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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2015



A stellar year for tourism!

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THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

Arrivals up, but Caribbean market share still falling



David Jessop
Contributor

ALTHOUGH THE year-end visitor arrival figures have yet to become available, it looks like 2014 will be seen as the year in which Caribbean tourism turned around, arrival numbers increased, and for hoteliers and the industry more generally, occupancy, yield and profitability strengthened.

Although there were clearly variations by destination, the view from the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) at mid-year was that annual growth would be in the region of three per cent for stay over and cruise tourism and that the demand for Caribbean vacations will remain buoyant.

"The atmosphere of despair has lifted," Beverly Nicholson-Doty, the outgoing CTO chair declared at the regional body's annual state of the industry conference last September.

That said it is also apparent that while a degree of life has returned to the tourism sector, the region as a whole has continued to lose global market share.

An International Monetary Fund study produced in late 2014 indicated that the pace of growth in the Caribbean tourism economy in recent years had been weaker than in other regions, and its share of global tourism has continued to decline, falling on average to around 2 per cent from a figure of 2.5 per cent recorded in 2000.

That said, some destinations were exceptions. For example Belize, the Dominican Republic, Aruba and Jamaica, experienced significant and sustained growth, improving their product offering, airlift, and marketing, enabling them to diversify their feeder markets. This was in contrast to nations that remained largely reliant on arrivals from the US (the Bahamas) or for instance, the UK (Barbados and Antigua).



JESSOP

APD VICTORY

The good news in 2014 was that after years of lobbying by Caribbean tourism ministers and the industry, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer (finance minister) decided to revert, as the Caribbean had proposed, to a two band long-haul/short-haul system for its Air Passenger Duty (APD). The effect was to at least make the Caribbean competitive with US destinations that were previously in a lower tax category, though the tax remained high and damaging. Later in the year, Britain also announced that it would gradually remove APD for children, thereby significantly reducing the costs for families vacationing in the region.

At the other end of the spectrum in December, the US president, Barack Obama, announced that the US would further ease travel restrictions on the twelve categories of US visitors licensed to travel to Cuba. Although the new regulations governing this



FILE

Chairman of CTO Beverly Nicholson-Doty.

and possible ship calls have yet to be published, the implications are potentially

far-reaching. President Obama wants more people-to-people contact, and the likely next steps, when full diplomatic relations are restored, may be an agreement to restart scheduled air services and possibly cruise ship calls.

LOW OIL PRICES

Another development of potentially great significance to the industry is the collapse in global oil prices. While it will take some time to see crude oil prices at US\$55 per barrel or less feed through – a year ago, it was over US\$100 – airlines will come under increasing pressure to remove their now unwarranted fuel surcharges, and hoteliers should see lower utility and other input prices.

Last year was the year that the much hoped for growth in Russian tourism to the region collapsed as that nation's annexation of the Crimea led to sanctions and foreign exchange and payment problems; arrivals from South America continued to grow; and there were reports of growth in the inter-regional tourism market. It was also the year in which Jamaica led the way in understanding the importance of foreign language training for visitor-facing staff; the use of ganja began to be liberalised, starting a debate about the implications for tourism and visitors.

Finally, it was the year when forward-looking parts of the industry in Jamaica and elsewhere realised that future growth and profits will go to those best able to adapt their offering to the interests of better-off millennials, baby boomers and users of social media.

A stellar year for tourism!

Janet Silvera

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

JAMAICA'S DIRECTOR of tourism, Paul Pennicook, is forecasting an estimated 740,000 stopover arrivals to Jamaica this winter tourist season.

This indicates a 2.5 per cent increase over last year, revealed the director, adding that the foreign exchange earnings are estimated at US\$868 million, a 4.6 per cent increase over last year.

On the other hand, some 611,500 cruise ship passengers are expected to dock at the island's ports, a 5.6 per cent increase over last year.

This positive forecast comes on the heels of an additional 163,000 airline seats available to the tourist industry, bringing the total number of seats for the winter to 1.2 million.

"We will have an additional 58,000 seats out of our largest source market, the USA," Pennicook said.

POSITIVE ABOUT 2015

Pennicook's optimism has been shared by president of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA), Nicola Madden-Greig, who said that the favourable results of 2014 and the upswing in the US economy are reasons to feel positive about the performance of the sector for 2015.

"Overall, the feeling is that 2015



PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA

Royalton's Kerry-Ann Quallo-Casserly.

should be a good year for the industry barring any unforeseen incidents and jointly with the Jamaica Tourist Board, the JHTA plans to work on fostering more aggressively the attainment of niche segments such as sports tourism, eco-tourism, faith-based and meetings/conventions."

Madden-Greig however cautioned that Jamaica will have to be vigilant in terms of watching the impact, if any, of the depreciation of the Canadian dollar on Canadian travel patterns.



FILE

Nicola Madden-Greig, president of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association.

The removing of the air passenger duty (APD) on children under the age of 12 from the United Kingdom, she said, will help to stimulate family travel, especially in the summer months.

"The Latin American and Caribbean market are both very promising, and as an industry, more focus should be placed to ensure we reap the potential benefits."

JHTA members such as the Blue Diamond group concretised the positive outlook, revealing that



Paul Pennicook, director of tourism.

they were pacing exceptionally well between now and July.

"We are pacing ahead, four to five per cent over last year," said Kerry-Ann Quallo-Casserly, director of sales at both Royalton White Sands in Trelawny and the Grand Lido Negril, both operated under the Blue Diamond brand.

Quallo-Casserly stated that they get most of their business from Canada and Europe, with expectations being more aggressive in the US market.

According to her, "January is

booked solid, in fact, we are expecting to surpass our budget of 93 per cent for Royalton, while Grand Lido is clocking 92 per."

For the month of February, Casserly said her Negril property was almost closed out, "and already, we are showing bookings at 70 per cent for July".

She says May, which is traditionally a soft month for Jamaica, has changed considerably, and she has seen the difference at her properties. "We are already at 70 per cent booking for May," she revealed.

HOTELS ADDING ROOMS

Owing to the increase in interest for the island, hotel groups such as Blue Diamond are adding rooms to their current inventory, and Royalton expects to expand with another 180 to 200 rooms.

In the meantime, Pennicook says another flight of advertising is to commence on US television and cinemas in selected cities throughout the USA.

These ads were scheduled to commence on Monday (January 12).

Starting on February 9 and running for six weeks, there will also be an OOH (out-of-home) campaign on trains and train platforms in the New York/New Jersey area of the United States, aimed specifically at sustaining an already vibrant market.

Linkages networking event to strengthen ties between sectors

IN ITS continued bid to strengthen the linkages between the tourism industry and other sectors of the economy, the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment's Tourism Linkages Hub is collaborating with the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA), the Jamaica Manufacturers' Association (JMA) and other partner entities to host the first ever Linkages Speed Networking event. The session will be held on Wednesday, January 21 at the Half Moon, A RockResort in Montego Bay.

The innovative networking event will entail a series of fifteen-minute meetings between managing directors, general managers and CEOs of local companies

which supply products and services and owners as well as managers of properties, restaurants, attractions and other tourism entities. Additional representatives from core areas within the hotel's operation such as purchasing, food and beverage, housekeeping, maintenance and guest services, who are in a position to make purchasing decisions, will also be in attendance.

"The initiative is in keeping with our ongoing efforts to improve the linkages between tourism, manufacturing, agriculture and other sectors of the economy to increase business with local suppliers of goods and services," said Minister of

Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill.

"We are very pleased to be able to provide this opportunity to local business interests. The strengthening of linkages between tourism and other sectors will help us to build a more lucrative industry which will benefit more Jamaicans," he added.

50 HOTELS, 80 BUSINESSES

Some 50 hotels and 80 businesses offering a wide range of goods and services will participate in the networking event, including suppliers of craft, toiletries and guest amenities, chemicals and cleaning products, cosmetic and spa products,

furniture, bedding, food and beverage, uniforms, printing and packaging, construction, training, ICT, electrical, entertainment, meat and fresh produce.

The other entities partnering to host the speed networking event are the Rural Agricultural Development Authority, Jamaica Promotions Corporation, and the Jamaica Business Development Corporation.

Chairman of the Tourism Linkages Council, Donavon Perkins, pointed out that the event is "an outstanding opportunity for hoteliers, restaurateurs and attractions to place orders, discuss contracts and prices and other areas of interest with the producers and suppliers of a range of critical products and services used by the tourism industry. It will also give them a chance to learn about the many novel and high-quality products now being produced in Jamaica, and we hope more of our local products and services will ultimately be used within the sector".

Fort Charlotte an untapped gem – tour operators

Claudia Gardner

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

LUCEA-BASED TOUR operators say they are waiting with bated breath for the proposed development of Fort Charlotte in Hanover to come to fruition as the facility, as it is an untapped gem with huge heritage tourism potential.

Their comments come on the heels of an announcement made late last year by Mayor of Lucea Wynter McIntosh that the Hanover Parish Council would be making basic repairs to the Fort, including the provision of

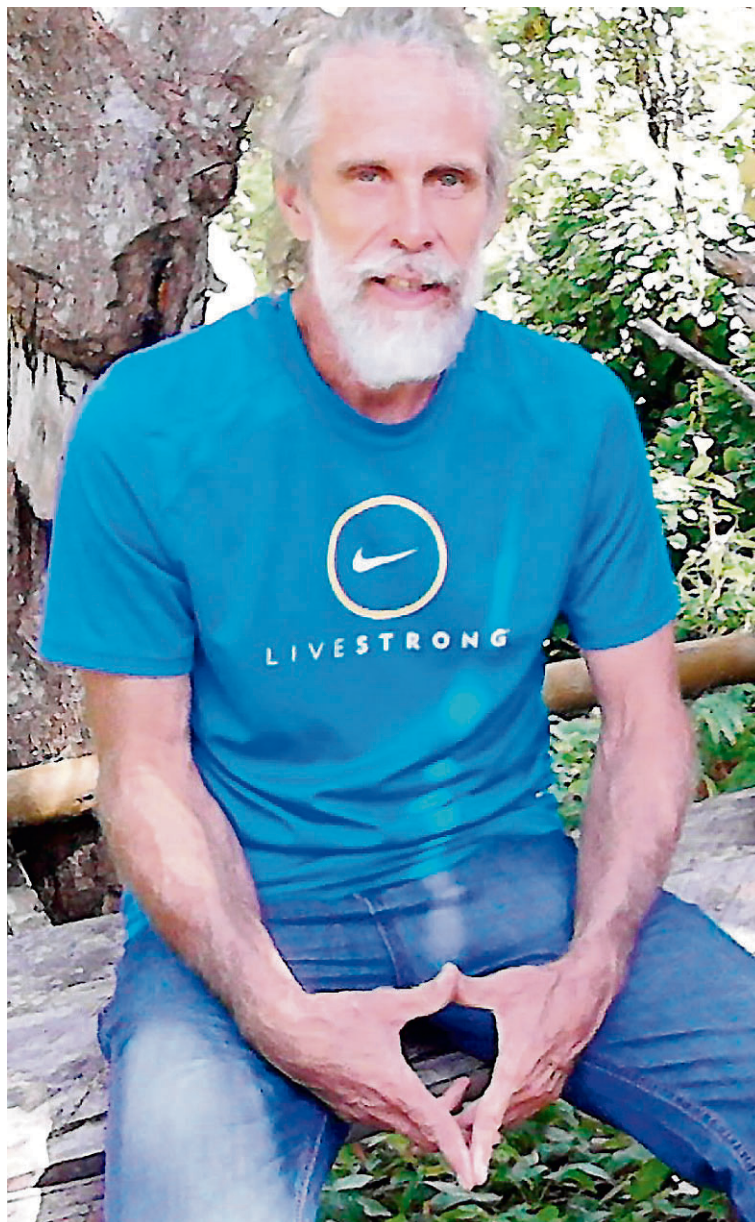
restrooms in order to officially accommodate tours within the first quarter of this year.

Stephen Riviere, who has been a tour operator for more than 20 years, told **Hospitality Jamaica** that he believes the fort could be the catalyst for the future development of the town and the parish as a cultural tourism destination.

Riviere said what he has garnered from research and in his everyday running of business is that although a lot of the tourists stay in all-inclusive hotels, they want to do tours because the real Jamaica is



The historic Fort Charlotte in, Lucea, Hanover.



RIVIERE

not really experienced behind the walls of a resort.

“They want to experience our food, our culture, which incorporates our music, dance, theatre, language spiritual beliefs, whether it be Kumina, Rastafari, Ettu – all the things that make us Jamaicans, a multicultural nation, predominantly of African descent. Of course, there is a lot of history out there for even British visitors, regarding King George III, who was a German,” Riviere said.

According to him, all these things could be showcased at Fort Charlotte, which has a unique location because it is halfway between Montego Bay and Negril.

“It is a logical stop-off for people travelling whether on a transfer or on a day tour out of Montego Bay or even out of Negril heading Montego Bay. The physical beauty of the place sitting right out there on that point overlooking the harbour, Dolphin Head Mountains – the town of Lucea,” he added.

Fort Charlotte was built in 1761 by the British for the defence of the north-westerly section of Jamaica during the reign of King George III of England, and was named after his consort, Queen Charlotte. The fort was built with barracks capable of housing 50 soldiers and had 23 embrasures for 23 guns, 20 of which were mounted. At present,

only three remain.

Riviere, who is fluent in Spanish, French and German, says the scores of European and Latin American tourists – his primary target markets – whom he has brought to visit Lucea, have shown a deep appreciation for the rich history and culture of the town, including the fort.

KODAK MOMENTS

“They say it’s beautiful, but what a disappointment that it is in such a terrible condition! People spend money and take a thousand pictures out there. Just the view, the breeze, the panorama, the mountains the town the coastline, the coral reefs, sometimes you might see a fisherman out there in a canoe – these are what you call Kodak moments,” he said. “We have serious physical things in the history and culture of Hanover that we should be taking advantage of, and over the years, Fort Charlotte has been tremendously neglected.”

He argues that Negril and Montego Bay have the (brand) names, and Lucea has not established itself as a brand or as a destination, separate and apart from them.

“But what we have to do is make Fort Charlotte and Lucea and Hanover suitable for we Jamaicans, and then when it is suitable for us

in terms of being clean, attractive, landscaped, reflecting the natural beauty of Hanover, we invite tourists,” Riviere said.

Another tour operator, James Thompson of JUTA Lucea, told **Hospitality Jamaica** that even though there are currently no activities at the fort, numerous trips are made there by himself and his colleagues. He is hoping that the fort will be made officially ready for tours quickly.

“Just by virtue of the fact that it is not presently an official tourist attraction, but visitors on a daily basis go there, tells you that there is vast potential for the development of the area, as well as the town of Lucea as a potential tourism heritage attraction and town. When we do a highlight tour of Negril, most of the drivers make that as their second stop. We show them the town clock of Lucea and tell them about the historical antecedents, and then we head over to Fort Charlotte,” he said.

He feels the fort’s potential is absolutely an exciting one.

“With proper marketing in Montego Bay, Negril and at the Grand Palladium, those who are investing should really recover their investments in short order, because it is the only attraction of its kind in this area.”

hospitalityjamaica@gleanerjm.com

Airline profitability grows as oil prices fall

Financial health drives consumer benefits

THE INTERNATIONAL Air Transport Association (IATA) announced an outlook for improved industry profitability in its **Economic Performance of the Air Transport Industry** report. Airlines are expected to post a collective global net profit in 2014 of some \$19.9 billion (up from the \$18 billion projected in June). This looks set to rise to \$25 billion in 2015.

Lower oil prices and stronger worldwide GDP growth are the main drivers behind the improved profitability.

Consumers will benefit substantially from the stronger industry performance as lower industry costs and efficiencies are passed through. The airline industry is highly competitive. After adjusting for inflation, average return airfares (excluding taxes and surcharges) are expected to fall by some 5.1 per cent on 2014 levels and cargo rates are expected to fall by a slightly bigger 5.8 per cent.

The expected \$25 billion net post-tax profit represents a 3.2 per cent margin. On a per passenger basis, airlines will make a net profit of \$7.08 in 2015. That is up on the \$6.02 earned in 2014 and more than double the \$3.38 earnings per passenger achieved in 2013.

The return on invested capital (ROIC) is expected to grow to 7 per cent. This is a substantial improvement on the 6.1 per cent ROIC expected to be achieved in 2014. This is still 0.8 percentage points below the 7.8 per cent weighted average cost of capital (WACC), so there is still some ground to cover before achieving sustainable margins.

"The industry outlook is improving. The global economy continues to recover and the fall in oil prices should strengthen the upturn next year. While we see airlines making \$25 billion in 2015, it is important to remember that this is still just a 3.2 per cent net profit margin. The industry story is largely positive, but there are a number of risks in today's global



environment – political unrest, conflicts, and some weak regional economies – among them. And a 3.2 per cent net profit margin does not leave much room for a deterioration in the external environment before profits are hit," said Tony Tyler, IATA's director general and CEO.

"Stronger industry performance is good news for all. It's a highly competitive industry and consumers – travelers as well as shippers – will see lower costs in 2015 as the impact of lower oil prices kick in. Airline investors will see ROIC move closer to the WACC. And a healthy air transport sector will help governments in their overall objective to stimulate the economic growth needed to put the impact of the global financial

crisis behind them at last," said Tyler.

2015 FORECAST DRIVERS

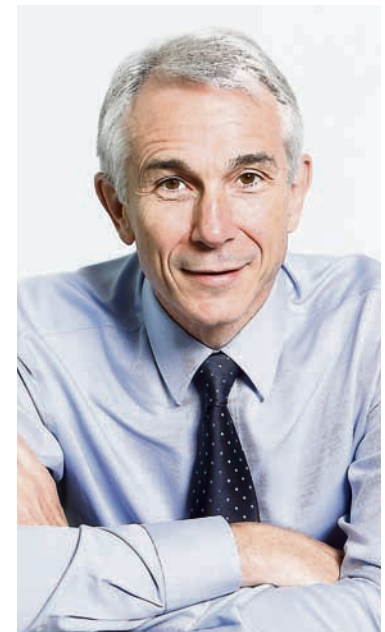
Oil Prices: Oil prices have fallen substantially in recent months, and this is expected to continue into 2015 with the full-year average price expected to be \$85/barrel (Brent). If that assumption is correct, it would be the first time that the average oil price has fallen below \$100/barrel since 2010 (when oil averaged \$79.4/barrel).

Fuel Prices: Jet fuel prices are expected to average at \$99.9/barrel in 2015 for a total fuel spend of \$192 billion, which represents 26 per cent of total industry costs. It is important to note that the impact of lower fuel prices will be realised with a time lag, due to forward fuel-buying practices. Improving

fuel efficiency continues to be a priority for airlines. Fuel efficiency is estimated to have improved by 1.8 per cent in 2014, and a further improvement is expected in 2015. Fuel efficiency improvements could be accelerated by reducing the 5 per cent of wasted fuel burn as a result of airspace and airport inefficiencies.

Economic Growth: Global gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to grow by 3.2 per cent in 2015, up from 2.6 per cent in 2014. This will be the first time that global GDP has broken over 3 per cent since 2010 (when global GDP grew by 4.1 per cent in a post-recession bounce-back), this time boosted by the fall in oil prices.

Passenger Trends: Passenger traffic is expected to grow by 7 per cent in 2015, which is well above



International Air Transport Association CEO Tony Tyler.

the 5.5 per cent growth trend of the past two decades. Capacity growth is expected to outstrip this slightly at 7.3 per cent, pushing the passenger load factor to 79.6 per cent (slightly down on the 79.9 per cent expected for 2014). The fall in the price of fuel is expected to lead to cheaper air fares for consumers. After adjusting for inflation, average return air fares (excluding surcharges and taxes) are expected to fall by 5.1 per cent to \$458 in 2015. Total passenger numbers are expected to grow to 3.5 billion and passenger revenues are expected to grow to \$623 billion.

REGIONAL TRENDS

All regions are expected to report improved net profitability in 2015 over 2014. However, there are stark differences in profitability among the regions. Current and forward-looking industry financial assessments should not be taken as reflecting the performance of individual airlines, which can differ significantly.

North America: The strongest financial performance by far is being delivered by airlines in North America. Net post-tax profits are the highest at \$13.2 billion next year (up from \$11.9 billion in 2014). That represents a net profit of \$15.54 per enplaned passenger, which is a marked improvement from just three years earlier. Net profit margins forecast at 6 per cent exceed the peak of the late 1990s. This improvement has been driven by consolidation, helping to raise load factors (passenger + cargo) to 65 per cent this year, lower fuel prices and ancillaries, which together push break-even load factors down below 60 per cent next year.



ZERUNIAN

Zerunian named among top hotel managers worldwide

Janet Silvera

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

JAMAICAN HOTELER Aram Zerunian has been nominated among the top 27 hotel managers worldwide by **Luxury Travel Advisor** magazine, one of the most credible in the travel and tourism industry.

Zerunian, who is general manager at the Half Moon, A Rock Resort, is one of two Caribbean hoteliers to make the powerbroker's list, which has some of the biggest names in travel and tourism, including, Stefan W. Bollhalder at the Shangri-La Hotel, Paris; Walter Brindel; Park Hyatt, New York; Rainy Chan, China; and Mehdi Eftekari in Los Angeles.

The other Caribbean hotelier to make the list was Ross Stevenson of Cap Maison in St Lucia.

Surprised by the nomination, Zerunian said he was humbled and honoured to be named among some

of the most powerful names in the industry.

"We here in little Jamaica standing tall with hoteliers in places such as London, Rome, Bangkok, Orlando, Hawaii and Fiji, tells me we are doing something right," said Zerunian.

He was designated the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association's (JHTA) 2014 prestigious Hotelier of the Year.

EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE

Born in Austria, Zerunian has dedicated 25 years of his life to the various aspects of resort operations. He has had extensive experience in all aspects of resort operations including construction, renovation, new facility opening, project management, budgeting, training, food and beverage, and administration.

His illustrious career began as executive assistant manager at Trident Hotel and Villas in Port Antonio. He

later worked at Plantation Inn and Sandals Ocho Rios.

He has worked at Half Moon for over 13 years, where he currently leads a team of over 800 men and women. He is responsible for the overall operations of a 400-acre, 398 room resort with extensive recreation facilities including six dining outlets, eight bars, championship golf course, 68,000 square-foot spa, children's activity centre, shopping plaza and more.

Under his leadership, he administered a U\$30 million annual operation budget, including directing cost-cutting exercises to maintain efficiency and improve year-end fiscal performance. During his tenure, he has directed the redevelopment and re-launch of resort's 42-year-old signature restaurant, revamped food and beverage operation and performance; established retail and golf operation; and held direct responsibility of opening of the award winning Fern Tree, the Spa at Half Moon.

Ja part of Caribbean food business revolution

JAMAICA'S AGRICULTURAL sector could be in for a big boost with the launch this week of a global initiative to transform the region's food and beverage industry.

The US-based Global Business Innovation Corporation (GBIC), comprising business partners from the United States, the Caribbean and Brazil, launched a Caribbean Food Business Innovation Revolution in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Tuesday, as the group aims to boost Caribbean economies through increased agricultural, agri-business and food and beverage exports.

"We believe the Caribbean food industry can become a world leader in promoting innovative business models," said GBIC director and spokesperson for the initiative, Dr Basil Springer.

The regional management consultant explained that GBIC is proposing that the industry embrace a year-round export-driven thrust to complement the gains already achieved through other initiatives.

He added that there were huge potential gains for Jamaica and the

Caribbean's tourism industry "if we better leverage our agricultural resources to supply to the tourism trade, and in turn, cultivate them into marketing opportunities for our respective destinations".

"Jamaican companies like Grace have done an impressive job penetrating the global marketplace, but I think Jamaica – with its already powerful brand – is only scratching the surface. Much more can be done with a coordinated approach to give aspiring entrepreneurs assistance to supply their products worldwide," he reasoned.

DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

Over the past few months, the GBIC team has been developing the strategy, which is focused on food design, innovation, shepherding and communications to help the region's manufacturers penetrate the global marketplace.

"This Caribbean Food Business Innovation Revolution is designed around a three-pronged, coordinated approach: governmental investment in manufacturers to boost economic growth; investment by the business community in manufacturers, aimed



Bevan Springer

at enhancing profitability and community development; and the



Dr Basil Springer

engagement of manufacturers to support this incredible opportunity,"

Dr Springer explained.

The GBIC team also includes US-based Guyanese-American, Dr Owen Carryl, a product and technology development executive and innovation strategist who previously served in executive leadership positions with Procter & Gamble and PepsiCo.

Mexico-based Brazilian native Diego Ruzzarin, an industrial designer, leads GBIC's food design strategy, having birthed the food design group at PepsiCo. He subsequently assisted the Brazil and Singapore governments with their food and beverage development thrusts.

US-based marketing and public relations practitioner Bevan Springer will manage the communications platform, while Dr Springer will spearhead shepherding services.

The GBIC team told **Hospitality Jamaica** that following the launch, the team would be reaching out to public and private sector players in the Jamaican market who are interested in benefiting from the initiative.

For more information, contact Dr Springer at basilgf@caribsurf.com.

– Janet Silvera

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Cacique Estevez shows young Layla Shirley how to play the mayowaca, a drum made of elongated hollow wood.



The Taino medicine wheel helps people to heal themselves.



Nicola Shirley-Phillips



A traditional Taino necklace.



Cacique Estevez displaying a bag of cassave (bamy). Yuca is the Taino name for cassava, while cassave is the Taino word for bamy.



The Taino instrument at left is a gourde. It is called a guiro. The other is called a pua, which is used to scratch the guiro.

Taino chief hosts educational camp in St Thomas

Paul H. Williams
Gleaner Writer

IN 1494 when Christopher Columbus landed on the shores of what is now called St Ann, he and the other explorers met fair-skinned, long-haired people who had been living on the island for decades. These people once called Arawaks, are actually Tainos, who spoke the Arawak language. Columbus landed near their settlement of Maima. He was to return to Jamaica a second time in 1503. He was stranded, and lived at Maima for one year while he waited for help. Columbus left Jamaica in 1504 a broken and broke man, never to return. However, his son, Diego, and Spanish colonisers returned in 1510. They established the first Spanish settlement in Jamaica near Maima, and called it Sevilla la Nueva (New Seville). Over time, hard work, mass murder, European diseases and suicide almost wiped out the Taino population, to the point where they were believed to be extinct. Some had actually run away from the Spaniards and were the first Jamaican Maroons. Others were released by the Spaniards to assist them in their fight against the British, who arrived here in 1655. The Spaniards officially ceded the island to the British in 1670. By then, runaway Tainos had firmly established themselves away from the Spanish-British conflict. Africans were brought over by the Spaniards



Cacique Estevez blowing the guamo (conch shell) to the south during a medicine wheel ritual on Tuesday, January 6.

Cacique Estevez listens to a youngster during a traditional feather headdress workshop at the Source Farm on Tuesday, January 6.



and the British to replace the dwindling Taino population. Some of these Africans also ran away from the plantations and joined the Tainos in the interiors. It is believed that interbreeding took place between the Tainos and the Africans, thus the survival of the Tainos in Jamaica. And last year, **The Gleaner** told the story of two women who said they are Tainos, who were born in St Elizabeth. They said they have also always known that they are Tainos. South Manchester and St Elizabeth are known to have had many Taino settlements. While many people believed the women, others ridiculed their claims. But what they cannot ridicule is the existence of Tainos in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. They have been visiting Jamaica for quite a while now, and some participated in activities at the Charles Town International Maroon Conference in June. That was where Cacique Jorge Baracutay Estevez, a Taino chief from Connecticut, met Nicola Shirley-Phillips of the Source Farm Foundation and Ecovillage in John's Town, St Thomas. In that encounter Cacique Estevez was invited to the Source Farm to host a Taino educational camp. He arrived on January 5 and departed on the 10th. **Hospitality Jamaica** caught up with

him on Tuesday the 6th, when he conducted a workshop on the making of traditional feather headdresses. Participants were also shown some of the tools, equipment, instruments, utensils, and ornaments that Tainos make from natural material. **BORN IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC** Speaking with **Hospitality Jamaica**, Estevez said he was born in a Taino family in a mountainous village in The Dominican Republic, migrated to the United States at an early age, and now lives in Connecticut. He works with The Museum of the American Indian in New York and Washington. Being Taino to him means freedom – freedom to explore himself. The essence of his visit to the camp was to create Taino ambassadors who can pass on their knowledge of the Tainos to others, Shirley-Phillips said. The week of activities also involved a mask-making session. In assessing the week-long camp Shirley-Phillips said “it was awesome”.

She said she felt so blessed to have had Cacique Estevez hosting the camp because of his wealth of knowledge. She was particularly impressed with the medicine wheel rituals, which she said she was comfortable with, as she didn't come out of it feeling “heavy”. The medicine wheel consists of a circle of river rocks laid out on the ground. It is used to help people heal themselves, Estevez said. Within it, there are two lines of stones, one running east to west, the other north to south. In the medicine wheel, people establish a relationship with the creator by giving thanks. This is done by blowing the guamo (conch shell) while facing east, west, north and south. After each blow, participants say what they are thankful for. In his own assessment of the camp, Estevez said he wanted people to be curious about themselves and to discover themselves. The next Taino camp at The Source Farm will be in August, which will be on a grander scale.

Jamaica engages new holidaymakers

... Partners with Samsung's The Travel App for 3D destination film

ON JANUARY 1, the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) launched an exciting new partnership with The Travel App, which will see Jamaica share engaging multimedia content and exclusive holiday packages on all Samsung SMART televisions.

The Travel App is a unique application that is pre-loaded onto all new Samsung TVs and is a compelling new way for destinations to reach potential holidaymakers in the comfort of their homes.

Starting January, Jamaica will feature its 3D destination film within the application, the first and only destination to have 3D

content on The Travel App. The film captures the island's stunning scenery and brings the iconic sights of Jamaica to life like never before. For those viewers who want to book a holiday directly from their living room, the JTB has partnered with leading tour operators on The Travel App to display a range of unique packages, with calls to action on how to book. Each month, there will be inspiring new content and bespoke landing pages available with different tour operators, including Tropical Sky in January, Virgin Holidays in February, TUI in March and



Thomas Cook in April.

The Travel App has the exclusive rights to display travel content on the Samsung Smart TV platform worldwide. Samsung is the largest manufacturer within the global Smart TV market with over 220 million units produced to date, with predicted growth of 70 per cent by 2016. In the UK, The Travel App was launched in March 2014 and currently has more

than 500,000 downloads. Use of The Travel App has grown exponentially since its launch, averaging 3,000 new users every day.

PREMIUM DESTINATION

The Travel App's lead content integrator, Andrew Kweik, said: "We're absolutely delighted to have a beautiful destination such as Jamaica on board with The Travel App. Jamaica is a premium destination that has wide-ranging appeal to many types of travellers, and of course, it is visually stunning and culturally stimulating, which works well on our unique audiovisual platform. I look

forward to a rewarding partnership with the Jamaica Tourist Board throughout 2015."

Elizabeth Fox, regional director UK & Northern Europe for the JTB, added: "We're very excited to be working with The Travel App in 2015. Jamaica's gorgeous scenery, beaches and captivating culture are enough to whet any viewer's appetite, and we look forward to showcasing our beautiful destination through our pioneering 3D film. We're always interested in innovative ways to target additional holidaymakers, and this new platform will allow us to engage with viewers directly in their living room. We hope viewers enjoy watching our 3D film. We look forward to welcoming many visitors to Jamaica who discover our stunning destination through The Travel App."

Ja looks to capitalise on sporting events

JAMAICA, HOME of sprint king and queen Usain Bolt and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, and the inspirational bobsleigh team, has launched Jamaica Sport, an initiative to develop sports tourism and diversify the island's tourism offerings. Chaired by businessman and corporate executive, Chris Dehring, the committee has as its mandate to bring more sport-focused events to Jamaica, boost tourist arrivals and position the island as a major sporting destination.

"As a country, we are well known for our rich sporting legacy. The dominance of our athletes, including sprinters, cricketers, netballers, swimmers and footballers, has been tremendous, but it is this achievement in combination with the can-do attitude of our bobsledders that defines a sporting culture found only in Jamaica" said Paul Pennicook, Jamaica's director of tourism.

During 2015, a number of sporting events will be held in Jamaica, which all sports enthusiasts can experience. A sampling of events include:

■ JSP HIGH MOUNTAIN COFFEE 10K (JANUARY 26)

The annual race (Inaugurated 1983) staged by the Jamaica Standard Products Company Limited is one of the largest and most challenging yet popular road races in Jamaica. The event takes place in central Jamaica in the cool hills of Mandeville. Now in its 32nd year, the day begins with the 5K Run and 5K Walk designed for the fitness conscious individual, followed by the most, challenging yet exhilarating 10K Race, taking runners up to 1,200ft above sea level, where they experience some of Jamaica's freshest air and pristine beauty.

■ PINEAPPLE CUP (FEBRUARY 6-15)

Starting just outside of Fort Lauderdale, this ocean-racing classic will take

competitors on a challenging all-points-of-sail course, stretching the 811 nautical miles to Montego Bay. Established in 1961, the Pineapple Cup is one of the marquee offshore sailboat races in the world. At the finish, sailors will be treated to a week of cocktail parties, steel bands, limbo dancing, ending with a dinner and dance prize-giving ceremony on February 15.

■ JAMAICA FAT TYRE FESTIVAL (FEBRUARY 16-FEBRUARY 22)

The Jamaica Fat Tyre Festival is a week-long mountain biking extravaganza that highlights Jamaica's unique, vibrant culture. Held annually, the Festival opens with a welcome and registration party on the evening of February 16 at John Crow's Tavern, located in the heart of Ocho Rios. The festival features the Jamaican Downhill, the XC National Championship and plenty of live entertainment to wrap up the activities.

■ KINGSTON CITY RUN (MARCH 13-15)

Kingston comes alive during the weekend 5K race/walk and half marathon. The Kingston City Run route highlights the city's historic sites and the festivities include a Health and Wellness Fair and After Party. Weekend packages are available for travelers to visit Kingston, enjoy the sights and night-time activities while also participating in the Run.

■ JAKES OFF-ROAD TRIATHLON (APRIL 18)

Jamaica's South Coast hideaway Jakes, is gearing up for its 20th triathlon on April 18. With a dedicated package, triathletes and supporters alike can sample the best of what the bohemian bolthole and its surrounding community can offer. Those seeking a fully integrated adventure can embark on A Fitness Trip in Rebel Terrain from April 16-20 with New York fitness

guru Ross Anti, from the celebrated Equinox gym franchise.

■ KARL HALE TENNIS TOUR (APRIL 21-26)

Recognised as the Caribbean's No. 1 tennis event, the Karl Hale Tennis Tour will host the second annual Jamaica Senior ITF Championships at Tryall in Montego Bay and the Liguanea Club in Kingston. Also included in the tour are ten hours of clinics and a Pro Charity Exhibition featuring Wimbledon champion Marion Bartoli.

■ JAMAICA INTERNATIONAL INVITATIONAL (MAY 9)

The Jamaica International Invitational, features some of the best international and local athletes at the National Stadium in Kingston. This annual track and field competition, first held in 2004, now forms part of the IAAF World Challenge Meetings.

■ SOUTH COAST HOOK & LINE CANOE TOURNAMENT (OCTOBER 18-20)

The three-day competition is where local fishermen vie for prizes by catching the largest fish using only the traditional fishing method of a simple hook and line. No fancy yachts or first world equipment are seen at this grassroots event. The weekend also includes other events, such as a boat race, local talent show, fish fry and a community beach party.

■ REGGAE MARATHON (DECEMBER 5)

The Reggae Marathon & Half Marathon is Jamaica's premier international marathon event. Seasoned marathoners, sports enthusiasts and novice racers converge in Negril for an exciting event characterised by good vibes and plenty of reggae. Included in the registration is the infamous World's Best Pasta Party, an all-you-can-eat feast with pasta dishes, traditional Jamaican cuisine, free beer and an open bar.



From left: Sandra Scott, deputy director of tourism, marketing Jamaica Tourist Board; Paul Pennicook, director of tourism; Jennifer Valentyne, Breakfast Television host; and Armando Pizzuti, general manager, Royalton White Sands. Toronto's leading morning television programme 'Breakfast Television', recently aired their show live from Royalton White Sands in Trelawny. The programme featured an outside broadcast with host Jennifer Valentyne and was interspersed with pre-recorded segments featuring Jennifer and her crew enjoying attractions and restaurants on the island. The occasion brought significant exposure to destination Jamaica as 'Breakfast Television' has an audience of two million in the Greater Toronto Area.

Half Moon recruits management trainees

HALF MOON, A RockResort has announced a relaunch of its Management Trainee Programme.

The two-year training and development programme will give young people interested in the tourism and hospitality industry the opportunity to positively impact the growth of Jamaica's tourism product through hands-on experience from one of the Caribbean's most legendary resorts.

In making the announcement, Shernette Crichton, director of resort operations, who herself benefitted from the resort's Management Trainee Programme in the 1990s, encouraged young persons to make use of this opportunity to learn from among the best in the industry.

"The Half Moon Management Trainee Programme provided my breakthrough into the

working world. I was mentored by some of the leaders and stalwarts in the hospitality industry, and now welcome this opportunity to provide young adults with the same guidance I received. If you have an interest in this industry and meet all the requirements, I implore you to submit your applications very early as we are eager to have you as part of our team."

PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS

Ideal candidates for the programme must have a first degree in tourism and hospitality from a recognised institution or three years' experience in the hospitality industry. Additionally, short-listed candidates must be over 21 years old, possess strong communication and

organisational skills and be service driven with excellent customer service skills.

Applicants are invited to make submissions to the resort's human resources office via traditional mail, or email humanresources@halfmoon.com by January 30, 2015. Following the submission of all applications, there will be a selection process and interviews to identify the candidates most suitable for the programme.

The Half Moon Management Trainee Programme was first introduced in the 1980s and was placed on a break in 2005. The relaunch of the programme solidifies the resort's commitment to empowering young people through education while providing on-the-job training and mentorship.



Hotel Manager at Half Moon Shernette Crichton.

Karrie Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

TRIENA ANGLIN has worked in a number of sectors throughout her life; but it is in the field of hospitality that the 26-year-old mother of one claims that she has found her true calling.

Since 2011, Anglin has been employed to the Mystic India restaurant in Ironshore, Montego Bay, working in the capacity of a waitress. She is currently merited as being the longest-serving employee at the restaurant; having commenced her employment at its opening in June 2011.

"I really enjoy working in hospitality," Anglin said. "It's very fun and interesting as I get to meet new people everyday. I also get to learn new things and learn about different cultures, and it's also a pleasure to work with great people in the industry. Here at Mystic India, it's very easy-going and we are never too stressed at the end of the work day, plus we also have a great boss."

INSPIRED BY FRIEND

Anglin told **Hospitality Jamaica** that she was inspired to work in the industry after seeing how her friend, Orlando Stewart, was able to turn his life around from being employed to the sector.

"My friend Orlando Stewart, is the person who really motivated me to work in this industry. I find his journey very inspiring. I've seen how he started out at the very bottom, and now, years later, he has moved up to ranks to owning and managing his own service business. One day, I hope to emulate his achievements and own a business in hospitality," she said.

Stating that she would like to



own a restaurant, Anglin was sure to clarify that when that day comes, she plans on staying true to her Jamaican cuisine, claiming this as her preference. However, she admitted that she enjoys dining on a number of "delicious Indian dishes, such as chili mushrooms

and mutton rara."

Though she confessed to being introverted, those meeting her for the first time would not easily guess this. At work, the head waitress is both bubbly and charming with guests and co-workers alike. She disclosed that the most enjoyable

aspect of her job is learning about different wines.

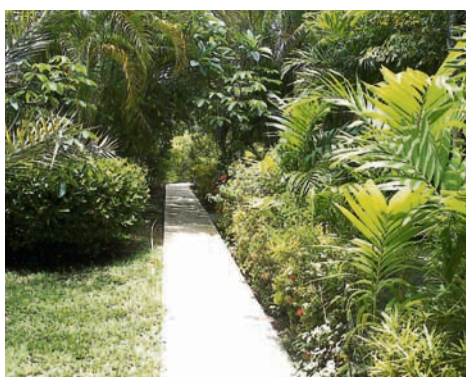
Anglin grew up in Leithe, Hanover, and is a graduate of the Anchovy High School in St James. She now lives in Montego Bay with her 10-year-old daughter, Petrena Barrett, whom she hails as being

her greatest achievement, to date.

"My baby girl is my purpose in life. She is a happy little girl and everything I do in life is for her. She is the only person who can make me instantly happy and make me smile all day. I love her endlessly," she said.



A view of the sports bar at the Sea Star Inn.



Flowers border each side of a typical walkway at the Sea Star Inn, blocking direct views of individual rooms and verandahs.



A typical bedroom at the Sea Star Inn. Rooms spacious enough to accommodate up to four persons.



A hammock hangs from every verandah at the Sea Star Inn.

Sea Star Inn: a paradise of tranquility

Karrie Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

NESTLED IN Negril's West End is the Sea Star Inn, a small boutique hotel which is widely regarded as a sanctuary for nature lovers or those seeking to escape it all and just unwind in tranquility.

The hotel features 20 spacious guest rooms, of one or two-bedroom units. Each unit has its own private verandah and is outfitted with a hammock for added relaxation.

Among the amenities offered in accommodation are fully air-conditioned rooms, flat screen televisions and a study area equipped with a table and chair. Bedding ranges from a large king size, queen or two double beds. Guests also have the option of requesting an extra bed if the need arises. There is also a kettle and condiments for making hot beverages. Original wall paintings and freshly cut flowers further enhance the decor of rooms.

The grounds of the Sea Star Inn are beautifully landscaped, teeming with a host of vibrant flowers and fruit trees, which create a natural perimeter for the resort and also for each apartment unit, fostering an added sense of privacy.

A large rectangular swimming pool, complete with gazebos and lounge chairs, along with a cold water Jacuzzi and two water fountains, add additional layers of charm to this family-friendly resort. Woodcarvings located along paved walkways and murals found throughout the resort's public areas, also add to its appeal.



A view overlooking the pool and restaurant at Sea Star Inn.

LEFT: Sea Star's cold water whirlpool bath refreshes guests' on a hot day.

But the Sea Star's charm extends far beyond its aesthetics. Courteous and attentive staff also complement this resort, making its motto, "at Sea Star Inn, you arrive as a guest and leave as family", indeed true.

The resort operates a full-service restaurant, catering both local and international cuisines. Guests have a choice of dining at the sports bar restaurant or in a private upper level dining room. The resort offers guests a complimentary continental breakfast daily.

LIVE MUSIC

For those who value live musical entertainment, at the Sea Star Inn, Saturday night will leave you with long-lasting memories. From as early as 8 p.m., the sports bar, which houses a stage area, comes alive with karaoke, dance, poetry and drumming. All this is accompanied by a dinner buffet and a wide choice of alcohol and non-alcoholic beverages.

The Sea Star Inn boasts an 80 per cent return rate, which includes a number of local artistes. In 2014, the resort was also ranked at number 12 out of the 91 hotels in Negril and received a Traveler's Choice Award from TripAdvisor, the world's most trusted travel advisory source.

According to Christopher Tomney, owner of Sea Star, these and other accolades are very well deserved.

"Our guests return year after year because we treat them like family, in fact, we have an 80 per cent returning guest rate, and reservations are often made two years in advance ... we go a long way to ensure our guests are satisfied," said Tomney.

Lucea wasting Grand Palladium opportunity – *JUTA* past president

Claudia Gardner

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

IMMEDIATE PAST president of the Lucea Chapter of the Jamaica Union of Travellers Association (JUTA), James Thompson, is lamenting the economic opportunities which are being lost in the capital town due to micro-entrepreneurs failing to diversify their offerings.

Thompson told **Hospitality Jamaica** in a recent interview that he was dismayed because as a Hanoverian, he was hoping his fellow citizens would have been more enterprising in order to capitalise on the windfall from the operation of the Grand Palladium hotel at Point Estate in the town.

“One of the opportunities that has been missed by the business people in Lucea – especially the small operators, is the fact that such a large hotel is on the doorstep of these small-business people, and they have not sought to diversify the kinds of business that they are into. And so a lot of the tourists that go into Lucea, hoping to do some of the shopping that they could normally do in Negril, find that there are very few places that offer

that opportunity, and so a lot of the business, in terms of shopping for craft items and souvenir items and clothing, is done in Negril,” Thompson said.

“There are one or two shops in Lucea, but they don’t offer the kind of variety that you would see in Negril and I think there is vast potential for tourism shopping to be added to the offers that they have in Lucea in terms of merchandise,” he added.

INDIGENOUS PRODUCTS

Thompson, who is one of the founding fathers of the eight-year-old JUTA Lucea cooperative, said most guests are interested in acquiring authentic Jamaican items, especially non-food indigenous products such as wood-carvings, art, accessories, and other items which can easily be supplied in Lucea. JUTA Lucea is one of the main tour companies operating tours out of the Grand Palladium.

“The Grand Palladium has a total of 1156 rooms, so Lucea is losing. That is something that I know as a person who is intimately involved as a taxi operator at Grand Palladium. Many times, guests want to not do a US\$100



Immediate past president of JUTA Lucea Chapter, James Thompson.

highlight tour of Negril, because they would rather spend US\$30 and go into Lucea and do their shopping and use that extra \$70 as part of their purchasing money. But because there is limited opportunity for shopping for tourism-related items like craft, then we take them to Negril, and

that is an opportunity that has been lost,” Thompson said.

“That is why we probably have had to concentrate more on some of the historical features and aspects of Lucea to make up for the lack of shopping opportunity in Lucea. And so I hope that when Fort Charlotte is opened, they will

consider offering shopping as one of the major aspects of the product there,” he said.

A study conducted by Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) Hemispheric Agrotourism Specialist, Ena Harvey in 2010, further cements Thompson’s statements. “The study noted that a portion of tourists spend is always dedicated to the purchase of locally produced products that are typical for the country, population or landscape, as a remembrance of the visit, a token of moments shared with loved ones, or as an authentic gift to friends and family back home”.

The study also said that the potential demand for authentic local craft as souvenirs can be estimated from tourism statistics of visitor arrivals “at a conservative estimate of US\$5 per gift for 10 percent of total numbers of visitors”.

Jamaica’s Ministry of Tourism has upped its promotion of tourism linkages over the past few years, including non-food indigenous products, particularly crafts, which are derived from local agricultural material such as animal skins, leaves, pods, seeds, roots and grasses, as well as nutraceuticals, massage oils and spa products, candles, fragrances, wooden craft items, jewellery, dolls, and wooden kitchen items made by Jamaicans using authentic Jamaican material.

CARIBBEAN TOURISM ORGANIZATION’S STATEMENT ON US/CUBA RELATIONS

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of a change in diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States is a welcome opportunity to increase tourist arrivals to the Caribbean. With the US already being the region’s largest source market, producing nearly half of our tourism business, this new development could enhance those numbers. Last year, we welcomed over 12 million Americans to our shores. An opportunity to substantially increase that number will be welcomed.

Cuba is a longstanding and active member of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), having joined the CTO in 1992. The island is actively engaged in our trade and consumer promotions in Canada, Latin America and Europe, and we look forward to including Cuba in our programmes in the United States. We now anticipate the island’s broader participation in CTO-organised global and regional events in the future.

Naturally, an unusually large inflow of



new travellers to the Caribbean will have varying effects on Cuba and the rest of the

region. The CTO will provide the technical resources necessary to manage

the growth, reduce any dislocation, and help create sustainable tourism development strategies throughout our member countries.

The CTO proudly promotes an exciting, diverse tourism product offered by its over 30 member countries and Cuba is an integral part of that diversity. The success of every member-country is an important focus of the organisation’s overall vision for the Caribbean.

ABOUT THE CARIBBEAN TOURISM ORGANIZATION

The CTO, with headquarters in Barbados and offices in New York and London, is the Caribbean’s tourism development agency comprising membership of over 30 countries and territories including Dutch, English, French and Spanish, as well as a myriad of private sector allied members. The CTO’s vision is to position the Caribbean as the most desirable, year round, warm weather destination, and its purpose is Leading Sustainable Tourism – One Sea, One Voice, One Caribbean.



To be or not to be fit

Fish Done Falls in Silver Hill, Portland is a popular stop for tourists in the Buff Bay River Valley.

Paul H. Williams
Gleaner Writer

IN TERMS of unfitness and weight gain, 2014 was the worst in my entire life. My sorry physical state was highlighted by my abandonment of a wild-hog hunt in the Bangor Ridge/Zion region of Portland, a hike to Sambo Hill, and a trek to Old Nanny Town, both also in Portland. On these journeys, my ageing body failed me in more ways than one.

Then, I could only reflect on the days of my youth when at one point I used to be in Lloyd Young's gym in Montego Bay six days a week. I could curl into a ball, stretching my legs over my head until my toes touched the floor. Mr Young, now resting in peace, used to warn that I could damage my spine. Years later, I found out that I in fact have slipped a disc.

Even at UWI, Mona, I was a regular at the gym. After UWI, I got my own weights. I made several efforts to eat right and maintain an exercise regimen. But I also relapsed many times into nonchalance about my weight and health. The times when I used to work out and run were the times when I was most confident about my physical appearance. So, with last year's weight gain, I am not happy.

FEELING LIKE A BLIMP

Then entered Christmas and New Year's Eve. I ingested stuff that I had not eaten in ages, and ended up looking and feeling like a Goodyear blimp. On New Year's Day, I couldn't fathom what I saw in the mirror. I became terrified knowing that I have cholesterol and pre-hypertensive issues.

I did not wallow for long, as a bloated pig would, in my despair, for an idea had come to me. I remember a wrestling camp set up in Charles Town, Portland. I made a call and invited myself for the weekend. I couldn't wait to leave Kingston, so I started to pack. I attempted to do some light exercises, but I felt so puffed up. I surrendered and decided to wait until the morrow.

I left Kingston early Friday morning, but wished that I had left the night before. In the light of day, everybody seemed slim and trim. I was the only balloon floating through Liguanea, Half-Way Tree, Stony Hill, Broadgate, Friendship Gap, Chovey, Grey's Inn, Annotto Bay, Dover, Hart Hill and Buff Bay.

My arrival in Charles Town didn't make things easier for me. The people all looked to be in tip-top physical form. In the evening, I

attempted to join the warm-up drill and wrestling practice session, but I ended up on the sidelines, taking pictures. I felt so heavy, and as stiff as a piece of buckram. After the session and dinner, some of us spent the rest of the evening bantering with one another. But I didn't find my weight gain funny.

I arrived 11 minutes late for Saturday's 6 o'clock practice in the wrestling pit. Once again, I tried to join the routine, but I just could not keep up. My joints were crying out for some WD40. I did what I could, however, until the end. Like after the other session, I reflected on my gross unfitness, and frustration set in. "How did this happen?" I asked myself. I knew the answer, so I didn't dwell.

Instead, I rounded up three of the wrestlers, and we went on a two-hour walk



That is what you get when you are young and fit. Tajay McLeod of Moore Town, Portland gets cosy with fellow wrestlers, Kerry Bryan (left) and Cashaine Richards of Charles Town Portland.

up the Buff Bay Valley. The rustic scenes along the narrow road and Buff Bay River took away some of my weariness. At one stage, I felt for some fruits. I thought luck was mine when I saw a Rastaman approaching us with some plastic containers on his shoulders.

I assumed he was on his way to market. It was after he ignored and walked past me when I tried to find out what he was selling, that I was told he was not 'righted'. I was having issues with my weight, and he was having issues with, whatever.

Further up the road, the issues continued as someone who is having big spelling challenges had written some misspelt words on a retaining wall. And there was the issue of falling rocks from a steep hillside directly on to the road. Any moment, one of those huge rocks could be dislodged. The walk up ended after we engaged an elderly man, known as 'Cosmic' and 'Dingo Dong', into a conversation.

The veteran stone structure builder was cutting stones in his yard when I saw him, and started asking about what he was doing. We invited ourselves into his yard, where he told us animated and humorous stories of his life, which obviously didn't pack on pounds of unwanted fat on his thin 66-year-old frame.

YOGA SESSION

We were back at the camp in time for the yoga session. This was the activity that really screamed my unfitness to the surrounding hills. Even the fittest among us felt the strain and aches of the exercises. I got a few 'good jobs' from the instructor, but I was still very frustrated, which was further heightened when in the evening I travelled by car with three other people up the valley, to Fish Done Falls, located at Silver Hill.

When we arrived, many tourists were on located. Some were in a big, cold pool into which tons of water crashed. I was reminded of my unfitness again when I saw youth



Eighteen-year-old wrestler Ackeme 'Crocs' Powell flexing in front of Fish Done Falls. Unfit Hospitality Jamaica Writer Paul H. Williams used to look like that.

jumping from the top of the cascade and somersaulting into the pool. Back at the camp, I opted out of the evening routine. Was too sore from the yoga session.

I had to abandon Sunday morning's drill in the pit as sand flies had swarmed, and bit me relentlessly. I had to go elsewhere to do some light exercises. I wanted to go on another long walk on Sunday, but it didn't happen. Monday morning's session in the pit was not so bad. I walked around it many times until I began to sweat. My six-pack, my six-pack. They must come back.

I left Charles Town around noon with a new commitment to my health and fitness. I need them to earn, and to travel around Ja.



Young wrestlers going through their early-morning exercises at the Charles Town wrestling camp in Portland, recently.



The shepherd did not teach his sheep to spell. A sign written on a retaining wall along the Buff Bay Valley main road in Portland.



Wrestlers in a training session at Charles Town, Portland on Friday, January 2.

Ethics committee praises Accessible Tourism initiatives

THE FOURTEENTH meeting of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics meeting in Rome, Italy (17-18 November 2014) commended the efforts of UNWTO and its partners to advance accessible tourism for all. The committee firmly supported the Montreal Declaration – A World for All, the outcome document of the recent World Summit on Destinations for All, and participated actively in the 1st Conference on Accessible Tourism in Europe held in San Marino on 19-20 November.

Besides the issue of accessibility, the committee also debated the ethical implications of the promotion of fair models of all-inclusive holidays, the impact on tourism of unfounded ratings on travel portals and the effect of the rise of sharing economy in tourism.

“Tourism makes a great contribution to economy, although on occasion, it can be damaging at a local level, our committee pays special attention to this. The tourism sector is undergoing great changes (online booking systems, user-generated ratings, the use of ICT and social networks in tourism);

topics which we have to understand and reflect in our initiatives,” said Pascal Lamy, chair of the committee.

DIFFICULT TIMES

Welcoming the members of the committee, Minister for Culture and Tourism of Italy Dario Franceschini said, “In these difficult times, characterised by economic and financial instability, natural disasters and unpredictable socio-political events, we are all aware that development can only be addressed with a shared ethical framework.”

“I would like to thank the outstanding support received from the Italian government in advancing the important agenda of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics. It is the fourth time that the committee meets in Rome thanks to the excellent cooperation established with Italy and to the support of the Rome Centre for the Promotion and Dissemination of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. This collaboration shows the commitment of Italy to promote a more

sustainable and responsible tourism development,” said UNWTO secretary general, Taleb Rifai.



RIFAI

The Committee further backed the Be a Responsible Traveler’ anti-trafficking campaign by UNWTO, UNODC and UNESCO in cooperation with the private sector, to stand against human trafficking and illegal trade in wildlife, cultural artefacts and drugs. In the sphere of child protection, the Committee acclaimed the participation of UNWTO in the forthcoming **Global Study on the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism** and will follow up with attention the progress of this research.

As the organ responsible for promoting and monitoring the implementation of the UNWTO global code of ethics for tourism, the committee applauded the growing number of companies and trade associations that have adhered to the Private Sector Commitment to the Code. By November 2014, a total of 356 signatories from 51 countries had committed to promote and



Director General of the World Trade Organization Pascal Lamy.

implement the code in their business operations.

The World Committee on Tourism Ethics is the independent body responsible for promoting and monitoring the implementation of the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

The next meeting of the committee will take place in Istria, Croatia, on the occasion of the 100th Session of the UNWTO executive council.

WTM offers virtual tour of 2014 UK staging

WORLD TRAVEL Market, the leading global event for the travel industry, is offering the opportunity to revisit the WTM 2014 UK & Ireland region via an interactive 360-degree online tour.

The BETA initiative has been launched in partnership with US-based virtual tours specialist VPiX. VPiX has worked with resorts, hotels, nightclubs and estate agents in the past, and this is the first time its technology has been used in an events context.

The BETA virtual tour of the UK & Ireland region is hosted on the www.wtmlondon.com website. It comprises some sixty panoramic images of the exhibition floor, taken during this November’s event. Visitors can navigate around the stands by clicking on arrows which change their view and see them virtually walking around the exhibition.

Stands which are part of the virtual tour are flagged up with an ‘Info’ icon. Clicking on the icon takes a visitor directly to the exhibitor’s page within the Exhibitor Directory channel on the



From left: Jamaica’s director of tourism, Paul Pennicook; Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr Wykeham McNeill; World Travel Awards president, Graham Cooke, and vice-president, cruise shipping and marina operations, Port Authority of Jamaica, William Tatham with the five awards Jamaica won at the recent 2014 World Travel Market in London, England.

WTM web site, which contains all contact details.

Additional features of the virtual tour include other WTM digital

content. For example, the Hilton Worldwide stand includes a link to an interview with its Senior Vice President and Global Head of

Digital Geraldine Calpin, hosted on the official WTM YouTube channel.

Some of the world’s biggest

businesses are exploring the concept of virtual events. IBM Vice President, Software Business Partners Sandy Carter is quoted as saying: “Virtual events – in which you truly replicate an event experience – are the most exciting Web 2.0 marketing opportunity.”

‘EXCITING NEW STEP’

World Travel Market Senior Director Simon Press explained: “This is an exciting new step for us as we look to give our exhibitors every opportunity to maximise their participation at WTM.

“Post-event follow-ups are an important potential source of new business and this BETA initiative gives exhibitors the chance to connect with buyers and visitors from around the globe.”

“It also confirms World Travel Market’s commitment to innovation and the introduction of new ideas as we look to consolidate our position as the leading global event for the travel industry.”

To take part in the virtual tour visit www.wtmlondon.com/virtual-tour.