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Tourism Service Excellence awards 2017



Dawn of
a new era for
Falmouth

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Run Taino Run

Time to promote
tourism
to diaspora achievers



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY ANGUIN

From left: Dr Horace Chang, minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, share lens time former Mayor of Falmouth Garth Wilkinson and Member of Parliament Victor Wright.



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (right) converses with CEO and president of the Port Authority of Jamaica, Professor Gordon Shirley.

Dawn of a new era for Falmouth

Camille Miller

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

NOTING THAT Falmouth has the potential to be right up there with the 'New Orleans' and 'Miami Beaches' of the world, the Jamaican Government is going full speed with massive infrastructural work throughout the Trelawny capital.

Coming against the backdrop of Falmouth already having the biggest and most ambiance-friendly port in the Caribbean, ground was broken last Friday for the Hampden Wharf Development – a mega infrastructure project that will certainly reposition the town as one of the Caribbean's premier cruise destinations.

For Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett, the potential goes even further.

According to him, the town will not only soon become the "region's tourism Mecca, but Falmouth will also have a central role to play" in the Ministry of Tourism's growth strategy as "we seek to attract five million visitors and generate US\$5 billion in tourism earnings by 2021.

In addition to the Hampden Wharf where all the amenities that make a resort town great will be in place, the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) and its partners are also in the process of completing another enhancement project in the town – the Falmouth

Streetscape Project," Bartlett added.

"This project concentrates on the enrichment of the streetscape by providing improvements consisting of: safe and accessible sidewalks; potential underground services (drainage and sewage services); special paving and surface treatment; overhead lighting (by decorative lamp posts); banner and hanging planter baskets; street furniture, benches and trash bins; way-finding signage; landscaping; improved sidewalks; and traffic management."

The entire project, which Bartlett said was estimated at \$279.9 million, also included works to Harbour Lane, Market Street and Falmouth Street. The rehabilitation of Tharpe Street has also commenced and is expected to be completed in the second quarter 2018-19.

Bartlett said that with cruise shipping on the rise and with the Falmouth Port being the biggest in the Caribbean, "we have to put the infrastructure in place" where the town can capitalise.

"Falmouth currently hosts the three largest cruise ships in the world – *Harmony of the Seas*, *Oasis of the Seas*, and *Allure of the Seas*. How many ports can make this claim?"

"The cruise market is one of the fastest-growing segments in the tourism sector and can make a significant contribution to a destination's economy. However, it is a fiercely competitive sector and proper planning,



David Dobson (left), of the Ministry of Tourism and Mark Hylton, general manager, the Falmouth cruise ship port.



A construction worker checks out one of the drawings of what the new Hampden Wharf Development will look like.

policies and infrastructure must be in place to take advantage of the booming cruise sector."

Bartlett added that there is no doubt in his mind that Falmouth has the capacity to become the largest distributor of cruise passengers in the Caribbean, projecting that cruise arrivals should reach 1.5 million by 2021.

He further noted that the town should also see earnings of US\$180 million or J\$2 billion from tourism spending. This, he noted, will entail increasing the average spend by each cruise passenger to US\$120, up from the \$90 dollars now being spent.

"Because of the potential we see in Falmouth, Jamaica is indeed poised to become the leading cruise ship destination in the region," Bartlett noted.

"Jamaica last year played host to the six largest cruise ships in the world. The Falmouth Pier hosted the largest cruise ships in the world – *Harmony of the Seas*, *Allure of the Seas* and *Oasis of the Seas*, which are all Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines (RCCL) vessels; while Ocho Rios hosted the *Norwegian Epic*, the *Norwegian Pearl* and the *Carnival Vista*."

"This was indeed a rarity for any destination globally," Bartlett added. "Over the next five years, we will significantly boost our capacity to receive luxury cruise lines in the country's major resort towns, including

Kingston, with Falmouth leading the way of course."

For his part, Mayor of Falmouth Colin Gager said the town is once again poised to reclaim its "economic and social importance" and is positioned to become "Jamaica's oil."

"There cannot be any dispute as to the leading role that Falmouth has played in the past and is now executing at present for the future economic and social prosperity of our nation," he pointed out.

The mayor also pointed to the early-18th-century days when, he said, the town was known to be the economic capital of the Western World, having one of the busiest ports and accommodating up to a total of 30 ships on any given day.

"Falmouth has always played a pivotal role in nation building and is a major catalyst for the stimulation of growth for sustainable development," he noted.

"The economic impact and contribution of this parish is rightly recorded in history, as it was the royal parish when sugar was king, and the wealthiest town and parish during that period. Falmouth boasted in excess of 12 sugar factories and was the leading exporter of sugar, rum and molasses."

He further noted that while there has been a reversal of fortunes where sugar is concerned, the town is again "kicking" with a new form of activity – tourism.



Senior adviser and strategist in the Ministry of Tourism, Delano Seiveright (left), and JAMVAC's Joy Roberts.



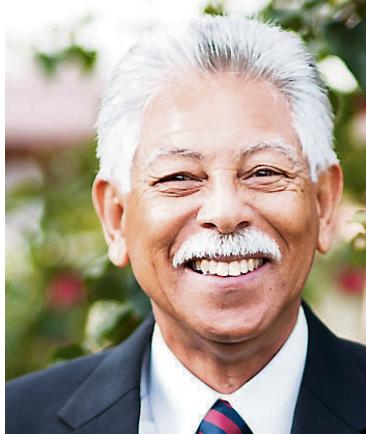
Custos of Trelawny, Paul Muschette, (left) and Professor Gordon Shirley, CEO and president, Port Authority of Jamaica.

Kiwanis convention to bring hundreds of visitors to Jamaica

JAMAICA WILL host hundreds of Kiwanians from across the Caribbean and Canada at the Kiwanis Annual District Convention, slated for May 17-19, 2018, at the Montego Bay Convention Centre.

The convention, which will be hosted in Jamaica for the fifth time, has been endorsed by Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett and the Tourism Enhancement Fund. Minister Bartlett has underscored the opportunity the Convention will provide to showcase Brand Jamaica, in addition to the expected revenues that will be generated by small hotels, Airbnb operators, the transportation sector and large all-inclusive hotels catering to the varying needs of tourists.

Over the three-day period, Kiwanians will engage in seminars designed to stimulate discussion and provide training in areas nec-



Governor Kiwanis Eastern Canada and the Caribbean District, Jamaican Robert 'Bobby' Moo Young.

essary to facilitate Kiwanis' work, including youth engagement, community service, fundraising, image building and leadership. These

forums are intended to enhance the skills and expertise of Kiwanians as they serve in their local clubs and work to positively impact their communities.

Prime Minister Andrew Holness will deliver the keynote address at the opening ceremony on May 17. Other highlights of the convention will be Jamaica Night, which has been dubbed 'Spirits Awakened', at the Rose Hall Great House and a grand gala on the Saturday night, which will culminate the convention.

In addressing Kiwanians, Convention Committee Chairman Lisa Golding outlined that winning the rights to host this convention has come at a critical time when there are increased calls for a concerted effort to develop programmes that cater to the needs of the country's most vulnerable citizens. Golding believes the convention will provide an excellent platform to equip



Host chairman for the Kiwanis Eastern Canada and the Caribbean District Convention, Lisa Golding, poses with Louise Paquette, JTB business development manager, Eastern Canada, and members of the West Can Folk group following a performance to promote the Jamaica convention in Ottawa last year.

volunteers to extend their reach and better serve our children and other vulnerable groups.

Other sponsors include Rose Hall Jamaica, Tropical Tours, Sipacupa Teas, Chancellor Insurance, Sixt Car Rental and Hope Marques Villas.

Kiwanis is a global organisation

with over 600,000 volunteers dedicated to improving the world, one child and one community at a time. Each year, Kiwanis clubs worldwide raise more than US\$100 million and report more than 18.5 million volunteer hours to strengthen communities and serve children.



PHOTO BY CARL GILCHRIST

New 'welcome' sign brightens Ocho Rios. A recently constructed sign marked 'Ocho Rios Welcomes You' has added some beauty to a section of the resort town. The sign, built by the St Ann Municipal Corporation with funds provided by the Tourism Enhancement Fund, has drawn attention and positive responses from residents and visitors to the town. The sign is located across the road from the Ocho Rios Police Station, at the intersection of Evelyn Street and the unnamed road leading to the transportation centre.



CONTRIBUTED

FDR hosts Gleaner's Children's Own Spelling Bee top three. The top three finishers in The Gleaner's Children's Own Spelling Bee contest spent an enjoyable weekend recently at the family-oriented Franklyn D Resort in Runaway Bay, St Ann. The winners were joined by relatives and members of the Gleaner team. Pictured here are (from left) Chaunte Blackwood, junior coach of the second- and third-place winners; Assana Thompson, third place champion; Nathaniel Stone, national Spelling Bee champion; Sherika Swaby, vacation nanny at FDR and Latoya Marston, coordinator at FDR.

Winners in Tourism Service Excellence Award



PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

Mikaila Robinson (left), Individual regional champion, Kingston, accepts vacation for two prize from Sandals Resorts International's Sheryl MaGaw-Douse.

Janet Silvera
Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

THE HYATT Ziva and Zilara are the 2017 Organisation and all-island champions in Tourism Service Excellence Awards (TSEA), while the Jamaica Pegasus' Mikaila Robinson copped both the individual award for Kingston and overall in the country.

The Montego Bay resort and Robinson were the stars at Saturday's awards function at the Montego Bay Convention centre in Rose Hall.

Hyatt went up against finalists such as Chukka, Beaches Negril, the Judy House, The Courtleigh Hotel and Suites, Island Car Rentals, Sandals Negril and Royal Plantation, Dunn's River Falls and Parks, Beaches Ocho Rios and Sandals Southcoast.



Tourism Service Excellence champions from the various resort towns share lens time with Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett.

At the end of the evening, the hotel, which ended 2017 being '1' and '2' in Hyatt America for service, walked away with the coveted recognition.

The Courtleigh was the top organisation in Kingston; Beach-

es Negril came out on top in Negril, Sandals Royal Plantation copped the number one spot in Ocho Rios, and Sandals Southcoast was the gem of the south, while Hyatt placed first in Montego Bay.

"Walking away with the TSEA top prize signals that we are being recognised for the excellence that we have created and only good things can come from

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Time to promote tourism to diaspora achievers

David Jessop

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

MUCH OF the recent emphasis by the Jamaican Government and others in relation to the Caribbean's sizeable diaspora in North America and Europe, has been on finding ways to encourage an interest in national development projects.

The idea has been that the region's community overseas might invest in productive enterprises rather than, as is now largely the case, homes for retirement, small family enterprises, or small start-ups utilising skills obtained overseas.

However, there are signs that the Government's approach may be changing in ways that recognise the growing diversity of the diaspora and place a greater emphasis on tourism as the driver of interest.

Speaking about this recently in Greece at the World Tourism Forum Lucerne Think Tank, Jamaica's Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett said that as the diaspora population grew and acquired substantial financial assets, an opportunity would arise to encourage some in this category to make investments in tourism.

"Our agencies will aggressively court partnerships with the diasporic communities and provide incentive structures to leverage their investment in accommodations, entertainment events, transportation, food and beverage, booking and sales services, and other small businesses that are linked to the tourism sector," he said.

It is also the case that the increasing diversity of the Caribbean's communities overseas may offer new marketing opportunities for tourism.

There is already a well-established and important diaspora travel business, the so-called VFR market. This involves many in the region's community overseas making often lengthy stays with friends or relatives, and visits home for important family events. So significant has this market become that, for example, in 2016 Jamaica reported that of the 210,000

overall visitors it received from the UK, 26 per cent were in the VFR category; an increase of nearly 19 per cent on 2015, and representing 11 per cent of all the country's visitor arrivals.

WIDER TRAVEL MARKET

However, what is only just beginning to be understood is that there is a much wider diaspora travel market that the region has largely failed to address. This is because it has not widely understood that the Caribbean's overseas community is no longer homogenous and there is a need to explore how best to attract as tourists those in the diaspora who have succeeded economically, intermarried, become assimilated, or have come to play roles that are remote from those who migrated.

Put another way, there are now tens of thousands of successful individuals in the diaspora, including



David Jessop

millennials, whose connections to the region are attenuating. Typically, this group is relatively well off and taking one or more long- or short-haul vacations annually with their families and friends.

Attracting such visitors requires a very different marketing strategy. One that speaks to heritage, family, ancestry and experiences, allied to all else that a country is selling to travellers – from beaches to quality hotels.

Interestingly, the *Voice* newspaper, Britain's only publication aimed at the Caribbean and African community, has recognised the opportunity and is to launch a travel magazine in print and online, targeting Caribbean and African travellers.

It notes that this category of visitor has been highly under-represented in the UK travel market through irrelevant travel offerings, despite being a growing market segment.

In order to obtain a greater understanding, the publication collaborated with a travel industry specialist to survey over 1,500 Caribbean and African diaspora travellers resident in Britain. What

its interim research showed was that diaspora millennials were leading the way with 48 per cent of respondents in this category travelling overseas, with many seeking cultural experiences when they do so. It suggested that this group was particularly brand aware and required greater focus by those in the industry seeking to boost their revenue streams and new markets.

Unfortunately, there is little detailed socio-economic research about how the Caribbean's overseas communities are changing.

Some Caribbean companies, for example those engaged in selling product to the Caribbean community and seeking mainstream crossover or those that provide money-transfer services for remittances, are undertaking market research. However, there is, more generally, little reliable socio-economically categorised information about the evolution of the region's diaspora and the nature of their economic activity.

What is needed is a properly researched understanding of what now constitutes and motivates the many different parts of the Caribbean's overseas communities and how this might relate in future to tourism.





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MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Congratulations To Our SERVICE EXCELLENCE Champions

TSEA Individual Winner: Mikhailla Robinson – The Jamaica Pegasus Hotel with Hon. Edmund Bartlett, CD, MP – Minister of Tourism.



Resort Winners: (left-right) Mikhailla Robinson, Shanique Cunningham, Romaine Meggo, Lennox Williams, Executive Director, TPDCo - Dr Andrew Spencer, Sandals South Coast - Adrian Whitehead, Hon. Minister Edmund Bartlett, CD, MP - Minister of Tourism, Sandals Royal Plantation - Arnold Nugent, Sandals Negril Resort - David Latchimy, Hyatt Ziva & Hyatt Zilara - Betty Ann Brown, Coutleigh Hotels & Suites - Michelle Reynolds, Member of the TPDCo Board - Toni Spence.

Special Recognition Awardees (left-right) – Chukka Caribbean – John Byles, The Judy House – Sue McKenzie, Dunns River Falls & Park – Jomo Pitterson, Executive Director, TPDCo - Dr. Andrew Spencer, Janette Kaloo - Sunset Resort & Villas, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, CD, MP - Minister of Tourism, Hopeton Powell – Olde Craft Market, Winston Jones – Hyatt Ziva & Hyatt Zilara, Michelle Sterling – Amstar DMC.

Guest entertainer - Barbara "Saxgurl" Brandford Witter serenading Hon. Edmund Bartlett, CD, MP - Minister of Tourism, (to his left) guest speaker Senator Don Wehby, CD - Group CEO GraceKennedy Limited and His Worship the Mayor of Montego Bay, Councillor Homer Davis.

For being named **World Tourism Minister**, a surprise special award was presented to Hon. Edmund Bartlett, CD, MP - Minister of Tourism by his executive team - from left David Dobson - Senior Technical Director, Ministry of Tourism, Janet Taylor - Executive Director, Devon House, Jennifer Griffith - Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Joy Roberts - Executive Director, JAMVAC, Dr. Carey Wallace - Executive Director, Tourism Enhancement Fund, Dr. Andrew Spencer - Executive Director, TPDCo and Donovan White - Director of Tourism, Jamaica Tourist Board.

Thanks to Our Sponsors

First-ever Jamaican Passover programme to launch in Montego Bay

'Royal Passover' makes Jamaica accessible to strictly kosher tourists

Though Jamaica boasts over 400 years of rich Jewish history and is a prime location for family-friendly vacations, there has never been an organised Passover programme for Jewish tourists on the island.

That will change from March 29 to April 8, when a new partnership with the Jamaica Tourist Board, the Chabad of Jamaica, and Royal Passover brings the first-ever strictly kosher Jamaica Passover programme to Melia Braco Village in Montego Bay.

"We are thrilled to partner with Royal Vacations to bring the first-ever Jamaican Passover programme to the island," said Jamaica's Director of Tourism Donovan White. "Jamaica has long been an ideal destination for Jewish families looking for both a tropical island getaway and a healthy dose of Jewish heritage, and the Jamaican Passover programme is a great addition to the 'Jewish Jamaica' experience."

Seeing untapped potential for Jewish tourism in Jamaica, Tzvi Berg, a veteran of the Passover programme industry and the director of Royal Passover, has embraced the island vibe and is working to make Montego Bay the next big destination for Passover programming, as well as Jewish weddings and bar mitzvahs.

"Jamaica is well known for her extraordinary natural beauty and world-renowned culture, but many do not know about her Jewish history and the many Jewish historical sites that dot the island. These include several preserved Jewish cemeteries, the final resting places of some of the Jewish pirates of the Caribbean, and the 100-year-old Shaare Shalom Synagogue, one of four remaining sand-floor synagogues in the world," Mr Berg pointed out. "It is my mission to make Jamaica truly accessible to strictly Kosher tourists by removing the

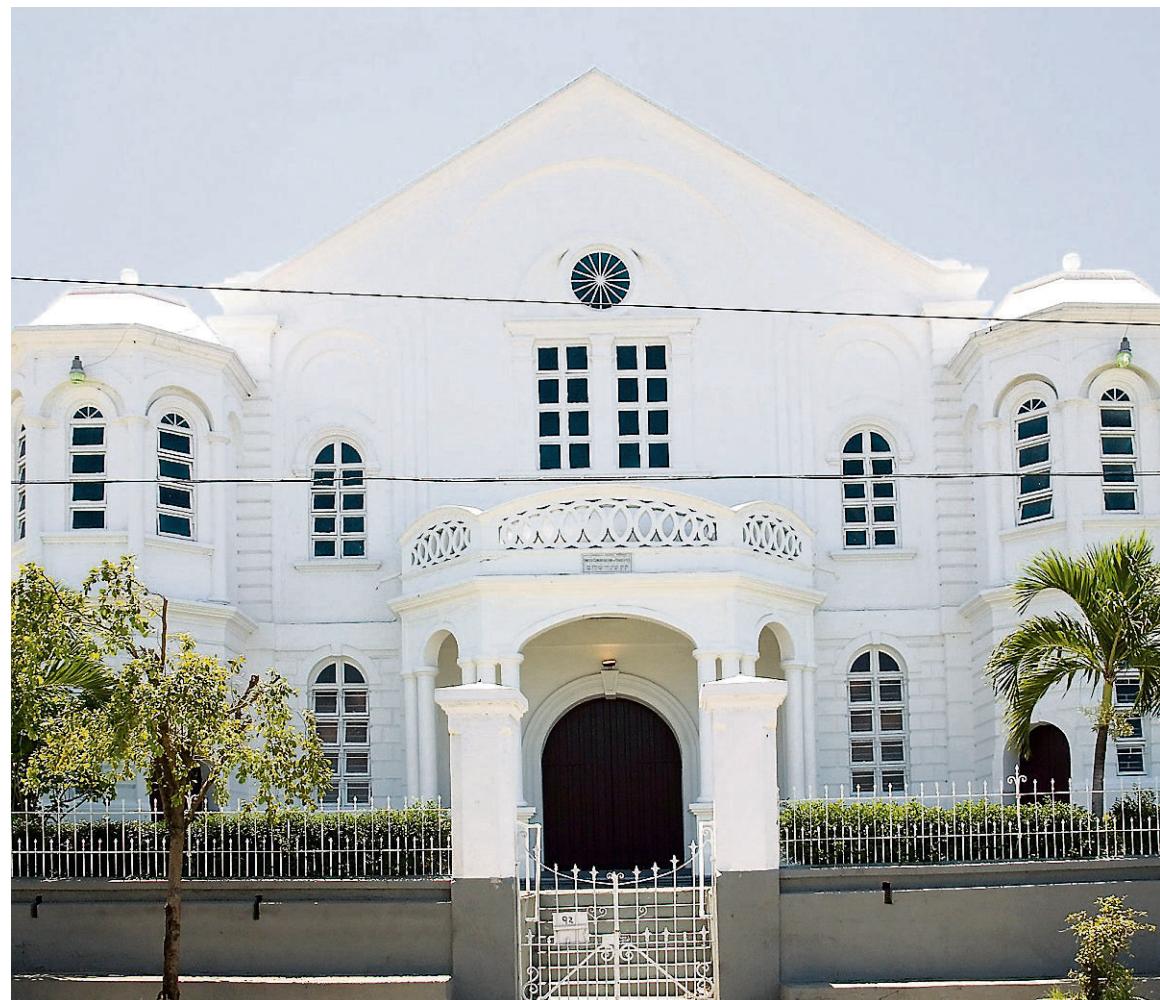
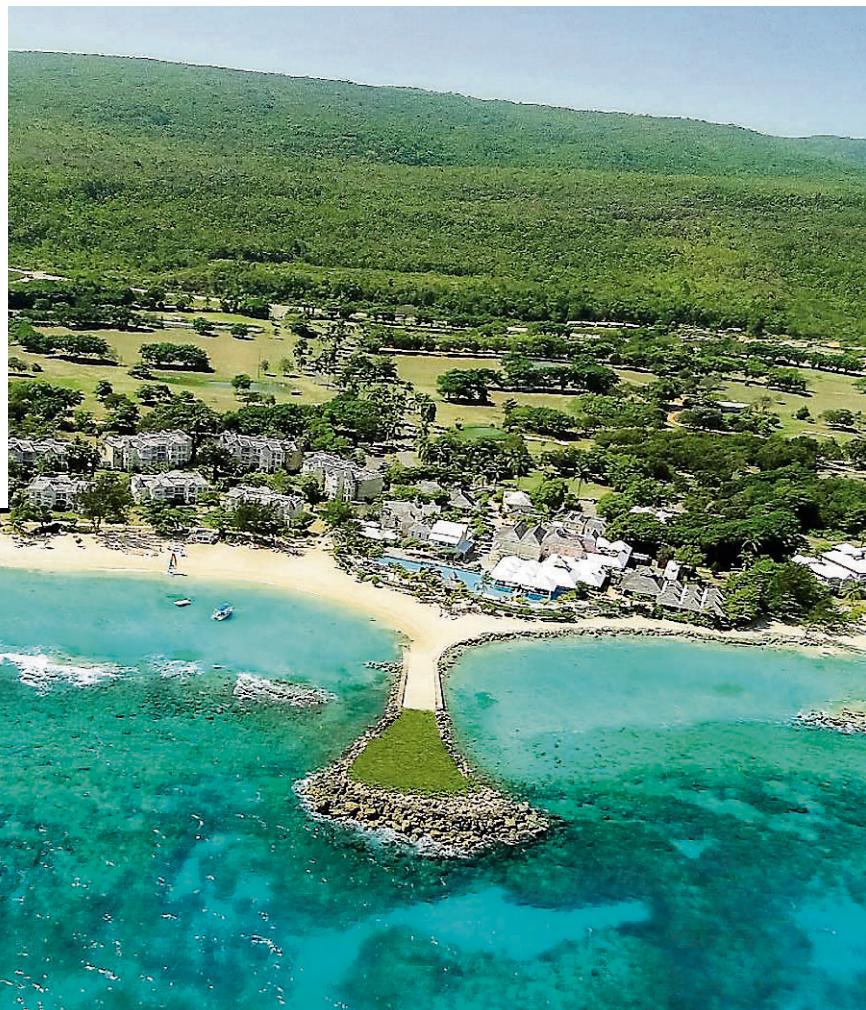
kosher food concern entirely and providing Jewish heritage tours and programmes."

While Jewish travellers to Jamaica have long struggled with finding kosher food on the island, the Royal Passover programme and the Chabad of Jamaica will make such concerns a thing of the past. Under the strict supervision of Rabbi Yaakov Raskin, co-director of Chabad of Jamaica, the programme will highlight delicious kosher cuisine prepared by a team of top Israeli chefs. The menu will also feature a medley of gourmet cuisines from France, Italy, the United States, and Israel, as well as authentic Jamaican jerked chicken, prepared by a team of Jamaican grill masters.

In addition to steel drums, reggae music, and beachside barbecues, Royal Passover hopes to inspire its guests with a private Jewish music festival featuring world-class entertainment, including Avraham Fried, Cantor Yaakov Motzen, Nissim Black, Tal Vaknin, and Yoni Z. The Jamaica Passover programme will also include stimulating lectures and Torah classes by Rabbi Dr Elie Abadie, director of the Jacob E. Safra Institute of Sephardic Studies at Yeshiva University; Rabbi Arthur Schneier, senior Rabbi of the Park East Synagogue New York City and founder and president of the Appeal and Conscience Foundation; Professor Alan Rechtschaffen, senior lecturer of laws at New York University; Rabbi Samuel Frankel, an expert in mindfulness; and Meir Kay, a motivational speaker and producer of viral videos about positivity and Jewish values.

To find out more about Royal Passover's all-inclusive programme at the Melia Braco Village in Montego Bay, please visit www.RoyalPassover.com.

For more information on faith-based travel to Jamaica, please visit: www.visitjamaica.com/faith.



The jewish synagogue in Kingston, Jamaica.



The Hyatt Ziva and Zilara team (from left): Karen Stephenson, wedding sales manager; Sophia Swaby, credit manager; Betty Ann Brown, director of human resources (rep for organisation champion at the event), Winston Jones, Pool and beach butler (semi-finalist and special awardee), Renee Clarke, group sales manager; Sashena Rowe, meeting and special events manager; and Jevan Campbell, social media executive.

WINNERS

CONTINUED FROM 5

this," stated Betty-Ann Brown, the resort's human resources director.

Robinson, who did joint degrees in hospitality and tourism management, is employed to the food and beverage department at The Jamaica Pegasus.

She had to compete with finalists, Janette Kaloo of Sunset Resorts and Villas, Treasure Beach; Hyatt's Winston Stones, a pool and beach butler; Amstar DMC's Michelle Sterling; Sandals Royal's Shanique Cunningham; Sandals Negril's Romaine Meggo; Beaches Negril's Kevin Spence; Goldeneye's Lennox Williams; Beaches Resort's Judy Henry Richards; and Olde Craft Market's Hopeton Powell.

The hospitality worker, who preaches that "in hospitality and

tourism in general, service is the backbone of the industry", took home top honours and several prizes, including a scholarship valued at \$1.8 million from the Northern Caribbean University to pursue her MBA.

Kaloo, Jones, Powell, Sterling and Williams all received special recognition awards from the Dr Guntley-chaired committee.

Guest speaker at the event was Senator Don Wehby, with Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett lauding the awardees for their outstanding contribution to the industry.

The TSEA is geared towards promoting performance excellence within Jamaica's tourism industry, urging all participants to focus on a winning strategy that will ensure the country maintain its high repeat percentage, while attracting new visitors every day.

janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com



Shanique Cunningham of Sandals Royal, Individual winner for the Montego Bay region, accepts her plaque from Director of Tourism Donovan White.



Grace Moss-Solomon of Grace Kennedy, presents a special award of recognition to Hopeton Powell of the Olde Craft Market in Ocho Rios.



The Island Outpost team (from left): Judith Grant, HR manager; Jeanine Tibley, social media manager; Lennox Williams, Houseman at The Ian Fleming Villa at GoldenEye; Jenny Wood, director of travel and trade; Jenepher Binns, housekeeping executive manager at GoldenEye; and Clayton Hinds, guest services manager.



Lennox Williams of Goldeneye accepts one of five special recognition awards from chairman of the Tourism Enhancement Fund, Godfrey Dyer (right).



Regional individual winner Janette Kaloo (left) of the Southcoast and Sunset Resorts & Villa accepts some of her prizes from Caribbean Airlines' Petra Harris.



Sandals Southcoasts' General Manager Adrian Whitehead accepts the Resort Area Champion award from a director of the board of the Tourism Product Development Company, Toni Spence.

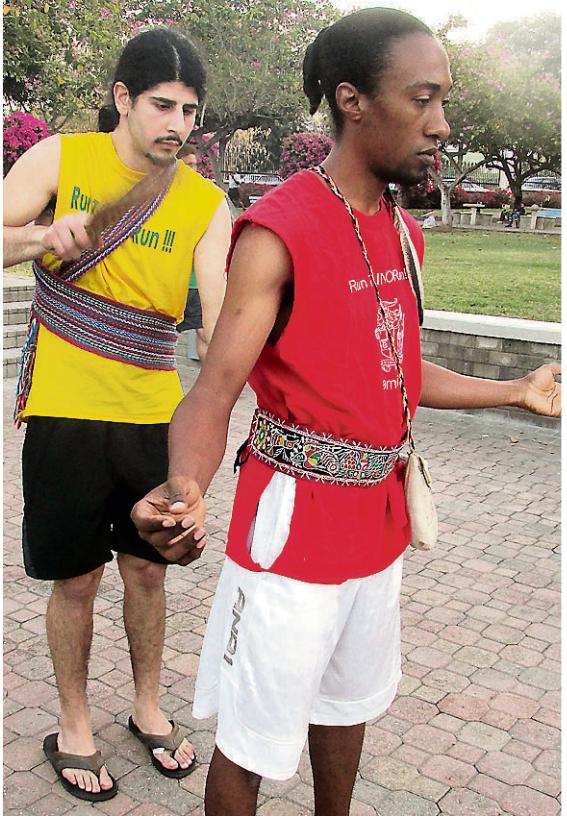


Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett is flanked by the national champion in the individual category, Mikaila Robinson, of The Jamaica Pegasus (left) and national champion in the organisation category, Betty-Ann Brown of the Hyatt Ziva and Zilara, during the Tourism Service Excellence Awards at the Montego Bay Convention Centre last Saturday night.



Sankofie hosts

Run Taino Run



Taino Cuyo Areito of New York, USA, smudges Robert Pairman before he enters the circle.

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

THE PEOPLE who lived in Jamaica (Yamayeka) when the Europeans arrived in the late 1400s were called Tainos. Many history books and historical documents incorrectly called them Arawaks.

For many centuries the Tainos lived an idyllic life, which involved a love of, and respect for, life and nature. Yet, their peace was decimated by the Europeans, and hundreds ran away into the interior, where they were to be joined by some of the Africans who came over to replace them as labourers.

And the Tainos are running again, this time in a programme called Run Taino Run, coordinated by Sankofie, an entity in St Andrew that "focuses on the spiritual culture of our Taino peoples, thereby exploring yet another dimension from which to understand their peaceful and harmonious ways of living".

Sankofa facilitates the participation of Taino delegations to the island, and has a relationship with Taino organisations and elders, who are guides, teachers and supporters. In collaborating with local



Taino Mildred Karaira Gandia Reyes of Miami, Florida, is happy to see Ronald Pairman again.

bodies, it organises and hosts Taino-focused activities and facilitated Jamaica's first-time participation in the Intercontinental Peace and Dignity Journeys in 2016.

The Peace and Dignity Organisation is a First Nation group located in the USA. It is committed to the preservation of the Native American culture. And in 1992, it initiated the Intercontinental Peace and Dignity Journeys, which have been going on every four years since then.

It consists of a series of 'spiritual runs' across North, Central and South America. The overall purpose is to achieve the unification of First Nation peoples of North America (the eagle) and South America (the condor). "The unification is necessary for the healing of our nations, to allow us to work together to ensure a better future for many generations to come," Sankofie said.

There was more unification in 2008 when Tainos and other indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, represented by the red-tail hawk (guaraguao), a sacred bird, were included in the journeys. Jamaica was represented in July-November run by Robert Pairman and Velva Lawrence, and now Sankofie is coordinating Run Taino Run Yamayeka 2018.

It is "an initiative to assist Jamaica and Jamaicans in reclaiming the indigenous in ourselves, our land and country. This run is intended to honour the first peoples of Jamaica, and to put out to the universe prayers for appeasement, and healing for their and our spirits – Yamayeka 2018 highlights our Taino ancestors and the fountain of knowledge that resides with them ...," Sankofie said.

IN-COUNTRY RUN

In the past week, local runners and indigenous peoples (including Tainos) from Mexico and the USA participated in the run through communities in eastern Jamaica. In this in-country run, which started at Emancipation Park in St Andrew last Wednesday, runners carried staffs infused with prayers for themselves, families and communities.

The way was led by the runner with the Peace and Dignity Journeys regional staff, symbolising the red-tail hawk, which represents the Taino People and Yaya (Spirit of the Spirits). There were stops in Happy Grove and Charles Town in Portland, and in Rio Nuevo in St Mary. These community stops were to facilitate sharing of information through discussions and rituals.

The activities, launched in Emancipation Park, were partly sponsored by the ministries of Culture, and National Security, represented by three runners and Roxanna Harriott, technical coordinator in the office of the permanent secretary in the Ministry of National Security.

Harriott read Permanent Secretary Diane McIntosh's message, which said, among other things, "The Tainos have indeed left an indelible mark on our people. They are known as a good and noble people and these are the values that we want to pass on today. It is our hope that this event will remind persons that we can live in harmony and respect for each other."

The week-long activities ended yesterday (March 20) with an arieto (celebration), held at Seville Heritage Park in St Ann, an important Taino site.



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Velva Lawrence (third from left) of Sankofie leading some of the participants in song.



From left: Dorrick Gray of the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, Major Othneil Blackwood, Corporal Michael Morgan and Roxanna Harriott from the office of the permanent secretary in the Ministry of National Security look on during the Launch of Run Taino Run in Emancipation Park last Wednesday.



Tainos Luis Cozcacauhtli (left) of Mexico and Xitlalin Payan of California.



Participants uncovering the staffs to be carried during the run from the Corporate Area to Seville in St Ann.

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H

A day of peace and harmony

WHEN I arrived in Charles Town, Portland, last Friday night the music, drumming and dancing were all over, and I heard people had a jolly good time. I was very upset, because I was looking forward to the fun.

St Andrew peak-hour traffic, from Half-Way Tree to Manor Park, denied me that joy, but it was to come the following day, an entire day of peace and harmony, or so I thought.

I fell asleep shortly after my disappointing arrival, and woke up a few minutes after 5:30 a.m. Not even the cold weather could stir me, that's how tired I was.

As I was milling around, and rummaging through my paraphernalia to find something to munch on, I heard the heralding sound of the conch shell. It was time to drop my rock cake and ripe banana and go to the morning ceremony, signalling the start of the day's activities of the Charles Town leg of Run

Taino Run.

It was a spiritual run for peace and dignity from St Andrew to St Ann and included Taino participants from Jamaica, the USA and Mexico. I wanted so much to participate in the run, but I listened to my ageing body. So, I decided to immerse myself into the cultural offerings, and there was much of it.

Apart from the rituals and the reverence, it was a day of smiles and hugs. I have never seen so much hugging and greetings in one place, at any one time. It was also about sharing – of love, food, refreshments, knowledge, stories, ideas, experiences, etc. And the children from the community were there to bear witness.

The moment that stood out for me was when a big coconut jelly I had, caught the eyes of one of the Tainos, who had his hair braided by acting Colonel Marcia Douglas. He asked for a sip. I said no with a smile. I then gave him the entire



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Some of the people who participated in the Run Taino Run community activity day at Charles Town in Portland last Saturday.



From left: Acting Colonel of the Charles Town Maroons, Marcia Douglas; Dr Robert Vassall: Taino elder Vanessa Inaru Pastrona; Carol Miller of Sankofie; and Velva Lawrence of Sankofie.



Acting Colonel Marcia Douglas of the Charles Town Maroons braiding the hair of Taino Cuyo Arieto of New York.



Taino elder Vanessa Inaru Pastrano inspects a piece of local tobacco given to her while Luis Cozcacuauhtli of Mexico, Kemoy Blake of Portland, and Xitlalin Payan of California look on.



Rodney Rose of the Charles Town Maroons blows the abeng while Taino elder Vanessa Inaru Pastrano and Robert Pairman stand at attention.



Taino Cuyo Arieto of New York blows a conch shell, while Roxanna Harriott of the Ministry of National Security looks on.

coconut. He eyes popped out, and I said, "Yes, it's all yours." And he smiled back at me before saying thanks.

But, instead of sitting by himself sipping away, he went around sharing the flavourful water. People were taking a sip or two, and there seemed to be no end to the amount of water. And when it was finally finished, there was to be more sharing, of the thick meat.

I could not keep my eyes off the Tainos, and kept thinking about what it perhaps was like in the pristine, pre-Columbus days when they would have rituals similar to the ones that were taking place on Saturday. The respect that they have for the universe, earth, elders, ancestors, and for one another is astounding.

And the singing and dancing that I missed on Friday night I got to be a part of, not in the volume and intensity of Fridays night's. But, there was some vocalising and movements nonetheless.

INVITING WATERS

While the riverside blessing of the runners' staff was going on, I went away from the gathering because the swirling waters around huge boulders were very inviting. I found a spot between two big rocks and let the water rush on to me. On my left, a mountain towered directly above me. On my right there were thousands of river stones, great and small.

Behind me the water came rushing. In front of me, it cruised on its way to Buff Bay. At the riverside, the gathering was reflecting, praying and singing, paying respect to the cleansing body of water, and embracing it at the same time. I was at peace and harmony in the heart of nature. I wished I could be frozen at that spot forever.

I was jolted from that wistful moment when I remembered what I called an 'intervention'. The peace and tranquility that I felt for most of the day and the harmony that consumed me were on the verge of being shattered.

Nothing was going to spoil my joy for a second straight evening, but, alas, I had to leave the spot, and woke up to the reality of returning to St Andrew.



PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

Shop owners of the new Ocho Rios Fishing Village being schooled in business management by trainers from the JBDC.

PAJ trains shop owners

IN PREPARATION for the official opening of the multimillion-dollar Ocho Rios Fishing Village, some 26 shop owners have been going through a series of training organised by the Port Authority of Jamaica (PAJ).

On Friday, March 9, the operators participated in the subject 'Introduction to Business Management', supervised by trainers from the Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC), at the Ocho Rios Cruise Ship Terminal in St Ann.

Topics such as 'Cultivating an Entrepreneurial Mindset'; 'Starting a Business'; 'Legal Framework of

Business'; 'Tax Obligations and Strategic Planning' were among the areas touched on by the trainers.

The aim of the workshop was to help the shop owners to identify with general character traits of an entrepreneur; identify and evaluate a business idea; while understanding the business environment from a Jamaican perspective.

The shop owners have also been exposed to the banking sector and customer service.

Hospitality Jamaica bring you highlights of the business management training session.



Jamaica Business Development Corporation trainers Kareem Bent (left) and Roxonnia Dwyer-Stewart at one in a series of training for shop owners at the new Ocho Rios Fishing Village.



Kareem Bent (standing), trainer with JBDC, interacts with shop owners of the shops at the new Ocho Rios Fishing Village.



From left: shop owners Marjorie Taylor, Marvin Traillie and Peta-Gaye Whyte participate in group activity during a training session in business management.



Chris Lue has the attention of Juliet Taylor during the business management training session for shop owners who will operate businesses at the new Ocho Rios Fishing Village.