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Hospitality Jamaica

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2016



TOURISM WORKERS



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A man in a tan suit is walking across the bottom of the page, partially overlapping the large text 'AWARDED'.

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Drones tourism



David Jessop
Contributor

DRONES, THE unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) loved by hobbyists, but which have important everyday civilian and military applications, are starting to become an issue in the Caribbean, raising unusual questions for governments and the tourism industry.

The issues fall in to three distinct areas: safety, security, and regulation; commercial opportunity; and privacy.

Read online hobbyist publications like **Dronelife.com** and it is clear that taking your drone on a vacation has become an 'epic way to catalogue your summer exploits', is much cooler than taking selfies, and is the best way of 'capturing your visit to the beaches of the Caribbean'.

Fun aside, however, Dronelife recognises the growing challenges faced by visitors travelling with a UAV, with its readers citing examples of having to pay duty in The Bahamas; a complete ban in Nicaragua; the more common experience of uncertainty among Customs officers and the police in nations from St Vincent to Cuba; and uncertainty about which, if any, Caribbean country requires a licence. There are also, it seems, significant airline safety concerns relating to checking in drones because of the

lithium batteries they use and with hoteliers who, in some cases, are concerned about client privacy.

More specifically, when it comes to Caribbean safety, security, and the regulation of UAVs, my research suggests that there is no joined-up regional approach as to their use by either citizens or visitors and that better and more consistent regulations may now be required, with appropriate information made available to visitors before they depart.

The trouble with this is that some Caribbean islands have no relevant legislation or regulations other than, it seems, in relation to kite flying. Even where there are UAV-specific regulations, it is unlikely that any country has a police force equipped or able to catch those who break the rules. Moreover, it is clear from online blogs by drone flyers that it is very hard for them to discover what local controls exist.

The paramount issue is safety. Drones pose a significant danger if used close to airports and are a potential threat if used in sensitive areas where elevated security is required. This is resulting in an increasing number of

warnings from local authorities in the region to operators, noting that they could face prosecution if they are caught flying their devices in designated zones. For instance, Barbados has recently said that it is reviewing all rules and processes governing the importation and use of drone technology even though it already restricts recreational flying of UAVs to four designated areas in the country and requires an operating licence.



JESSOP

KEY SUPPORT

On the positive side, however, commercially used drones have become a key support and promotional vehicle for the marketing of hotels and many Caribbean destinations and locations, as well as to sell real estate to overseas buyers.

This is because the bird-like ability of drones to fly and swoop over islands, hotels, beaches and the countryside, providing high-resolution panoramic and close-up pictures in ways that, with the right soundtrack and voice-over, add dramatically to the ability to romanticise and sell a vacation. They also have an increasingly important role in the Caribbean in addressing environmental issues, weather forecasting, and national security.

As a consequence, many companies are emerging in the region and internationally specialising in UAV photography and other applications and are actively selling their services to governments, tourist boards, hoteliers, and all manner of local and international agencies.

Offsetting this is the issue of personal privacy. Hoteliers and the tourism industry are regularly concerned about how to protect their celebrity guests who value the approach that most Caribbean destinations and local people take in respecting their privacy. However, this is changing as the international media have begun to pay large sums for pictures or video footage of movie stars, footballers, and others in the privacy of their villa or hotel. This is leading to drone users from paparazzi to individuals not just seeking out the well-known, but in some cases picturing other visitors who have come to the Caribbean because it offers them privacy, tranquillity, and the opportunity to enjoy themselves.

Drones are yet another form of disruptive technology that governments and the industry will have to come to terms with. The challenge will be to determine how best to balance security and privacy against commercial value and the individual freedom that taking a vacation implies.



From left: Lancelot McFarlane, Manager of the Year; Tracy-Ann Brown, Chef of the Year; and Huntley Wilson, Supervisor of the Year, at the Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa's first annual service awards last Wednesday in Montego Bay.



From left: Lionel Beckford, Bartender of the Year, Natalie Harvey, Most Recognized Awardee, and Kamar Kaye, Most Exemplary, at the Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa's first annual Service Awards last Wednesday in Montego Bay.

HILTON ROSE HALL RESORT AWARDS *EXCELLENCE*

Janet Silvera

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

DEMONSTRATING APPRECIATION for its staff, the Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa recognised its associates at a multimillion-dollar inaugural service awards last Wednesday in Montego Bay.

Hosted under the theme 'Celebrating Our Growth, Embracing Our Future', the resort, owned by

the Sagcor group and operated by the Aimbridge Resorts, seized the opportunity to reiterate its main priorities.

"Which is the well-being of our associates and their development towards the enrichment of their lives and professional growth," said the resort's managing director, Carol Bourke.

Emotional at times when she paused to pay respect to members of

her team who had transitioned in the last year, Bourke said that those who had excelled throughout 2015 had done the resort proud.

True to form, the success of Bourke's team was a true reflection of her leadership. She has been described as a leader whose skills epitomise strength and determination; one who leads by example; and one who is focused on both the internal and external customer.

It came as no surprise that the Associate of the Year, Marie Brown, who works as payroll coordinator, fitted the bill for the coveted prize.

Brown was hoisted off the ground and taken to the stage, where she was surrounded by her colleagues, who celebrated her win. The payroll coordinator took home prizes valued at \$1.5 million.

She trounced runners-up Errol Simmonds and Winsome Thelwell,

who placed second and third, respectively.

Lancelot McFarlane was named Manager of the Year; Huntley Wilson, Supervisor of the Year; and the affable Janet Wedderburn recognised with the Award of Excellence.

Eighteen employees were awarded for their outstanding contribution to the resort.

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Blue Energy awardee Donna Bailey-Gray (left) and Sandra Eccleston dancing to the beat of Gem Myers.



Having the time of their lives, the Hilton Rose Hall associates were awarded millions of dollars in cash and prizes.



Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa team members.



Housekeeping director Zerica Lawrence (left) presents the Hilton Ambassador Award to Janet Wedderburn.



Dancing to the songs songstress Gem Myers belted out at their first annual service awards, the Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa staff members were happy campers.



Guest speaker at the Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa's first annual service awards Fae Ellington greets 'The Doctor', Beenie Man, who was one of the artistes who performed at the event.



Hilton Rose Hall's director of sales Charmaine Deane and the resort's general manager literally let down their hair and had a great time.



Three star generals, Associate of the Year, Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa, Marie Brown (centre) is flanked by first runner-up, Errol Simmonds (left) and second runner-up, Winsome Thelwell during the hotel's first annual Service Awards last Wednesday in Montego Bay.



Senior Vice-President of Aimbridge Resorts Rich Cortese and Carol Bourke (right), managing director and general manager, Hilton Rose Hall, present the coveted Associate of the Year award to Marie Brown.



Michael Dannecker presents the award to the Gift Shop's sales associates (from left) Shannon Scarlett-Gibbs, supervisor; Shenique Richards, sales associate, who also won the Smile Award for the Year; Debbie Grant, retail manager, Jewel Resorts and Hilton Rose Hall; and Semorn Bennett, sales associate.

AN ICON in Jamaica's hospitality and tourism landscape, Half Moon, A RockResort, recently finished several enhancement projects to further establish its reputation as one of the finest resorts in the world.

The property has reopened the historic Sugar Mill Restaurant, along with updates to the lobby, including the addition of Lester's Café, a new coffee shop; and The Cedar Bar, a newly renovated bar and terrace overlooking the ocean.

"The Sugar Mill Restaurant is a well-known and favoured fine-dining experience in Jamaica," said Sandro Fabris, general manager of Half Moon. "The upgrades to the physical space, paired with a new menu featuring the best of modern Jamaican cuisine, will give guests and locals alike a reason to revisit this culinary staple for our destination. Furthermore, our enhancements to the lobby with the addition of Lester's Café and upgrades to The Cedar Bar invite a welcome energy from morning to late evening."

Nestled in an alcove next to a 17th-century water mill is the renovated Sugar Mill. Helmed by Chef de Cuisine Christopher Golding – named 'Best Chef in Jamaica' – the restaurant now serves Wagyu beef, known for its distinctive flavour and tenderness perfected by a charcoal cooking technique via Jamaica's only Jasper charcoal broiler oven. This is the first time Wagyu beef has been added to the menu in Jamaica.

The Sugar Mill's new menu also features farm-to-table options using herbs specially grown on the resort's property. Also on the menu is Jamaica's highly prized 50-year-old Appleton Estate rum, said to be the oldest rum available for sale.

As guests enter the lobby, they will be welcomed by aromas from Lester's Café, named



Half Moon unveils newly renovated Sugar Mill Restaurant, Cedar Bar, and Lester's Café

The Cedar Bar at Half Moon.

after Michael Lester Leszczynski, a well-regarded sea captain and painter whose artwork hangs in the lobby of the hotel. Serving grab-and-go items throughout the day and certified pure roasted Jamaica Blue Moun-

tain Coffee, Lester's Café is a brand-new addition to the dining options at Half Moon.

Perfect for a nightcap or a refreshing afternoon drink, the newly upgraded Cedar Bar offers quintessential ocean views and a curated

rum selection, some of which are used in the resort's expertly crafted cocktails.

Located 10 minutes from the Sangster International Airport, Half Moon is an idyllic Caribbean getaway.

Negril Police Station gets \$40m upgrade

A SOCIAL intervention pilot project for the parish of Westmoreland is to be rolled out over the next few weeks to help reduce criminal activity. This was disclosed by Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill recently during a handover ceremony for the refurbished Negril Police Station.

In his remarks, McNeill stated that the \$20 million project is being funded by the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) and will consist of programmes in schools, including sports, job training, mediation, and community outreach. "The Ministry of National Security has put this forward and it is specific to Westmoreland as a pilot project," McNeill said.

In delivering the keynote address at the handover ceremony, the



Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Wykeham McNeill (left) meets Woman Constable Felicia Warsop (right) and Woman Corporal Althea Simms during a tour of the Negril Police Station. The occasion was a recent handover ceremony for the newly refurbished police station.

tourism minister expressed satisfaction with the timely way in which the refurbishing of the station was executed, pointing out that it was on time and under budget. "Of the \$50 million budgeted, under \$40 million was spent, and this was due to the Project Management Unit of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) providing additional skilled labour, which resulted in this significant savings to the project," said McNeill.

According to Assistant Commissioner of Police Leon Rose, members of the JCF provided plumbing, painting, carpentry, masonry, tiling, welding, and landscaping services, as well as constructed an ID Parade room. A 304-foot perimeter fence was also installed.

McNeill said that the refurbishing of the Negril Police Station is part of the strategic approach in the collaborative relationship between the Ministries of Tourism

and Entertainment and National Security, noting that the half-billion dollars set aside is a huge support. "Our support is in excess of half-billion out of the Tourism Enhancement Fund, and that is a lot of money in the budget of any ministry and certainly a major part of the budget of the TEF."

The Ocho Rios Police Station has been refurbished and the Port Antonio Police Station is slated to be the next beneficiary under the TEF-funded programme.

The Minister of National Security, Peter Bunting; Deputy Commissioner of Police George Quallo; president of the Negril Chamber of Commerce Lee Issa; and chairman of the Negril Resort Board Cliff Reynolds also participated in the official handover of the police station.

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Omar Williams, the Most Reliable Employee at the Hyatt Ziva, accepts his award from Maria Fernandez, director of entertainment.



Guest Helper Smile awardee Ruth-Ann Briscoe (right) accepts her award from Mureen James, director of sales, Hyatt.



Resort Superstar of the Year at Hyatt Ziva and Hyatt Zilara Peter Bartley doing the footloose after winning the coveted award at the resort last week Tuesday in Montego Bay.



Playa Culture Courtesy awardee Tatanisha Miller (right) of the spa accepts her award from spa manager Avril McCalla.



Leader of the Year Rose McLeod (centre), accepts one of many awards from the Hyatt Ziva and Zilara general manager, Diego Concha, and human resources director, Betty-Ann Brown.



Most Valuable Players 'Heart of the House' recipients Christina Clarke (second left) and Caulette Haughton accept their awards from Vishal Vaswani (left), director, Rooms, and Ignazio Podda, executive chef at the Hyatt Ziva.

JAMAICAN WORKERS have been credited in large part for the success of the local tourism sector, which saw 3.69 million visitors in 2015. Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill described them as the "the bedrock of our world-class tourism industry" as he gave the keynote address at last week's inaugural Eminence Awards for Hyatt Ziva and Zilara staff in Rose Hall, Montego Bay.

Addressing staff, awardees, and guests, the minister lauded the employees of Hyatt Ziva and Zilara, noting that their hard work had helped to make the resorts a resounding success.

"You are one of the most, if not the most, important assets for our tourism and hospitality organisations. You are the difference that enables us to provide exceptional service to visitors, exceed consumer expectations, and achieve that much-needed competitive advantage," McNeill said to the resorts' workers.



Most Improved Employee Cosimo Edmondson (left) accepts his award from Vladimir Burazor, director of operations, Hyatt.

Noting that people were an integral part of the tourism product experience, McNeill told the hotel workers, "It is ultimately the experience that visitors take away that

determines the success of their visit. For this reason, each one of you here makes the difference in whether visitors come back again and again."



Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill is flanked by the Hyatt Ziva and Hyatt Zilara general manager, Diego Concha, and human resources director Betty-Ann Brown.



Keneil Brown (right), one of two awardees of the general manager award, accepts his award from Diego Concha.

He also pointed out that consumers' expectations for quality were rising as the industry grew worldwide, and concurrently, competition among the players in the industry, both nationally and internationally, was intensifying.

The tourism minister lauded Hyatt Ziva and Zilara for recognising the commitment, loyalty, and hard work of their employees and the important role they play in their success. "The Government, too, recognises the tremendous value that our tourism

workers bring to the sector. For this reason, we are developing structured programmes to benefit workers in the sector," said McNeill. He informed the audience that a contributory pension scheme for tourism workers was slated for implementation in January 2017 that would ensure that those who have given years of exemplary service to tourism could retire without financial worries.

Also, discussion has started with the National Housing Trust to

develop workable strategies for the provision of housing for tourism workers.

Fifteen members of staff received awards in 12 categories. The top award – 'Superstar of the Year' – went to Peter Bartley of the resort's engineering department. He received a motor vehicle, which was presented to him by McNeill; general manager for Hyatt Zilara Rose Hall and Hyatt Ziva Rose Hall Diego Concha; and the hotel's director of human resources, Betty Ann Brown.

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) promotes the best of Destination Jamaica – the people, the cuisine, the music and the attractions. These attributes have made the island one of the most visited destinations in the Caribbean and the winner of scores of regional and international industry awards. Jamaica has also played host to numerous acclaimed events and influential personalities. In addition, for the past several years, Jamaica has welcomed more than three million visitors. While these are noteworthy achievements, one of the efforts that the JTB finds most rewarding is collaborating with visiting groups and organisations that give back, especially to Jamaican young people.

These not-for-profit organisations focus on charity and philanthropic endeavours that involve workshops, sports clinic, building schools and financial donations. Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook said, “we are always proud to promote Destination Jamaica to the world because we have confidence in our tourism product. We know first-hand that the gains from tourism contribute to the income of many Jamaican households as well as other vital sectors of the society. We are equally proud to support events which give back to the society. It is heart-warming to know that our partnerships continue to have meaningful outcomes, especially in the lives of young Jamaicans.”

The RuJohn Foundation, Jakes Triathlon, Karl Hale Jamaica Tour with the Helping Hands Jamaica Foundation and the Arthur Wylie

JTB gives back

JAMAICA

Jamaica’s students continue to be empowered through the creation of life-changing opportunities.

Week-long acting workshops, baseball, football and basketball camps with celebrities are features of the RuJohn Foundation. The foundation, which began in 2003 by siblings Andrew and Christina Batchelor, seeks to inspire industry in youth by creating and facilitating opportunities for them to interact with role models. The students benefit from camps, workshops and sessions that focus on pursuing academic excellence. The RuJohn Foundation activities have provided much-needed school supplies together with tuition disbursements. As second-generation Jamaicans living in the United States, the Batchelors are keen for young Jamaicans to mature into respectable citizens.

HELPING HANDS

Helping Hands Jamaica Foundation is a Canadian charity established in 2006 by Jamaica-born tennis professional Karl Hale. The foundation is dedicated to improving the lives of the next generation of Jamaicans by creating a world-class education system through investment in infrastruc-

ture, resource materials and expertise. In addition to partnerships with local and international organisations, Hale also hosts the Karl Hale Jamaica Tour, which is an International Tennis Federation Seniors Championship event. Proceeds go towards building schools. To date, the Helping Hands Jamaica Foundation has built seven schools and renovated four on the island. They have conducted educational workshops, ongoing teacher training, nutrition seminars, meal programmes in schools as well as tennis classes.

Earnings from the multiple-stage Jakes Triathlon are used to promote education, sports, cultural heritage and emergency health care in Treasure Beach. Not only does the event showcase the island as a sport destination, but it highlights the vibrant and very successful community tourism model that exists in Jamaica’s south coast.

The recent inaugural Arthur Wylie Foundation Celebrity Golf & Events Weekend is another organisation that has taken interest in the social, economic and leadership potential of Jamaicans. Its weekend of events brought representatives of several international companies who shared their success stories. They provided insight on leadership and entrepreneurial vision for existing and upcoming businesses in Jamaica. The Bob Marley Foundation is the first organisation to benefit from the Arthur Wylie Foundation.

Together, these and other philanthropic efforts have been pull factors that account for many visitors who visit Jamaica.



Arthur Wylie (left) of the Arthur Wylie Foundation and Arthur Wylie Enterprises has the rapt attention of Jason Hall (right), deputy director, cruise attractions and event, Jamaica Tourist Board and Michael Rollins, director of Rose Hall Developments, at the welcome reception of the Arthur Wylie Foundation Celebrity Golf and Events Weekend in January.

Foundation are just some of the entities that invest in the human and social capacities of Jamaican youth.

The JTB supports the tangible and intangible contributions of these and similar organisations, as scores of

Ja Sport: Promoting sports tourism in Ja

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB), through Jamaica Sport, has set its focus on promoting Jamaica as an ideal destination for hosting world-class sporting events.

In 2013, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill assembled a group of professionals with expertise in tourism, marketing, sports administration, event management and media to spearhead Jamaica’s efforts in sports tourism under the banner Jamaica Sport. Functioning under the auspices of the JTB, the mandate of Jamaica Sport is to increase the number of international sporting events that are staged on the island, thereby increasing the participation of international athletes and sports enthusiasts visiting the island. The added benefit is that these sporting fixtures garner increased inter-

national exposure for Destination Jamaica.

Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook remarked, “Sport is one of the flagship elements in the marketing mix for Destination Jamaica. As a dominant sporting destination, we continue to celebrate the superb talents of our people in diverse events. As such, sport is a formidable attractor for visitors to the island.”

EVENTS HOSTING

He concluded, “Jamaica Sport has been using Jamaica’s success in sport to promote the destination, thus keeping us top of mind for the hosting of top-notch sporting events”.

Jamaica Sport has been reaping success. In just over two years, it has assisted more than 13 sporting events and as many as 10 sporting

federations have received a boost to their budgets. As a result, there were approximately 4,000 additional visitors to the island because of the input of Jamaica Sport.

Some of the sporting events that have benefited from Jamaica Sport over the past two years include Reggae Marathon, CONCACAF Under-20 World Cup qualifiers, UANA Youth Water Polo Championships, Olympic Qualifiers for beach volleyball, Caribbean Gymnastics Championship, Caribbean Amateur Golf Championship, Caribbean Premier League T20 Cricket and international Test cricket tour. These events generated the most room nights and brought extensive media coverage for the island.



JTB PROMOTES HOLIDAY PACKAGES IN IRELAND: The Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) promoted holidays to Jamaica at the Holiday World Shows in Belfast and Dublin during January. The JTB collaborated with Couples Resorts, Jewel Resorts (Dublin) and AM Resorts, operators of Secrets Resorts, Sunscape Resorts and Zoetry Resorts. In Dublin, the JTB was joined by TUI’s Falcon Holidays, which offered visitors the chance to book packages on Thomson Boeing 787 Dreamliner from Dublin into Montego Bay this summer. Above, Torrance Lewis (right), JTB’s district sales manager, United Kingdom, pose with a couple (second and third left) who booked with Falcon Holidays. They won a complimentary Club MoBay VIP experience, courtesy of VIP Attractions. At left is the Falcon Holidays representative.



From left: Jamaica College upper sixth-former Ashay Blake is thrilled to be photographed with Bahamian booth representative Latesha Gibson.



UWI fourth-year medical student Georgette Skerritt of Montserrat gets ready to serve coconut plate tart.

UWI Mona hosts homecoming week

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

THERE WAS much festivity on the Mona campus of The University of the West Indies (UWI) last week as the region's premier tertiary institution hosted homecoming celebrations, which is part of the thrust to integrate students and staff who are from different Caribbean islands.

The theme for the week was 'Reigniting the Pelican Flame'.

Also, the activities have been held for the past several years "because we want a chance for our students and graduates, staff, members of the community, supporters ... to come together and reaffirm the extent of the contribution that the university has made to the region, the work that is being done by the institution, and just to celebrate being a part of the university", Dr Carol Edwards, UWI's director of marketing, recruitment, and communications, told *Hospitality Jamaica*.

The process started last Thursday with a homecoming parade of students from contributing territories. According to Edwards, this



Amina Blackwood Meeks in a storytelling mood at the UWI, Mona, Homecoming 2016 activities on Friday, February 5.

year's parade was the biggest ever. "They all came out because they wanted to be a part of the experience," she said of the students who participated.

On Friday when *Hospitality Jamaica* visited, it was the 'Caribbean Day Festival of Food

and Culture', showcasing the food and culture. Information booths exposing the culture and social history of the contributing territories, storytelling, and a variety of performances were on display. The highlight of the day seemed to be the sampling of dishes from all over



From left: Miss UWI Mona 2015, Aneika Louis, and Miss Jamaica World 2015, Dr Sanneta Myrie, a graduate of UWI, Mona.

the Caribbean, as well as a best-dish competition.

It was a festival where many queens were in attendance. *Hospitality Jamaica* spoke with two of them, Miss UWI Mona 2015, Aneika Louis from Tobago, and

UWI graduate Dr Sanetta Myrie, Miss Jamaica World 2015.

Louis said Homecoming Week and Caribbean Day, in particular, was important to her because "coming from a small island like Tobago, it gives the rest of the university a chance to know who else is on campus and who they are sharing space with and who the family of UWI is made up of". Looking around the grounds, she observed that "UWI is out here and UWI is celebrating and appreciating Caribbean culture that is ours".

In speaking about her passion for the Jamaican culture, Myrie said that she was happy and proud to represent her country. And on the matter of her being a graduate of UWI and to have gone back to the homecoming celebrations as Miss Jamaica, she said, "It's a grand homecoming. I'm getting the love from my fellow pelicans, and I am so grateful when UWI students come together and give their support."

Later in the evening, there was a public lecture by Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie, who was named by the homecoming selection committee as this year's honouree. Professor Leo-Rhynie is the first female to become both deputy principal and principal of The University of the West Indies, Mona campus.

Other activities for the week included a rivalry football match between the UWI and the University of Technology.



The young Patrick Byles.

PATRICK BYLES is relentless in his pursuit of raising the understanding, profile, and brand of Jamaican art and craft. He is a man living with a powerful, driving vision for a nation made strong because of the natural talent and creativity of its people.

He dreams in vivid, bright colours using history, culture, the environment, and natural resources as inspiration. His works capture scenes depicting unique aspects of Caribbean life and are reproduced on wood, ceramic, canvas, fabric, and paper and are sold as posters, trays, coasters, and mugs. His distinctive style assisted in creating a brand for Jamaica that can be identified anywhere on the world stage.

Patrick Byles, however, is sure that at almost 90 years young, he still has much to teach about the business of art and craft.

He is greatly concerned that Jamaica is missing tremendous opportunities on the global stage by not investing more in training artisans how to “manage” their talent and teaching them how to identify market trends and to produce not only on inspiration, but also based on needs.

“Art should communicate meaning and should be a part of our everyday living. Art is to be used to enhance our daily lives, create harmony and peace, and a particular style of Jamaican-ness that people in turn will seek out.” Art, he states, “Should be transferred on to everything from calendars to cushions. It should be on the empty zinc fences, on the busses, ingrained in furniture. Our citizens need to have a nurtured

PATRICK BYLES



Patrick Byles at work.

‘So much things to say right now’



Patrick and Claudia Byles.

appreciation for art in order for the artist to realise financial rewards for their efforts. We ourselves must respect the value that art brings to our own quality of life and humanity before creating art as objects of desire for others to purchase.”

Today, Patrick Byles still has much to offer young artists on the road to being professional. His journey has been long and eventful. He successfully transferred from artist to artisan to graphic artist to entrepreneur to advertising executive and business-development consultant. He has many awards and accolades, and, being an avid and fastidious collector and researcher, he has amassed a formidable collection that any library would be envious of possessing and many from overseas are trying to acquire.

The cultural industries travelling

on the many transmission media waves is how nations have given information about their identity. What are we saying about ours when we represent ourselves and our stories through our talents?

Jamaica is rich in knowledge and experience, rich in talent. We are also rich in confidence. The difficulty, therefore, seems to be finding a strategic direction and unified approach at any one time to create the necessary impact for such a broad base of creative energies.

It is time for our artists and artisans to reap our own rewards by telling our own stories – put on our own labels, our names to utilising our art and craft as well as our music and dance and positively strengthen our own identities through our own experiences and interpretations.

Villa Juanita

offers real Jamaican experience

A view of Villa Juanita.



Gareth Davis Sr
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

PERCHED ON a hill overlooking the Caribbean Sea, the picturesque 19-bedroom Villa Juanita has as one of its assets the highly vegetated Blue and John Crow mountains ridge as a backdrop.

This villa is fast becoming renowned for offering visitors a true Jamaican experience.

Located 28 miles east of the resort town of Port Antonio, in Hectors River, Villa Juanita is famous for its service offerings, including the traditional Jamaican breakfast. The villa offers Maroon culture and folklore on display, spa treatment and nature tours.

The distinction between Villa Juanita and other tourist attractions in Portland is its highly touted experience, complemented by the parish's rich history, heritage, food, and culture.

"We serve complimentary breakfast to all our guests, who are seeking solace, relaxation, and delicious food," said Raymond Lewis, owner of Villa Juanita.

"Our traditional breakfast comprises ackee and salt fish, run-



One of the bedrooms at Villa Juanita.



One of the specially designed bathrooms at Villa Juanita in Portland.



Chef 'Oliver' prepares conch fritters, a special at Villa Juanita.

down, corn pork and ackee, fried plantain, eggs, bacon, ham, roast breadfruit, porridge, salt mackerel, red herring, and other side dishes. This is definitely a villa with a difference. We also offer tours to the various attractions sites, including Reach Falls, Boston Beach, Rio Grande rafting, Moore Town (a Maroon village), and Bath Fountain for its mineral bath experience," he added.

According to Lewis, a special treat for guests is the skilfully prepared authentic meals, some of which are renowned traditionally, including jerk pork, wild hog, wild deer (venison), shark steak, bussu, lobster, crayfish, shrimp, conch, fish and octopus,

which are prepared by the in-house chef, upon request.

Dubbed the Portland experience, Lewis pointed out that preliminary talks with the Jamaica Tourist Board have been great thus far, and expectations are that Villa Juanita will be certified as a tourist destination soon, allowing them pride of place in advertising on the tourism body's website.

He added: "It is now an open secret. Come to Villa Juanita for the real Jamaican/Portland experience."

With breakfast included in the rate, the rooms are affordable, Lewis said.

Villa Juanita also provides live entertainment in kumina, reggae music and folk songs.

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H.

Laughter in Miss Inez's DEAD YARD

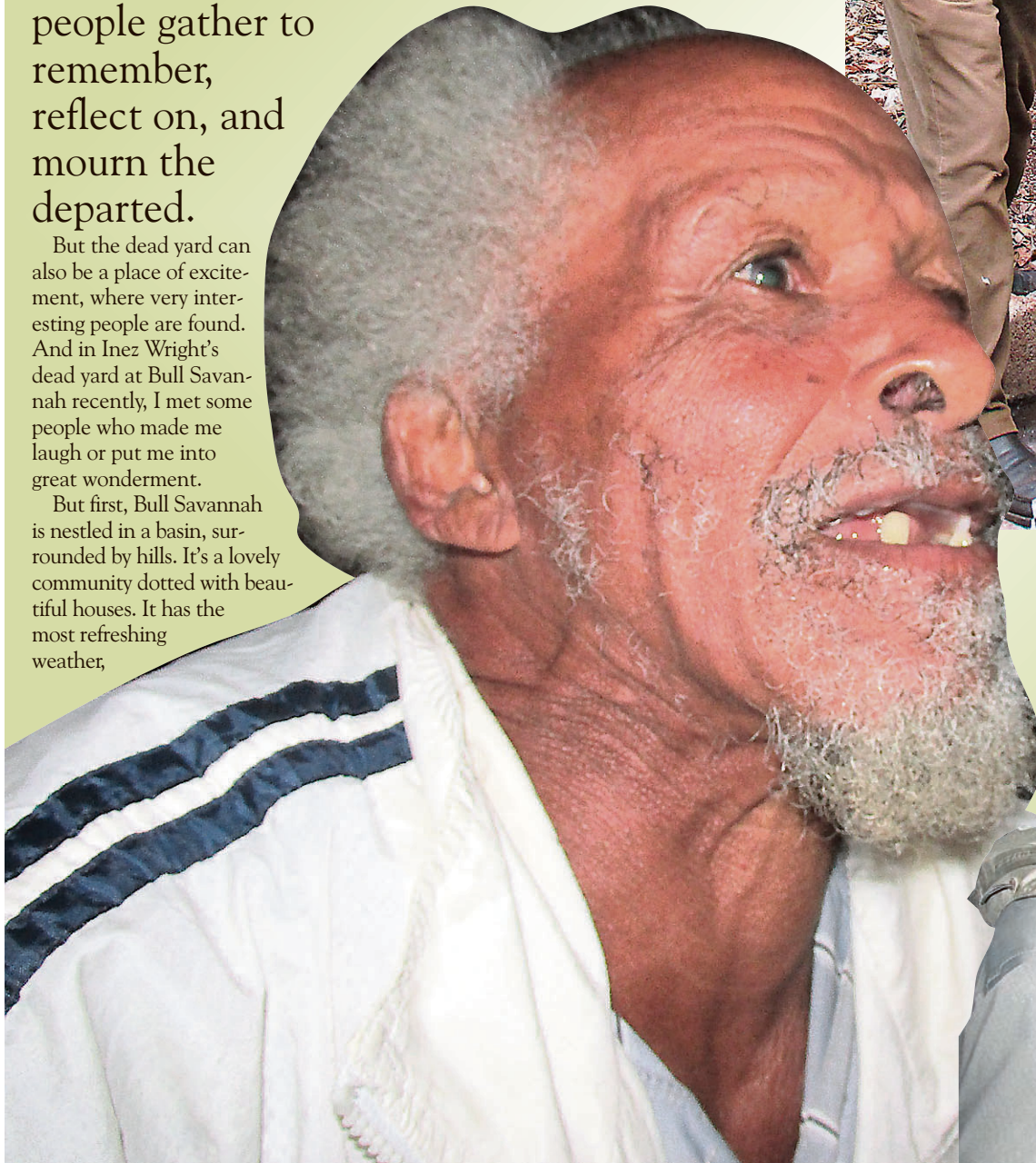
A 'DEAD yard', the former home of the deceased, is supposed to be a place where people gather to remember, reflect on, and mourn the departed.

But the dead yard can also be a place of excitement, where very interesting people are found. And in Inez Wright's dead yard at Bull Savannah recently, I met some people who made me laugh or put me into great wonderment.

But first, Bull Savannah is nestled in a basin, surrounded by hills. It's a lovely community dotted with beautiful houses. It has the most refreshing weather,



'Ogo' stirring the biggest pot of soup ever.



From left:
The
veteran
drinker and
drinker-in-
training.

which some people find to be too cold. I would live there.

I arrived early, when the inside of the Miss Inez's grave was still being painted. Soon, I met some of her relatives, and we became familiar fast. She was the grandmother of a colleague of mine.

Slowly, people arrived to pay their respects or to help with the cooking. It was the day before the funeral, and preparations were gathering momentum. I found myself a spot, after pulling water from a well, where I could see the women who were cooking.

The soup pot was the biggest pot I had ever seen, and it required a big makeshift spoon to stir it. And as the women worked, they chatted and reminisced about the loves of their lives – or the lack thereof. When the wood under the pot started to smoke, one of them gave a suggestive reason as to why it was.

Another remarked that women shouldn't get pregnant this year as it was a leap year and that only mules got pregnant in a leap year. Her sarcasm was on point as she knew very well that mules cannot get pregnant at all.

Yet, it was the dramatic Novelette Powell who fascinated me. She used every part of her body to tell her stories. She should be a professional stand-up comedienne. You just look at her face and you have to laugh.

The stories of Powell's food allergies are not common. She was once knocked out from eating too many naseberries, jackfruit hurts her head, and bananas make her sick. But, she said, she was not allergic to men as she twisted her body and face.

Powell and the other got into the stories of women who are not inclined to be domesticated such as the 'figaree', who was sent home by her man because she would buy cooked food on the road and take it home and place it into pots pretending that she was the cook.

Then there was the one who cooked the chicken's feet with the toes on; the other who put the rice and the peas to cook at the same time. Folklore or fact? Powell made them sound like the latter. And later in the evening, the food cooked with so much joy was enjoyed by all.

Yet, the drinks were what keep some 'mourners' around long after many had left for their own yard. The late-night drinkers flocked the 'bar'. The drunk ones carried on with their antics, refusing to leave. A young drunkard-in-training nearly came to blows with a veteran after he accused the vet of drinking his cup of liquor.



Workmen putting the final touches to Inez Wright's grave.



What is a dead yard without fried fish!

Our little session was interrupted by a slim-build man coming up the red-dirt path. He seemed to be on haste and staggering. He was coming from another dead yard with a cup in his hand. He stopped by

Inez's yard for rum, the rum that he didn't get the night before. Not sure what became of him, for I had left the scene to get things done, perhaps to look for the bull in the savannah.



Inez Wright's descendants going through old albums.



Beach volleyball boosts sports tourism

The Jamaica team in action.

Carl Gilchrist

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

FOR THE second straight year, the Jamaica Volleyball Association (JAVA) hosted the Women's Beach Volleyball Olympic Qualifying tournament at the Ocho Rios Bay Beach.

The event, held from January 29 to 31, brought 12 Caribbean teams together to play for the right to advance as one of eight teams to the third round of the tournament later this year in El Salvador.

Each team consisted of four players, along with officials.

Having won the first round, Jamaica, this time, finished third behind winners Trinidad and Tobago,

who defeated Barbados in the finals but advanced to the next round.

Getting closer to the Rio Olympics is good news for Jamaica, but even better is the fact that the tournament represents a shot in the arm for sports tourism in Jamaica.

Deputy Director of Tourism Jason Hall, who was on hand to witness play on the final day, told **Hospitality Jamaica** that as far as sports tourism was concerned, it was a good partnership between JAVA and the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), one of the sponsors of the tournament.

"This is the second time we (JTB) are sponsoring this event. We have

actually been involved with the indoor version of the game, but we recognise that JAVA has the capacity to coordinate and execute events of this nature, so as far as sports tourism is concerned, this is a very good partnership. We can depend on the organisers to deliver regional-class events and, indeed, world-class events," Hall stated.

COORDINATION

Hall said that it was important to note that sports tourism was not about any single entity taking the lead, but a coordination of multiple agencies.

"For example, here we have the UDC, who have done an amazing job of preparing this ground to



Peter Lindo (second right), head of marketing, First Global Bank, main sponsors, hands the winning trophy to Ayana Dyette of the winning Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) women's beach volleyball team, while Mushtaque Mohammed, vice-president of FIVB, and other T&T team members, Malika Davidson, Apphia Glasgow, and Lateisha Joseph look on.

make it competition ready; the hoteliers for coming into the equation; corporate sponsors First Global being here on board as title sponsors, and that's very important; and none of these events can be done in isolation. So as far as sports tourism is concerned, this is a tremendous start, a great success."

Sponsors of the event included First Global Bank, which sponsored both the tournament and the Jamaica team, Jamaica Sport, the Sport Development Foundation, Irie FM, the St Ann Development Company, Hi-Lyte, Lifespan, St John Ambulance, the St Ann Parish Council, Pure Nation Ice, and EMKAY Sports and Trophies.

Hall said that what Jamaica Sport is now focusing on is having beach competition sports as an actual

strategic objective, pointing out that a beach rugby tournament would be staged in Ocho Rios later this year, while other sports such as beach tennis and beach football were also being explored.

"Our objective in the end is to really position Jamaica as the leading sports tourism destination," Hall said.

President of JAVA Rudolph Speid and his team were praised by Mushtaque Mohammed, vice-president of the International Volleyball Federation for presenting a top-class tournament.

Said Mohammed: "It was exciting! The level of the tournament here was really of a high standard. It was awesome. Ocho Rios, the people, the environment – it was electrifying! We had a really good tournament."

Sandals Foundation brings climate change talks to schools

WITH CLIMATE change trending in 2016, the Sandals Foundation has taken matters into its hands, engaging over 120 students from Montego Bay-based schools in discussions regarding coastal ecosystems and climate change.

Through its Save Our Seas programme, which was launched late last year as part of a partnership with the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation and CARIBSAVE (INTASAVE Caribbean), the hotel group is highlighting the importance of protecting the environment.

The Save Our Seas year-long programme is being carried out in 40 schools across the region. An emphasis is on developing marine

awareness and environmental stewardship among children. The project started two weeks ago.

In its latest session, environmental, health and safety managers from Sandals Resorts in the Montego Bay region shared information with the students on the causes and widespread impact of climate change and the importance of protecting marine ecosystems in order to combat this phenomenon.

The students were also brought into discussions highlighting things that can be done to lessen the effects of climate change while being encouraged to help spread the word among their peers.



Two students of the John Rollins/Success Primary School show off the bull shark and blue marlin, which they coloured during a fun activity at the end of their Save Our Seas session on climate change. As part of the session, each child received a colouring book outlining the various marine animals that depend on the protection of our oceans. Sharing in the occasion are two members of the Sandals team, Danaree Dixon (left) and Vernica Salmon.