

The Gleaner
Hospitality Jamaica

Weed!
destination wedding





WEED destination wedding in Jamaica

Christian Broderick models an ital vapour steam chalice.

Janet Silvera
Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

THE RECENT decriminalisation of cannabis has opened the doors for weed weddings in Jamaica, said renowned Canadian wedding planner Jennifer Borgh.

Certified by the Wedding Planners Institute of Canada, Borgh, whose work throughout the Caribbean qualifies her as an expert, brings that expertise to Jamaica, offering destination weddings at her new Borghinvilla on the border of Trelawny and St Ann.

“We plan to incorporate ganja into the weddings we do and we are keeping under the decriminalised limits,” Borgh told

Hospitality Jamaica, adding that she is inspired by the breathtaking cliffside views of the Caribbean Sea, the lush Jamaican flowers, and the sensational sunsets at Borghinvilla.

ELEGANT EVENT

“Without compromising our aesthetic, our couples will be able to have an elegant destination wedding while enjoying the legal limits of marijuana in Jamaica. We are incorporating a few items such as a touch of marijuana in the bouquet, boutonniere, potted plants, cake, pipes and even a ganja, rolling station,” said the wedding planner, who has been honoured by the Jamaica Tourist Board as one of Jamaica’s best travel partners.

According to Borgh, the legal

cannabis market is thriving, and she is even more encouraged by the recent cannabis conference held at the Montego Bay Convention Centre. The event opened up further conversations about a market that has the potential to change the tourism landscape.

Although weed weddings are on Borgh’s mind, her real goal, she said, is to make Jamaica the world leader in destination weddings, a multi-million-dollar market that has brought significant revenue to many Caribbean islands.

“In keeping with this mission, we have made it our duty to exceed the current offerings by promoting and increasing the options for destination weddings in Jamaica. We are working with resorts in bringing destination wedding



Brides bouquet with ganja

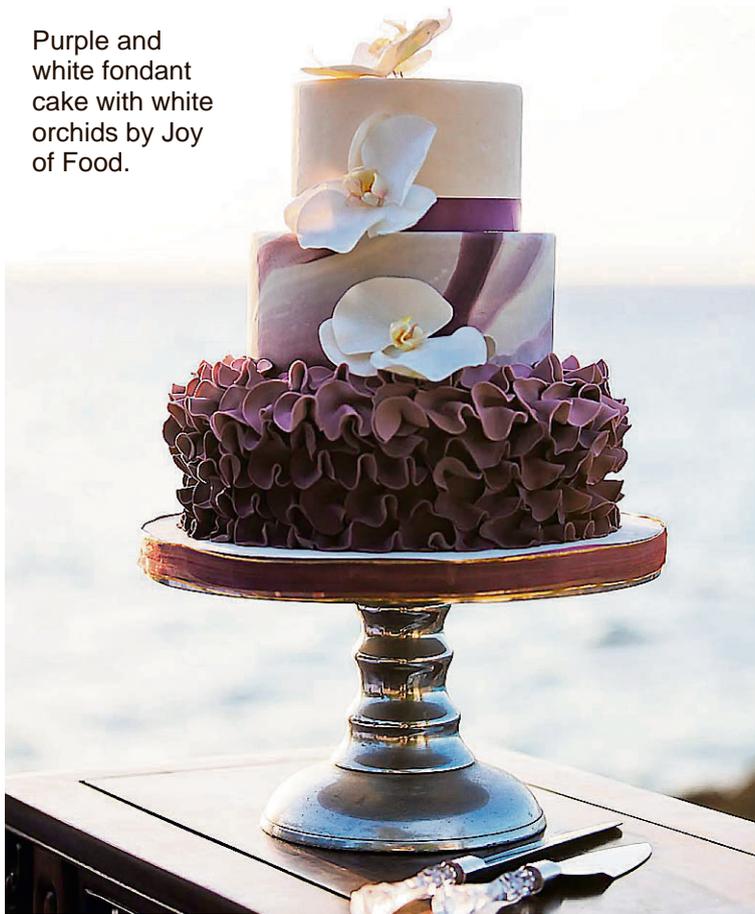


A weed destination wedding at Borghinvilla.

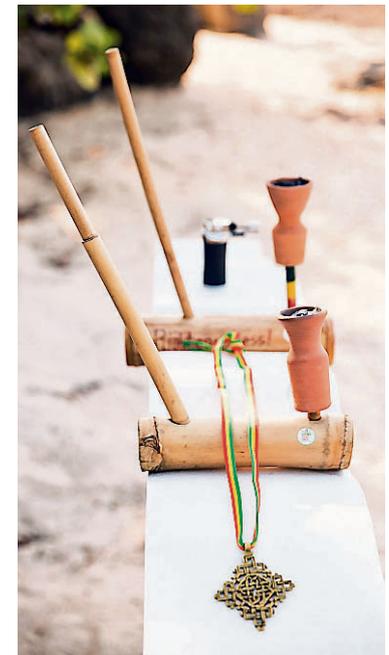


Joan Elizabeth Webley (model bride) and Christian Broderick (model groom) at a staged weed wedding at the new Borghinvilla on the border of Trelawny and St Ann.

Purple and white fondant cake with white orchids by Joy of Food.



Model bride (Joan Elizabeth Webley) with Ras Kahleb and his ital vapor steam chalice.



Ras Kahleb ital vapour steam chalice.



Ceremony set-up for a wedding at the new Borghinvilla.



Ganja rolling station. Guests can choose between having one rolled or a pre-rolled joint.



Ceremony set-up: Fuchsia bougainvillea line the aisle while sheer purple fabric drapes the wedding gazebo along with flowers that include fuchsia roses, ferns, and purple orchids.

groups to this island," she said.

Before settling in Jamaica, Borgh searched long and hard to find the perfect location for couples. When she did, she selected Borghinvilla based on its uniqueness, privacy, and the opportunity it offers for personalised weddings and events.

"This venue is available year-round to host celebrations, vow renewals, and other special events," she stated, noting that the property was seated on two acres of lush tropical oasis.

"Guests will love our mix of First World standards, mixed with the warm, friendly service of Jamaicans. Our goal is to wow wedding guests and make couples and their guests feel overwhelmed with joy on this day," is the promise Borgh is making.

A promise she plans to keep hosting no more than one wedding

per day, "so it can be all about couples and their guests".

Borghinvilla is centrally located for many of the hotels and resorts in the Montego Bay, Trelawny, Runaway Bay, and Ocho Rios areas. It is less than an hour from Kingston or Montego Bay.

Borghinvilla hosts any religious or non-religious denomination. Specialising in South Asian weddings, Borghinvilla is capable of accommodating both Sikh and Hindu ceremonies, as well as Christian, Catholic, Jewish, etc.

The area where ceremonies take place has the capacity to accommodate 100 persons; however, Borgh said there are no limits because the property has enough land space. Some locations were identified, ranging from the cliffside gazebo,

cliffside deck, tree area on the beach to a grassy or garden areas.

Bridal parties have the option of two air-conditioned bridal suites with washrooms and a living room/dining room, with a fan. All the other areas are outdoors.

Borgh outlined the top 10 reasons Borghinvilla is the best wedding venue for persons getting married in Jamaica, whether locals or visitors:

1. We are located on two acres of lush tropical gardens, plus we have beach and cliff views of the endless Caribbean Sea.
2. You can bring your own vendors without additional fees.
3. It's exclusive so you will not have uninvited guests at your wedding or in your photos.
4. Ceremony start times are your choice as we aren't fitting you into a time slot.
5. We host only one wedding per day so you won't cross paths with any other brides.
6. The reception can end when you are ready to stop the party.
7. Air-conditioned, ocean-view walk-out bridal suite so your hair and make-up can be as fresh as possible.
8. Spectacular sunset year-round.
9. We reply to our emails promptly so you can plan your wedding at your convenience.
10. We don't charge any additional fees for guests not staying at your hotel.

Borghinvilla is not the easiest venue to find, so Hospitality Jamaica encourages you to call Borgh at 876-425-8222 or email info@borghinvilla.com before going to check out the location. Website: www.borghinvilla.com.



The Sandals and Beaches team in a celebratory mood after winning 15 awards, including the Caribbean's Leading Hotel Chain for the 23rd year, during the World Travel Awards gala at Sandals Ochi Beach Resort last Saturday night.

Jamaica makes big haul at World Travel Awards

Janet Silvera

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

FOR THE sixth consecutive year, the Montego Bay Convention Centre has copped the World Travel Award (WTA) for the Caribbean's Leading Meetings and Conference Facility.

Last Saturday night, the centre's general manager, Dittie Guise shared the spotlight with several other Jamaican companies recognised at the Caribbean and North America WTA gala ceremony at Sandals Ochi Beach Resort.

Overwhelmingly pleased and excited at receiving the award, Guise said, "We are genuinely thrilled that we were able to come out on top in a category with such impressive nominees. Since inception, the Montego Bay Convention Centre has focused on providing sterling service to our

clients. So, for us, it's truly an honour that validates the exceptional effort we place on providing a first-rate convention centre we can all be proud of."

Topping the list of awardees was Sandals Resorts International (SRI), as its Sandals and Beaches properties walked away with 15 awards, including the Caribbean's Leading Hotel Chain, a title it has received 23 times.

Also awarded within SRI's brand was its philanthropic arm, the Sandals Foundation, which received the special honour of Outstanding Contribution to Corporate Social Responsibility Projects for its commitment to making a positive impact in the region through education, environment and community.

Braco Melia Village was recognised as the Caribbean's Leading New Hotel; Club MoBay was named the



Dittie Guise (left) of the Montego Bay Convention Centre with senior adviser in the Ministry of Tourism, Delano Seiveright, and Miss Jamaica World 2016 Ashlie Barrett, after receiving the award for Caribbean's Leading Convention Centre.



The Caribbean's Leading Tour Operator, Go Jamaica Travel's, Dave Chin Tung (left) poses with Vice-President of World Travel Awards Chris Frost.



PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

Belinda Morrow of Jamaica Inn with the Caribbean All-Suite Hotel trophy at the World Travel Awards.



Dr Horace Chang (left), minister without portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister, accepts the Leading Cruise Port award from Vice-President of World Travel Awards Chris Frost.

Caribbean's Leading Airport; and Trafalgar Travel taking home the Caribbean's Leading Travel Agency award for another year.

The World Travel Awards were established in 1993 for the express purpose of acknowledging and celebrating achievements in all areas of the world's travel and tourism industry. Today, the World Travel Awards brand is recognised

globally as the ultimate hallmark of quality, with winners setting the benchmark to which all others aspire. Each year, WTA covers the globe with a series of regional gala ceremonies staged to recognise and celebrate individual and collective successes within each key geographical region.

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Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (third left) with the Caribbean Airlines team (from left): Odette Hudson, Dionne Ligoure, Trudy Chin, Hope Stewart and Delia Bennett.



President of World Travel Awards Graham Cooke is flanked by Debbie-Ann White (left), senior vice-president of public relations and promotions, Unique Vacations Inc, and Jessica Culbreath, media relations manager, Unique Vacations.



Half Moon's Sharon Logan (right), accepts one of three awards from Yendi Phillipp, master of ceremonies at the World Travel Awards last Saturday night in Ocho Rios.



Spanish Court's Andres Cope (left) accepts the Jamaica Leading Business Hotel award from master of ceremonies Adrian Atkinson.



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett and Turks and Caicos' Minister of Tourism Porsha Stubbs-Smith after accepting her country's award for Caribbean Leading Beach Destination during the World Travel Awards gala.



Minister of
Tourism
Edmund Bartlett.

Ministry to celebrate Tourism Awareness Week

THE MINISTRY of Tourism, its agencies and industry partners, will seek to further raise awareness about the role Jamaica is playing in promoting responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism during its annual celebration of Tourism Awareness Week (TAW).

This is in keeping with the ministry's drive to ensure that the benefits of tourism are felt by every Jamaican across the length and breadth of the island and to continuously improve the tourism product to meet the unique needs of our visitors.

The week-long celebration will be observed from September 25-October 1, under

the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's (UNWTO) theme for World Tourism Day, September 27 – 'Tourism for All: Promoting Universal Accessibility'. It promises to be an engaging week, with a series of activities highlighting the work the ministry and its agencies are doing to foster universal accessibility within the tourism sector.

TOURISTS WITH DISABILITIES

According to the UNWTO, 15 per cent of the world's population is estimated to live with some form of disability. More specifically, there is an estimated one billion people around the world who are unable to enjoy the privilege of travelling to experience another culture because of a physical disability.

"Jamaica recognises the importance of universal accessibility and we want to eventually remove all barriers that may hinder persons with special needs and disabilities from enjoying our beautiful island. We know that with more improvements to the sector in this regard, it makes our country more marketable and appealing,

ultimately increasing potential earnings," said Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett.

In observing TAW, the ministry and its agencies will highlight initiatives such as the national beach development programme, which provides full access to some of our island's best beaches for all Jamaicans and visitors, including persons who are physically challenged. Another important undertaking is the development of the Tourism Linkages Network, which seeks to ensure that more Jamaicans have the opportunity to be a part of the sector and reap the many benefits.

"I have issued a charge to our team within the ministry and its agencies to ensure that as we diversify and improve our tourism product, due consideration is given to accommodating visitors with special needs," added Bartlett.

The slate of activities for Tourism Awareness Week will include a social media competition, poster competition, Development Programme Exposé on September 27 at Boston Beach, Portland, and the official launch of the National Community Tourism Portal on September 28 at Devon House.

THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

To connect or not to connect

David Jessop
Contributor

HAVING SPENT a significant part of my working life staying in hotels in the Caribbean, North and South America and in Europe, I have become accustomed to the varying, sometimes surprising facilities and styles one finds in hotel rooms.

For example, I have been given a hotel room in Switzerland that promised 'colour therapy', allowing me to change the lighting in a way that it claimed would enable me to adjust my mood – it failed; a hotel room in Brussels in which there was a bean bag and water bowl for my non-existent dog; and another, many years ago before tourism took off in a small, then forgotten Caribbean island, where the whole room was painted black, which my

bill on check-out described appropriately as the suicide room.

I note that, having spent the last week travelling in Europe, during the course of which I stayed in two hotels that could not have been more different. The first in a smart provincial Dutch town was simple, almost austere and calm. There was Wi-Fi, a high-definition television and a modern coffee machine, but little more in the room other than one might more generally expect from any good hotel.

In contrast, I went on to stay in Brussels in what was the highest tech, most modern hotel room I have ever been in, with a level of connectivity that took me to the edge of my comfort zone. The offer was straightforward; by downloading a hotel app I could wirelessly link all my mobile devices from laptop to mobile

phone and iPod to their network so as to watch my movies, favourite clips and see my photographs on their television screen.

The experience made me aware of the extraordinary growth now taking place in hotels across the world in guest-facing technology.

APP SERVICES

What emerges from a little research is that it is becoming more common for guests in some of the world's leading hotel chains to be offered, before arrival, the opportunity to download an app on to their smartphones that will enable them to perform a wide range of functions when they arrive. These include check-in and check-out, accessing their room floor and their room, controlling in-room facilities, for example, by pre-setting and adjusting room temperature, lighting and music before arrival, and even pre-selecting their choice of favourite beverage for their mini bar. The

same app, on some properties, is also used for ordering from room service, making bookings at hotel restaurants and more.

Beyond this, a number of Starwood properties are now equipped with beacons that can communicate with guest-downloaded apps so that, for example, front-of-house staff are able to greet guests by name or can inform housekeeping staff when guests are not in their rooms.

Much less attractively perhaps, other hotel chains are using beacons to send marketing messages to guests while on a property, for example, about special discounts at a spa during quiet times, or to encourage them to use other facilities like casinos or restaurants. Some chains are also using uploaded information by guests to personalise subsequent marketing messages, and, in some cases, intend selling this on to marketing companies, a

development that potentially raises issues of personal privacy.

More extraordinarily, one hotel chain is even making a virtue out of offering guests the opportunity to not have to interact with a human being unless needed, and the chance to self-store their luggage using a giant robotic arm.

According to those developing high-tech applications for hotels, such facilities are likely to become particularly important as the baby-boomer generation fades and millennials become the next high-spending, well-travelled generation, carrying ever more advanced smartphones.

How much of this technology will appear in Caribbean properties or will come to be expected by those visiting the region remains to be seen; but for my money, a Caribbean vacation and a hotel are locations in which to relax, offering one of the few chances to escape from the menace of total 24-hour connectivity.



JESSOP



Must be 18 yrs & older to drink.
Drink responsibly!



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Desmond Simpson (left) receives his Top Producer Award from Wyley Sweeney, president of Rose Hall Developments Limited.

Rose Hall Great House hosts Taxi Driver Awards Dinner

TAXI DRIVERS of western Jamaica were fêted on Sunday night at the Rose Hall Great House Taxi Driver Awards held at the beautiful White Witch Golf Club.

It was a delightful evening of good food, good people and good vibe as the 30 top producing taxi drivers were recognised for their outstanding business contribution to the Rose Hall Great House attraction.

Excellence Awards were given to the top Jamaica Union of Travellers Association, JCAL and Maxi Tours drivers as well. The winners in this section were Trevor Richards, representing the Jamaica Union of Travellers Association (JUTA), Leon Clarke, attached to JCAL Tours and Maxi Tours' Trevor Hudgins.

Jerome Spence and Lawton Jackson, both from Jamaica Tours Limited (JTL), copped the top awards for first- and second-place Superstar Awards and walked away with Samsung smart television sets and bright smiles.

An elated Jerome Spence said he never expected anything like this and truly appreciates Rose Hall for what they are doing to increase business with drivers.

In her address, Michele Rollins,

chairman of Rose Hall Developments Limited, praised the drivers for their vital role in the tourist industry by ensuring that visitors ventured outside of their resorts and truly experience the heart of Jamaica through her attractions, restaurants and shops.

Great House manager Angele Nunez, in welcoming the drivers, said, "We have heard you! We appreciate you and we have even better [things] in store for the taxi drivers who support our business."

DRIVERS ECSTATIC

The drivers were ecstatic about the awards and openly voiced their appreciation to Rose Hall for recognising this sector of unsung heroes of tourism in Jamaica.

Rose Hall Great House operates day and night tours of this beautifully restored 18th century plantation great house. Guests are mesmerised by bewitching tales of former mistress of the house, the legendary Annie Palmer. Thousands of guests from nearby resorts and cruise ships visit the house daily to experience this authentic piece of Jamaica, but at night the tour is not for the faint at heart as the plantation era is brought to life and visitors have spine-chilling encounters with the ghosts of Rose Hall.



Lawton Jackson (left) receives his second-place Superstar Award from Michele Rollins, chairman of Rose Hall Developments Limited.

AT RIGHT: Jerome Spence (left) and his wife Stacey (right) with Michele Rollins, chairman of Rose Hall Developments Limited, after receiving the first-place Superstar Award at the Rose Hall Taxi Driver Awards on September 11.



Sherill Gayle receives her Top Producer Award from Wyley Sweeney, president of Rose Hall Developments Limited.



An ecstatic Jerome Spence (left) and his wife Stacey (right) with their new 48-inch Samsung SMART TV, after copping the top award of first-place Superstar at the Rose Hall Taxi Driver Awards on September 11, 2016. Michele Rollins, chairman of Rose Hall Developments Limited, and Wyley Sweeney share the moment.

CONTRIBUTED

AT LEFT: Michele Rollins (centre in blue), chairman of Rose Hall Developments Limited, with (fourth from left, front row) Angele Nunez, Rose Hall Great House manager and the staff of the Rose Hall Great House and a few award winners at the Rose Hall Taxi Driver Awards. Also in photo is Wyley Sweeney (left), president of Rose Hall Developments Limited.



Second-place Superstar Award winner Lawton Jackson accepts his 32-inch Samsung SMART TV from Michele Rollins (right), chairman of Rose Hall Developments Limited. Also present is Annakay Woodstock, tour guide at the Rose Hall Great House.

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Jamaica Travel Market to boost presence in the UK

PLANS FOR Jamaica Tourist Board's inaugural Jamaica Travel Market are in high gear with the event set to commence on September 29 at the Luton Hoo Hotel, Golf & Spa in Bedfordshire. The trade-only event will see scheduled appointments between Jamaican suppliers and partners negotiate with tour operators, travel agents, wedding planners, and representatives from the MICE sector.

Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett and Director of Tourism

JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD

Paul Pennicook will spearhead the initiative that is dedicated to Destination Jamaica.

Tourism partners and stakeholders are already registered. Some 20 suppliers are seizing this

unique opportunity to engage in business-to-business discussions with major players in the marketplace within and beyond the United Kingdom (UK). Equally, the event has generated interest from more than 40 buyers, including tour operators, airlines, and industry affiliates. Additionally, representatives from the trade, consumer and diaspora media will be in attendance. Interactive workshops for travel agents, highlighting Jamaica's offering in the wedding and

honeymoon sector will also be available.

The two-day event will also recognise tour operators that contribute to Jamaica's tourism success through the Jamaica Travel Market Awards. Awards will be presented to companies with the largest growth in room nights to Jamaica in 2015. The award categories are: UK Tour Operator, UK Travel Agent/Tour Operator, UK Online Tour Operator, UK Charter Tour Operator and Nordic Tour Operator.

Top local tourism officials visit Canada

A DELEGATION of top tourism officials from Jamaica, led by Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett and Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook, visited Canada recently. The group was in Toronto to meet with airlines, tour operators, travel agents, as well as diaspora and media representatives. Also in the delegation was Jamaica Tourist Board

(JTB) Chairman John Lynch, Marcia McLaughlin, deputy director of tourism, marketing, and Philip Rose, regional director, Canada.

The goal of the trip was to share the minister's Five Pillars of Tourism Growth and collaborate with Canadian partners on marketing strategies. Strategic planning sessions were held with WestJet Vacations, Air Canada Vacations, TravelBrands,



Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett appeared in a live television interview on the Business News Network's 'Business Day PM' show with anchor Catherine Murray discussing the business of tourism in Jamaica.

Sunwing Travel Group and Transat Holidays. As a result of these meetings, Sunwing will now increase their capacity to Jamaica for the winter season by 10.5 per cent. There were also meetings with

diaspora partners.

Media meetings provided key information on new product updates, such as the new North-South Highway, expanding cruise facilities and new resorts and attractions.

Interviews were conducted with Business News Network, Postmedia News, **Canadian Traveller**, Travelweek, **Canadian Travel Press**, PAXNews, Toronto Caribbean News and G98 radio.



Paul Pennicook (centre), Jamaica's director of tourism, and Regional Director Philip Rose (right) were guests on G98.7 radio's 'Grapevine' show with station owner and diaspora community leader Fitzroy Gordon.

Nominations are now open for:

The Gleaner **Hospitality Jamaica** *Awards*

Saturday, November 19 • Montego Bay Convention Centre

RECOGNISING ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND EXPERIENCE OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

- **Best EP hotel**
- **Best all-inclusive over 300 rooms**
- **Best all-inclusive under 300 rooms**
- **Best cuisine**
- **Best in eco-sustainable tourism**
- **Best in innovation**
- **Best small or boutique hotel**
- **Best in transportation**
- **Best purveyor**
- **Best business or conference hotel**
- **Best attraction**
- **Best in Jamaican entertainment**
- **Hospitality person of the year**

• *Hospitality person of the year will be selected from category winners.*

NOMINEES MUST:

- Comply with all applicable tourism industry and other standards
- Provide exceptional customer service which enhances the visitor experience
- Engage in continuous upgrading of facilities and training of staff
- Contribute significantly to the improvement in quality of Jamaica's tourism industry
- Entity must be in operation for at least one year

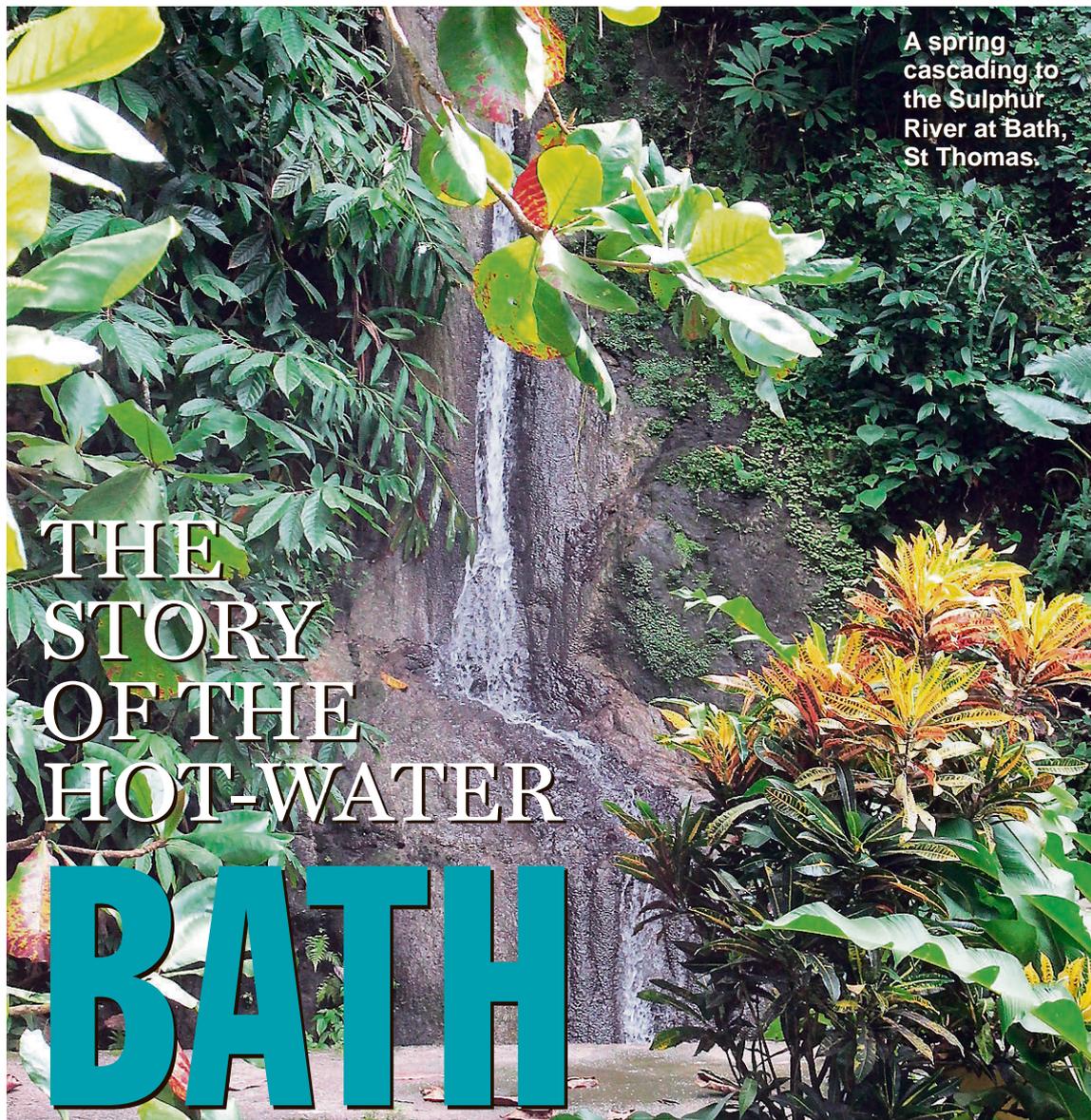
NOMINATION PROCEDURE

Send a fax to 952-3828; a letter to Editor, The Gleaner, P.O. Box 40, Kingston; or email: hospitalityjamaica@gleanerjm.com nominating an individual or organisation meeting the criteria.

**NOMINATIONS CLOSE
SEPTEMBER 30.**

ENTRIES MUST INCLUDE:

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



A spring cascading to the Sulphur River at Bath, St Thomas.

THE STORY OF THE HOT-WATER BATH

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

VISITORS TO the district of Bath in east central St Thomas, if they had not already read about its history, would not know that this quiet and laid-back place was once a social hotspot, a lovers' rendezvous, a pirate's haunt, and a nature hospital. Its heyday is long gone, but people still go there in droves to the natural balm, the sulphuric hot waters, to soothe their mind and body.

The hot springs were what made Bath famous in the first place, and when **Hospitality Jamaica** visited last Friday, a long line of people were seen crossing a bridge and travelling up the moderately steep incline to go to the spot where piping-hot water oozes from rocks into the cold sulphur river.

Its discovery was made, according to oral traditions, by an enslaved African named Jacob. He had run away from the injustice and hardship of slavery, and had hidden among thick vegetation on

lands owned by a Colonel Stanton, who had held him in servitude. Jacob, who had sores all over his body, came upon the hot waters by chance. Some of it had collected in a natural basin, in which he got the idea to soak his entire ulcerous and tired body. This he did for a while.

AMAZING HEALING

Eventually, the water, now known to contain calcium, magnesium, sodium, sulphate, bicarbonate, silicate and chloride, serendipitously healed Jacob's sores. The joy of the 'miracle' was too sweet to keep, so Jacob risked being maimed or killed for his truancy by returning to his keeper to tell him about the hot waters and how it amazingly healed his sores.

After the divulgence of the curative nature the hot water, the springs became popular among the local people. But Colonel Stanton sold them with 1,130 acres of land to the Government in 1699. The change of ownership did not stop the interest in the springs. The first decades of the 1700s saw a rise in

their popularity among members of the public.

The news had spread wide and far, and people travelled from far and wide to Bath to heal their gout, rheumatism, arthritis, stomach disorders, ulcers, skin diseases. Over time, the place to which Jacob's discovery had pulled the sick, the maimed and the lame had turned into a nature hospital for many. These were not only people from the local gentry, but also rich and ailing white Americans and Europeans.

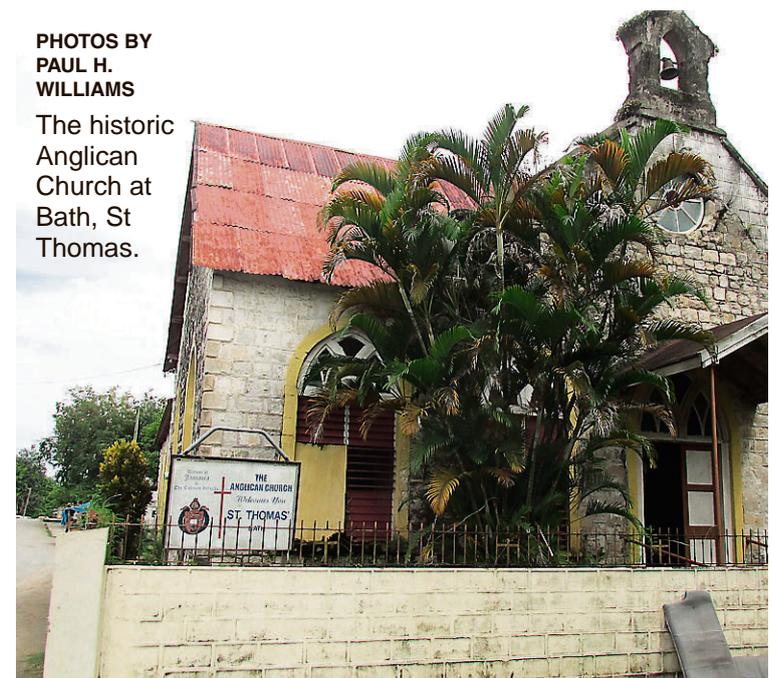
The wealthy ones, who could not get enough of the 'medicine', began to build dwelling places not far from the springs. But the new village of Bath itself evolved on the northern banks of the Plantain Garden River, which runs from west to east, by people who built townhouses on lots they had purchased. As hard as **Hospitality Jamaica** tried, no ruins of the original dwellings were seen. But the research has revealed that Bath also became a mecca for people of wealth, high social standings, and worldwide repute.



People still flock to the hot-water springs at Bath in St Thomas. It is said they were discovered by a runaway enslaved African named Jacob in the late 1600s.

PHOTOS BY
PAUL H.
WILLIAMS

The historic Anglican Church at Bath, St Thomas.



The Bath Fountain Hotel and Spa offers a variety of therapeutic and hospitality services.



CONTRIBUTED

SPREADING THE LOVE: Human resources director at Royalton White Sands, Angeline Anderson (left), and community relations manager at the resort, Debbie Bailey, interact with children at the Blossom Gardens Child Care Facility in Montego Bay during a visit to the facility on Wednesday, September 14. While at the home, members of staff of Royalton White Sands delivered several pieces toys and provided refreshments for the children.

Royalton White Sands supports Blossom Gardens Child Care Facility

CHILDREN AT the Blossom Gardens Child Care Facility in Montego Bay on Wednesday, September 14, felt the warmth of members of staff of the Royalton White Sands Resort in Trelawny through the donation of toys and other items.

The resort delivered several toys to the children and also provided them with refreshments in what turned out to be an emotional visit to the facility.

Human resources director at Royalton White Sands, Angeline Anderson, said the visit and donation formed a part of the resort's community relations programme and ensured that staff members were given an opportunity to visit and spend quality time with the children and members of staff.

"The facility is very clean. The

kids were adorable, which resulted in some of us becoming attached to them, and leaving the home was an emotional experience. We just could not pull ourselves away from these children, who are so warm, beautiful, and adorable," stated Anderson.

SPREADING RESOURCES

The hotel's human resources director said the hotel plans to continue to give to the home regularly. "We are on a mission to spread the resources which the resort has been blessed with – through the kind donation of our team members, the corporate offices and, very importantly, our guests. We are determined to make a difference – not only in the parish of Trelawny, but where we think these resources are needed," she said.

Community relations manager Debbie Bailey, who was part of the visiting team, described it as an experience of a lifetime to finally be able to participate in an activity at the home, which is well known throughout Jamaica.

She said: "I have on many occasions read about, and heard of, Blossom Gardens Child Care Facility and being there gave me a new thinking of the tremendous work that the caregivers are delivering to the children. Participating in the feeding session took me down a road which I will always treasure."

As part of its community relations programme, Royalton White Sands continues to seek out new avenues in which it can support communities and the people who serve the company.

The Bahamas elected chair of CTO

THE BAHAMAS has been elected chair of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), with the election as Minister of Tourism Obie Wilchcombe.

The election took place on September 15 in Barbados at the organisation's annual general meeting during the CTO's State of the Tourism Industry Conference.

Following his election, Wilchcombe said: "I intend to build upon what [immediate predecessor Richard Sealy of Barbados] began and I also intend to build on the relationship with the private sector. I've always thought that CTO is the body that provides equity and we can; and the way is to speak with the same voice. We also have to deal with the issue of inter-regional travel."

Wilchcombe succeeds Barbados's Minister of Tourism and International Transport Richard Sealy, and will serve a two-year term. It is his second stint as chairman, having previously been elected to the position in 2002.

The Bahamas minister will shortly name his appointee for the post of chairman of the CTO board of directors, since, according to the CTO Constitution, the board chairman and the chairman of

the Council of Ministers and Commissioners of Tourism must come from the same member country.

ADDITIONAL ELECTIONS

In addition to the election of the chairman, vice-chairs were elected to serve on the executive committee of the board of directors to represent various sub-groups – Curaçao, representing the Dutch Caribbean; Martinique, representing the French Caribbean; Barbados and Belize, representing the independent CARICOM countries; and the Turks & Caicos Islands representing the British Overseas Territories. Each of these member countries will form the executive committee of the board of directors, which will be completed with representatives from the private sector.

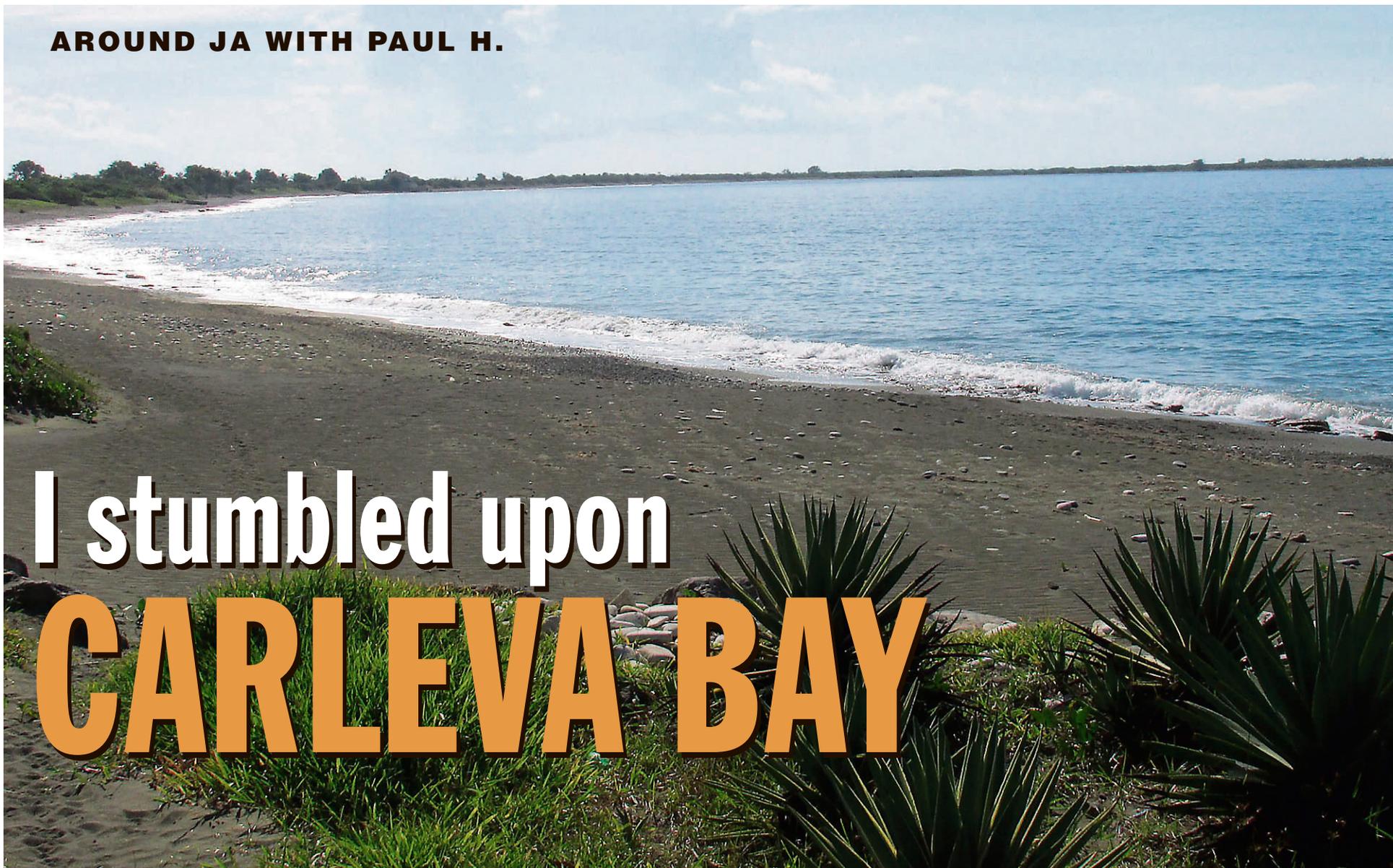
Last Friday's vote was in keeping with the CTO constitution which mandates that elections must be held every two years.

This year's conference at the Hilton Barbados Resort was organised in collaboration with Barbados' Ministry of Tourism and International Transport and the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc and was sponsored by LIAT, the Caribbean Airline and Libris by Photoshelter.



Obie Wilchcombe

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H.



I stumbled upon **CARLEVA BAY**

Carleva Bay Beach, near a community called Pondside at Yallahs, is perhaps one of St Thomas' natural gems.

PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

FOR YEARS, I have been interested in the salt ponds at Yallahs in St Thomas, but it was a few years ago that I realised how huge they were.

The revelation came about because the trees that hid the extent of their sizes for centuries are being cut down to produce charcoal.

The existence of these ultra-salty bodies of water are steeped in folklore, but they are, in fact, natural phenomena for which I am yet to get a sound scientific explanation, and I have also wondered why the salt that they produce is not mined commercially. So, on my list of places to seek out are these mystical lakes. Yet, they are actually one body of water.

A strip of land cuts across it giving the appearance that there are two separate pools. The strip does not go right across; there is a gap through which water flows between the small section and the much bigger one. The sections are

separated from the sea by another strip of land, but there is also a gap along this strip through which the sea flows into the ponds.

I wanted to trek along one of the outer strips, so recently I embarked upon a reconnaissance tour to see what I would be up against. But before I reached anywhere near the entrance to the strip that partially encloses the smaller section, I stumbled upon a bay called Carleva. I have never heard of it, never saw it on the map, and so my interest was piqued. The salt ponds could wait, so I diverted to the bay.

BLUE WATERS

It is huge, having a very deep curve at the eastern end until it reaches the beginning of the strip of land that encloses the small section of the pond, way in the distance. The water is mesmerisingly blue, and is relatively calm. It washes on to powdery black sands that sparkle under the sun. Strewn atop the glittery sediments are



As twilight descends, get ready to lie in a swinging bed to listen to the lullabies of the sea at Carleva Bay, Yallahs, St Thomas.

smooth stones of various colours, sizes and shapes.

When I turned around to the northern hills, there was more magic. The rolling verdant mounds, juxtaposed with the sky, were majestic. I was really overwhelmed by all of this grandeur of nature, the beauty that weakens my knees. But I did genuflect. I stood my ground to absorb it all.

The ponds had pulled me to what has to be one of St Thomas' best-kept secrets. Compared to Lyssons, Southampton and Bayshore beaches, this is the most attractive beach on the St Thomas' southern coast.

But it was not only the bay beach I chanced upon. There is a villa that is situated near the beach. On a wall at the gate is written: 'Edu-tourism St Thomas Center for Global Understanding'. Contact information is also given. Further research and face-to-face checks reveal that it is an active entity that

'is the natural extension to the basic philosophy of Edu-tourism'.

"At the core of the centre's operation is the practice of service learning (community research and exchange), a form of international education regime appropriate to the realities of the global village by which our world is now defined ... We are committed to providing the environment in which high-quality, academically sound, and experientially rich, learning occurs ... working with groups to structure experiences suited to their needs," says its website, among other things.

From the outside looking in, the property is well designed and decorated with natural things from the area, which has a variety of vegetation such as mangroves, acacia, cacti and other succulents.

Had it not been for my interest in the ponds I would not have stumbled upon Carleva Bay. It's simply beautiful. I shall return, and who knows what other serendipity I will 'buck up'.



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

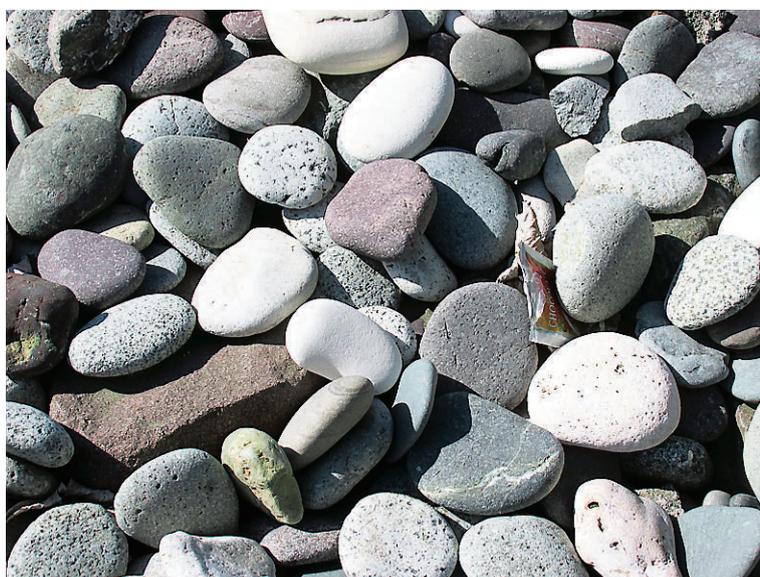
A section of the road leading to and from Carleva Bay Beach at Yallahs, St Thomas.



Verdant rolling hills can be seen from the expanse of Carleva Bay Beach.



The area in which Carleva Bay Beach is located at Yallahs, St Thomas, has a variety of plants such as mangroves, cacti and succulents such as the ones in the picture above.



Carleva Bay Beach is a stone-lover's haven.



The sands on Carleva Bay Beach are black, powdery and glittery.



CONTRIBUTED

Sandals Whitehouse general manager Adrian Whitehead works with a little boy from the Whitehouse community to clean up a section of the Whitehouse Fishing Village on International Coastal Clean-up Day on September 17 during an effort spearheaded by the Sandals Foundation.

Sandals Foundation volunteers clean up Whitehouse Fishing Village

MORE THAN 80 volunteers from Sandals Whitehouse, fisher folk, and other environmentally aware members of the Whitehouse community carried out a much-needed clean-up effort at the Whitehouse Fishing Village over the weekend in observation of International Coastal Clean-up (ICC) Day [September 17].

During the clean-up effort, sponsored by the Sandals Foundation, volunteers collected approximately 2,620 pounds of debris, including three old fridges, multiple discarded boat parts, and more than 60 pounds of fibreglass.

Launched by the Ocean

Conservancy in the USA, ICC is the largest one-day volunteer outreach with more than 100 participating countries. This year's event was coordinated locally by the Jamaica Environment Trust in partnership with the Tourism Enhancement Fund. The Whitehouse Fishing Village was one of nine sites across the Caribbean earmarked for clean-up by the Sandals Foundation this year. The Sandals Foundation teams also used the day's activity as an opportunity to educate their volunteers and local communities about proper waste disposal and the effects that improper waste disposal has on the health and well-being of communities.



Beeston Spring Peace Corps volunteer Patrick Bula (left) and a community member carry a large bag of debris, which their group collected. Their bag was one of 132 collected from the Whitehouse Fishing Village beach on International Coastal Clean-up Day during an effort spearheaded by the Sandals Foundation.

'Voluntourism' is alive and well

Claudia Gardner
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

VOLUNTEER TOURISM was on show in the parish of Hanover over the last three weeks via a dental clinic, which was staged by the Great Shapes International Medical Mission in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Lucea and the Sandals Foundation.

Fifty 'voluntourists' from the United States provided dental services free of cost to approximately 1,000 persons at the annual clinic held at the Hanover Parish Church Hall in Lucea. Services rendered included cleaning, filling, and extractions.

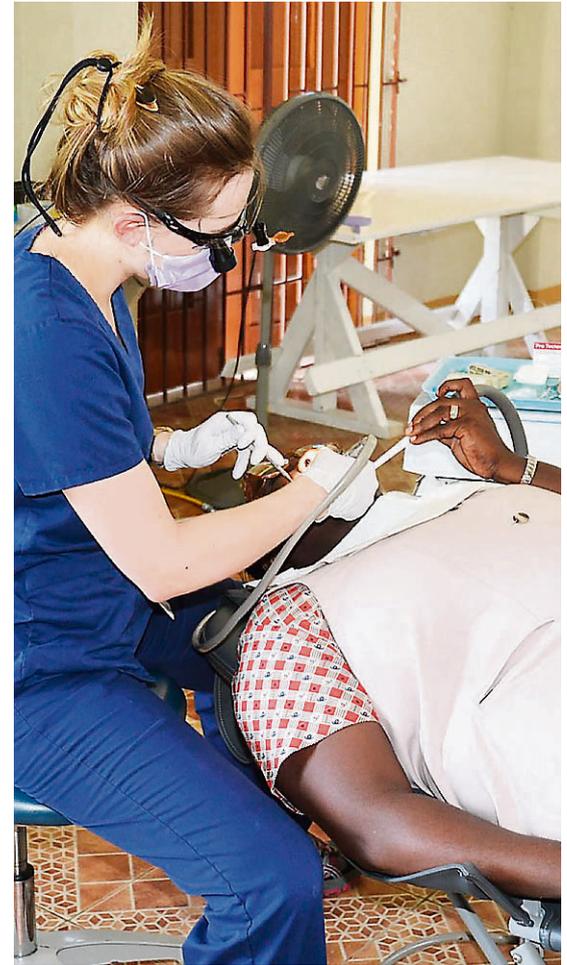
Great Shape volunteer and dental professor Dr Ronald Guttu told **Hospitality Jamaica** that over the eight years that he has been volunteering with the mission, he has seen a decline in the number of dental cavities, which he attributed to the organisation's school programme.

"The year 2003 was the first year Great Shapes came to Hanover, and since then, the programme has increased every year. We are here just to supplement the public-health system that is already in place. The dental-health programme (in Jamaica) is overwhelmed by the numbers and that is due to a funding issue and not having enough providers," Guttu said.

President of the Rotary Club of Lucea, Winfield Murray, told **Hospitality Jamaica** that the objectives of the clinic was to provide services to between 50 and 60 persons per day from across Hanover, a parish that is served by only one dentist.

"The expression from the people is that they appreciate it greatly," Murray said, adding that another joint project featuring the two organisations is in the making.

"The idea is to convert a 30-seater bus into a clinic, which can take the dental service into the interior of the country to schools and communities," he said.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

A member of the Great Shapes dental team tends to a patient at the recent three-wheeler clinic in Lucea.

BELOW: Rotary Club of Lucea's Pamela Campbell, a retired nurse, checks the blood pressure of Michelle Mowatt.

