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### The ripple effect of Airbnb

#### **Claudia Gardner**

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

RESIDENT OF the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA), Nicola Madden-Greig, has called on members of the country's accommodations sector to be mindful of the rise of Airbnb Inc, as more Jamaicans continue to list their personal homes as vacation rental options with that company.

Madden-Greig made her comments during the opening of the Jamaica Product Exchange (JAPEX) trade show at the Montego Bay Convention Centre last Friday. Citing statistics released by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourist Association (CHTA), she said more than 40 million guests stayed in Airbnb accommodations in 2015, up from 20 million in 2014.

"When it comes to total number of rooms for rent, Airbnb dwarfs the world's biggest hotel chains ... Airbnb represents more than two million rooms for rent, compared to Mariott with 1,112,613 rooms, including Starwood, Hilton worldwide with 745,074 and Intercontinental with 726,876," she said.

"The world is changing, and as travellers look for new ways to experience destinations, we must also change. The advent of sharingeconomy models such as Airbnb, FlipKey and Home Away, indicates a shift in how consumers engage and buy," she added.

The website **airbnb.com** serves as an online community marketplace, connecting people seeking to rent unused spaces in their homes with people who are looking for accommodation. The company is headquartered in San Francisco, California.

Madden-Greig said international travel partners should also note that Airbnb also lists small vacation properties.

"While the JHTA membership includes many chain hotels and large independent properties, our members also include many of the small accommodation types that are popular on sites such as Airbnb. Savvy partners will see the wisdom in not just contracting with the large, but looking at how to add the inventory of the small and niche properties as, clearly, there is also a great worldwide demand for their product; and not having prod-



CONTRIBUTED

Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association President Nicola Madden-Greig (left) and former Minister of Tourism Wykeham McNeill were among the many who visited the Smith and Stewart's ice cream and frozen novelties booth at JAPEX 2016.

uct on your store leaves players such as Airbnb to dominate the market," she said.

#### **CARIBBEAN LISTINGS**

"For example, by February 2016, Airbnb recorded more than 25,000 listings on the Caribbean. Jamaica is reported to have close to 1,500 listings so far," she continued.

Madden-Greig also raised questions about the impact travellers who book accommodation via Airbnb could have on the region's airlift. She also suggested that this emerging accommodations sub-sector be integrated into the island's tourism offerings and that the Government examines taxation regimes on the income generated by the owners of properties listed with Airbnb.

"Obviously, as a member of the private sector, the JHTA has no issue with the growth of this alternative accommodation sector. However, the Government will have to look at levelling the playing field so that these new entrants contribute by paying the requisite taxes and fees," she said.

"The report also concluded that such accommodations are also beginning to affect destination airlift capacity. In some cases, the increased demand has reduced the number of available seats for hotel guests and has also driven up the cost of air tickets. This is a trend which we must watch in Jamaica to ensure increased demand for nontraditional accommodation translates into growth in stopover arrivals and is fully integrated into our offerings," she said.

Forbes magazine, in a 2013 article titled 'Airnbnb and the Unstoppable Rise of the Share Economy', stated that Airbnb has what it termed 'a broker's model' which, in exchange for providing the market and services such as customer support, payment handling and \$1 million in insurance for hosts, takes a three and a six per cent commission from the renter and traveller, respectively, depending on the property price.

It said a study commissioned by Airbnb of its economic impact on San Francisco in 2012, found a 'spillover effect' as, since Airbnb rentals tend to be cheaper than a hotel, people stay longer and spent \$1,100 in the city, compared with \$840 for hotel guests. It reported that 14 per cent of their customers said they would not have visited the city at all without Airbnb. The article also noted that there were 'all sorts of tax questions, such as whether an Airbnb stay should be hit with a local hotel tax'.

On March 28, another article by **Forbes**, this time titled 'Airbnb to Big City Mayors: Take our Tax Dollars, Please'! noted that the company's head of global policy has come up with a proposal to help cities collect tax revenue from the peerto-peer transactions that occur on its platform.

"Recognising that their own pace of innovation has moved faster than the pace of regulation, Airbnb has begun lobbying to change those laws so that the revenue generated through their peer-peer room-sharing model is taxed appropriately. Essentially, Airbnb has innovated itself into a corner. To get out of it, they're looking to municipal authorities to move just as quickly ..." the article stated.

It also noted that in 2014, the New York attorney general had brought a lawsuit against Airbnb for refusing to provide the names of its New York customers, and that authorities wanted those names because they suspected that Airbnb hosts, who rented their homes using the service, may not have paid taxes on the income and, in some cases, violated New York's housing laws.

hospitalityjamaica@gleanerjm.com

## CHTA recommends solutions to regularise vacation home rental industry

S THE online vacation home rental industry blossoms, the region's leading umbrella tourism private-sector organisation is counselling its members on how to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the rapid rise.

The call comes with the rise of Airbnb, Uber, HomeAway, and VRBO, which have become a cause for concern for the Caribbean Hotel and Tourist Association (CHTA) and its 32 National Hotel and Tourism Associations (NHTAs).

In a media release, the CHTA said it has unveiled a resource guide to support the destination's local efforts to create a level playing field through the taxation and regulation of the sector and its engagement in local public- and private-sector tourism-development efforts.

The Caribbean has seen explosive growth in the short-term vacation home rental business. Taking advantage of new technology platforms, many residential owners throughout the world are sharing in tourism revenues by providing accommodations through marketplaces or host platforms such as Airbnb, VRBO, and HomeAway, which have emerged as the industry's top leaders.

Airbnb, in particular, recorded more than 25,000 listings in the Caribbean as of February 2016 and is projecting significant growth this year. Destinations such as the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guadeloupe, Jamaica, Cancún, Martinique, and Barbados feature the most listings on Airbnb, with continued growth projected throughout the entire region.

#### **EXPECTED INCREASE**

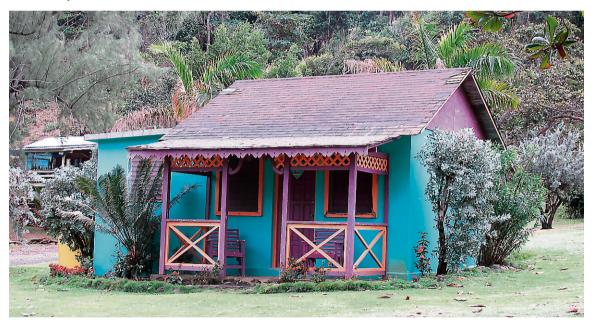
St Lucia expects a 17 per cent year-over-year increase in stays in 2016. Aruba saw the number of visitors using non-traditional accommodations (private homes, apartments, villas, condominiums) in 2015 jump from 24 per cent of visitors to 33 per cent.

"As many governments throughout the world have experienced, the sharing economy made possible by these hosting platforms is happening whether or not we choose to embrace it, and it presents new opportunities for the industry as well," said CHTA President Karolin Troubetzkoy.

"This leaves us with two options:



Strawberry Hill, Irish Town,



One of the original campsite cottages at Strawberry Fields Together.

we can allow it to develop as an untaxed and under-regulated market and lose out on tremendous opportunities, or we can bring all the players to the table to work out solutions to the benefit of all concerned parties," added Troubetzkoy.

"CHTA has endeavoured to take a positive, constructive, and balanced approach to the guide, welcoming this rapidly developing accommodations sector, but also calling for a fair-play arrangement regarding taxation and some measure of standards beyond those applicable to residences. CHTA is not calling for there to be the same detailed and sometimes onerous regulatory requirements for hotels, but for a level of regulation beyond those which simply apply to residences. These are commercial enterprises regardless as to how one looks at it, and the welfare of the guest and health, safety, and reputation of the host property, the hosting platform, and the destination must be considered," said Troubetzkoy.

The guide provides the region's public- and private-sector tourism stakeholders with a summary of the key issues surrounding the sharing economy, its impact on the tourism sector globally as well as regionally, and the opportunities presented by this emerging accommodations sector.

It offers solutions and new approaches for the Caribbean's NHTAs and governments to consider when regulating and regularising this emerging industry. And it sets the stage for engaging the emerging accommodations sector in organised public- and privatesector efforts to protect and grow the tourism industry.

The proliferation of Airbnb and other such hosting platforms is also

beginning to affect airlift capacity to some destinations. In some cases, increased airline load factors have reduced the number of seats available for traditional hotel guests or have driven up the cost of air tickets. "Therefore, it is important that we account for this growing accommodations sector in our research, product development, airlift development, and marketing efforts in order to plan accordingly," noted Troubetzkoy.

#### **TAXATION ISSUES**

Increasingly, governments throughout the world are working in partnership with local tourism industry stakeholders and hosting platform companies such as Airbnb, taking a proactive approach to addressing challenges and concerns. With the support of companies like Airbnb, destinations are adopting new measures to address the taxation and regulation of home-vacation stays.

Underscoring the untapped potential for Caribbean jurisdictions experiencing budgetary challenges, a 2016 Airbnb study estimates that the 50 largest cities in the US would have collected an additional US\$200 million in occupancy taxes in 2015 if taxation measures and supporting collection and enforcement protocols were in place.

At the same time, concerns over the safety and well-being of both travellers and their non-traditional hosts are also prevalent. Traditional hotel and taxi businesses operate with strict property and insurance liability requirements and must meet stringent safety, cleanliness, and operational standards, which are kept at a voluntary minimum for most home-rental operators.

"By embracing the sharing economy, we are able to hold nontraditional accommodation and service providers to a higher degree of responsibility than that which is typically expected for strictly residential use. This will help protect the reputation of a destination and the Caribbean brand as a whole," said Troubetzkoy.

The CHTA is supporting local efforts to bring together public- and private-sector stakeholders to review its existing laws and regulations pertaining to taxes, health and safety requirements, and other standards, incorporating the necessary changes for the sharing economy.

### JHTA president issues charge to Gov't

#### Claudia Gardner

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

RESIDENT OF the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) Nicola Madden-Greig said her organisation would be asking the Government of Jamaica to make more funds available for marketing the country as a tourism destination and strengthening its infrastructure.

Her comments came during the recently concluded Jamaica Product Exchange (JAPEX) trade show at the Montego Bay Convention Centre last weekend. "Not only will the JHTA be lobbying the Government to ensure that more than adequate funds are available for marketing, but also to ensure that we truly fulfil the mandate of using the Tourism Enhancement Fund to drive and build out a world-class tourism industry islandwide," she said.

"This can only be done if the long overdue massive investment in many potential world-class tourism assets is undertaken to produce marquee attractions and drawing cards to increase international visitor arrivals," she added.



Operator of Johns Hall Adventure Tours Donald Brooks (right) raps with Western Hospitality Institute students Remeka McIntosh (background), Daneil McLean (centre), and Kimona Cameron during the JAPEX trade show at the Montego Bay Convention Centre on Saturday, April 30.



Civil engineer at Smith Warner International Miles Harris (left) converses with Monesh Davis of Apply 3D Tech during the JAPEX trade show at the Montego Bay Convention Centre on Saturday, April 30.



Director of Sales at the Urban Development Corporation Rean Goulbourne (right) and General Manager of Delta Supply Company Jonathan Swire at the UDC booth, at JAPEX 2016 on Saturday.



Let's do it in the Caribbean's Theo Chambers and Global Bridal Group's Jacqueline Johnson greet each other at the Marry Caribbean's booth at the JAPEX trade show at the Montego Bay Convention Centre on Saturday, April 30.



Managing director of Millenium Paving Stones, Jason Silvera (right), engages in discussions with group procurement manager of X Fund Property Jamaica, Garnett Williams, and Jewels' purchasing manager, Beverley Dendie.



Founder of APPLY 3D Inc Ghaffar Ellis shows off some of the latest technology to Kellye Barnaby-Barnett of Barnaby Engineering and Testing services on Saturday at JAPEX 2016.



Fly Jamaica's station manager for Montego Bay, Patricia Quartess (left), informs Cindy Chambers about the airline's international routes at JAPEX 2016 on Saturday.



Jamaica Tourist Board's regional director for Continental Europe, Gregory Shervington (right), listens as sales director of CESCO Terrence Chambers (centre) explains the use of safety gear supplied by his company on Saturday at JAPEX 2016. At left is sales representative Raymond McCalla.

#### THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

### The tyranny of the breakfast buffet

#### David Jessop Hospitality Jamaica Writer

N NORTH America and Europe, there is a growing focus on health, and in particular, on significantly reducing consumers' sugar intake and a more thoughtful approach to diet and exercise. This is because of the spiralling healthcare costs associated with obesity and the growing global prevalence of diabetes, a condition that unfortunately is particularly common in the Caribbean.

It is, therefore, surprising that in so many hotels in the region, in comparison to those in the countries from which most of the region's visitors arrive, it is difficult to find genuinely healthy, low-fat, low-sugar alternatives on hotel menus, particularly, when it comes to the now ubiquitous breakfast, lunch and dinner buffet.

I recently had the opportunity to explore this issue at first hand while travelling in the US and the Caribbean and trying to lose weight by eating more healthily.

What I found was that in Caribbean properties appealing to a mid-market demographic, their interest in maximising revenue and reducing costs appears to be leading to a situation where the range of healthy eating choices is declining.

Particularly striking in this regard were a Jamaican north coast hotel, where I was speaking at a conference, and a Barbados beach hotel of the same brand that doubles as a business hotel. In both cases, it proved surprisingly difficult, short of placing a special off-menu order, to find what I wanted. For example, it was far from clear why it was impossible to obtain natural yoghurt on the stays in question, or even a good selection of fruits.

#### **CONSIDERING HEALTH**

In contrast, the United States (US) hotels I stayed in, including one from the same chain, all took their client's health and well-being seriously. They offered on their menus and buffets a wide choice of options, and seemed aware that in particular millennials and many senior travellers – the higherspending demographics that most Caribbean destinations are now trying to attract – have become very particular about what they eat.

This is not to be critical of the





quality of what was available in the

Caribbean, which met the require-

especially those with children, but

to observe that tastes are changing

and diet and health consciousness is

ments of many vacationers and

**JESSOP** 

also coming to define the type of target traveller the region is seeking, who the marketers say want from a Caribbean vacation the authentic, the genuine experience, the natural, and a sense of well-being.

The issue seems to be particularly problematic when it comes to buffets, which as the industry knows, but few guests recognise, offer a near scientific way to control costs, while seemingly offering something extravagant.

Buffets are particularly popular with chain hotels as they offer lower labour costs because fewer kitchen and waiting staff are required and tables turn over more rapidly. More specifically, they encourage guests to select low-cost foodstuffs over more expensive proteins by the way dishes are placed, through the relative sizes of the serving cutlery, and, for example, by providing chefs with the option to use cold cuts from earlier roasts.

This may be good for the hotelier's bottom line, but as consumers become more discerning, is likely to require further thought.

In an indication of how important healthy eating trends are becoming in the Caribbean's key markets, one only has to look at an announcements made recently by Nestlé, the world's biggest food group, and Mars, another global food giant.

#### **CAUTIONING CONSUMERS**

Nestlé, in what may be a first in retailing, is now encouraging consumers of one of its pizzas to eat one slice only, and to ensure their plates are otherwise filled with salad. In a similar move, Mars is suggesting that those eating its high-calorie pesto and lasagne sauces do so only occasionally. Seeing their market share fall for highstarch and processed products, these and other companies are also reformulating their products, for example, removing artificial flavours, preservatives, and highfructose corn syrup.

In doing so, the companies say they are responding to advice, for example, from the World Health Organization, which has said people should eat less sugar, and the US Food and Drug Administration, which is about to issue guidelines on salt intake. At another more potent level, they are taking notice of the effect that the thinking of nutritionists, the medical profession and activists is having on consumers.

At the top end of the Caribbean visitor market, hoteliers long ago responded to the trend towards foodstuffs that are simpler, natural, have a clear origin, may be organic and are fresh; and, as a part of their marketing approach, stress these aspects of their cuisine.

Other hoteliers should expect this trend to take hold increasingly in the mid-market segment of Caribbean visitors. It provides an opportunity, ideally with Caribbean agriculture, to think long and hard about how to address the growing desire for healthy eating. BOMBA

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### **MoBay City Run – a marquee event after only three years**

HE TOURISM capital's hotels, business-processing operators, banks, auditing firms, and industry suppliers turned out in their numbers on Sunday morning for the third staging of the MoBay City Run.

Named in honour of the Second City, MoBay City Run was held on May 1, the date the town received city status 35 years ago.

More than 3,000 persons converged on the Old Hospital Park, Gloucester Avenue, where the 10K/5K run and walk had its hospitality area.

Held under the theme 'Running for Education, Hope for the Future', the MoBay City Run has become a marquee event after only three years on the running calendar.

Again this year, RIU walked away with bragging rights and prizes from Courts (Unicomer), JetBlue Airways, Run raises funds for tertiary students and Jewel Dunn's River after placing struggling to remain in university. first in the Corporate Challenge.

This is the third year the Spanish

chain has copped first place. Scotiabank followed in second place and Sandals placed third.

Champion Gym's Ronique Williams retained his 10K title, clocking a time of 36.10, surpassing his male counterparts, while Rainforest Seafoods dominated the female class for both runs with Chriss-Ann Lewis and Julliet Dinnal securing the 10K and 5K victories in 45:11 and 21:47, respectively.

Horace Burey took home the 5K male class in 18:10 and completed the impressive field of runners.

Sponsored by Courts (Unicomer). Sandals, ATL Automotive, Jetblue, Bull Head Water, Solo Jamaica, Biggs, Cover Me Up Tents, Holiday Inn, Billy Craig Insurance Brokers, Rainforest Seafoods, and the Jamaica Tourist Board, MoBay City

janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com



Decked out in red, the JetBlue team came to deliver on their promises of travel certificates.



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY ANGUIN

The Sandals team had more than 200 participants, taking home the prize as third-largest corporate group.



Red Dragon Tae Kwando Centre showing off its medals.



The largest corporate team, RIU Resorts, dancing up a storm at the MoBay City Run.

Old Hospital Park in Montego Bay on Sunday.





Some members of the VIP Attractions group share lens time at the MoBay City Run.



The Advantage General team.



The Courts team had more than 180 persons registered.

The Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency team looking lovely in yellow.



Again, the Lloyd's team was out in its numbers supporting the MoBay City Run.



Riu's general manager, Frank Sondern (centre back), surrounded by his team of winners after being named largest corporate aroup.



Auditina firm KPMG has supported the MoBay City Run since its inception Sundav was no different.



The Iberostar team, extremely happy about the part it played in the MoBay City Run, showing off its medals.



CONTRIBUTED A mixed group from Sandals and Holiday Inn pose for the camera.

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### JTB exposes Destination Jamaica during JAPEX

AMAICA PRODUCT Exchange (JAPEX) is the island's stellar travel trade show. Hosted by the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) and the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), the trade show, which began 26 years ago, has grown to become a flagship event that generates lucrative business for Jamaican organisations.

From an initiative that originally started as a trade show primarily for businesses directly involved in tourism, JAPEX has grown to encompass linkages with the manufacturing, agricultural, and entertainment sectors.

Integral to the success of JAPEX is the exposure of the domestic product to international buyers. In this regard, the JTB has been fundamental. The JTB is responsible for inviting and facilitating the attendance of international media to the event. The media in attendance are from diverse markets such as North America, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Europe. The journalists have the opportunity to attend meetings that provide important information on critical segments in the industry. They also have direct access to leaders in Jamaica's tourist industry like the minister of tourism, the director of tourism, the president of the JHTA, and prominent business leaders who provide updates on developments in the island's tourism product. Equally important, the journalists are able to meet face to face with members of the attractions, accommodations, and linkages sectors on the floor of the trade show.

#### **MEDIA TOUR**

The JTB has added to the journalists' experience of Destination Jamaica during their JAPEX trip by planning a media tour that continues after IAPEX has ended. The schedule sees the journalists visiting various attractions, accommodations, eateries entertainment, and cultural events across the island. These interactions solidify their exposure to Jamaica's tourism offerings. Additionally, the JTB, along with the JHTA, is instrumental in the scores of international travel agents and tour operator companies that continue to participate in JAPEX each year.

"The Jamaica Tourist Board is



Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook (right) interacts with a representative from Sandy Haven Luxury Boutique Hotel at the JAPEX trade show last weekend. The representative from the hotel was among the more than 250 supplier delegates who engaged in face-to-face business meetings with some 105 buyer delegates at the trade show. JAPEX is hosted by the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association and the Jamaica Tourist Board.



Philip Rose, regional director, JTB Canada, engages partners on the trade floor.

always pleased to partner with the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association for the staging of JAPEX," said Paul Pennicook, director of tourism. "The benefits of such an event to our tourism partners are undeniable, especially for our small entities that are not able to attend international trade shows. We know that our success as a destination is due in part to our partnerships with overseas media, tour operators, and travel agents, and we are always happy to host them."

JAPEX was staged in April this year as this time of the year provides better business for tour operators and travel agents to include in their fall and winter sales packages. Exposure that will be generated from the media visit about the island will also create a buzz in the overseas market.

JAPEX will remain an excellent medium through which the JTB will continue to expose the best of Destination Jamaica to the world.

### **Fifteen receive Sandals Prestige Awards**

ANDALS ROYAL Caribbean paid tribute to its shining stars of 2015 at the resort's much anticipated Annual Prestige Awards held on Friday, April 22, on Sandals Private Island. During the course of the evening, 15 awards were presented, among them the Diamond and Platinum Talent of the Year Awards, the Manager of the Year or MVP Award for 2015, and the 'A' Team of the Year Award.

Each award recipient received a framed certificate and engraved acrylic award, in addition to trips for two to sister properties, airline tickets, top-of-the-line gadgets, and cash prizes.



#### CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Sandals Royal Caribbean Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) manager Dexter Cummings (left) and EHS Guardians Club President Saminto Clarke were happy to present the Sandals Earth Guardian Talent of the Year Award to Bartender Yone Gayle (right).



Cost Control Clerk Wilden Cooke receives the 2015 Standing Ovation Award – formerly the Financial Controller's Award – from outgoing finance manager Celina Scott during Sandals Royal Caribbean's Annual Prestige Awards.





Club Sandals agent Shanique Cunningham has every reason in the world to be elated as she is presented with the coveted Diamond Talent of the Year Award by Sandals Royal Caribbean General Manager Gerald Christ (right) and the resort's 2014 Talent of the Year, André Hamilton.





PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Some of Abraham 'Brammy' Grant's clay figurines.



A patron admiring a piece of Anthony Campbell's artistic vintage chic jewellery and accessories.



The art of creating gardens in bottles.

#### **AROUND JA WITH PAUL H.**



It's about using the clay found in Trench Town to create wonderful works of art.

### **Of plants and art**

AM not feeling too well of late. Fatigue. So I had to lessen my workload and visits. One of the places to go on my list was this year's Jamaica Horticultural Society annual flower show.

I missed the first day on Saturday but crawled out of bed on Sunday afternoon. The venue wasn't far from my home, and I wasn't going to miss the entire show.

I was not driven by the plants themselves. I love plants. No question about that. And I don't have to wait for a show to buy and embrace them. Why then did I go, in a daze, to an event called a flower show?

I was pulled from my resting place because of the artistic elements and artistry of the people who would be participating. You see, it's not all about flowers. It also showcases Jamaican art and artisans, so I expected to see some there.

And the extrication from my bed was really worth my while as I got to see some great pieces, including Vintage Chique Jewellery and Accessories. There is art in every piece of Anthony Campbell's items. This country has some very creative people, and it is good that such a show is giving them exposure. And though patrons had budgeted for plants mainly, they stopped by the arts booths even just to ask questions.

There were many clay products, even on the outside of the property, where some vendors had apparently camped out on Saturday night.

I like Claude Hoilet's ceramic pieces, and might just get some soon. Mr Albert Jonas, a show staple, was there with his exquisite calabash creations. His products are classic examples of how we can use the bounties of nature to create lovely work of functional art.

But the artistry was not limited to non-plant items. The art was also in some of the plants. To grow them to show standards is an art itself. The succulents, the orchids, etc, are grown and arranged artfully. The cacti in the competition literally made my mouth water.

The sight of the bonsai trees did spring water from my mouth, but they lightened my heavy eyes.

Bonsai is the art of keeping trees

at a certain size by deliberately cutting, bending, and twisting them. These miniatures, as I call them, are the objects of great admiration. That is an art that I would really like to learn, but I also need to learn to be patient.

The arrangements, floral, and otherwise, were also outstanding. I think I would do well in this category next year, not the floral section. I have the materials and the creativity, so I need to stop procrastinating.

I spent most of the early evening under the booth of Trench Town Ceramics and Art Centre, speaking with its chief executive officer, Garfield Williams, and master potter, Abraham 'Brammy' Grant.

The booth had some lovely pieces, created right there in west Kingston, but it was Brammy, an elderly gentleman with an artistic face, who caught my eyes. He was making something with clay, so I decided to stay and watch.

What he had made so far was a long drum between two legs. I watched and questioned as he made and attached the torso, the





Abraham 'Brammy' Grant fashioning a piece of clay to add to a figurine he was making at the 2016 Jamaica Horticultural Society flower show.



'High and Dry', a stunning arrangement at the 2016 Jamaica Horticultural Society flower show.

A Touch of Art among the plants.



A part of the bonsai section at the 2016 Jamaica Horticultural Society flower show.

neck, the hands beating the drum, the bald head, and the dreadlocks.

Then he used a small black comb to create streaks in the dreadlocks before putting it down to dry. It was a rare opportunity to see how people create their art, and the process is not usually how you had envisioned it would be.

Brammy described himself as fig-

urine maker. He was trained in pottery by Things Jamaica but has taught himself many techniques and has evolved into an excellent maker of clay figurines that are beautifully finished.

Williams and Brammy invited me to Trench Town, and as soon as my weary body is back in balance, I will take up the offer even to get one of their clay necklaces and a Rastaman beating a drum.

Moreover, I would love to see what Brammy does with the moulds he has made from my

African mask brass pendant. Now you see that a flower show is not all about pretty plants. It is also about art and making artistic links.

### The SJF recognises excellence at National Spanish Festival finals

AMAICA'S ASOCIACION Nacional de Profesores de Español (ANPE) recently staged its annual National Spanish Festival Finals at the Shortwood Teachers' College, where more than 400 students from 29 primary and secondary schools across the island showcased excellence.

Categories judged included dance, drama, song, speech, and poetry – with nine creatively executed items presented.

The Spanish-Jamaican Foundation (SJF) pledged support valued at \$75,000, which will go towards the purchase of awards for prize winners. SJF's general manager, Karen Donaldson, addressed a packed auditorium during the opening ceremony, praising both students and teachers for their dedicated efforts in bringing the Spanish language and culture to life in a multiplicity of formats.

She encouraged the participants to continue their foreign-language studies, highlighting some of the rewarding benefits of mastering such skills.

Established in the 1970s, ANPE members regularly participate in national educational activities, including regional workshops for



ANPE President Nordia Antwine (centre), accompanied by zone coordinator Shaneka Henry-McLean (left), accepts a symbolic cheque valued at JA\$75,000 as sponsorship of awards for National Spanish Festival finalists from SJF general manager Karen Donaldson.

teachers and students, the creation of educational materials and the preparation and revision of curricula. The association works closely with the Ministry of Education and collaborates with The Spanish-Jamaican Foundation, as well as other embassies representing Spanish-speaking countries in Jamaica. Each year, ANPE hosts the National Spanish Festival Competition which encourages students at both the primary and secondary levels to compete and share their skills.

#### **VERY GRATEFUL**

President of ANPE Nordia Antwine, who spearheaded the complex coordination and successful implementation of this competition along with Shaneka Henry-McLean, expressed her gratitude to the Foundation for the partnership.

Founded in 2006, the SJF is a collaborative effort of a number of Spanish companies with investments in Jamaica. Their main objective is to strengthen the friendship between Spain and Jamaica.

The SJF stages and supports educational, cultural, environmental, and health-based community development initiatives.

The learning of Spanish is one of the SJF's priorities. The groups that form the SJF include RIU, Iberostar Hotels and Resorts, Secrets Resorts and Spa, Grand Palladium, Gran Bahía Princípe, Excellence Group, Hospiten, and Global Exchange, while the ambassador of Spain to Jamaica serves as honorary president.

#### CTO to present on customer loyalty at conference

AS COMPANIES examine strategies to grow their revenues by attracting and keeping loyal customers, it is becoming clear that traditional methods of measuring customer satisfaction are not enough, according to corporate trainer and coach Andre Bello, Virgin Atlantic's commercial manager for the Caribbean.

A specialist in performance improvement through behavioural change, Bello will facilitate a masterclass in customer loyalty dubbed 'Your Loyalty Army – Harnessing The Power of Your Loving Customers' at the Caribbean Tourism Organisation's (CTO) eighth Tourism Human Resources Conference in Antigua & Barbuda from May 11-13.

"Traditional surveys feel burdensome for customers to complete, take too long for companies to analyse, and often become overloaded with data that is hard to act on. Additionally, the correlation between satisfaction and growth is weaker than originally thought. Your satisfied customers are still susceptible to leaving you for what looks like a better deal from your competition," he explained.

The masterclass, which takes place on Friday, May 13, from 8:30 a.m. to noon, will explore building loyalty by harnessing the power of customers; the secrets of building a growth strategy through an accelerated word-of-mouth programme; how to influence the digital chat; and how to use customer and employee feedback to continuously improve.

"It turns out that your customers' likelihood to recommend you is a telling indicator of their loyalty to you," says Bello, author of The Sword & The Spirit and Give More, Get More! Negotiate Your Way to a Richer Life.

The conference theme is 'Making Excellence a Habit: Service, Loyalty, and Profitability in Caribbean Tourism'. It is being organised by the CTO in collaboration with Antigua & Barbuda's Ministry of Tourism and the Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Authority and will be held at the Jolly Beach Resort and Spa.

For more information, including how to register, visit www.onecaribbean.org, or email Marvelle Sealy at the CTO atmsealy@caribtourism.com.





PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Some of the InterTribal tourists chilling out at Irie River just before lunch on Saturday, April 16.

Amon Chavez of the Purépecha tribe swings off, while Huumaay Banegas of the Kumeyaay tribe awaits his turn.

# **InterTribal group makes sweet 16 trip to the island**

#### **Paul H. Williams**

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

IXTEEN YEARS ago, Native American Marc A. Chavez, educator, founded InterTribal Youth, and to celebrate this milestone, he brought some 15 Native Americans, including some family members from various tribes in California, South Dakato and New Mexico to the island from April 11 to 17.

They were hosted at Jamnesia Surf, Skate and Music Camp at Bull Bay Beach, St Andrew. Jamnesia is renowned as a unique outpost of Rasta surfers and also a corner of vital reggae music.

On Tuesday, April 12, the group toured Bob Marley Museum, where Hospitality Jamaica witnessed Chavez getting goosebumps as tour guide Natasha Clarke told the group about Marley's musical achievements. They also visited Trench Town, where they walked the community. The making of the music tour at Tuff Gong International Recording Studio culminated the day's activities.

Still in the Corporate Area, they toured the Mona campus of The University of the West Indies on



From left: Rivermaids Cheyenne Bacad, Angelica Labreake and Julie Labreake.

Wednesday, and moved on to St Ann and St Mary on Thursday, where the group visited the Taino Heritage Camp at Eden Hill, and the Oracabessa Fish Sanctuary.

Camping out at Irie River, Bonham Spring, near Exchange, the group spent two nights for the Earth Family gathering, Saturday

being a day-and-night affair, a celebration of Garnett Silk's birthday.

In speaking with **Hospitality** Jamaica about why Jamaica was selected as the destination for the anniversary trip, Chavez said the island was a place where there was much to be learned, and educa-



Marc A. Chavez, founder of InterTribal Youth, and his mother dancing to reggae music at Irie River.

tion was a key component of his organisation. He said the country has more to offer than people would ever know. Bob Marley's international repute was also a big pull factor.

# Taste of the Caribbean 2016 to present eclectic menu-training opportunities

**F**OOD AND beverage professionals, managers and students from all facets of the culinary trade will have the opportunity to strengthen their skills and build industry knowledge through the educational programmes being presented June 7 and 8 at this year's Taste of the Caribbean (#CHTATaste2016). Staged by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), Taste of the Caribbean will take place at the Hyatt Regency Miami, June 6-10.

Each educational session will be conducted by leading industry culinary professionals ready to showcase the latest food and beverage trends and marketing strategies designed to boost profitability and improve culinary offerings.

"These industry trend-focused educational sessions provide hoteliers, restaurateurs, and food and beverage professionals the opportunity to hone their skills to help increase the success of their businesses," said Karolin Troubetzkoy, president of CHTA

CHTA has partnered with Johnson & Wales University as the education institution for Taste of the Caribbean 2016. As part of this partnership, Johnson & Wales will be facilitating three of the sessions to be presented at the event. "We are so pleased to have Johnson & Wales University on board for this year's event, and know they will offer great value to the educational component," noted Troubetzkoy.

"We truly value our partnership with the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, and are proud to be a part of the Taste of the Caribbean," said Larry Rice, president of Johnson & Wales University North Miami Campus. "Johnson & Wales University is home to one of the region's leading hospitality programmes, and it is our pleasure to welcome food and beverage professionals to participate in educational sessions that will enhance their knowledge of the industry."

Educational sessions for Taste of the Caribbean 2016 include:

#### TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2016

**Global Trends** This session will outline the



Former Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill (left) is seen with representatives of the Jamaica national culinary team who participated in the Taste of the Caribbean 2015 competition during a courtesy call at his New Kingston offices on July 17, 2015. Team members (from second left) are: chefs Rochelle Grindley, Warren Rowe, Tiffany Grant, Mark Cole and junior apprentice chef Cadane Wynn. The team medalled in all seven categories at the region's premier culinary showcase held in June in Miami, Florida.



Karolin Troubetzkoy, president of the CHTA.

major global food trends and 'game changers' that are shaping the industry as well as projections for the coming decade.

**The Anatomy of a Menu** Creating and designing an appealing menu is both a science and an art in the food and beverage arena. Participants will learn how a menu should be developed for cost efficiency, as well as optimum taste and nutrition.

#### The Art of Plating: Flavour is Just Half the Battle

'We eat with our eyes first!' During this session, industry professionals will share their knowledge and techniques to create and serve food that is both pleasing to the eye and the taste buds.

Session facilitated by Johnson & Wales

#### Healthy Menu Trends: Dishing up Good Nutrition

Over the past decade, consumers have become savvier about the connection between food and health. They are demanding dishes that are both healthy and delicious. Plant-based, vegan, vegetarian, paleo, low-carb, low-fat ... how can you meet the demanding needs of all diners? This session will explore current diet trends, how these trends can be incorporated into menu design, the health benefits, and products that can assist in achieving greater nutrition diversity on menus without starting over completely.

#### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2016

Session facilitated by Johnson & Wales

#### Road to Profit Improvement: Cost Control and Purchasing

As the food and beverage industry becomes globally competitive, leaders at all operational levels are constantly required to implement sustainable cost-reduction strategies to improve profit. This presentation will highlight how leaders can effectively manage the cost of operations and cost of capital.

#### Session facilitated by Johnson & Wales

#### Innovative Products and Technology for the Food Service Industry Today

The need for restaurant technology has skyrocketed over the last five years, and the demand is growing exponentially. The food service employee and consumer have the world at their fingertips and industry leaders are eagerly working to meet those internal and external customers' needs.

This presentation will showcase some of the exciting tools and technologies that can help businesses succeed through training, innovation and efficiency.

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