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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016



BREXIT FALLOUT

**ECONOMIST WARNS TOURIST
ARRIVALS COULD DROP DUE
TO BRITAIN'S DECISION ON EU**

Tourism interests weigh in on Brexit

Janet Silvera

Senior Gleaner Writer

WESTERN BUREAU:

ECONOMIST DR Denarto Dennis is predicting that tourist arrivals from the United Kingdom (UK) will be adversely affected if the anticipated economic slowdown and large pound sterling depreciation occurs as a result of the Brexit.

Dr Dennis, an economist who heads the department of economics at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Western Jamaica Campus, made the prediction two days after the interesting divorce between the UK and the European Union last Thursday.

“The UK’s exit from the EU creates economic uncertainty, uncertainty in financial markets and a revision of their free access to key markets in Europe. This will at least in the short run, result in significant depreciation of the pound sterling and potentially slower economic growth rates in the UK,” he told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

Dennis said some European Union (EU) economies could also experience slowing growth rates although the UK stands to lose more than the EU from the exit.

“A weakened pound sterling and a slower UK economy will have profound implications for Jamaicans working in the UK, whose earnings could suffer, leading to a slowdown in remittances to Jamaica also,” he noted.

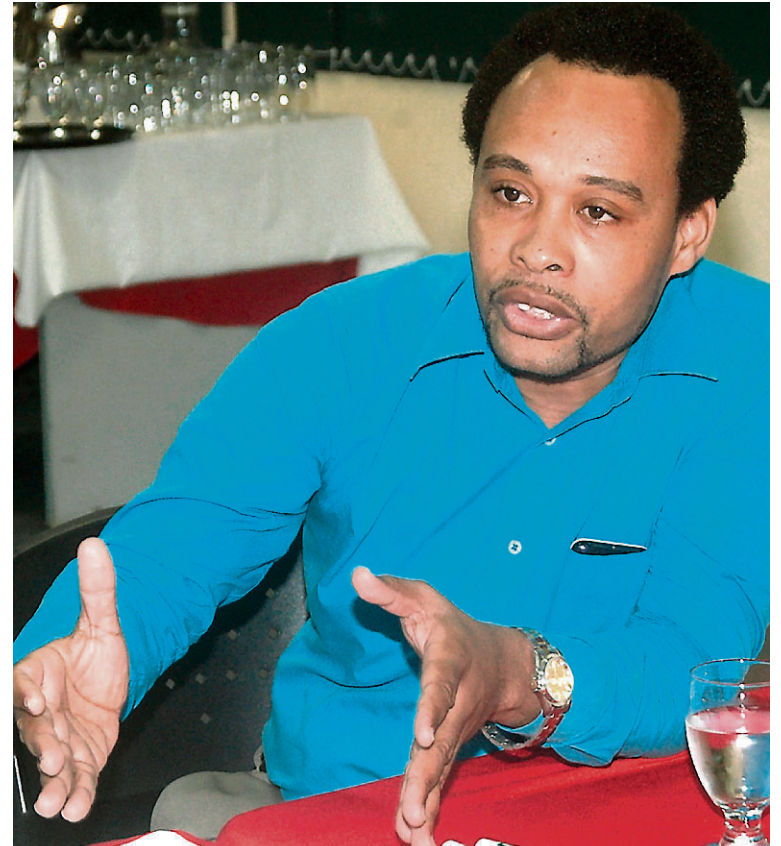
Additionally, Jamaicans who hold financial assets which are denominated in the pound sterling will experience a fall in the value of such assets.

“Jamaican exports to the UK could also become less attractive if the pound sterling depreciates against the Jamaican dollar due to a weaker British economy,” he added.

His comments were backed up by the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association president, Omar



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett



Dr Denarto Dennis



Aloun Assamba, former ambassador to the UK.



CONTRIBUTED

Rafael Echevarne, CEO of MJB Airports Limited.

Robinson, who, in response to questions posed by **Hospitality Jamaica**, said with the lowered value of the pound against the US dollar, this will have real impact on the spending power of Brits.

"Vacations will be almost 20 to 30 per cent more expensive due to the weakened currency. In addition, the economy is expected to contract, so persons might also reduce discretionary spending, with the outcome being a reduction in the number of persons taking vacations."

Robinson admitted, however, that it was still too early, and so he was going to wait to see how things unfold.

In the meantime, chief executive officer of the MBJ Airports Limited, Rafael Echevarne, does not think Jamaica will necessarily suffer from the Brexit.

"Many of the trips have already been booked, and with a low price of oil, the airlines have a higher margin and are more able to absorb this type of event. In particular, the airlines serving this type of long-haul leisure destination are operating as part of a package tour."

Echevarne further stated that from the political perspective, freedom of movement is not something that affects the relationship between Jamaica and Britain.

"The relationship is a bilateral one and not influenced by the European Union."

Montego Bay businessman, Fred Smith, managing director of Tropical Tours, is also not fazed by what has happened in the UK. He thinks it could be positive for both Britain and Jamaica.

"The UK will be given a free hand to trade with the world and will not have the burden of the poorer EU countries. Equally, they will need to continue growing their economy, which will give Jamaica the opportunity to provide products and services, including labour, as the UK is no longer expected to accept EU workers. Again, this is positive for Jamaicans seeking employment, and we must now aggressively pursue the UK with clear aims and objectives," said Smith.

Ideally, Jamaicans living in the diaspora think it is an opportune time for the Jamaica Tourist Board to tap into their 'banks', a market deemed untapped by the marketing agency.

"The diaspora market is untapped, and that is a market that



SMITH

has potential," former minister of tourism, Aloun Assamba, stated in response to questions posed by Hospitality Jamaica last weekend.

Assamba, who recently returned from the UK after serving as Jamaica's High Commissioner for more than three years, said Jamaica has already covered the trade; what is needed to combat the impact of the exit by the UK from the EU is a lot of computer marketing.

MORE ADVERTISING

"We will also have to spend more money on advertising to the consumers now," she noted, adding that roadshows do not reach the consumers.

Her comments were backed by Britjam organisers, who last year brought more than 1,740 visitors to the island for their annual parties held over a one-week period in the tourism capital, Montego Bay.

According to Larry Simpson, the man responsible for transportation, based on the bookings, 2017 will be the best year for him and his team in terms of persons coming from the UK.

This year, the event held in March had the following breakdown:

UK – 432

US – 312

Amsterdam/Germany – 78

Sweden – 56

France/Belgium – 112

Asia (Japan/China) – 220

Caribbean – 105

Canada – 237

Undisclosed – 192

Jamaica's tourism minister,



ROBINSON



SIMPSON

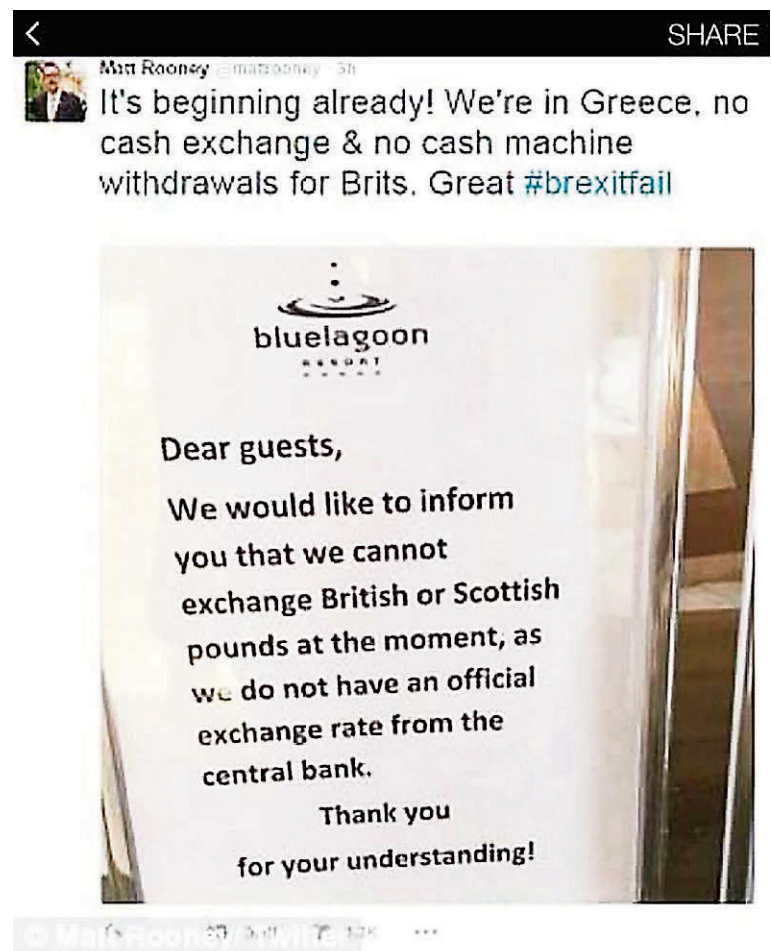
Edmund Bartlett, is not about to sit on his laurels and watch the market dissipate in front of him. Urging stakeholders not to panic in the face of the changes, Bartlett noted that the Caribbean was the region that was most dependent on British visitors on this side of the globe, and "it is important for us to consider what implications that will have on the flow of visitors into our destinations".

The UK is Jamaica's third-largest market, and according to the tourism minister, is a growing market and with it comes also important connectivity from other areas of Europe, so whatever is happening in that economy in that political space, is of tremendous interest and importance to this country.

In a media release on the weekend, the minister gave the assurance that proactive steps were being taken to secure the UK market, but said it was recognised that the immediate short-term impact was the devaluation of the British pound.

"This will have implications for British travellers and their ability to afford visits to the Caribbean and Jamaica, "especially against the background that our prices are predicated on the US dollar".

Like Rafael Echevarne, the tourism minister suggested that the



British tourists on holiday in Greece have been told they cannot exchange money because of the Brexit market turmoil. Matt Rooney, who is on holiday in Kos, said his hotel was refusing to swap currency

LIKE 2 COMMENT 1 SHARE

“Vacations will be almost 20-30 per cent more expensive due to the weakened currency. In addition, the economy is expected to contract ...”

immediate impact on arrivals for Jamaica, "may not be severe at all". This is because "our immediate market arrangements are covered by a series of packaging which have taken place already – payments for which have either been in the system already or are about to be made," he disclosed.

However, Bartlett said Jamaica had to look beyond the next winter season, and "as a result, I will be leading a team to the UK in

September for the Jamaica Travel Market and thereafter to do a roadshow in the British Isle". He stressed that this was important to shore up partnerships in the area and bolster the country's market position in relation to the type of products, pricing and general arrangements that will be made "to ensure the competitiveness of destination Jamaica".

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Moon Palace Jamaica Grande making dreams come true

PALACE RESORTS – the company that sets the standard in five-star, all-inclusive resort accommodations – recently partnered with the Miss Universe Jamaica North East pageant to make 14 local girls' dreams come true. The Palace Foundation at Moon Palace Jamaica Grande, the company's philanthropic organisation in Jamaica, organised an unforgettable experience where the pre-teen children had an opportunity to meet the contestants of the pageant and embark on a one-year mentorship programme.

The brand's newest property, Moon Palace Jamaica Grande, recently set the stage for the 2016 Miss Universe Jamaica North East pageant, where Candice McLeod was crowned the winner and will compete to become the new Miss Universe Jamaica later this year.

The Palace Foundation's 'Dreams' committee paired underprivileged pre-teen girls with each of the 14 Miss Universe Jamaica North East pageant contestants. The young ladies were among the 450 attendees of the pageant, which took place at the AAA Four Diamond property's grand ballroom. The three-hour event featured multiple performances by all-girl group Adahzeh and was attended by VIPs including Miss Universe Jamaica 2015, Sharlene Radlein; Miss Jamaica Universe 2014, Kaci Fennell; New Orleans Saints' James Anderson; and NFL's Brian Banks.

"Palace Resorts is committed to serving our valued guests, and our foundation is equally committed to serving our valued communities," said Gibran Chapur, executive vice-president of Palace Resorts. "The Palace Foundation at Moon Palace Jamaica Grande was proud to partner with Miss Universe Jamaica North East and bring joy to a group of young local girls. We believe it is our responsibility and privilege to give back to those in need, and we look forward to further embracing our friends and neighbours in our new home of Ocho Rios."

INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY

The Palace Foundation at Moon Palace Jamaica Grande, created in 2014, is a non-profit organisation that contributes to solving social issues in the local community. The foundation is made up of five committees: dreams, educational, health, environmental, and social welfare. Since its creation, the foundation has been heavily involved with the local community. The organisation has participated in activities such as visiting the St Christopher's School for the Deaf and providing the children with care packages; providing nine children with special needs from



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Contestants who competed in the recent Miss Universe Jamaica North East pageant and the youngsters being helped by the Palace Foundation.



Youngsters who are being helped by the Moon Palace Foundation.

all across Jamaica a three-night all-inclusive weekend at the resort with their families; launching their toy drive campaign – Juguetón 'Each Toy is A Smile'; and much more.

Moon Palace Jamaica Grande began welcoming guests in July 2015, is strategically sit-

“The Palace Foundation at Moon Palace Jamaica Grande was proud to partner with Miss Universe Jamaica North East and bring joy to a group of young local girls. We believe it is our responsibility and privilege to give back to those in need ...”

uated on the north coast of Jamaica, and is accessible from the Montego Bay airport. Following a multimillion-dollar transformation of what was formerly the iconic Sunset Jamaica Grande, Moon Palace Jamaica Grande now boasts more than 700 guestrooms and suites with oceanfront views of the Caribbean Sea.

Moon Palace Jamaica Grande features an array of luxurious amenities, including Jamaica's largest spa, Awe Spa; a FlowRider double-wave simulator; four unique dining destinations; the ultra-chic Noir nightclub; a dolphin habitat, and much more. The hotel features 17 acres of ivory sand on the longest stretch of private beach in Ocho Rios.

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Cruise ships and millennials

David Jessop

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

DESPITE A love of being on the sea, I have never taken a cruise in the Caribbean.

Although some years ago it did occur to me that if one could fit in meetings at each port of call – doing so might offer an alternative way to island hop in the Eastern Caribbean – the idea of sharing a voyage with large numbers of retirees, and the type of on-board entertainment offered filled me with horror.

Not only is this probably unfair, but my thinking also appears to be factually incorrect, as according to the Cruise Lines International Association, the average age of travellers vacationing on its members' cruise ships in 2014 was 49.

My prejudice and that of many others reflects a problem that faces the cruise sector: how to change the image and the product so that seaborne vacations have a broader appeal, particularly to the higher-spending younger visitors that Caribbean destinations have been so successful in attracting?

The issue is critical. If the cruise industry cannot change its demographic and offering, it will struggle to ensure the profitability of its new ships, which reports suggest now cost around US\$1b each and have a working life of around 10 years.

DIFFERENT MARKET

Over the last year, some of the leading cruise lines have publicly recognised that as the post-Second World War baby boomer generation fades from view, they will need to attract a younger group of travellers, particularly millennials and families wanting experience, authenticity and connectivity. They are also aware that to do so they will have to reconceptualise on-board facilities, entertainment, the nature of shore excursions, and in some cases, the whole concept of a cruise.

Much of their primary focus is now on trying to achieve seamless on-board connectivity so that customers experience something not far removed from what their clients enjoy at home.

Like many others in the tourism sector, Royal Caribbean, Carnival and MSC have all recognised that without 24-hour connectivity, they cannot hope to attract a younger



David Jessop

clientele and are investing millions of dollars on updating their communications technology.

Although the companies say their intention is to provide, at a cost, a connection that is very fast and can be linked to a wide range of platforms, this is technologically complex and expensive. It involves an uplink to a satellite when the ship is at sea, a shore connection when in harbour, or for some lines, a unique hybrid maritime system able to move between both. This is, however, far from straightforward as it involves reaching commercial

agreements with the few maritime communications companies that own or lease bandwidth or have their satellites focussed on the most cruised parts of the region.

This has the consequence that, for passengers, the cost varies depending on the technology used and the type of services required – with rates ranging from US\$5 per day for access to social media to US\$25 or more if passengers want streaming, with some services requiring high bandwidth, like Skype, being inaccessible.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADDITIONS

More interestingly, however, for the land-based industry in the region, are the ways in which the cruise companies and others have begun to change their on-board offering. At the quirkier end, it includes anthropomorphic robots that can bartend or read human emotions, but more seriously includes multiscreen cinemas, Bluetooth technology, high-definition TV screens, new ways of getting a tan, alternative music and entertainment, and so on.

More challenging, perhaps, are new types of cruises specifically aimed at millennials, where the on-board experience is as important as where is being visited.

Carnival Cruise Line's Fathom brand and the kind of lifestyle cruise offered by *Summit at Sea* provide interesting indications of where a part of the market is headed.

Fathom is a one-ship line that 'encourages volunteerism and social support'. It is cruising to Cuba and the Dominican Republic using the 704-passenger *Adonia* and includes, for example, in the case of Cuba, artistic, educational and other activities such as visits to organic farms, visits with Cuban artists and authors, and walking tours. It also has on-board experiences, including discussions about history, culture, food and entertainment, as well as making available Cuban literature and Cuban films. Unlike most other cruises, it does not have a casino.

Even more targeted is a concept developed by *Summit at Sea* which, according to online blogs, offers annually 'inspiring talks, great

music, some art, many many great people in a closed offline environment and some weird stuff such as special meditation techniques'. It has been going since 2011 and uses a standard cruise ship – apparently the slot machines are ignored – and sails out of Miami to The Bahamas using a smaller cruise ship.

According to the blog I read, it is invite only, and mixes 25 to 40-year-old entrepreneurs, artists, musicians and people involved in interesting projects: in fact, just the type of individuals that most Caribbean investment agencies would like to reach.

Tourist boards, hoteliers and the industry should give more thought to the implications of this. While the typical cruise customer is not going to change suddenly, the diversification now taking place suggests that before long, land-based tourism will have to consider how to respond.

As for me, I am seriously considering a cruise of sorts: on one of Hurtigruten's small working ships along the coast of Norway this coming winter to see the Northern Lights.



WE ARE VERY PROUD OF YOU!

Carol Bourke – 2016 Hotelier of the Year!



It is with great pride that the Aimbridge Hospitality™ family proudly salutes Mrs. Carol Bourke for being named “2016 Hotelier of the Year” by the Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association for her outstanding performance, dedication and contribution not only to the Hilton Rose Hall Resort & Spa and Jewel Resorts, but also to travel and tourism to the Caribbean.

Carol joined the hotel industry in 1984 and quickly climbed the ladder of success. Today she is the General Manager at the Hilton Rose Hall Resort & Spa and Managing Director over three resorts with Jewel Resorts. She is one of the first female hotel general managers in Jamaica and we are proud to have her at the helm of the Hilton Rose Hall Resort & Spa and Jewel Resorts.



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CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association's Hotelier of the Year, Carol Bourke (centre), and the Abe Issa awardee for 2016, Rebel Salute's Tony Rebel (to her right), and her husband Richard Bourke (to her left) are flanked by well-wishers from the Jewel family.

Aimbridge Hospitality's GM is Hotelier of the Year

AIMBRIDGE HOSPITALITY, the United States' second-largest independent hotel management and investment firm, announces that its general manager of Hilton Rose Hall Resort & Spa, Carol Bourke, was named Hotelier of the Year for excellence in performance and achievements.



Dave Johnson

Bourke also oversees regional responsibilities for all three award-winning Jewel Resorts, and was instrumental in the launch of the Curio brand of two of the three Jewel Resorts in Jamaica.

Additionally, Bourke directed the multimillion-dollar enhancement programme of Hilton Rose Hall. And, under her direction, the resort achieved the prestigious President's Award as one of the top 10 performers at the recent Aimbridge Hospitality annual conference.

Aimbridge Hospitality President and CEO Dave Johnson congratulated Bourke and said: "Carol is a great leader and a great person; and what defines her and sets her apart is her true passion for her work, her island, her team and her company. We all join in congratulating Carol on this well-deserved honour."

A jewel in the eyes of all who know her, Bourke is adored by her staff and recognised as a phenomenal woman. She is driven to exceed the expectations of others and mentor

those with whom she works. Born on Christmas day, and nick-named 'Christmas Carol' by her mother, Bourke was an only child, and a gem in her parents' eyes.

With more than 30 years experience in the hotel industry, Bourke has worked in every department in hotels across Jamaica. She was managing director at Jewel Dunn's River Beach Resort and Spa; first general manager of Curio Collection by Hilton when it opened in 2010, and then went on to become manager of Hilton Rose Hall Resort & Spa. She has succeeded in establishing the Jewel brand as one of excellence in the all-inclusive category and was one of the first female hotel general managers in Jamaica.

For several years, Bourke has worked with Aimbridge's senior vice-president of Caribbean operations and development. He said: "Carol has proven that one can achieve anything with a positive attitude and determination, and she has taken our resorts and the resort teams in Jamaica to the highest level of hospitality and performance excellence."

"Hard work and perseverance made this possible," Bourke said. "Cross-training is vital to success in the hospitality industry. Remember, every challenge is an opportunity, and do not put barriers on your staff," she added.



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CONGRATULATES

CAROL BOURKE

JAMAICA HOTEL & TOURIST ASSOCIATION'S

HOTELIER OF THE YEAR 2016.






Carol Bourke (centre) accepts her award from former president of the JHTA, Nicola Madden-Greig, and Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook.

MESSAGES

Congratulations to an exceptional leader

THE MINISTRY of Tourism and its agencies join the wider tourism community in extending our warmest congratulations to Carol Bourke on being named Hotelier of the Year by the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association.

Great organisations are led by great managers who have the ability to inspire great teams. Carol's extraordinary leadership, passion, and professionalism have ensured that the Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa and the Jewel Resorts group maintain the consistently high standard of excellence that have become synonymous with these world-class hotel



brands.

There is no doubt that Carol is an exceptional leader, and what is even more remarkable is that she executes her substantial duties with quiet humility and confidence. In

addition, she is well known as a hands-on hotelier who is equally comfortable handling executive duties as well as walking the grounds of the property to meet guests and assist her staff.

It is this type of exemplary leadership that will continue to give Jamaica that winning edge in the extremely competitive global tourism industry.

Carol, thank you for your outstanding contribution to local tourism, and congratulations again on receiving what is certainly a well-deserved honour.

EDMUND BARTLETT
Minister of Tourism

A positive force for development

ON BEHALF of the council and membership of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA), I would like to extend our heartiest congratulations to Carol Bourke, managing director, Jewel Resorts, and general manager, Hilton Rose Hall Montego Bay, winner of the 2016 JHTA Hotelier of the Year Award!

With more than 30 years of dedication to tourism, this wife, mother, and corporate high achiever has worked her way up from the bottom to the highest echelons of the industry. Today, the properties that our Hotelier of the Year leads have amassed a slew of top awards.

With her distinctive blend of business acumen and social consciousness, she has been a positive force for development in the lives of her associates. Over the years,



she has shown resilience, drive, and dynamism, which has added value to her own personal and professional life, her team, and the companies she represents, and she is truly deserving of our top award.

We look forward to her continued contribution.

OMAR ROBINSON
President
Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association

Your future blooms brighter than your past

I WISH to offer my heartfelt congratulations to Carol Bourke for being named the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association Hotelier of the Year for 2015-2016.

Carol has worked her way up through the ranks of the industry in a career characterised by hard work and dedication.

The cap in her illustrious career has been to head the Jewel organisation, which in five years, has gone from operating one hotel to now having four hotels and being one of the largest operators of hotel rooms in Jamaica.

A large part of Carol's success is due to her ability to engender loyalty and team spirit in those who work with her and her warm and caring personality and the sense of purpose that she exudes.

When I think of Jamaica's success in tourism, I believe it is largely due to the passion exhibited by persons such as Carol. She serves as a fine example to young men and women coming in to the industry of what one can



accomplish.

I consider it a privilege to call her my friend and wish her husband and family all the best.

Carol, I am certain your future blooms even brighter than your past, and as you forge ahead, know that you have my unwavering support and good wishes.

You are a consummate hotelier with an unparalleled love for the industry of which you are a part.

Congratulations!
WYKEHAM MCNEILL
Opposition Spokesman on Tourism



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Congratulates

Carol Bourke

JHTA HOTELIER OF THE YEAR

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A product of Jamaica

CAROL BOURKE was born in the United Kingdom but migrated to Jamaica when she was only eight years old. Her mother was British and her father Jamaican.

"Moving to Jamaica was a difficult transition because my accent was heavy and I got teased a lot," said Bourke. However, she lost her accent and quickly adapted to the Jamaican culture. "I got into a lot of scuffles. I had bruises everywhere because I was a tomboy," she said, laughing. "I played cricket and I climbed trees. I was not the typical little girl daddy wanted," she recalled.

Bourke's mother instilled in her at an early age the importance of making sound decisions that made her feel happy and true to herself.

Bourke grew up at a hotel because her mother was an employee

at the Runaway Bay Hotel in the housekeeping department. "My ultimate dream was to become a pilot in the army, but my love was definitely for culinary arts," she added.

She attended Columbus Preparatory school and St Hilda's High School in St Ann and transferred to Westwood High School in Trelawny, where she was actively involved in sports, clubs, and the choir.

Recalling a life-changing experience when she was 17-year old, Bourke said working in the hotel was not what she wanted to do. "I accompanied a friend to a job interview at Hedonism, and to my surprise, one of the managers at the hotel at the time told me to apply for the job as an entertainment coordinator. When I applied, I got the job, and the rest is history. I am a Jamaican; my life was built here,"



CONTRIBUTED

Carol Bourke (left) gets ready to embrace Lady of Soul Karen Smith during a tribute by the songstress.

she asserted. So here she stayed.

Bourke is happily married to Richard, and they recently celebrated their 28th wedding anniversary. She has one child, a daughter, Samantha, who is currently studying marine biology in Florida. When it is family time, it's family time," she said.

Despite being described as an workaholic, Bourke's staff and colleagues admire her work ethic and hold her in the highest regard. As managing director of the Jewel Resorts and general manager of the Hilton Rose Hall, Bourke has a hands-on

approach.

"I tell my staff all the time to go beyond the ordinary, beyond barriers," she said. "Once my staff is happy here, we have a productive team, so I make sure that they are comfortable and healthy."

GIVING BACK

Bourke is not one for cameras and publicity; however, she is very involved in community work and giving back.

"I genuinely just love helping people for the greater good of society. To know I made a difference in someone's life is enough

for me," she said.

One of her many projects is helping the Edgehill School in St Ann, which, she says, is one of the most satisfying parts of her job – to have the opportunity to become part of giving back to communities.

For Bourke, the future continues to look bright for tourism in Jamaica and throughout the Caribbean. She said that she is looking forward to going beyond the ordinary and excelling above what the resorts have accomplished to date.

"The sky's the limit," she said.

Congratulations
to
CAROL BOURKE,
Awardee of JHTA Hotelier
for the year 2016.



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Carol Bourke

Carol Bourke's social conscience

CORPORATE SOCIAL responsibility is very important in any hotel that Carol Bourke manages. Below are some of the projects implemented under her watch:

RECYCLING COMPETITION

Team members were incentivised to collect plastic bottles in and around the hotel and community. The end result being 600,000 bottles collected and donated to the recycling centre. This is now an annual event.

INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEAN-UP

Hotel teams participate each year. In 2015, over 10,000 bottles and other debris was collected.

WELLNESS AND AWARENESS HEALTH FAIRS

These are held each year and are open to staff members and their families. Invitations are also issued to the elderly in the surrounding communities. These events have been implemented in all resorts.

SAINT ANN'S BAY INFIRMARY

This project was adopted in

2012. Teams visit at Christmas to provide decorations, gift packages and a meals. During Easter, bun and cheese is provided along with other services. At these times, Bourke and her team pamper residents with haircuts, shampooing, braiding and manicures. Gardening and general maintenance work are undertaken. Donations of clothing and other items are also made. Hilton Rose Hall has now started the practice at the Falmouth Infirmary.

SAINT ANN'S BAY HOSPITAL

On Labour Day each year, the institution is treated every year to teams doing beautification and maintenance work carried out by the Hilton Rose Hall team.

CHARITY WALKS

Teams participate in a number of charity walks throughout the year, including the MoBay City Run.

EDGEHILL SCHOOL

This school was adopted by Jewel Dunn's River. Students are provided with back-to-school assistance and other benefits throughout the year.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Carol Bourke

HOTELIER OF THE YEAR

Sandals Resorts International wishes to congratulate Carol Bourke on recently being named the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association's Hotelier of the Year.

As Managing Director/General Manager at the Hilton Rose Hall Resort & Spa/Jewel Resorts, Carol has been diligent, focused and driven, acting with purpose and precision to grow her brand and maintain the best interests of her team members.

Her commitment to the hospitality industry is unquestionable and is indeed a reflection of our island's passion for hospitality and service. She is truly deserving of this honour and we stand with the JHTA in celebrating her outstanding contribution to the industry.





CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS
Peter and Wilhelmine Carby and Carol Bourke.



Carol Bourke and her dad, the late Baldwin Pitter.

Carol Bourke takes time out with family, friends




Carol Bourke (right) at her daughter Samantha's graduation, along with her mother Shirley Pitter (left).



Carol and husband of 28 years, Richard Bourke.



Carol Bourke (second left) poses with her family (from left): Joanne Bourke, stepsister; Samantha Bourke, daughter; Sebastian Campbell, nephew; and Chelsie Campbell, niece.



Round Hill
Hotel and Villas
MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA

Congratulates

CAROL BOURKE

on being voted as

JHTA'S HOTELIER

of the year.



Carol Bourke (left) at a family event.



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Bourke's trajectory in the hospitality industry

IN 1984, Carol Bourke officially joined the hotel industry as an entertainment coordinator with the infamous Hedonism II where she met her watersports manager husband Richard, to whom she has been married for 28 years.

After a few years in entertainment and cross training in sales, she transferred to Couples Ocho Rios before leaving Superclubs in 1986. She moved to Kingston where she was a concierge floor supervisor for the then Hilton Kingston. Her love for the tourism industry on the north coast carried her back to Negril, where she became the manager for the Country Resort and restaurant on the Seven-Mile Beach. After the devastation of Hurricane Gilbert which extensively damaged the island, Bourke moved on to rejoin Superclubs as the purchasing manager for the opening team at Grand Lido, Negril, where she became well known for her no-nonsense attitude and her attention to detail.

When her husband took a post-



Carol Bourke (second right) shares lens time with the new Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association's (JHTA) board (from left) Sandals Resorts International's Adam Stewart; Jamaica Villa Association's Vana Taylor; JHTA President Omar Robinson; and Dolphin Cove's Marilyn Burrowes.

career, as family has always been of prime importance. Not known to be a stay-at-home mom, she soon accepted the position of general manager for Sea Splash Resort in Negril, which she successfully ran for two years and, under her guidance, holds the distinction of being the first hotel in Jamaica to be Green Globe certified.

NO SETTLING DOWN

Settling down seemed to elude her, as her husband again relocated to Trelawny and she resigned to be with her family. Staying at home did not last long, and she became the revenue manager for the then Wynndham Rose Hall in Montego Bay. This became her home for 11 years.

Bourke's work ethic did not go unnoticed and was appreciated by all who interacted with her and sought her expertise to enhance the hospitality product. Her attitude, strength, equity, interpersonal and communications skills are unparalleled, and this combination of characteristics and others made her a prime candidate for promotion. She moved on to eventually become the first Jamaican female resident manager at the Wynham.

After being passed over for the general manager position which became available, she decided to accept the position of general manager for the new resort owned by Sagicor that was to be managed by Aimbridge Hospitality five years ago.

ing in Ocho Rios, Bourke moved too. Her daughter Samantha was conceived there. She was offered a position with Ciboney Resort as purchasing manager. With her passion for the industry, she accepted and eventually went on to become the catering and assistant food and beverage manager.

When her husband again took a posting in Negril, she sacrificed her

Congratulations



Carol Bourke

Awardee of JHTA Hotelier of the year

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Carol Bourke poses with the plaque she was given by her staff at the Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa.



A joyous and proud staff celebrating the recognition of their boss, Carol Bourke (centre), after she was named the JHTA Hotelier of the Year 2016.



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Jewel Resort Runaway Bay wins Best Online Reputation and Resort of the Year

THE JEWEL Resort & Spa in Runaway Bay, St Ann, recently won Best Online Reputation and Resort of the Year at the annual Aimbridge Hospitality conference in Orlando, Florida.

The hotel, owned by Sagcor X-Funds property holdings, came out on top from a pool of 450 Aimbridge-affiliated hotels across North America and the Caribbean.

Aimbridge Hospitality is one of the world's leading independent hotel investment and management firms.

Aimbridge focuses on sales and revenue, but also looks at the well-being of the staff and guest satisfaction.

"We are very pleased that we received these two prestigious awards from such an exceptional institution," said Jewel Resort and Spa general manager, Scott Robbins.

"It is a great honour to win Resort of the Year as Aimbridge has over 10 resorts, and this is the first year of them giving this award. The online reputation is based on Aimbridge's 452 hotels and resorts in its portfolio, which we won by going the extra mile and caring for the wants and needs of our guests," Robbins said.

INDUSTRY AWARDS

Robbins said the awards were special. Other awards, he said, come from the consumer, which is great. However, the Aimbridge Awards comes from "our peers and the owners, so you know that you are appreciated by your employers, other professionals within the industry."

The staff at the resort continues to be the crowning jewel for Robbins as they are the ones who make the guests feel like they are at home.

"If you are looking for posh, marble and chandeliers, this might not exactly be the place for you but if you are looking for staff that make you feel like family then you have found your home," he emphasised.

Maintaining reputation and credibility online is a hard task but Robbins endeavours to make his guests happy by continuously engaging them in that space.

"Even though it is our job to make everyone happy, we all know that everyone's style and expectations are different. However, I listen to them online and hear their experiences and, for the most part, everyone



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

An aerial shot of Jewel Runaway Bay.



The Jewel Runaway Bay staff and general manager Scott Robbins (left front) pose with their certificate after receiving the award.

rages about how friendly our staff is and how everyone seems happy in their job. Those who have difficult times at the property, we try to solve while on property," he shared.

The success of the hotel is attributed largely to the employees and how they treat guests when they arrive at the hotel. The leadership also plays a large part in the process. When asked to describe his preferred leadership style, Robbins sums it up in one word, 'WAM', Walk Around Management. "You can't manage an operation sitting in an office all day long. If you don't get out and talk to your guests and your staff, you will never change things.

If the staff doesn't see you move a table, sweep a floor, paint a wall, then they have an excuse to say, "That's not my job".

However, if the staff constantly sees you picking up garbage, then they have to do what is necessary," he added.

Ja's tourism officials woo Asian market

JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) recently announced its plan to expand its source markets in order to achieve growth in tourism arrivals to the island. In keeping with this objective, Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook and Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett were recently in Japan holding meetings with stakeholders in that market to reclaim Jamaica's share of the Asian market.

During their visit to Japan, Pennicook and Bartlett met with officials from the Japan Association of Travel Agents and JALPAK, the tour arm of Japan Airlines. The discussions focused on initiatives to be undertaken to make Jamaica the Caribbean destination of choice among their outbound market, which totalled 16 million travellers in 2014.

"We have opened discussions with Japanese tour and airline companies in an effort to bring more Japanese visitors here," said Bartlett. "We are also in discussions with China, with the aim of concretising a tripartite agreement for multi-destination tourism among China, Jamaica, and Cuba. This will help us tap into the Chinese market in a more meaningful way," he continued.

This purposeful move comes against the background that the Japanese market has been recouping from a recession and the negative repercussions of natural disasters. These occurrences had stymied the number of Japanese visitors to the island, which in the 1990s had seen over 20,000 visitors in one year.

Re-establishing Jamaica as a desired vacation destination among



CONTRIBUTED

Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook (third right) makes a courtesy call at the office of the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA). From left: Toshiaki Shigeta, director, Outbound Promotion Division, JATA; Masayo Nakayama, JTB representative in Japan; Ambassador Ricardo Allicock, Jamaica's ambassador to Japan; Tatsuro Nakamura, senior executive director of the board, JATA; and Manabu Sano, deputy general manager, Outbound Travel Promotion Division, JATA.



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (right) accepts a token from Shinichi Hamasaki, chairman of the Tottori Athletic Association, during the minister's recent trip to Japan.

Japanese travellers was the primary focus of the tourism officials' undertaking. Members of the Japanese travel trade, including tour operators and travel agents, were apprised of updates in Jamaica's tourism product. Their ability to access connecting flights to Jamaica in the United States is one of the main factors that resonated with the participants. Information on infrastructure enhancements like the island's expanded accommodation portfolio and the ease of ground travel with the opening up of the north-south highway was well received.

According to Pennicook: "Strong spend and a large outbound travel from the Asian market influenced our decision to engage specific countries in that region (Japan, China, and Korean). A significant number of these travellers are already vacationing in the Caribbean, and through strategic arrangements, we aim to

increase the number of arrivals to Jamaica. We know that we have the experiences that they demand, and our world-class hospitality will keep them coming back for more."

LOOKING AT KOREA

In addition to the trip to Japan, the JTB was for the first time invited to participate in the Korea World Travel Fair (KOTFA). The largest international travel fair in Korea, KOTFA provided opportunities to showcase the offerings of Destination Jamaica. There has been a growing interest in Jamaica as a destination among South Korean travellers, and information shared about the island found a captive and expectant audience. During the fair, convened June 9 through 12, in Seoul, Helen Minott, JTB's senior assistant to Pennicook, met with travel trade representatives and gained an understanding of the market and how Jamaica can satisfy their travel needs.

Of the more than 450 participants, the JTB was among a select few that were presented with 'The Best Tourism Publicity Award', in acknowledgement of Jamaica's excellent promotion of its tourism assets and information.

Many of the nearly 100,000 fair attendees visited the JTB booth. Jamaica's fascinating history, captivating culture, and incomparable blue mountain coffee are some of the attributes that make the island a desired destination among Koreans. The Asian populace is tech savvy, and the JTB will be engaging social media platforms and advertising tools to exploit the renewed interest that the Asian market has in Destination Jamaica.

Jamaica's target for growth in the Asian Pacific market is 11.3 per cent for 2016.

Mother, daughter make their mark at Sandals

AS A youngster, Girdeen Myers would attend all the fun days and family-held events hosted by Sandals Resorts. As she got older, she spent summer and Christmas holidays interning at Sandals Royal Caribbean Resort & Private Island, where her mother, Lilly Sawyers, worked as a room attendant.

While her motivation was to work to assist her mother, a single parent of four, Myers' journey would take her well beyond casual internships and fun days. She would officially become part of the Sandals family and work her way through the ranks to her current post of weddings manager at Sandals Whitehouse European Village and Spa.

Sawyers has been employed to the Sandals group for almost 16 years, and for Myers, though her own journey started in 2005, she has considered herself part of the Sandals family for 16 years as well. She revealed: "Growing up, I thoroughly enjoyed my mom working at Sandals. My siblings and I went to all the fun days and all the sports days. It's just how we grew up. So for us, it's been 16 years with the company as well."

After starting out as a casual holiday intern, Myers' determination and impressive work ethic soon saw her landing a permanent position with the company. Her growth has since been continuous, and her mother couldn't be more proud. "When they say small axe fall big tree, I think it's Girdeen they're talking about. She's so tiny, but she loves her job and she works so hard. I am so proud of her," she said.

At an early age, Myers developed a spirit of determination and a sense of purpose. She realised that if she wanted to pursue an education and secure a good job, she would have to play an active role in the process, and so she worked. "I worked summer; I worked Christmas; I worked the weekends. Basically, if I wasn't at school, I was at Sandals Royal Caribbean working," she shared.

Myers added: "I don't know how my mom did it. It was not a lot of pay and she was a single parent



Girdeen Myers (left) and her mom, Lilly Sawyers.

with four girls. Sandals has always been integral to our lives. My other siblings benefited from books and

bursary programmes. We didn't have everything we wanted, but we had everything we needed and we

were never hungry. My mom built her house through this job."

Her mother credits Sandals for

being instrumental in their personal and professional success, revealing: "Sandals has impacted my life and my children's lives. To be honest, sometimes it was hard because I'm a single parent and Girdeen wanted to go to Montego Bay Community College and I said, 'Gird you did well in high school and I want to further you, but mom has no money, so what are you going to do?'"

PERMANENT POST

After working numerous holidays at Sandals Royal Caribbean, Myers was recommended for a permanent post at Sandals Montego Bay in 2007 and officially joined the team there as a secretary in the human resources office. From there, she worked as a guest services agent, a member of the resort's sales team, and as a wedding planner. "Working where my mom worked, I was never favoured. I had to do my best. I never wanted her to ever be ashamed of me, so I always tried to make her proud," she added.

After leaving the company briefly to return to school to pursue her bachelor's degree, Myers returned to Sandals Montego Bay, where she rejoined the team at the resort's Red Lane Spa. She was later transferred to Sandals Whitehouse as the assistant spa manager and then promoted to weddings manager.

For her part, Sawyers is happy to be employed to Sandals and is grateful that her job has provided for her family and opened doors for her daughter.

This dynamic mother-daughter duo is but one of the many multi-generational families employed by Sandals Resorts. A family-owned organisation, Sandals has always promoted family values and consistently provides employment opportunities for team members' families.

Adam Stewart, Sandals' chief executive officer, said: "This company is built on a sense of family. It's what means the most to us. This family is one of the many awesome families we have on board and we are always happy to know that we can positively impact lives by not only providing for our team members, but their families as well."

CONTRIBUTED

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H.



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

By name and nature, Drum Explosion, shattering the tranquility of the community of Charles Town, Portland, on Thursday, June 23.



The sounds of the drums nearly knock these men off their feet.

Sounds of reflection

SOUNDS ARE powerful, for they can create all sorts of effects. They can make you jump, laugh, cry, dance, reflect, mourn, despair, etc. They can be pleasant or unpleasant, inviting or repulsive, soothing or depressing, like some songs.

They were many types of sounds at the just-concluded Charles Town Maroon International Conference in Portland, some of which are still echoing in my skull. And there is a particular one that is reverberating more than the others, and it is not pleasant, and was not exploded at the conference.

My body is still rocking to the arresting and hypnotic beats of the Maroon drums. It is not only the sounds that captivated me, but the passion with which the players played. They are the epitome of liberation. They are Maroons, and the urgent beats of their drums make you want to rise up, dance, celebrate, and free your mind.



Shaman Kalaan Atman (Robert Pairman) was mesmerising with his rendition of a piece of traditional flute music.

And the abeng, that musical instrument made with a cattle's horn, Jamaica's first cell phone, as Vivian Crawford puts it, has a language of its own. It always makes me reflect on the days when its musical alphabets would travel on the winds over hills and valleys. It must have been very scary for the British pursuers to hear this mystical explosion of air and not know where it was coming from and what it was saying.

The conch shell, too, had its moments of power in the Asafu Yard, so were the wails and songs of a female Taino elder from Puerto Rico. Called guamo by the Taino, it was a very important instrument. It is to the Taino what the abeng is to the Maroons. Incidentally, the first Maroons were Tainos.

The flute has its own story, and it is one of the musical instruments of indigenous peoples the world over. Last Thursday, Shaman Kalaan Atman (Robert Pairman) gave a



An enthralling combination, Rodney Rose on the abeng, and Gloria 'Mama G' Simms on the conch shell.

masterful rendition of a South American story with his flute. It transported me to the rainforests of that southern continent, where indigenous peoples live a life of happiness, free from the vicissitudes of modern life.

Into the mix, add the element water, the therapeutic sounds of water. And the sounds of water falling on to water; water falling on to rocks never failed to calm me. So, twice over the weekend I found time to drop by the Buff Bay River that rushes near the Asafu Yard. But it was the two showers of rain that thundered upon the zinc roof on Saturday night that produced the sweetest sounds over the weekend. I curled up as a meagre dog would and soaked up the heavenly lullaby. But it ended too soon.

And in the midst of the joy, sorrow usually intervenes. This time it came in the form of a rooster, an ill-mannered variated cock. I did not stay in the Asafu yard on Friday, but at a guest house on Blueberry Hill, on the periphery of Buff Bay.

I had intended to get a solid rest, but the rooster on a neighbouring property had another idea. That nocturnal beast crowed right through the night, and when daylight came, it went silent. I saw it while I was drinking cornmeal porridge cooked in a big enamel pot by Miss Doris. It flapped its wings and carried on as if to say, 'Yes, a mi, whapp'n.'

Should I stay at that place any-time soon, I know what I would take with me, and then, and only then, it will know what's happening. Its crowing was the only sound I heard over the weekend that I want out of my head. It was harsh and piercing, and disruptive, nothing like the lullaby of raindrops upon the zinc roof in the Asafu yard.



Be still, and listen to the sound of the conch, echoing from the mountains.

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CHTA calls for US-Caribbean tourism dialogue

THE CARIBBEAN Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) presented a paper to attendees at a Capitol Hill Briefing in Washington, DC, urging the creation of a Caribbean-US public-private sector dialogue and a framework for a Caribbean-United States tourism action agenda to strengthen Caribbean engagement with the US.



Karolin Troubetzkoy, president of the CHTA.

Maintaining that tourism presents the Caribbean with the quickest way to create jobs, reduce public debt, and stimulate new business activity, CHTA's CEO and director general, Frank Comito, said "A new demand-driven public-private sector approach and resolve by the region's leadership, the United States, and other major global tourism trading partners is necessary for the countries throughout the region to maximise the benefits from tourism and for the United States to further benefit from a more secure, stable, and prosperous Caribbean.

Organised by Caribbean-Central American Action and the Inter-American Development Bank, attendees included representatives from the United States Congress and US administration, private sector leaders, the diplomatic community, and representatives from Washington's multilateral institutions.

Joining Comito at the briefing was CHTA president Karolin Troubetzkoy and Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace, a member of the CHTA Board of Directors and chair of the organisation's Government Relations Committee.

Comito called on stakeholders to explore opportunities and challenges for the United States and the Caribbean region through tourism. Comito participated in a panel session with moderator Ambassador Richard Bernal, incoming pro-vice chancellor of global affairs at the University of the West Indies, and representatives from the financial services and energy sectors.

Two days prior to the briefing, the US House of Representatives had passed legislation to strengthen United States' engagement with Caribbean countries. The legislation puts particular emphasis on energy security, countering violence, expanded diplomacy, and other priority areas.

Troubetzkoy said: "The bill is an impor-

tant first step to see a further expansion on the collaboration between the United States and the Caribbean region, and we hope that the appropriate funding will be made available to address the various requirements highlighted in the bill.

"We are all aware of the complex and diverse issues that affect many of our Caribbean nations and the

strides that need to be made to jump-start our economies and create jobs, but also in the areas of climate resilience, energy efficiency, education, and safety and security.

"Tourism is recognised as holding the greatest potential as the region's economic driver. Therefore, a strengthening of our collaborative efforts with the United States can only be beneficial to achieve our region's overall goals."

TOURISM TIES

Comito added: "The tourism ties between the United States and the Caribbean extend well beyond the 14.3 million Americans who travelled as overnight visitors in 2015, spending over \$15 billion in the Caribbean. This represented 50 per cent of our record-setting 28 million overnight visitors in 2015 and does not include those visiting our shores on cruise ships, mostly from US destinations. Our ties extend to the cultural, historic, and economic relationships that have underscored our connectivity and inter-dependence for centuries.

"While the US accounts for our region's most significant exports – the Caribbean is one of the United States' most important strategic partners – in trade and in talent. CHTA is a federation of 32 hotel and tourism associations throughout the region, and we have over 1,000 member companies, which include some of America's most noted global travel and tourism industry brands, including Hilton, Marriott, the Hyatt, Expedia, JetBlue, and American Airlines.

"Today, there are over six million self-identified members of the Caribbean diaspora residing in the United States, representing about two of every 100 Americans, and many more with generational roots. Our ties are significant and pervasive," underscored Comito.



Mango Madness at Anse Chastanet and Jade Mountain

ST LUCIA'S renowned luxury resorts Anse Chastanet and Jade Mountain are paying homage to the mango throughout the months of June and July. To celebrate the tropical fruit, guests will get the opportunity to partake in a variety of mango-themed activities, events, and services featuring educational, culinary, and wellness amenities.

"With the abundance of mangoes available during this time in St Lucia, we decided to declare June and July 'Mango Months' at Anse Chastanet and Jade Mountain," said Karolin Troubetzkoy, executive director of the iconic resorts. "We have many [mango] trees growing at our organic Emerald Farm and wanted to celebrate the various types of mangoes found here on the island, while educating our guests and enhancing their experience with mango-inspired offerings."

Throughout June and July, guests can participate in weekly mango-tasting classes, learn how to make mango chutney and jam, concoct

the perfect mango cocktails, and indulge in a variety of mango-infused body scrubs, wraps, and massages available at the spa. Guests can also visit the Emerald Farm to take a tour of the mango orchard, as well as see the other farm-to-table produce grown for resort guests.

Spearheaded by consulting chef Allen Susser, a 'Mango Madness' festival will be held from June 24-28. Susser, the National Mango Board spokesman and author of the **Great Mango Book**, will amplify the experience with five days of mango-themed activations and events. These include a mango cocktail party, a mango mixology class, a mango tour of Nick Troubetzkoy's Emerald Gardens with Chef Susser, and the 'Night of 1,000 Mangoes' dinner at the Treehouse Restaurant, one of the highlights of 'Mango Madness'. For the complete list of the 'Mango Madness' events, visit: <http://anse-chastanet.com/events.html> and http://www.jademountain.com/cuisine/culinary_events.html.

Little October's descendant gets VIP welcome

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

ONLOOKERS AT the arrival section of the Norman Manley International Airport (NMIA) in Kingston were obviously wondering who was being given such a glorious welcome on the morning of Tuesday, June 21.

For they did not see a well-known personality, and they had not heard of the arrival of any.

Yet there was a small group of people waving Jamaican flags, hypnotic drumming from the Akwaaba Drummers, people hugging and shaking hands, a white film crew, and cameras flashing. A smiling Olivia Grange, the minister of culture, gender, entertainment and sports, was among the gathering. After the meeting and greeting, the small party, including three Excelsior High School students and a teacher, Lolita Davis-Mattis, chairman of the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT), made its way upstairs to the VIP Lounge.

In that same place, the pleasantries continued, before and after the formalities, for it was a homecoming of sort for Keith Stokes, the great-great-great maternal grandson of Robert Barclay, also called 'Little October', an enslaved African who lived in Unity Valley Pen in St Ann. He was accompanied by his wife, Theresa Guzman Stokes. The arrangements for the visit were coordinated by University of the West Indies history professor Dr Verene Shepherd in conjunction with the JNHT, Sarah Manley, and the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports, and the NMIA.

FREED SLAVES

When she was studying at Cambridge in 2008, Shepherd came across the story of Little October, who was among 30 enslaved Africans freed by their master, David Barclay, co-owner with his brother John, of Unity Valley Pen in St Ann. He arranged for 28 of them to be sent to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1795, as the owners of neighbouring estates were uncomfortable with such a decision. In an article published by **The Gleaner** in 2008, Shepherd shared the story.

Among the freed Africans was eight-year-old Little October, who was received by John Ashley, Barclay's agent in Philadelphia. They were all put into the care of The Pennsylvania Society for the Improvement of the



PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports Olivia Grange (right) greets Keith Stokes in the arrival section at the Norman Manley International Airport, while Professor Verene Shepherd (second left) and Lolita Davis-Mattis, chairman of Jamaica National Heritage Trust, look on.



People waiting to give Keith Stokes a warm Jamaican welcome at the Norman Manley International Airport, last week Tuesday.

Condition of Free. In 1796, the 28 of the 30 who survived were settled by a Rev Richard Allen.

They first stayed at the African Methodist Meeting House, where they attended church, and worked as apprentices and indentured labourers, earning a small wage. Little October was indentured for 13 years as a chair-maker. He was also taught to read and write. Those unemployed received support from public funds, as well as money given to the Abolition Society by David Barclay's agent.

In July 2015, Shepherd got an email response to her 2008 **Gleaner** article from a Keith Stokes of Newport, Rhode Island, in the United States in which he claims Little October was his maternal ancestor. Despite her initial scepticism, Professor Shepherd contacted

Stokes, and she was glad she did. It was a treasure trove of history that Stokes was to reveal to her.

Little October worked at many vocations. He married Eliza Ann Barclay and had four children. At age 73, he died on August 12, 1861. He was buried in the historic Olive Cemetery, which is today a part of the historic Eden Cemetery, the USA's oldest black-owned cemetery.

Robert Barclay's oldest son, George T. Barclay (1832-1901), moved to Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1859. He attended the Institute for Colored Youth and learned accounting and barbering and hair-dressing. He married Frances Thorn Morris in 1864 and they had eight children. Their son, George Nicholas Barclay, relocated to Newport, Rhode Island, and married Bessie Belle Forrester in 1903 and



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports Olivia Grange (second right) introducing Keith Stokes to the Akwaaba Drummers in the arrival section of the Norman Manley International Airport, last week Tuesday.



Professor Verene Shepherd (centre) making a presentation to Keith Stokes, while Lolita Davis-Mattis, chairman of the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, looks on at the Norman Manley International Airport, last week Tuesday.

they had 11 children, including Ruth, who married Archie William Stokes, the father of Keith Stokes, a prominent citizen of Rhode Island.

In Shepherd's July 2015 version of 'From Unity Valley Pen to Newport, Rhode Island: The Other Side of the Barclay Family History', she said of Stokes:

"Conscious of his heritage and the travails of his ancestors, he also devotes time to preserving the tangible and intangible sites and memories of African enslavement, including Newport's God's Little Acre Burying Ground, which contains one of America's oldest and largest collections of enslaved and free Africans. The cemetery also contains several generations of his Barclay family members."

In her address to the gathering, Shepherd recounted the amazing story of how she and Stokes got

connected. "I am so moved this morning to see Keith Stokes ... Keith, welcome to Jamaica, your home, the home of your ancestors," Shepherd said.

In her capacity as chairman of the JNHT, Davis-Mattis said that the JNHT was instrumental in verifying the place where Unity Valley Pen was located, and in welcoming Stokes, she said the developments were "very exciting". Minister Grange described the occasion as a "very special day". "As minister of culture, my heart is very full this morning," Grange said. "This experience has moved me."

Stokes, in his response, said Little October's descendants are very active in the black community and civic and heritage organisations. He said he was happy, excited, and humbled to be home and that it has been a lifelong journey.

Jamaica joins 'Peace and Dignity Journeys'

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

IN 1992, the 'Peace and Dignity Journeys' were initiated at a conference by indigenous elders mainly from North and South America, and the Caribbean in response to a prophecy regarding the uniting of the northern eagle and the southern condor.

They saw spiritual running as a means of uniting the nations of the Americas, thus the Peace and Dignity Journeys.

The prophecy says the indigenous people will once again come together as one nation. Among the Taino and other indigenous peoples, the uniting of the eagle and the condor signifies the meeting of the North and South. It is "to re-establish connection we had before the conquest", Bibi Cruz Vanessa 'Inarunikia' Pastrano, regional organiser, Peace and Dignity Journeys, and an elder in the United Confederation of Taino People, told **Hospitality Jamaica**.

The journeys are run every four years, and this year Jamaica will participate for the first time. Jamaica's participation is in light of its Taino heritage. The Tainos are part of the indigenous peoples of the Americas and the Caribbean, and under the theme, 'Run, Taino, Run', Jamaica will participate with other Taino homelands in this spiritual run.

"A contingent of at least three runners from Jamaica will represent our Taino history, heritage and legacy. Recognising the Tainos as the 'first nation', i.e., indigenous people of Jamaica, our runners will participate in this spiritual run as a powerful prayer for unity, healing and prosperity for all indigenous communities all over the world," Afua Fofie (Carol Miller), a Jamaican Taino, said.

STAFF PASSED ON

And on Thursday, June 23, in the Asafu Yard at Charles Town, Portland, in a moving prayer staff ceremony conducted by Pastrano, the Jamaica and regional prayer staff were officially passed on to two of the three runners in the Run Taino Run leg of the Peace and Dignity Journey. The staffs are ceremonial batons of sort. The Jamaican staff is made of a branch from a silk cotton tree in Bath, St Thomas. The Taino used to make canoes from silk cotton trees.



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Maroon elder Gloria 'Mama G' Simms (left), gives the Jamaica prayer staff to Akosua (Velva Lawrence), one of three Jamaican runners on the Peace and Dignity Journeys, during the prayer staff ceremony at Charles Town, Portland, on Thursday, June 23.

The Jamaican runners Kalaan Atman (Robert Pairman), Kofi Baaku (Toyloy Nugent) and Akosua (Velva Lawrence) depart the island shortly to participate in the beginning of this year's journey, which starts in New York City on July 5 and ends in Panama in November, covering 5,382 miles through eight countries. Incidentally, Baaku was the one who scaled the giant silk cotton tree to cut the branch for the Jamaican prayer staff.

Pastrano, a Boriken (Puerto Rican) Taino, told **Hospitality Jamaica** that she brought the journey to the Caribbean because Native Americans were initially the main participants, but that the Tainos were the first indigenous peoples to be displaced by the Europeans. It is also to bring awareness of the issues in the indigenous communities, to create friendship, and to establish self-

esteem with the youths so that they can be proud of their heritage.

In speaking with Kofi Baaku about his participation in 'Run, Taino, Run', he said the occasion was "monumental" as this was the first time Jamaica was participating. He said, "Many of us are Tainos, whether physically or spiritually, and the root of Jamaica's culture is the Tainos". He said he is hoping to gain more awareness of the Taino culture from the experience.

About his selection, Atman said, "I am quite honoured. I myself has been initiated in indigenous healing practice which comes from South America – Peru – and they speak towards the prophecy of the eagle and the condor coming together. So when I became aware that there were people that were coming together to fulfil this prophecy ... I was quite overwhelmed to bring to fruition the teachings I got from their elders."



Bibi Cruz Vanessa 'Inarunikia' Pastrano, regional organiser, Peace and Dignity Journeys, and a Bohio Atabei elder, make a dedication to the regional prayer staff during the prayer staff ceremony at Charles Town, Portland, on Thursday, June 23.