negril Police Station in Westmoreland.

Built in 1986, the station which serves the resort town is badly in need of repairs. The money is being made available by the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) as part of its ongoing effort to further enhance safety and security in resort areas islandwide.

Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill announced the contribution recently at the handing over of three Yamaha motorcycles to the station to improve police patrols mostly in the West End section of the town.

McNeill said the need to enhance security was put on the front burner some three months ago at a community meeting attended by himself and Minister of National Security Peter Bunting.

**Addressing Some of the Police Stations**

He said, “along with a number of other stations, especially in the resort areas, the TEF has taken a look at them and we will be addressing some of the police stations that are of particular interest.”

He added that, “Already, $25 million has been allocated for the repair of the police station here in Negril, and by the end of this month work is scheduled to start on the refurbishing so that the conditions under which the officers serve will be much better.”

McNeill expressed appreciation for the work being done by the security forces to keep the community safe, adding that, “Of course, our visitors want and expect to be safe, and from the Jamaican point of view, what you want more than anything else is a sense of security and safety; it allows us to be productive (and), it allows the country to really flourish.”

He assured Acting Assistant Commissioner of Police for Area One Gary Griffiths that “anything we can do to help you keep us safer, we intend to do”.

In welcoming the announcement, Griffiths said, “I cannot overemphasise our gratitude for the work to be done here on the Negril police station.”

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**Health City Cayman Islands to feature at World Medical Tourism meeting**

One of the Caribbean’s newest medical facilities will be introduced to the world as an excellent Caribbean contribution to the rapidly expanding medical tourism landscape at a major global meeting this month.

Health City Cayman Islands will be offered up as a centre of excellence for medical tourism and destination healthcare at the World Medical Tourism and Global Healthcare Congress in Washington DC, September 20 to 24.

Health City Cayman Islands, a leader and innovator in providing world-class, affordable, high-quality healthcare in a compassionate, caring environment, will introduce the special skills and capacities of the Caribbean’s state-of-the-art facility in his presentation to a Caribbean ministerial meeting.

“The networking value of these conferences is exceptional,” said Dr Abraham, who added Health City Cayman Islands is looking forward to sharing its door-to-door concierge service and tropical atmosphere which promote a relaxing recovery.

**Formal Meetings**

Fielding questions and representing Health City at formal meetings will be patient care relations manager, Joan Freedman; marketing director, Shomari Scott; and digital marketing specialist, Aliya Dunstan.

“As the world’s population ages, non-communicable diseases continue to rise in frequency and healthcare costs inflate at an alarming rate. The issue of creating a healthcare destination that provides a high quality service for far less cost has never been more pressing,” said Scott.

The Health City Cayman Islands facility, he added, represented the Caribbean’s determination to step up to the burgeoning global medical tourism and travel market.

Envisioned by Narayana Health’s storied Dr Devi Shetty, a philanthropist and personal physician of the late Mother Teresa, Health City Cayman Islands opened its doors in February 2014. The state-of-the-art medical facility in the western Caribbean is one of 27 facilities operating under Dr Shetty’s administration across the globe.

Health City Cayman Islands opened its first phase in early 2014, putting the Cayman Islands on the map as a healthcare destination, and offering patients a centre of excellence for cardiac surgery, cardiology, orthopaedics, paediatric endocrinology and pulmonology.

Once completed, Health City Cayman Islands will have 2,000 beds, a dedicated medical research university, assisted living centre and become one of the largest healthcare centres of its kind in the world.

Health City recently created Caribbean surgical history by installing an artificial heart pump LVAD (left ventricular assist device) to give a Caymanian man facing advanced-stage heart failure a new lease on life.
SJF commits $500,000 to promote fire safety in St James

THE SPANISH-Jamaican Foundation (SJF) launched its Fire Safety Awareness Project in late August by handing over funds totalling close to $500,000 towards community fire warden training in five St James communities, to representatives of the Jamaica Fire Brigade.

Donations of fire safety equipment to various hospitals and the distribution of a fire safety poster designed through a school-based poster competition last year will be distributed to schools, libraries, children’s homes and health clinics islandwide between September-December 2015.

The handover took place at the third annual SJF/Social Development Commission Back-to-School Health and Information Fair under the theme, A Healthy Start is the Best Start, at Montego Bay’s Providence Infant School.

As SJF general manager, Dr Rebecca Tortello, explained, “Once again, we are happy to see so many parents coming out to get all the information they need for back-to-school and ensure their children’s immunisation records are up to date, which although sometimes challenging for parents, is so essential to the health and safety of the children. We are also pleased to be working with the Fire Brigade to increase fire safety knowledge as it is so critical, especially given the drought we’ve been experiencing.”

SPONSORS

Close to 500 persons passed through the fair sponsored by the SJF, which was founded in 2006 by Spanish investors in Jamaica to promote education, cultural and environmental awareness and contribute to community development. This year, particular support came from SJF member companies, namely Riu Hotels and Iberostar Hotels and Resorts.

In addition to presentations on fire safety by the Fire Brigade, representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Red Cross, the National Youth Service, the Jamaica 4-H Clubs, the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission, the National Land Agency and National Solid Waste Management Authority, UWJ Open Campus, Professional Eye Care, the Rural Agriculture Development Authority, HEART, Peace Management Initiative, the Registrar General’s Department, the TRN Department, the National Council on Drug Abuse and, Jamaica National were on hand to deliver expert knowledge in their various fields.

School-age children had access to immunisations and assistance with the completion of medical forms.

Art and dance activities were offered by Iberostar’s entertainment coordinators and all children in attendance received back-to-school prizes and surprises including exercise books, pens/pencils and other fun giveaways.

McIntyre-Pike to conduct workshop on community tourism in South Africa

JAMAICA’S COMMUNITY tourism pioneer, Diana McIntyre-Pike, has been invited to conduct a workshop on community tourism at the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT), World Symposium in the Municipality of Ekurhuleni (City of Peace), South Africa.

The February 2015 symposium will feature the Countrystyle Community Tourism Network (CCTN)/ Villages as Businesses Programme together with the IIPT/SKAL Caribbean Peace Villages programme.

Being staged under the theme, Cultivating Sustainable and Peaceful Communities and Nations through Tourism, Culture and Sports the event’s aim is to identify strategies and best practices for employing tourism, culture and sports to cultivate productive, sustainable, peaceful and welcoming communities and to aid in reconciliation, healing and socio-economic re-development in countries that have experienced conflict.

Endorsed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the symposium honours the legacies of Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr and commemorates the 50th anniversary of the African Union, 20 years of South African democracy and the 50th anniversary of Civil Rights Legislation in the United States.

Founder and president of the IIPT, Louis D’Amore, says the intent will be to harness these legacies and milestones while building bridges of tourism, friendship and peace between South Africa, India and the United States – and other regions of the world.

According to an IIPT media release, the meeting will be highly interactive, with international experts in community development, community tourism, sports, culture and peace, engaging delegates in the exchange of experiences and ideas.

The IIPT enjoys what president D’Amore describes as “a special relationship with Jamaica and the Caribbean as a result of McIntyre-Pike’s leadership”.

IIPT recognised the work of McIntyre-Pike’s leadership. It also endorsed CCTN’s Villages As Businesses programme. Interest in CCTN’s approach and achievements led to a 2012 study tour to Jamaica by representatives of the South African tourism industry and, in turn, to IIPT’s engagement with South Africa.

With that context and the high visibility and lofty objectives of the symposium in mind, McIntyre-Pike sees attendance as an important opportunity for government, private sector and community interests in Jamaica to strengthen ties with South African counterparts. She hopes to be accompanied by a delegation that includes representatives of CCTN’s management and advisory teams, CCTN member communities, the Ministry of Tourism and the Jamaica Tourist Board.

The symposium host partners are South Africa Tourism, Gauteng Tourism, the Metropolitan Municipalities of Ekurhuleni and Johannesburg and South African Airways. Symposium partners include the UN World Tourism Organisation, Africa Travel Association, Pacific Asia Travel Association, SKAL International and International Coalition of Tourism Partners.
Charles Town Maroons get UNESCO Best Drum award

Paul Williams  
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

The violent uprooting of Africans which brought them to the Americas, where they ended up as slaves on plantations not only denied them of personal belongings on the journey, but also violently sought to strip them of language and culture.

It is said that what made slavery in the Americas such a wretched and inhumane act, is no effort was spared to wipe their minds of everything they ever knew and cherished. Despite the ruthless and brutal efforts of slave owners much of the African cultures not only survived, but was passed down from generation to generation.

The Charles Town Drummers and Dancers of Portland, descendants of enslaved Africans, are one of the many groups in Jamaica making sure that what was bequeathed is preserved. They are singers, dancers, drummers and drum-makers well recognised the world over for the preservation of Maroon heritage. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is one of the organisations that recognises the Jamaican Maroons’ world heritage significance. It has a flagship programme for supporting craft producers.

“The UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts aims to encourage artisans to produce handicrafts using traditional skills, patterns and themes in an innovative way in order to ensure the continuity and sustainability of these traditions and skills. This programme also aims to support craft producers,” its website says.

It’s not a competition, per se, as the entries do not compete against one another. Rather, they are selected by a jury for their quality and given a seal of approval by UNESCO. The UNESCO criteria for selection include excellence in design, craftsmanship, innovation, authenticity and marketability. To these, “the jury added sustainability as a crucial criterion” for the granting of an award.

And in 2012, The Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO hosted the selection for the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts in the Dutch and English-speaking Caribbean. This year, it was hosted by the Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO, and adjudicated by a jury comprising Marcella Echavarría, branding and design consultant from Colombia; Martin Aristeiguieta, artisan and businessman from Venezuela; and José De Ferrari, handicrafts coordinator in the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Dominican Republic.

The jury met on Tuesday, July 16 to evaluate 26 entries from The Bahamas, Curaçao, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname. At the end of the selection, the jury gave the Ph...
first prize to ‘Kumuntina’ by Grupo Ban Krese Huntu from Curaçao. “It is made from bottle caps forming a vase that is then painted in a blue that resembles the Caribbean skies,” the statement from the jury says. The second prize was won by Bianca Betrouv Kenswiel from Suriname for the ‘Awara and Coco Necklace’ for women.

The third prize went to the Charles Town Maroon Council (CTMC) for its bench drum. In describing its entry, the CTMC said, “The art of drum making was brought from Africa and it is still used in spiritual rituals calling on the ancestors. The bench drum was first created to disguise it from the colonisers. This drum was used by the Scotts Hall and Charles Town Maroons. It is used to call the ancestors in a Koromanti play for healing.” The jury, in a statement, said, “This drum was chosen for its craftsmanship and cultural content. It is a standalone object that talks about music using noble materials such as local woods and goatskin.”

The award was presented to the CTMC on Tuesday, September 2 at the 2014 Website Development Training workshop held at the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO in New Kingston. The maker of the drum, Barlow White, received the certificate of award from Marva C. Browne, secretary general, Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO. After the presentation, Colonel Charles Lumsden, leader of the Charles Town Maroons, in explaining the shape of the drum, said because the drum was banned, the Maroons designed a drum that they could hide in the open”. It looks like a bench, but it was in fact a drum.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Maria Smith, programme manager at Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO, said, “In essence, this drum is not just any drum, but a drum that speaks to our Maroon heritage, that connection with Africa, and the connection with how it was used as a talking drum to send messages during the plantation era. It’s really craft, but craft that speaks to the Caribbean.”

And to give a taste of Maroon culture, Rodney Rose, Captain Delano Douglas and Richardo Tenn gave a hypnotic and entertaining drumming demonstration.

Colonel Charles Lumsden (centre), leader of the Charles Town Maroons in Portland, discusses the award-winning bench drum with (from left) Everton Hannam, secretary-general of Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO; Sherril Oreggio Angus, permanent secretary in the Ministry of Youth and Culture; Dong-Seok Min, secretary general of Korean National Commission for UNESCO; and Christine Anne Norton, director and representative of UNESCO Caribbean Kingston Office.

Marva Browne (right), of the Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO, presents the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts to Barlow White (third from left) and Colonel Franck Lumsden (left). Looking on is Christine Anne Norton, director and representative of the UNESCO Caribbean Kingston Office.
As part of the observance of The Gleaner Company Ltd’s 180th anniversary, my colleagues Andewale McLaughlin, Errol Crosby and I, journeyed to some of the free villages that were set up for former slaves before and after Emancipation.

We went to Sturge Town in St Ann, Sligoville in St Catherine, Maidstone in Manchester, Alps and Stewart Town, in Trelawny, where we also passed through Martha Brae, Duncans, Kettering, Albert Town and Clark’s Town.

For me, it was a personal and professional endeavour, as apart from the news-gathering team, I was interested in the story and evolution of these villages where my African ancestors lived and died.

At Maidstone, the museum at Nazareth All-Age School is full of slavery-day and post-Emancipation artefacts that give insight into the social lives of slaves and ex-slaves. The sight of the branding irons was most heartbreaking. It was so hard to imagine being burnt by these red-hot metals. They are the unsightly vestiges of man’s wickedness to man. The slave hospital, also in Maidstone, and the slave house ruins at Sligoville also got me quite emotional.

From grief to laughter it was at times, especially in Sturge Town, St Ann, when three women were upset because they thought we were going to take their picture. One of them walked away very fast with such a look of bewilderment on her face. I thought she would have burst out crying at any moment. I found it very funny.

Eunice Baird of Sligoville and Kathleen Tracey in Sturge Town, too, gave us much to laugh about. Their wit and candour are beyond compare. The saucy Kathleen Tracey at 102 is a riot. Eunice Baird is a big package of drama, who Errol Crosby said reminded him of Madea, Tyler Perry’s no-nonsense, straight-talking character.

Stewart Town, including Westwood High School, was not on our list of places to visit, but while passing through it on the way to Alps, I was struck by its appearance, scenes that came straight from the pages of history books. I felt like I was in an era that was long gone. But because it was not our intended destination, we left with a promise to return.

We did return, and we found a place that is rich with material vestiges. There was so much to see. What amazed more than anything else in Stewart Town was the sturdy and Gothic-like St Thomas Anglican Church located in a dell. It has been abandoned for some time now, and the inside is falling into ruins and covered with bat droppings. I am still trying to find out why there is a trapdoor on the podium, what it was for, and why it was abandoned. Even the offering purses and hymnals were left to rot.

Then there are the little moments of wonder, reflection, and derision that I will perhaps always remember for whatever reason. The cemetery at Maidstone with a sign on a gatepost that says, “Nazareth God’s Acre.” An acre of dead people!

The public cemetery in Stewart Town is another interesting abode of the dead, on which the living
plays football. Same place in Stewart Town, there is a very generous female dog named Valentine. Unusual name for a female dog. Everywhere we went, her owner pointed out her offspring all over the village.

Rufus Taylor of Sligoville has an incredible metaphysical story of how angels visited him in hospital and brought him back from the brink of death. But it was the sight of some men in their late 20s playing marbles in Sturge Town in the middle of the day that caused my jaws to drop. Seriously? Nothing else to do. Marbles! In this age of smartphones and video games.

And while these young men had nothing to do but play marbles, Alonzo Rose, principal/teacher at Alps Primary and Infant School, has too much to do. In addition to his administrative job as principal, he teaches three classes and extra lessons sometimes in the evening.

There is much to see in these villages, ruins, old but habitable buildings, ancient graves, points of interest like the Marley Spring in Sturge Town, known as the fountain of youth; the mesmerising green water of the Dornock River head in Stewart Town. It was a sight I couldn’t get enough of, but we were attacked by huge mosquitos with sharp needles.

My free journeys were an experience replete with mixed emotions, the joy of being in those historic places, of discovering, and sadness upon seeing things that speak eloquently of the brutal system of slavery and its aftermath.

Branding iron in the museum at Nazareth All-Age School at Maidstone, Manchester.

Valentine, the dog on the right, has many offspring all over the village of Stewart Town, St Catherine.

AT LEFT: Dalton Cooper, a descendant of the first free villagers in Sligoville, St Catherine, leans against the ruins of a slave house on Government Mountain in Sligoville.
Hospitality Jamaica’s 10th Anniversary Awards
Recognising organisations and individuals who have contributed significantly to improving the quality and experience of the hospitality industry.
SATURDAY 25 OCTOBER

CRITERIA
1. Comply with all applicable tourism industry and other standards.
2. Provide exceptional customer service which enhances the visitor experience.
3. Engage in continuous upgrading of facilities and training of staff.
4. Contribute significantly to the improvement in quality of Jamaica’s tourism industry.
5. Entity must be in operation for at least a year.

The awards will be made in the ten categories shown below. The Hospitality Personality of the Year will be selected from category winners.

JAMAICA’S BEST

NOMINATION PROCEDURE
1. Send a fax to 952-3828, a letter to Editor, The Gleaner, P.O. box 40, Kingston or e-mail to hospitalityjamaica@gleanerjm.com nominating an individual or organisation meeting the criteria. Nominations must be sent by September 18.

Set out the: *Nominee’s full name *Nominee’s address and telephone number *Brief description of the specific reasons for nominating the individual or organisation *Category in which you are nominating your candidate *Your name, address and telephone number