

The Gleaner

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2014



Oracabessa Foundation

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ends on a
high note

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& TOURISM**

SIGNS OF WONDER

Riu staff
enjoys day
of fun

CONTRIBUTED
The Oracabessa Foundation Jump
Ball basketball programme.

Oracabessa Foundation

The saving grace of St Mary

Janet Silvera
Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

WITH the mission in mind, 'To be a catalyst for the sustainable development of Oracabessa and its environs', the Oracabessa Foundation has become the saving grace of a parish once dubbed the poorest in Jamaica.

The Foundation, under the leadership of environmentalist Jonathan Gosse, has taken sustainable development to unprecedented levels, focusing its attention on four major areas: environment, health, education and sport.

"Our aim is to get more people in the parish working, provide a healthier bay, produce positive and engaged youths, and ensuring sustainable community development," said Gosse.

Already, the community has successfully differentiated itself from other fishing villages on the island, which are suffering the effects of depleted fish stock and coral life.

Gosse is extremely pleased with the latest National Environmental and Planning Agency (NEPA) report for 2014, which reveals an increase of 1,313 per cent in fish biomass and a 31 per cent increase in coral coverage in the town's fish sanctuary.

"There is also a nine per cent reduction in algae," he said, noting that the fish sanctuary works because the Oracabessa Bay Fishermen's Cooperative manage the area. "It's a partnership between the Foundation and the cooperative," he explained.

TOUGH START

Admitting that the situation was not always as encouraging as it is now, Gosse said since the bay was gazetted in 2010, and the fishermen have supported the move, they are catching more pounds outside the sanctuary than they were in the middle.

"The fish migrate outside the sanctuary and allow the fishermen



HEART/NTA graduates who are part of the Oracabessa Foundation.

to live off the interest of their investment," he said, adding that 85-90 per cent of fisherfolk will not fish in the sanctuary.

The remaining 10 per cent have been known to steal or break the rules, but clearly, the changes are working. "The entire community is aware that immense progress has

been made and that the changes made have been working. It is the wardens who police the area," he stated, noting that the aim was not to build a museum, but to create a bay that people can continue to fish in.

The goal of the sanctuary, which was to create a no-fishing zone protecting the bay's critical breeding

areas and fish habitat has today been realised.

The Foundation has also since planted 3,670 corals and now boasts a nursery that will produce 2,000 corals per year.

"Currently, Oracabessa has the best snorkelling in the country," boasted Gosse.

With fishing being only one industry, the Foundation, in partnership with the community of Jack's River, has trained nearly 300 persons since 2008 in housekeeping, food and beverage, accommodation and villa services.

The aim, Gosse said, was to tackle the issue of underskilled residents, hence the establishment of the Jacks River HEART Community-Based Training Centre.

Because it is situated in the middle of Jamaica's north coast with many hotels constantly looking for

PLEASE SEE **O'BESSA**, 3



Coral planting in the Oracabessa Fish Sanctuary in St Mary.



Divers planting coral in the fish sanctuary in Oracabessa St Mary.

O'BESSA

CONTINUED FROM 2

people to work, the decision was taken to have housekeeping as the primary curriculum.

"Our first batch of students began in January 2008, and since then, we've graduated 81 persons. Thirty-five per cent of these graduates are now working in the hotel industry. At first glance, that doesn't seem like a stellar performance, but considering that these students have graduated in one of the worst economic climates since the Great Depression, it is actually pretty good."

Another major project the Foundation has introduced to Oracabessa is the A GANAR programme (to win or to earn), for at-risk youths. A GANAR, which started in Latin America, was brought to the region by the USAID and Partners of the Americas.

Offered in three phases, A GANAR is delivered via vocational training, work experience and instruction using sports.



Oracabessa Marlin Tournament.

"It teaches workplace themes, communication and teamwork which is result-oriented, with special focus on self-esteem, discipline and continuing self-improvement," said Gosse.

Summing up the programme, he described it as worth its weight in gold.

According to him, 66 per cent of the youth who complete the programme are now working in the hospitality sector, and some have even found work with the Urban Development Corporation.

Even before they enter the world of work, he said during phase one of the training, the youth worked with each other, becoming self reflective. "They don't fly off the edge. They are no longer victims of the system," he argued.

YOUTH BENEFIT

Using sports, the foundation has been running primary-school sports leagues for 20 years and recently built the first BMX track in the English-speaking Caribbean as part



Fish sanctuary wardens.

of the sustainable development programme.

Some 600 youth per year benefit from the sports league and this has been the case for the last 15 years, said Gosse.

The BMX track was funded from a grant provided by the Fetzer Institute in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Funds have been used to design the Two Wheels, One Love programme which has been developed into a curriculum incorporating principles of love and forgiveness into a structured BMX learn to ride programme.

The curriculum will be rolled out to five primary schools immediately surrounding the Eden Park BMX Track, culminating in a Two Wheels, One Love race series at the track for those students 'graduating' through all six levels of the programme.

"Our goal is to teach 250 area youth about love and forgiveness while getting them onto the BMX track," said Gosse.

The parting shot that Gosse delivered was the Foundation's motto of "Belong. Build. Believe".

Oracabessa is the same community that has given the turtles written about in this publication two weeks ago a chance at life.

Their turtle hatching has become a popular sight, with Jamaicans and visitors flocking the area to participate in this life-changing experience.

The Oracabessa Foundation is among hotelier Chris Blackwell's Island Outpost's group of environmentally friendly projects.

janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com



A Conversation With Malcolm Gladwell

October 13, 2014 | The University of the West Indies - Assembly Hall | 5:00 p.m.

Information: 977-1600

Whisky Productions

ADVT.

Ministry of Tourism Library renamed

THE LIBRARY at the New Kingston offices of the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) was on September 25 renamed the Clive Eugene Taffe Information and Resources Centre, in a fitting tribute to the late public servant who gave 50 years of outstanding service to the JTB in various capacities, both at home and abroad.

The announcement was made to an audience of former colleagues, tourism stakeholders, family and friends at the official opening of the Clive Eugene Taffe Retrospective Exhibition at the JTB's offices located at 64 Knutsford Boulevard.

Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill said it was fitting that in honour of Clive's memory, the JTB was hosting a retrospective exhibition that

reflects on 20 years of marketing Destination Jamaica.

"I say this because much of Clive's life was dedicated to the development and promotion of the island's vibrant tourism sector and his significant contribution to Jamaica's tourism industry is reflected in much of the successes we are experiencing today," said McNeill.

AWARENESS WEEK

Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook said there was no better way to observe the extended Tourism Awareness Week, which runs from September 21 to October 1, than by remembering Taffe. Hailing him as a professional and dedicated worker, Pennicook said Taffe was "easily one of the most dedicated

and passionate salespersons Jamaica has ever had."

Taffe, who passed away in June of this year, had the distinction of being the only JTB employee to have served with every director of tourism. The retrospective tourism exhibition, which honours his memory and many years of dedicated service to the tourism industry, will be taken across the island following its run at the JTB. The official opening of the exhibition is one of a slate of activities that the ministry, its agencies and tourism partners are hosting as part of Tourism Awareness Week 2014 in an effort to raise awareness of the vital contribution that the tourism sector makes to Jamaica's social and economic development.



Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill (left); Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook (right); and sister of the late Clive Eugene Taffe, Yvonne Gooden, take time out for a photo following the presentation of a keepsake to Gooden.



Rockey Madourie (right), one of the craft vendors at Beaches Negril, assists one of the students from the Theodora Skills Training Centre in decorating a crafted fish during a training session at the resort as part of a pre-World Tourism Day activity, aimed at empowering young people with skills useful in the tourism industry. Other students also received first-hand training in housekeeping and massage/beauty therapy.



Beaches Negril's housekeeping supervisors Maureen Humphrey (left) and Amol James (right) show students from the Theodora Skills Training Centre how to properly spread a bed.

Youth schooled for WTD

OVER 25 youth from the Theodora Skills Training Centre in Negril, Westmoreland recently benefited from hospitality skills training sessions at Beaches Negril in recognition of World Tourism Day (WTD) 2014.

Observed September 27 annually, WTD was held under the theme, Tourism and Community Development this year.

Focussing on the ability of tourism to empower people and provide them with skills to achieve change in their local communities, Beaches Negril, on the eve of the global observation, delivered hands-on in housekeeping, beauty/massage therapy and craft-making to the students.

Kristal Mattis, one of the trainees who participated in the sessions, shared that the exposure was fantastic. "I learnt a lot of new things about housekeeping, and while some of the areas we already knew in theory, this experience allowed us to see the practical side and helped us to apply what we learn."

The Theodora Skills Training Centre falls under the Theodora Foundation, a non-profit organisation that aims to empower young people, including some who may be at risk of being exploited through illicit means, human trafficking and the commercial sex trade. The Foundation



Tenisha Limmoth (left), massage therapist at Beaches Negril's Red Lane Spa, gives a tour of the spa's salon to students of the Theodora Skills Training Centre.



Students of the Theodora Skills Training Centre based in Negril, Westmoreland, ensured they seized the moment with Beaches Negril's Sesame Street educational partner, Big Bird, during a visit to the resort for a pre-World Tourism Day activity.

PLEASE SEE **WTD**, 5

Cruise ship boost next month

WITH CRUISE arrivals at Jamaica's three cruise ship ports showing increases, in a month's time, Montego Bay will become home port to the Thomson Dream vessel.

Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill said with the home porting of the cruise ship here, "we will be having four extra flights (out of Europe) a week" to service the ship.

Speaking at a JAPEX press luncheon at the Half Moon on Monday (September 22), McNeill expressed an eagerness to see this happen, stating, "The fact of the matter is we know that when the Thomson Dream comes, our estimate is that about 30 per cent of the passengers will do a sail and stay, so we are looking also to increase our stopover numbers."

For the eight-month period, January to August this year, the port of Montego Bay received 59 cruise ship calls with 162,120 passengers. These numbers represented increases of 1.7 per cent and 0.8 per cent respectively over the corresponding period in 2013.

Combining all three major ports, there were 267 calls for the same period this year bringing 938,844 passengers, in comparison to 238 calls last year accounting for 853,072. Statistically, the number of calls

increased by 12.2 per cent and the passengers moved up by 10.1 per cent.

Noting that Falmouth handles some 700,000 passengers per year, McNeill says, "In a few short years, (it) has been transformed into our leading port of call for cruise ships."

TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

A programme of transformation funded by the Tourism Enhancement Fund has been underway in resort townships. The Ocho Rios project is halfway to completion. The next stage is the redevelopment of a seaside boardwalk leading to Main Street which will also be rehabilitated to include a cobble stone lane devoted to pedestrian traffic.

Major upgrading work is taking place in Negril and the Falmouth transformation is also underway, while Montego Bay now has cultural centre housing an art gallery, a museum, space for theatrical productions, a bistro and gift shop.

At the same time, McNeill said his ministry was pressing ahead with plans to acquire and fully develop 10 beaches across Jamaica to be used by both residents and visitors alike. A network of rest stops is also being established to provide well-maintained restroom facilities and ancillary services for travellers throughout the island.

WTD

CONTINUED FROM 4

offers them opportunities for education and personal development. In addition, there is a safe house called the Theodora's Place.


The centre offers skills training and HEART certification in the areas of information technology, cosmetology and housekeeping.

Audrey Reynolds, coordinator at the centre, stated that she was pleased knowing there were businesses that have young people's best interest at heart "regardless of their background or position".

According to Kendra Johnson, regional public relations manager for Sandals, Beaches and Grand Pineapple Negril, this activity was a natural fit. "The theme for this year's World Tourism Day speaks to empowering people with the relevant skills needed to effect change in their community, so Sandals Resorts saw this as the perfect opportunity to impact these young people through tourism and provide an avenue for them to not only learn something new, but also enjoy themselves in the process."

She noted that other students from the centre will be accommodated for a similar activity at a later date.






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Chikungunya and tourism

David Jessop

IT IS now widely accepted that tourism underwrites most Caribbean economies; that governments and electorates depend on it to provide employment; that the industry provides substantial income through taxation that supports social and infrastructural spending; and that in its periphery, it creates demand for goods and services for everyone from farmers to junior physicians, lawyers and accountants.

As a consequence, few now question the strategic economic importance of the industry to most Caribbean economies and governments, tourist boards and hoteliers across the region that work hard to ensure that all visitors have a peaceful, happy and enjoyable experience.

Addressing the issue of public health and tourism is therefore sensitive and tends not to be often

discussed in a public way. This is because there is always the danger that by drawing attention, any concern may dissuade visitors from booking what will be a perfectly safe and happy vacation.

However, this is changing as governments and the tourism sector recognise that it is better to act in a timely manner and provide accurate information.

PROACTIVE MEASURES

As the chikungunya virus has spread across the Caribbean, tourism ministries and public-health agencies have had to begun to say more about the steps that they are taking to monitor any possible impact on visitors or those who work in the industry, and to

help step up the precautions that hotels and attractions need to take.

Speaking recently about the mosquito-borne virus, Jamaica's minister of tourism, Wykeham McNeill, said that the industry has been spared the effects, but Government was working closely with stakeholders in the hospitality sector and public-health agencies to take necessary proactive measures.

One consequence of this and similar approaches by governments across the region is that the virus has had no negative impact on tourism arrivals. Moreover, although cases have been reported in most islands, because the incidence is statistically low, government travel advisories from North America and Europe simply consist of warnings to take steps to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

Earlier this year in a speech to the Caribbean Tourism Organisa-

tion (CTO), Dr James Hospedales, the executive director of the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), made clear the importance of all involved in the industry taking a well thought through approach. He noted that in order to avoid any undue adverse impact on the Caribbean economy or the tourism industry, lessons learnt from others should be heeded.

EARLY ACTION

Observing that in La Reunion in the Indian Ocean, a chikungunya outbreak in 2006-2007 reduced tourism arrivals by 37 per cent – a decline that no tourism destination in the Caribbean could withstand – the key lesson, he said, was that “early, prompt, accurate, regular communication with the population and the media are essential and for tourism and hotel industry to work with Ministry of Health and all stakeholders”. It is an issue,

he noted, that CARPHA is working closely on with its partners to minimise any adverse economic impact and spread of the disease.

More generally, in this context, it is particularly welcome that CTO and CARPHA established early this year a joint regional tourism and health programme that aims to lessen the industry's vulnerability to health and safety issues that might challenge the sustainability of Caribbean tourism.

What recent comments on the chikungunya outbreak have demonstrated is that Government and the industry have largely understood that careful monitoring, the exchange of information, well-judged public comment, and close cooperation between ministries of public health and regional and international health authorities is the best way to ensure that the region's tourism economy is not damaged and visitors remain safe.



JESSOP



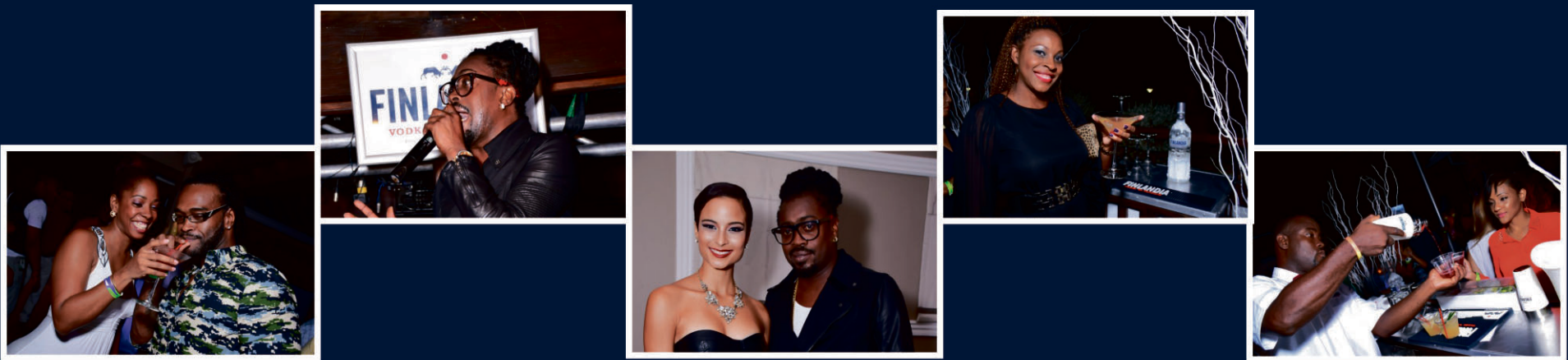
Casey Osbourne (left) of Elite Media Concepts shows off the new technology they have available to Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill and president of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, Nicola Madden-Greig, during the opening ceremony of JAPEX Sunday night.



From left, front row: Arielle Graham, Ricardo Morris, Kerry Lee Espeut, Edward Burke, Casey Osbourne and Majash Cunningham. Back row: Alrick Forbes, managing partner at Elite Media Concepts.

FINLANDIA[®] vodka refreshes CRU Live Series

The Live in the CITY bi-monthly series at CRU Bar and Kitchen in Kingston continues to be a resounding success. Last week's headliner, the Doctor—Beenie Man brought his super star swag and impressive talent to the stage for charity. The atmosphere got so heated when he started pulling for memorable hits like “Sim Simma”, “Let's go to the beach” and “Heart Attack”, that we were happy the night's sponsor hailed from Finland. Showcasing local bartenders flaring talents, patrons enjoyed frosty cocktails from the land of the midnight sun! Mango Basil martinis, Cosmopolitans and many other delectable flavours tantalized taste buds as the specials for the night. All this great music, and cocktails, wasn't just for fun...the Lupus Foundation of Jamaica stood to benefit from part proceeds. Just in case you missed it, here a few images from our resident social media partners...SKKAN! You can't afford to miss the next show!



Available at retailers island wide. Must be 18 years and older to drink. Enjoy Finlandia responsibly.
Photography provided courtesy of Skkan Media Entertainment.



Diana Marley (left), marketing and operations manager, Island Car Rentals, cooling out at The Jamaica Pegasus and Courtleigh Suites booth with Maurice Bryan and Prudence Simpson.



Eden Gardens Wellness Resort and Spa's Keniesha Brown, operations manager, and Etmour Williams, marketing and business development officer, at their booth at JAPEX.



PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

Lee-Anne Godfrey (right), and Dilton Bartley of Spanish Court Hotel meet with delegates at the recent Jamaica Product Exchange.

JAPEX 2014 ends on high note

THE FOLLOWING is a pictorial highlight of the recently held Jamaica Product Exchange (JAPEX). The three-day event is a signature marketing event combining scheduled business appointments between buyers and suppliers in the travel trade. The show was held from September 21-23 at the Montego Bay Convention Centre.



Giselle Vassell and Scott Dunn at the Dream Weekend booth at JAPEX.



Nurse Joylyn Hunter (left), of the Skin, Body and Mind Clinic and Institute, checks RIU's director of sales Angella Bennett's face during JAPEX.



Checking out the suppliers to the industry!! Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill (seated on bed) is all smiles as he checks out a Sealy Posturepedic bed by McIntosh Bedding Co, with president of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, Nicola Madden-Greig (left), along with Mayor of Montego Bay Glendon Harris (second right) and Mayor of Falmouth Garth Wilkinson. Showing off her furniture is Stephanie McIntosh (standing), operations manager at McIntosh.



From left: Dream Weekend promoters Ron Burke, Paul Matthews and Marcia McDonnough at JAPEX 2014.



From left: Royal Shop's Ravi Daswani, Rabbi Raskin, who is introducing the Jewish Tour to Jamaica and FDR's Angie Rance at JAPEX.



Mystic Mountain's Marsha Mattos (left), and Norma Bailey-Moore give special attention to Dave Chin-Tung of Go Jamaica Travel during JAPEX.



VIP Attractions' Tricia Robbins (left) and Tabitha Athey (right) have the attention of Jewel Resorts' Carol Bourke (second left) and Suzy Trott during JAPEX 2014.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES CENTRE



This new designation is in memory of former member of staff Clive Eugene Taffe, OD, JP. The Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) Library was named the Clive Eugene Taffe Information and Resources Centre, and a plaque mounted in his memory. Among the persons in attendance were members of Taffe's family. Above, Yvonne Gooden, Taffe's sister, expresses her delight to Paul Pennicook, director of tourism, that the JTB chose to honour her brother's memory with such a profound gesture. Taffe dedicated half a century to the promotion of destination Jamaica at the JTB. He worked in local and overseas offices as photographic librarian, public relations officer, sales/marketing representative, district manager, regional manager, regional director and consultant to the director of tourism. The exhibition will be hosted at the JTB's Kingston office on Knutsford Boulevard for two weeks, after which it will move to the Montego Bay office.

Ja Invitational Pro-Am Annie's Revenge attracts American celebrities

AMERICAN ACTOR and director, David Arquette, writer/producer, John Swetnam of Mad Horse Films and producer Michael Botti headline the list of celebrities set to take part in the Jamaica Invitational Pro-Am Annie's Revenge, presented by Appleton Estate Jamaica Rum, October 29-November 2, 2014. The Jamaica Tourist Board event, now in its ninth year, has continued to grow over the years, attracting the Hollywood stars for this year's staging. Arquette, who has appeared in **Scream**, and its sequels, and more recently in **Happy Face Killer** released earlier this year, will join Swetnam, whose two movies **Step Up** and **Into the Storm** are currently in theatres. Botti, producer of **Fire with Fire** starring Bruce Willis, Rosario Dawson and Josh Duhamel joins his industry associates who will tee off on Cinnamon Hill and White Witch, two of Jamaica's best championship golf courses.

Described by many players as the best Pro-Am in the region, Arquette, Swetnam and Botti will

make their tournament debut on the majestic fairways in Montego Bay. Persons interested in playing with the celebrities can register online now and pay the premium rate being offered to be part of their team. This will be on a first-come basis.

HIGH-CALIBRE EVENT

"We are pleased to welcome the participation of these celebrities from the American film industry for this year's Jamaica Invitational Pro-Am. Their interest in the event is an excellent testimonial of the calibre of this golf championship. We hope their presence will help enhance the Annie's Revenge brand as we continue to grow this tournament to become one of the premier golf events in the Caribbean," said Paul Pennicook, Jamaica's director of tourism.

Hosted by IBEROSTAR Grand Rose Hall, the event is organised and produced by The Golf Connection LLC. Teams consisting of five players to include a professional and four amateur golfers who will compete over 54-holes, playing both

courses as they vie for the Jamaica Pro-Am Championship trophy. In addition to the competitive golf, the five-day event also includes nightly receptions, spectacular tee prizes for all players, and the opportunity to win a host of prizes and awards.

Event sponsors American Airlines, Cobra Puma Golf, IBEROSTAR Hotels & Resorts, and The Golf Connection LLC, donate contest prizes and awards valued at more than US\$10,000. PGA golf professionals who host participating teams compete for a total prize purse of US\$35,000 between the Appleton Shootout and Annie's Revenge.

Golfers interested in participating in the Pro-Am can secure their team spot by booking on www.jamaica.proam.com, or by calling 484-762-1185. For more information on Jamaica and its golf offerings, please visit <http://www.visitjamaica.com/things-to-do/active-and-relaxing/golf>, or to learn more about the tournament, check out the **Annie's Golf EMagazine** at <http://joom.ag/hnlb>.

JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD

JTB PARTICIPATES IN JAPEX



Philip Rose (right), the Jamaica Tourist Board's regional director for Canada, engages representatives from online travel agency Travel Brands in discussion during the recently held Jamaica Product Exchange (JAPEX) at the Montego Bay Convention Centre. From left are Pat Lista, Dalia Martinez and Wayne Noseworthy. The JAPEX trade show was held from September 21-23 and saw hundreds of wholesalers, tour operators and travel agents engage local tourism stakeholders in key negotiations.

TALKING BUSINESS AT JAPEX



The Jamaica Tourist Board's (JTB) Anthony King (left), regional director, Tour Operators and Airlines; and Donald Dawson (second right), deputy director of tourism, the Americas, have dialogue with Amanda Moffett (second left), marketing manager at Bookit.com; and Donna Karnes, a director at Bookit.com, during JAPEX. The three-day event is a signature marketing event combining scheduled business appointments between buyers and suppliers in the travel trade. Now in its 24th year, JAPEX is the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association's event and is sponsored by the JTB.

Riu staff enjoys day of FUN



Alsheare Dixon, executive chef, Riu MoBay, cooks up a storm at the recent staff fun day.



DI FOTO SHOPPE PHOTOS

From left: Courtney Johnson (security manager, both hotels), Kagelia Spence (dining room and bar manager, Palace), Javier Huertas (assistant general manager, Palace), Frank Sondern (general manager, Palace and MoBay), Laura Medina (assistant general manager, Palace), Sheldon Henry (grounds manager, both hotels) and in front: Andre Philips (stewarding manager).



Daniel Orgaz Garcia, assistant general manager at Riu MoBay lifts his daughter playfully.



Children of Riu employees enjoy the bouncy house provided at the recent staff fun day.



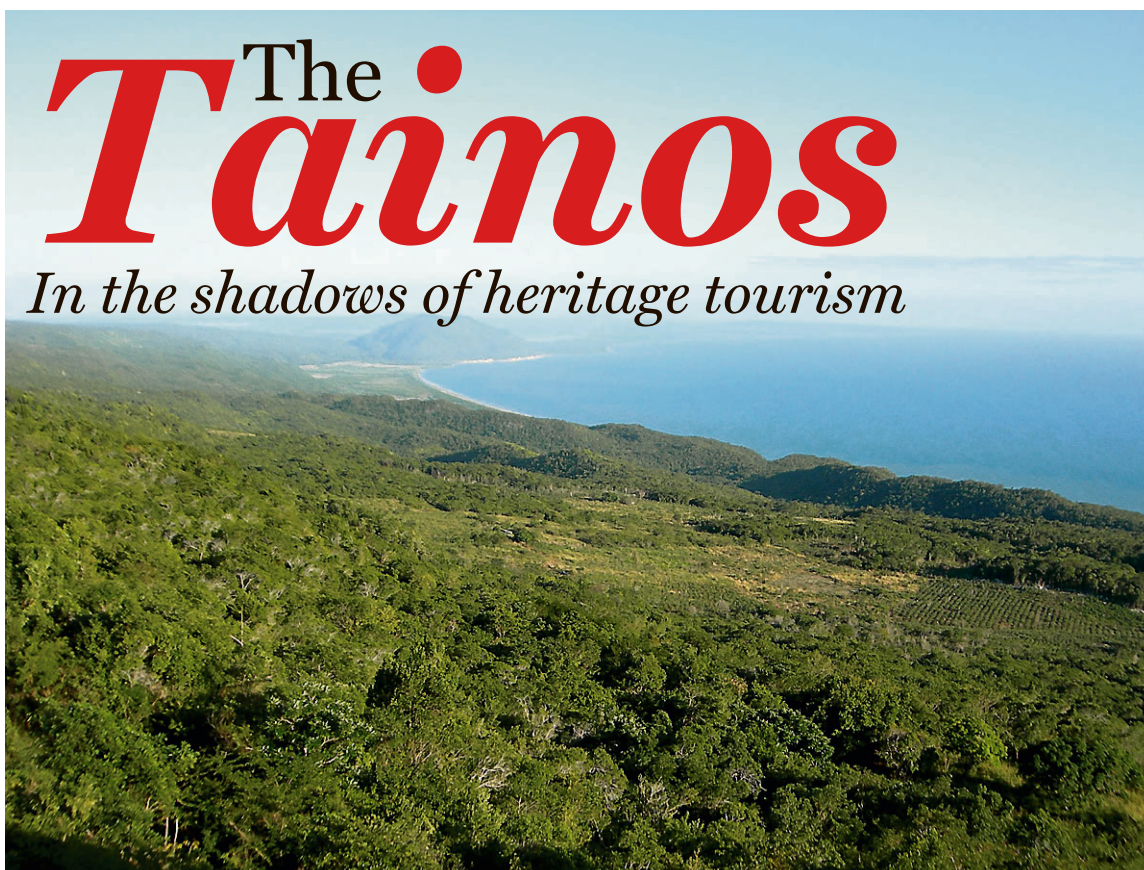
The Riu Palace Jamaica dining room and bar staff.



The dining room and bar staff of Riu MoBay at the fun day in their honour.



Entertainment staff at the resort perform for their colleagues.



The Tainos

In the shadows of heritage tourism

PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

The Canoe Valley of South Manchester was a major Taino settlement sight.

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

THIS MONTH, we observe Heritage Week, which climaxes with Heroes Day, the day we honour and reflect on the achievements of, six men and one woman who have played significant roles in the story of the Jamaican nation, a composite of mainly Europeans, Africans, Asian and Middle Eastern peoples.

And though the Tainos are the only people represented on the Jamaican coat of arms, their importance as our first ancestors is seldom given much space in the limelight. But who were they?

When Columbus first came to Xamayca in 1494, it was not devoid of human population. It was inhabited by the peaceful, Arawak-speaking, fair-skinned Tainos. They had come across from South and Central America hundreds of years before. In this land of wood and water, the Tainos had their own economic, social, religious and political systems.

While they had internal settlements across the island, they lived mainly along the coast in villages of circular huts. When Columbus arrived in 1494, he met the Tainos who lived at Maima, a settlement not far from the coast. When he returned on his fourth visit to the West Indies, he was stranded on



A group of Tainos from different Caribbean islands, including Jamaica, at the recent Charles Town International Maroon Conference in Portland.

the island where he lived at Maima from 1503-04. His son Deigo and a group of colonists returned in 1510, where they established the first Spanish settlement near Maima, which they later called Sevilla la Nueva, now known as Seville in St Ann.

The establishment of the Spanish settlement at Sevilla la Nueva was to be the beginning of the end of the idyllic lifestyle as it were for the Tainos. They were enslaved, and

eventually died from diseases they contracted from the Europeans, overwork, mass murders and suicide. Deaths were not confined to Maima, and over time, the Taino population on the island declined significantly.

Spanish Bishop Bartolome de las Casas, regarded as a “friend of the Indians”, wrote in the 16th Century that: “The island of Jamaica ... was

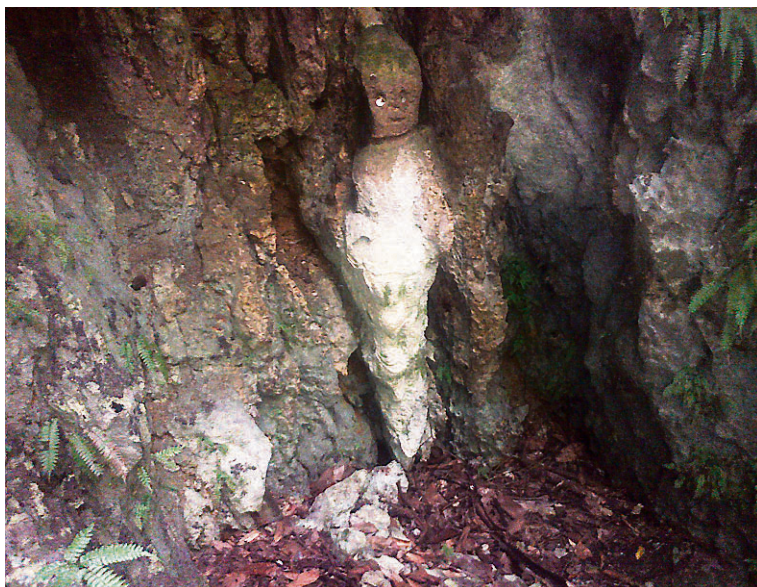
PLEASE SEE **TAINOS**, 13



On a recent tour of Woodside, St Mary, a former Taino (Arawak) settlement, were 71-year-old Kacike Cibanakan (left), chief of the Taino Nation of The Antilles, and his son Xeitaruti Cibanakan, chief administrator of Urayoan-oyaAitabahai (National Educational Institution of the Taino Nation of the Antilles), and Dalikentu Cibanakan, granddaughter of Kacike Cibanakan and niece of Xeitaruti. They reside in New York City, but their homeland is Puerto Rico. They visited the site of a Taino rock carving in Woodside, St Mary, August last year.



Tainos, Olive Moxam-Dennis and her daughter Dr Erica Neeganagwedgin, now living in Canada, were born in southern St Elizabeth.



PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

Dr Erna Brodber wants the Taino rock sculpture called 'One-Bubby Susan', located at Woodside, St Mary, to be declared a national heritage site.



A storyboard about the Tainos and the Spaniards at Seville Heritage Park in St Ann.

TAINOS

CONTINUED FROM 12

possessed by the Spaniards with the same bloody intentions, as the others were; for there they also exercised their accustomed cruelties, killing, burning, roasting men, and throwing them to the dogs ... as if they had come to rid the Earth of these innocent and harmless creatures" But the Tainos were not completely annihilated. Many fled into the hills, becoming the first Jamaican Maroons.

In order to replace the Tainos, captured Africans, starting in 1517, were brought to Jamaica to work on plantations under a system of slavery. For over 140 years, the Spaniards ruled Jamaica, establishing plantations all over the island. But the governance of the island changed hands with the arrival of the English led by General Robert Venables and Admiral William Penn in 1655.

For 15 years, the English and the Spaniards struggled to control the island. On May 9, 1660 the last group of Spaniards left the island, but it was not until 1670 that the Spaniards officially ceded the island to the British through the Treaty of Madrid. Part of the Spaniards' war strategies was the freeing and arming of their slaves with the hope that they would help them fight the British. But the Africans went to join those who had already escaped and runaway Tainos as Maroons.

There was interbreeding between the Tainos and the Africans in the interior, and, as such, the Taino genes survived through this inter-



CONTRIBUTED
Taino Heritage
(Norma Rodney-Harrack, 1995).

breeding, and the descendants of such unions have survived until today. This survival theory has much credibility since the Tainos are to be found on other Caribbean islands

such as Puerto Rico and Hispaniola. And in June, this writer met some people who said they are direct descendants of the Jamaica Tainos.

In a two-part feature in **Rural**



The great house of the 19th-Century coffee plantation in Woodside, St Mary, is now an old Anglican church. Beside it is said to have been a Taino midden (rubbish heap).

Express, I wrote about the claim that Dr Erica Neeganagwedgin and her mother, Olive Moxam-Dennis, made about their Taino ancestry and heritage. They were both born in south St Elizabeth, which, along with southern Manchester, was a major Taino settlement territory. The online feedback to the articles was overwhelmingly positive, but one **Gleaner** columnist chose to ridicule the women calling them "wackos".

Whether people want to believe their claims or not, they are worthy of serious discussions and research, as the Tainos are a significant part of the Jamaican heritage. The very name of the country came from an Arawak word. And the story of the Tainos could be a major part of the

heritage tourism plan that people have been talking about for years.

Some of our museums have sections that are dedicated to the story of the Tainos; the National Gallery of Jamaica in downtown Kingston, and The Seville Heritage Park in St Ann are some of the places to learn about them. There is also the Arawak Museum in White Marl, St Catherine. Places such as Woodside in St Mary and the Canoe Valley of south Manchester are just some of the many points of interests that local and overseas tourists could trek to.

It is now time, bearing in mind the claims by Dr Neeganagwedgin and Moxam-Dennis, and other factors, to pull the Tainos out of the shadows of history. Let them not be our forgotten ancestors anymore.

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H.

Signs of wonder

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality jamaica Writer

WE JAMAICANS love to write notices, signs and placards. We love to note our thoughts, say what we want or not, announce our intentions, and what we have for sale. Nothing is absolutely wrong with that. It's all about the right to freedom of expression, which is enshrined within our Constitution.

However, many of us who love to write on these platforms cannot spell, and are challenged by the English language and the spelling of Jamaican Creole words. Nevertheless, those who have these challenges still reserve the right to write.

And what they write, sometimes, unintentionally turns out to be very funny. Some will make you laugh out loud upon first viewing. Others will put you into a reflective mood,

make you wonder, like the one I saw in the park at Papine Square, St Andrew, years ago. It said no animals should be seen 'wondering' in the park. So, I guess wondering in the park was reserved only for two-legged creatures. I wonder what became of that sign.

In my travels around the island, I have come across many of these signs of wonder, and today on these pages, I am sharing a few with you our readers.



Seriously now, what is the owner selling?

For sale by owner

There is nothing wrong with this sign, but something is definitely wrong with what it is affixed to. Somewhere in the hills of Manchester in a deserted square was where I saw it on an old rickety building. Seriously now, what is the owner selling? Does it have historical value? I would not go near that building because it seemed like any moment it would collapse. I doubt if it is still standing. The thing perhaps is to sell the land with the building on it, and then it is the new owner's job to demolish it.



This sign must be removed and restored. God is not pleased.

Pentecosal Chuch (NOT AN ERROR)

They might have been honest spelling errors, but day by day, night by night, the members of "Maidstone Restored Pentecosal Chuch of God" in Manchester cannot see the errors? Do they actually look at their church sign, or is it that they are blinded by the glare of the Pentecostal fire? I am planning to visit to see whether similar errors are on the walls of the 'chuch' itself. That sign must be removed and restored. God is not pleased.



But mantraps do not cause sudden deaths. The ensnared is made to suffer. What then is going to cause sudden death on this property?

Mantrap and sudden death

For whatever reason, please do not 'trespass' on a certain property in Portland. "Mantrap and sudden death" await you. But then again, you might want to jump over the fence and look around to see what this 'mantrap' really is. No, it is not a woman, and you might just jump into it, for, the mantrap is 'an illegal trap set to catch poachers or trespassers on private land, usually in the form of a metal device that snaps shut onto somebody's leg'. But mantraps do not cause sudden death. The ensnared is made to suffer. What then is going to cause sudden death on this property?



PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

“Be yea therefore ready also”? Ready for what? To meet a similar fate like the goodly reverend?

Rev Spratt and his horse

On the way from the community of Alps in Trelawny earlier this year, I came upon a monument of sorts in the middle of nowhere. It marks the spot where Rev Spratt fell from his horse on July 23, 1883 and died ‘a few hours afterward’. A quote at the bottom says, “Be yea therefore ready also”, and I am asking the question: ready for what? To meet a similar fate like the goodly reverend?

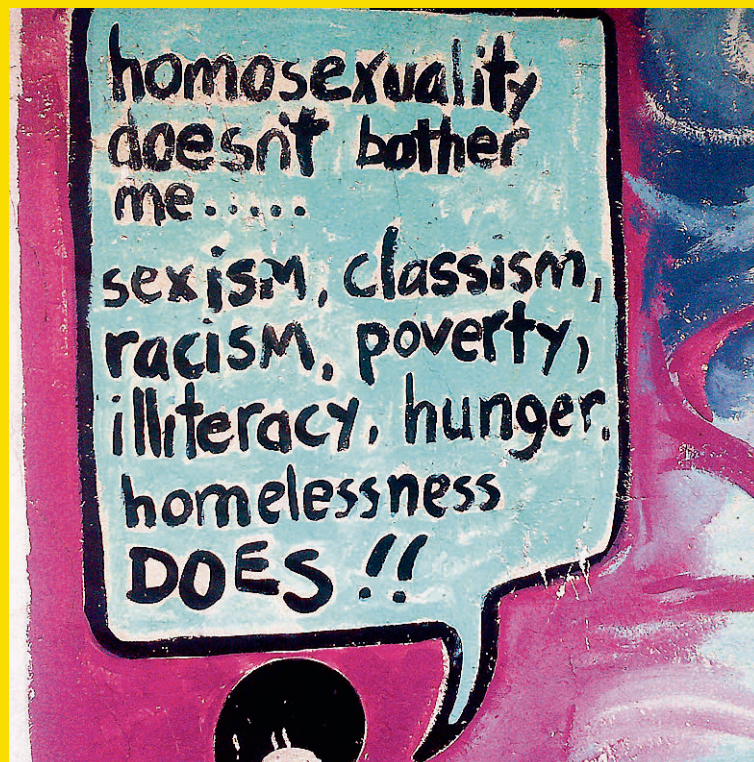
But who was Reverend Spratt? I turned to the Internet and found a note in the **Jamaica Witness** newspaper of Wednesday, August 1, 1883 that says, “The Rev Mr Spratt, well known minister of the Wesleyan body, lost his life by a sad horse accident, leaving a widow and numerous family.” Be yea therefore ready also?

Persecuted by the law

If it is any comfort to you, you will not be prosecuted if you find yourself on a property in Hopewell, Portland. The owner just doesn’t have time for long and drawn-out court matters. But not so fast ‘trespassers’. You will instead be ‘persecuted by law’. That means the law will hound, oppress, abuse, pursue, harass, mistreat, hunt, bully and torture you. You have been warned.



That means the law will hound, oppress, abuse, pursue, harass, mistreat, hunt, bully and torture you. You have been warned.



Even stranger than the notice itself is the fact that nobody has defaced it so far.

Homosexuality not a problem

Now, the sign that caused me to scratch my head more than any other was the one I saw painted on a wall on East Street, downtown Kingston. The writer makes it clear that “homosexuality doesn’t bother” him or her. What the writer is concerned about are “sexism”, “racism”, “classism”, “Poverty”, “Illiteracy”, “hunger” and “homelessness”. That is a very strange statement to be expressed in the bedrock of homophobia. Even stranger than the notice itself is the fact that nobody has defaced it so far.



Who, and why, came out of his/her vehicle to neatly write ‘BIG TOOL’ on an almond tree along the main road to Ocho Rios?

Big tool, etc

Still downtown Kingston, there is a notice at a restaurant door, announcing, “Curry goat with season rice \$950.” Would I be getting the entire goat? And from downtown Kingston to St Ann, the wonder never ceases. Who, and why, came out of his/her vehicle to neatly write “BIG TOOL” on an almond tree trunk along the main road to Ocho Rios?



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*Recognising organisations and individuals who have contributed significantly
to improving the quality and experience of the hospitality industry.*

**SATURDAY 25
OCTOBER**

**6:30PM AT THE MONTEGO BAY
CONVENTION CENTRE**

JAMAICA'S BEST

**EP HOTELS//ALL INCLUSIVE HOTELS//BOUTIQUE/SMALL HOTELS
ENTERTAINMENT//PURVEYORS//TRANSPORTATION//CUISINE
CONVENTION//ATTRACTIONS//ECO/SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

CONTRIBUTION: \$5,000.00 PER PERSON

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