

The Gleaner
Hospitality Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2017

C'BEAN TOURISM BODY SAYS
US SHOULD STICK WITH

CUBA

- >> Red Cap Feature
- >> Meet Mr Hospitality
- >> No to Negril bypass





CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The Capitol building (in the background) in Havana, Cuba.



Bike taxis in Cuba.

CHTA bats for CUBA

Janet Silvera

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

AS PRESIDENT Donald Trump reverses US travel policies on Cuba, the Caribbean's leading association representing tourism interests for national hotel and tourism associations is warning of the adverse effects this will have on American companies that invested in that country.

The decision could also affect the socio-economic development of Cuba and the wider Caribbean region. This was among concerns expressed by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) in a media release last week.

"The announced policy changes could stall or altogether reverse the heartening progress made in recent years," says the CHTA, adding that if restrictions are indeed re-imposed, the association expects adverse effects for US businesses –



Fidel Castro's likeness in the Museum of the Revolution in Havana.

not only for import-export companies, but also for the US-based travel-related businesses that have



The cemetery in Santiago de Cuba, where Jose Marti was interred.



The Hotel Nacional de Cuba.

made considerable investments in Cuba since normalisation began.

The CHTA says it continues to support the ending of the US-Cuba embargo and its restrictions on trade and travel, and encourages Cuba's active engagement in regional economic development.

Acknowledging that even before full normalisation, Cuba's hospitality industry's growth outpaced the rest of the region and most of the world, the CHTA stated that major global hotel chains from outside the United States have been investing in Cuba and today they manage tens of thousands of rooms.

"As latecomers, US firms are already at a competitive disadvantage in Cuba. They risk becoming marginal players in the travel industry's growth in Cuba and throughout the region," cautioned the CHTA.

The association says it is urging the United States and Cuba to accelerate cooperation and collaboration between their governments, based on their mutual acknowledgment that the growth of travel and trade presents the greatest opportunity for breaking the long-standing social, political and economic barriers that have historically divided the two countries.

NEW REGULATIONS

In light of its stance on the matter, the CHTA says it urges that any new regulations continue to encourage small- and medium- enterprise opportunities, both Cuban- and US-sourced. It also urges Cuban authorities to accelerate adjusting their investment and business licensing regulations to foster the local enterprises so crucial for a growing travel industry.

This is not the first time that the CHTA has raised concerns about Cuba-US relations.

In its presentation to the US International Trade Commission in 2015, CHTA called for a new US-Caribbean relationship – sparked by a new US-Cuba policy – through the creation of a Caribbean Basin Tourism Initiative, which would recognise travel as a way to foster regional development and trade, and create points of engagement between the US and the Caribbean's public and private sectors.

The media release states that a vibrant travel



Onions on display in Cuba.

industry, both in Cuba and throughout the Caribbean Basin, benefits both the region and the United States, helping to ensure the security of the United States' 'Third Border', while stimulating employment, entrepreneurial activity, trade and government revenues in the region.

"In the face of concerns about immigration into the United States, it is self-evident that a prosperous Caribbean will put less pressure on population movements. The economies and people of the US and the Caribbean are interdependent, and regional prosperity can be significantly improved through enhanced travel and with Cuba's full engagement," argues the CHTA.

The association says it remains hopeful that the recent US-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act will be a catalyst for this and that the regulatory framework developed in the coming months by the US administration, regulating Cuba travel and trade, will address concerns being raised by regional and US travel industry stakeholders as a result of the recent announcement.

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1950s cars used to offer tours in Old Havana.



A fort in Old Havana, Cuba.



The Cathedral in Old Havana.

CHTA's high profile on regional issues is welcome

TRADITIONALLY, PRIVATE-sector organisations in the Caribbean have kept a low profile, not taking strong public positions, especially where criticism of governments is involved.

While this is because many are weak and underfunded, even the larger genuinely representative bodies prefer low-key, and usually private, conversations. They hope that by not antagonising governments they can encourage the outcome they want. Their concern, in some cases, is that by being seen to disagree publicly, or speak out ahead of governments, is to tempt retribution.

It is a view that is particularly prevalent in many smaller Caribbean nations, where private-sector criticism is too often seen as reflecting party-political sympathies or personal vendettas. It contrasts with the ways in which companies and associations in much of the rest of the world now actively seek to have their concerns addressed through public commentary and



JESSOP

the use of all forms of media.

Although Caribbean tourism in recent years has been more willing than most other industries in the region to encourage public debate on issues that concern it, recent statements suggest the industry is now willing to take an approach that befits a sector that has become the biggest single economic component in future growth.

For this reason, the willingness of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) to make its voice heard recently on three issues of importance, not just to the

industry, but for the region as a whole, is both important and welcome.

In the past few weeks, the region's largest private-sector association has been prepared to speak out in relation to climate change, the damage that the new US policy on Cuba is likely to do to the regional tourism market and the industry more generally, and to welcome proposals by members of the US Congress to develop new programmes that support Caribbean development.

In each of the three cases, CHTA is leading public opinion in a practical way.

On the existential issue of climate change, the organisation issued a statement shortly after President Trump's announcement that the US would withdraw from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; a decision which, to its credit, CARICOM has described as an 'abdication of responsibility' by Washington.

CHTA could not have been more

direct. The Caribbean, it observed, is particularly vulnerable to the escalating effects of climate change. Its effect, it said, "threatens the very viability of the region's economies and societies, and the health and welfare of Caribbean people".

ESSENTIAL PRACTICES

Without mentioning the US by name, it pointed out that the issue is important to the Caribbean's own self-interest. Sound environmental practices are essential if visitors are to enjoy the natural beauty the region offers and the region is to remain a "safe, secure and viable partner, benefiting its neighbours and major trading partners," it said.

More recently, in an unusually strong statement on the Trump Administration's new Cuba policy, CHTA regretted the reversal of US thinking on travel, noting the likely negative effects on the development of the country and the wider Caribbean region.

It made clear, in a manner that so far the region has not, that

CHTA and its members reject restrictions on trade and travel, and wish to see Cuba's active engagement in regional economic development, warning "that the announced policy changes could stall or altogether reverse the heartening progress made in recent years".

It urged both the US and Cuba to accelerate cooperation on the basis that "the growth of travel and trade presents the greatest opportunity for breaking the long-standing social, political and economic barriers that have historically divided the two countries".

CHTA also welcomed earlier this year the US-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act, and more recently has actively played a role with others in Washington to help develop the bill's proposed outputs.

CHTA's decision to encourage public debate on issues that matter not just to the industry, but to the people of the region, demonstrates a new-found strength. It is to be commended.

Half Moon receives Safehotels certification

HALF MOON, one of the Caribbean's most iconic destinations, has become the only English-speaking resort in the Western Hemisphere to be Safehotels-certified at a premium level.

Safe Hotels Alliance is an international certification company for hotels and meeting spaces. It provides certification according to the Global Hotel Security standard. To be Safehotels-certified means Half Moon has met the highest level of security and safety standards; thereby giving guests additional peace of mind during their stay.

"At Half Moon, the well-being of our guests and employees is top priority. Being Safehotels-certified ensures that we always observe the best practices and review security protocols regularly to ensure there are no loopholes," said Sandro Fabris,



A beachside view of the Half Moon resort in Montego Bay.

general manager of Half Moon.

Half Moon – located in Montego Bay, just 10 minutes away from the Sangster International Airport – is spread across 40 acres of manicured grounds with two miles of beachfront. The resort features elegantly appointed rooms and suites, as well as villas that each come with a cook, butler, housekeeper and private pool.

The 63-year-old independent property is well under way with the second and final phase of its US\$75-million master plan, which includes the introduction of new guest facilities, accommodations and restaurants, and expanded beachfront. Scheduled for completion in October 2018, the project has been developed in such a way that guests will experience minimal to no disruption. To learn more about Half Moon, visit www.halfmoon.com.



*Abe Issa Award for
Excellence...
Mr. Hospitality
- Robert Russell*



CONTRIBUTED

Robert Russell (right) shares lens time with Hendrickson Group's Kevin Hendrickson.

Abe Issa Awardee Robert Russell is Mr Hospitality

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

IN ANY conversation about people who have significantly contributed to the development of the tourist and hospitality industries in Jamaica, and in Montego Bay in particular, the name Robert Russell is bound to pop up.

For many years, Russell has operated hospitality-related businesses in the Friendly City. The eternally popular chill spot, Pier One, situated on

the Montego Bay waterfront, comes to mind.

Russell developed and presented the Montego Bay-based Reggae SumFest, one of the world's biggest music events. He was its chairman for many years and a partner of the Jamaica Jazz and Blues Festival, another MoBay entertainment fixture.

Yet, the Second City is Russell's adopted hometown. The Kingston native is a graduate of Calabar

High School and St George's College, where he sang with a group and played the conga drums. Terry and The Hurricanes was a group he founded and sang with.

With his school days behind him, Russell dived head first into the field of hospitality when he and business partners opened a hotel called Little Madness in Ocho Rios, St Ann. It was said to be an

PLEASE SEE **ISSA**, 6



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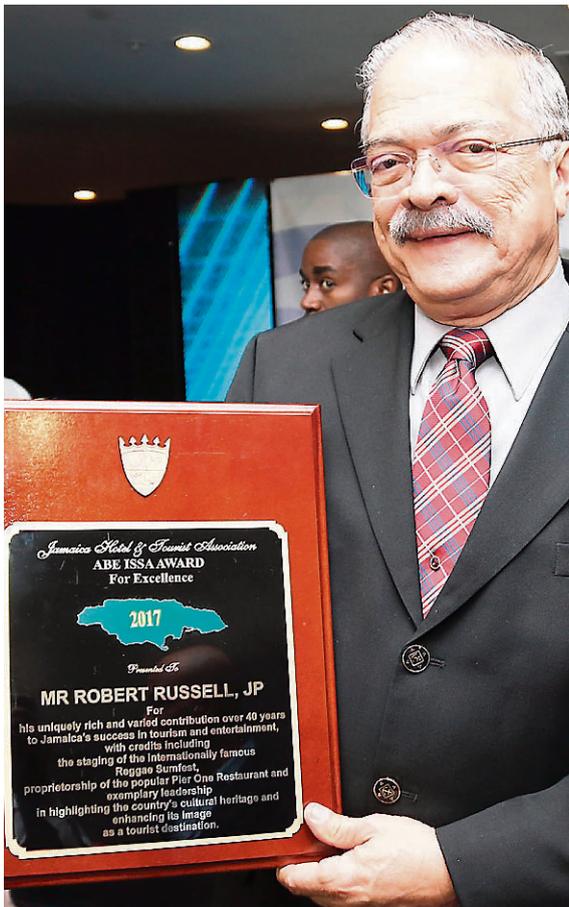
THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF

Deja Resort

WISH TO CONGRATULATE

Robert "Duxey" Russell

ON RECEIVING THE
JHTA'S ABE ISSA AWARD
FOR EXCELLENCE FOR 2017



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Robert Russell poses with his Abe Issa Award of Excellence plaque.



Abe Issa Award of Excellence recipient Robert Russell (centre) flanked by (from left) President of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA), Omar Robinson; Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Jennifer Griffith; executive director, JHTA, Camille Needham; and chairman of the Jamaica Tourist Board, John Lynch.

ISSA

CONTINUED FROM 5

all-inclusive even before the term was a buzz word.

Other hospitality businesses that Russell ventured into included Mandeville's Feeding Tree Restaurant, Tunnel Ten Disco, and the Den Jerk Centre.

From meat over a grille, Russell stepped behind the movie camera as assistant director of Perry Henzell's mega-hit film, *The Harder They Come*, starring Jimmy Cliff. He also worked with Henzell on *No Place Like Home*.

However, in 1987, Russell left his hometown of Kingston to pursue more movie projects in Montego Bay, where he planned to establish a complex consisting of a movie studio, a casino, a theme park, convention centre, convention hotel, and apartments.

Unfortunately, the complex did not materialise for various reasons. But, from the property on which the complex was to be established rose Pier One, and it has been a landmark on the hospitality landscape ever since. Russell's latest investment in tourism is the Deja Resort/RRED Limited, which was opened recently.

Apart from his personal enterprises,

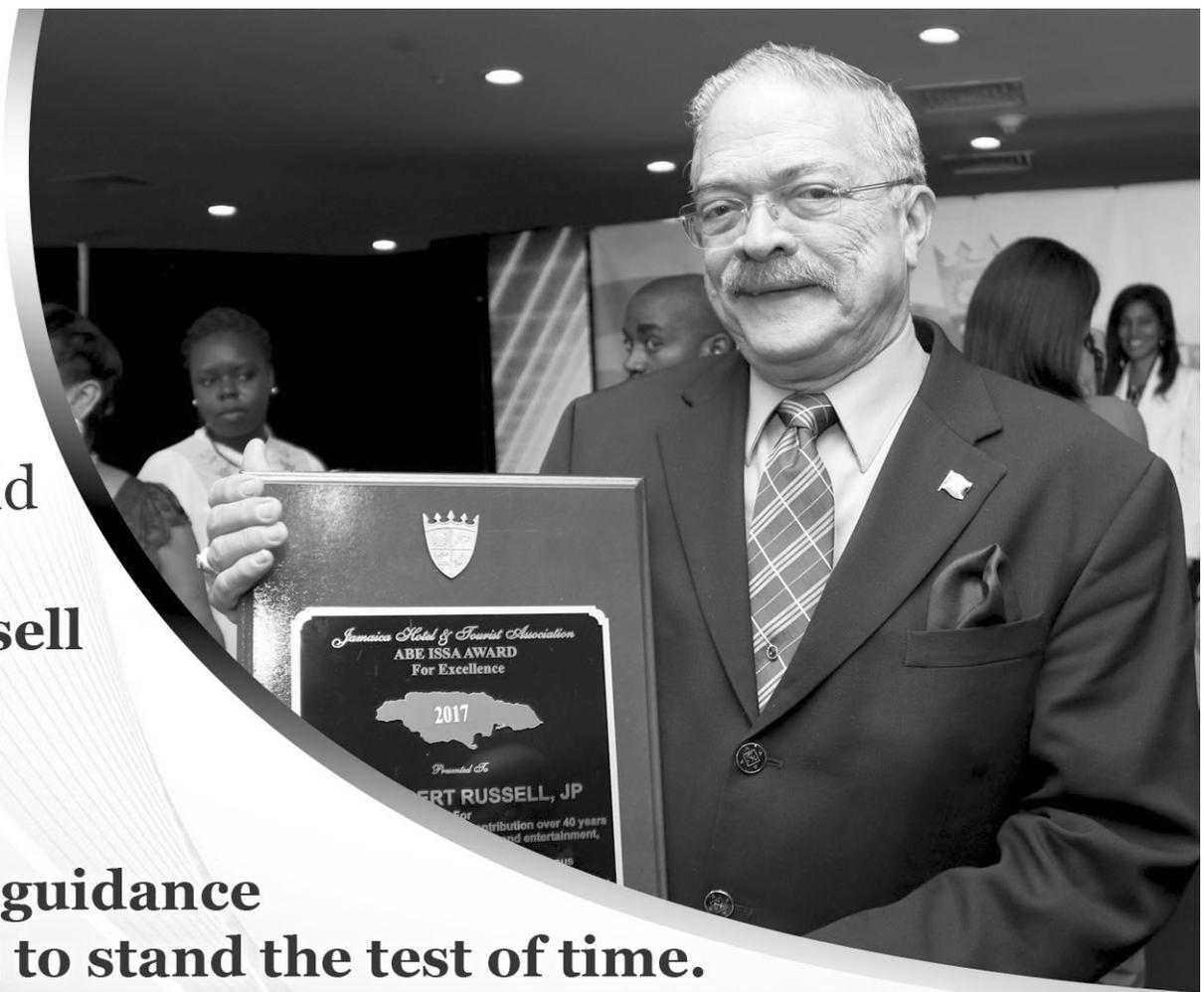
Russell has chaired several boards, including that of the Tourism Product Development Company, the Montego Bay Urban Development Corporation, Hot 102FM, the Montego Bay Convention Centre, and The Jamaica Pegasus hotel.

For his "uniquely rich and varied contribution to Jamaica's success in entertainment and tourism for over 40 years, for his strong leadership in highlighting the country's cultural heritage, and for consistent work to enhance its image as a tourist destination", Robert Russell is the recipient of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association's Abbe Issa Award For Excellence.



The Pier 1 Family would like to Congratulate Robert "Big Russ" Russell in being an Abe ISSA Awardee.

It is from his vision and guidance that Pier 1 has been able to stand the test of time.



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with SPIRITS

Tiffany O'Meally - A DREAM COME TRUE

Camille Miller
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

FOR APPLETON Estate Rum Tour employee Tiffany O'Meally, the burning passion has always been to be able to market her country to visitors, ensuring total satisfaction and a vacation well spent.

It is that kind of passion that has endeared her to her peers and co-workers and which saw her on June 17 being named Tourism Employee of the Year by the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA).

"What this shows is what having a dream and staying the course can do," a beaming O'Meally explained. "All I ever needed was that one break where I could get into the tourism industry and do what it is that I do best, and that is to be able to market my country in a way where visitors will want to come back."

O'Meally further pointed out that once she got a foot in the door in 2011, she knew that her "vision, discipline and determination would take it from there".

WORKED VERY HARD

"The first important opportunity came in 2011 when I got a job as a seasonal worker at a popular attraction in 2011," she noted. "From that year to 2015, I faithfully carried out my duties as a janitorial steward. And even though I had my mind and heart set on something else, I worked very hard



CONTRIBUTED

Tourism Worker of the Year, Appleton Estate Rum Tour's Tiffany O'Meally, poses with her award next to her company's signboard at the JHTA Annual General Meeting and Awards Luncheon.

and to the best of my ability."

O'Meally said she wasn't sure as to whether it was the combination of passion and her unwavering belief in going after her dream that made her declare to all who were willing to listen that she was interested in becoming a tour guide.

And it didn't take much convincing as, struck by her positive attitude, the warmth of her personality and welcoming smile, the operations team at her workplace became convinced that she had what it took to be a good tour guide.

So in 2013, O'Meally was offered the job of relief bartender and the opportunity to train as a tour guide. She grabbed the opportunity with both hands and at the end of her training, she got rave reviews for outstanding performance.

"I remember when I conducted my tour in 2015 and worked as a temporary tour guide while continuing to develop my skills," she explained.

However, it was in 2016 that the big opportunity came for the tour guide group to participate in the Aquila International Tour Guide Training for

Shore Excursions that O'Meally really started to fulfil predictions that she was indeed something special.

Aquila is the main training organisation for the Florida Cruise Shipping Association. Unlike others, O'Meally had no hesitation about seizing the opportunity, even though she did not have the required Internet access at home.

Despite the challenges, she completed the course and received a Certificate of Excellence. Her accomplishment has also enabled Appleton Estate Rum Tour to be the first and only attraction in Jamaica with an Aquila International tour guide (for shore excursions).

And despite riding high and living out her dreams, O'Meally has not for a minute lost her passion for acquiring knowledge and maintaining service excellence.

She is praised by her employers for her integrity and for consistently outstanding performance. A well-rounded individual, she is also active in her church and provides mentorship and homework supervision for the children in her community.



CONTRIBUTED

Caribbean Producers Jamaica Limited's Hugh Logan (left) and Dr David Lowe accept the Purveyor of the Year Award from second vice-president of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, Carol Bourke.

CPJ continues magical run

THERE IS no doubt, Caribbean Producers Jamaica Limited (CPJ) is on a roll! So much so that for the seventh times in 10 years, the Mark Hart-chaired group has walked away with the coveted Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA)'s award for Purveyor of the Year.

Founded in 1994, the company, which started out as an institutional food-service distributor catering to the hospitality industry, has expanded over the years to become the front-runner in the trade and the fastest-growing distributor in the retail sector.

"Part of the reason why CPJ has maintained its dominance is that it is service-oriented and keeps abreast of new trends and opportunities in the marketplace," explained Chairman Mark Hart.

"Today, we are being recognised again for what the JHTA and others feel has been our exceptional performance as a supplier, the high quality of our contribution to tourism and our strong support for community-related activities."

CPJ was founded in April 1994 by Mark Hart and

Thomas Tyler as an institutional food service distributor selling consumable products to the hospitality industry.

CPJ is recognised nationally as a leading food, non-food, wines and spirits distributor for internationally renowned brands. It now manufactures its own line of beverages and meat products.

As a strategic decision to ensure growth, the company listed on the Jamaica Stock Exchange on July 20, 2011. CPJ prides itself as a customer-focused, service-oriented organisation and its portfolio of products and services are known to meet or exceed the needs of its customers in both the institutional and local retail markets.

"As a dynamic company, we continue to improve the efficiency of our operations and the service we provide our customers. We are now Jamaica's leading food-service distributor and the fastest-growing distributor in the retail sector," Hart added.

- C. M.

Anthony Bascoe - A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

IT IS said that great bartenders are usually good listeners, able conversationalists, amateur psychologists as well as excellent 'mixologists'.

Add to those strengths a warm, welcoming personality, a million-dollar smile, motivational skills and the special appeal of a military man, and you would certainly be describing bartender Anthony Bascoe of Courtleigh Hotel and Suites - the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association's Hotel Employee of the Year.

A trained and certified lifeguard and first-aider, Bascoe first answered the call to the bar in 1992 when he became a bartender at Cocktails Nightclub.

From there he went on to the Courtleigh Manor Hotel on Trafalgar Road. It was some 20 years ago that he joined the staff of his current place of employment as

bartender at the Pool Bar, the post he still holds. For a time, he was also hotel lifeguard.

Chances are you will often find this man of many talents whipping up a special celebration or delighting repeat guests by remembering their names and their favourite drinks or engaging them in stimulating conversation. His professionalism has won him excellent reviews and several awards.

But what does he do when he is not at the bar?

"I could very well be in uniform, travelling in an army vehicle, because I am also a soldier; a reserve member of the Jamaica Defence Force in the Third Battalion of the Jamaica Regiment," he explained.

Bascoe also pointed out that for his contribution to nation building, he received the Medal of Honour for efficient service in 2008. But

there is still another side to Bascoe's versatility. As he explains it, he mentors at-risk youth in the Duhane Park community. He also gives practical assistance to those who need it. For example, he helped to rebuild and restore a home for a family of six in Clarendon.

Bascoe has been lauded for exemplary work and service. Just last year, he won the award of Best Team Player for the Pool Bar for 2016, an award he had also received in 2014 and has been Employee of the Month several times.

And if that is not enough, Bascoe also has an enviable performance record. He has never been late or absent, is greatly admired and respected by guests and colleagues alike, and is a credit to his hotel, the tourism industry and the nation.

- C. M.



CONTRIBUTED

Anthony Bascoe (right), Hotel Employee of the Year accepts his award from president of the JHTA, Omar Robinson and executive director, Camille Needham.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

From left: Hotel Employee of the Year, Anthony Bascoe, bartender of the Courtleigh Hotel and Suites; Chesna Haber, J. Wray and Nephew; and Tourism Employee of the Year, Tiffany O'Meally of Appleton Estate Rum Tour at the JHTA luncheon.



Jamaica Tours Limited's Bertram Wright accepts a prize from Scotiabank's Susan Sinclair after his company won the Top Local Transportation Provider at the JHTA Awards Luncheon.

JHTA recognises top performers

THE JAMAICA Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) recognised the top performers across tourism and hospitality at its annual awards luncheon held on Saturday, June 17, at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel. Through 10 awards, the full spectrum of players who deliver on the ground, day to day, what truly makes destination Jamaica great were honoured.

The winners of the 10 categories were as follows:

1. Purveyor of the Year – Caribbean Producers Limited
2. Local Transportation Company of the Year – Jamaica Tours
3. Attraction of the Year – Chukka Caribbean Adventure Tours Limited
4. International Airline of the Year – Jet Blue
5. Tourism Employee of the Year – Tiffany O'Meally of Appleton Estate Rum Tour
6. Hotel Manager of the Year – Dian McKenzie, Villa Zone Coordinator, The Tryall Club
7. Abe Issa Award for Excellence – Robert Russell
8. Lifetime Achievement Award – Ralph Smith, Tropical Tours
9. Hotel Employee of the Year – Anthony Bascoe, bartender, Courtleigh Hotel & Suites
10. Hotelier of the Year – Ian Kerr, managing director, Sunset at the Palms Resort.

Omar Robinson, president, JHTA, commented: "I am delighted to extend congratulations to this year's nominees and winners of the Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association's Annual Awards. These persons and firms, through their work, have acted to create an ecosystem of excellence, supporting and delivering on the travel dreams of our visitors. From the provision of access to our markets by our airline partners, to the provision of transportation and tours, timely and quality produce and food items by our purveyors, through to the warm hospitality delivered by our tourism and hotel workers, and, of course, our hoteliers and hotel



John Byles, Chukka Caribbean Adventure Tours Limited, accepts the Attraction of the Year Award from Vana Taylor, vice-president of the JHTA.

managers, who, with their teams, deliver the exceptional stays our visitors dream of. The JHTA is pleased to, at this time, recognise those of Jamaica's hospitality and tourism ecosystem who have stood out and are exemplary of the excellence we wish to see throughout."

Highlights of JHTA's AGM



PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

From left: Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook; his deputy director of marketing, Marcia McLaughlin; and Yello's Rasheed Girvan at the Annual General Meeting of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association.



Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism Jennifer Griffith chats with Spanish Court's marketing consultant, André Reid.



Executive Director of the Tourism Enhancement Fund Dr Carey Wallace chats with Island Outposts' Ricardo Bowleg.



From left: The Jamaica Tourist Board's Essie Gardner, Lucretia Green, and Antoinette Lyn at the Annual General Meeting of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association.



The Montego Bay Airport Red Cap Porters Association Limited



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Porters and guests worshipping at the Association's 50th anniversary church service.



Paul Stevens (right), marketing associate, presenting a cheque to Father Justin Nembhard at the 50th anniversary church service, held at the St James Parish Church.

50 years of offering quality tourism service

THE MONTEGO Bay Red Cap Porters Association Limited celebrated its 50th anniversary in February 2017.

The Red Cap porter service (original name at inception) started on February 23, 1967, by Colonel Reginald Townsend Michelin of the Jamaica Tourist Board. The service was formed for ex-military men to help rid the tourist industry of harassment that was becoming a problem.

The Red Cap porter service started out with 15 men who were trained for two months at the Police Training School in Port Royal. They were drilled on the history and geography of Jamaica. Six months later, more porters were added. Currently, all porters are trained and certified by the Tourism Product Development Company Limited. These porters were hired on the



Julia Snead (left), daughter of founder of the Montego Bay Airport Red Cap Association, presents an award to Michael Young, longest-serving member of the organisation. He has been employed for 50 years.

PLEASE SEE **SERVICE**, 12

On behalf of the management & staff at Amstar DMC, we wish to extend congratulations to the Montego Bay Airport Red Cap Porters



on achieving 50 years of meritorious service in the Tourism sector.

Your dedication and professionalism is an example to everyone!
Thank you for your continued service and contribution to the industry!



SERVICE

CONTINUED FROM 11

recommendation of politicians, family members and friends.

Twenty-seven years after the service was founded, the organisation made strides in having it incorporated by the Companies Office of Jamaica on April 15, 1990, where the name of the company was changed to The Montego Bay Airport Red Cap Porters Association Limited.

Today, with a complement of 66 porters (64 males and two



Wayne Cummings, group commercial director at Sandals Resort International, giving the main address at the 50th anniversary banquet hosted by the Montego Bay Airport Red Cap Porters Association.



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Awardees and invited guests show off their awards at the Montego Bay Airport Red Cap Porters Association 50th Anniversary Banquet, held at the Island Routes office in Montego Bay.

The management and staff of Siboney Manufacturing Co. Ltd. extends a hearty Congratulations to The Montego Bay Airport Red Cap Association on their 50th Anniversary



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Taylor-Marie Williams, trolley attendant, presenting a departing passenger with commemorative 50th anniversary T-shirt. Also pictured is Horetta Reid-Barrett, Red Cap porter.



Marjorie Cunningham (left) presents an award to Sheryl McGaw-Douse, group public relations manager at Sandals Resort International, for their continued contribution to the Montego Bay Airport Red Cap Porters Association.

females), we are the sole baggage handlers for both arriving and departing passengers at the Sangster International Airport. Our complete fleet is supported by five trolley attendants.

The association is led by a board that comprises serving porters along with an administrative assistant.

This year, the association celebrated its 50th anniversary with most of its activities observed in April and May.

Our celebration took place under the theme 'Customers' Satisfaction: Our Ultimate Goal to Quality Tourism Service'. The week began with a church service, which was held on Sunday, April 30, at the St James Parish Church, Montego Bay.

On Tuesday, May 2, we hosted a customer appreciation day for both



Passengers arriving at the Sangster International Airport being treated to traditional Jamaican snacks at the Montego Bay Airport Red Cap Porters Association 50th Anniversary Customer Appreciation Day.

incoming and outgoing passengers, where they were treated to traditional Jamaican food and drinks and given tokens.

Our flagship event for our 50th anniversary was our banquet and awards ceremony, which was held at the offices of Island Routes on

Queens Drive in Montego Bay on Thursday, May 4.



Opal Atkins, administrative assistant for the Montego Bay Airport Red Cap Porters Association, introducing the guest speaker at the 50th anniversary banquet.

Congratulation to the Montego Bay Red Cap Porters Association on their 50th Anniversary

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RED CAP PORTER ASSOCIATION

On Its

50th Anniversary



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Transport pioneer Ralph Robert Smith gets lifetime award

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

WITHOUT AIR, sea, and ground transport, there would be no tourists. Cognisant of that, Ralph Robert Smith founded Tropical Tours Ltd more than 40 years ago. It has grown to be one of Jamaica's largest destination-management companies.

And over the years, Smith has introduced several leading international tour operators to the island such as First Choice/TUI, Maxi Tours, Maxi Coverage Company Sun Wing, and Hotel Plan.

Smith's work and worth extend beyond his own personal and professional endeavours. He was a member of the Jamaica Tourist Board, president of the Jamaica Association of Tour Operators, president of the Montego Bay Skál Club and of the North America Area of Skál Committee, and president of the Rotary Club of Montego Bay.

He was also chairman of United General Insurance Company and Irie FM and was a member of the Victoria Mutual Building Society board. And quietly, the justice of the peace has made various types of contributions to community projects, schools, and churches.

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION

For his significant contribution to the development of tourism in Jamaica, Smith was, in 2005, bestowed with the Order of Distinction, an important national award, and over the years, Tropical Tours has received many Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) awards.

The current operator of Tropical Beach in Montego Bay was inducted into the inaugural Montego Bay Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Wall of Fame last year. He was also a Paul Harris Fellow, the highest award given by Rotary International.

Ralph Robert Smith is a pioneer for modern ground transportation, and for his "distinguished, dedicated, long-standing contribution to



CONTRIBUTED

Lifetime Achievement awardee Ralph Smith poses with Camille Needham, executive director of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association.

tourism, community and the nation", he is this year's recipient of the

JHTA Lifetime Achievement Award.



CONTRIBUTED

Dian McKenzie, Tryall Club's villa zone coordinator and Hotel Manager of the Year, accepts one of her prizes from Go Jamaica Travel's Dave Chin-Tung.

Dian McKenzie, named Hotel Manager/ Supervisor of the Year

"A TRUE gem." That is how the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association's Hotel Manager/Supervisor of the Year is described by the organisation that employs her, Tryall Club.

She is seen as a valuable asset, sparkling with enthusiasm for life, work, and making the world a better and happier place.

McKenzie's relationship with tourism began in 2002 when after working as an inspector in the garment industry, she took a job as room attendant at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Montego Bay. Just two years later, she was promoted to housekeeping supervisor, and five years later, she joined Tryall, where she is currently employed as villa zone coordinator.

RESPONSIBILITIES

In the capacity of villa zone coordinator, McKenzie is responsible for 16 luxurious villas, each with a staff of five, and scores full marks for performance in every aspect of her duties.

One of her greatest strengths is a strong commitment to service. Always quick to volunteer for any

activity that improves the quality of people's lives, McKenzie is actively involved in a wide range of her organisation's outreach projects.

These include working with senior citizens and participating in the annual fundraiser for the Committee for the Upliftment of the Mentally III; 'Reading Across the Nation' - Reading Day; Boys' Day; Montego Bay City Run; as well as Coastal Clean Up and Labour Day activities.

A noted sports enthusiast, McKenzie is a keen participant in the organisation of sporting activities.

McKenzie's insistence on high-quality service to guests is supported by her ability to lead by example and motivate others. She is well known and well liked, bonding with others through sports and volunteerism, and has won many accolades, a recent one being designated the Green Leader award for 2015.

For her exemplary contribution to community building on property and further afield in Hanover and St James, the JHTA named her Hotel Manager/Supervisor of the Year.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Main Street on a Sunday.

JUTA Lucea chapter says no to Negril by pass

Claudia Gardner

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

RESIDENT OF JUTA Tours' Lucea chapter, Adrian Parkinson, has disagreed with a call by the Negril Chamber of Commerce (NCOC) for a bypass to be created in Hanover to divert traffic heading to Negril, minimising traffic flow through the western town.

If effected, a bypass would destroy Lucea's heritage tourism plans, argues Parkinson. He said the congestion problem is mainly caused by insufficient parking spaces for motorists, deep potholes and improper traffic management, particularly on Main Street, where delivery trucks continue to block the street with impunity.

"I am not in support of it. What I would like to see is the dredging of the harbour to reclaim more land so that we can have adequate parking in the town," Parkinson said.

He said that in the past, the Hanover Chamber of Commerce had recommended to former Mayor Lester Crooks that delivery trucks should come to Lucea only on Thursdays, and they had to do so between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Drivers coming in later had to find somewhere other than Main Street to park, or they would be prosecuted.

"When Lester Crooks left office, that is where the breakdown started."

In a recent interview with **Hospitality Jamaica**, NCOC President Lee Issa had expressed concern about the "progressively worse" congestion in Lucea, which he said had, among other things, "outgrown its infrastructure".



Large trucks block Main Street in Lucea while delivering goods to supermarkets.

He urged Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett to give the bypass serious consideration.

"It is congested 99.9 per cent of the time and sometimes it is almost impassable with the trucks unloading their produce and the congestion," Issa had said. "It's going to get worse. With the expansion taking place in the tourism industry in Negril and the additional rooms that are coming on stream ..."

"I had a discussion with the minister of

Negril. It is a major contributor to the foreign exchange earnings.

However, Parkinson argues that once the delivery trucks dilemma and other problems are addressed, the traffic would flow freely and the tourism ministry could channel the allocated funds to other enhancement projects, and a small portion to reclaim land from the Lucea harbour, instead of on a bypass.

MORE EMPLOYMENT

"With the acquiring of more land space, delivery trucks would be assigned to one specific area, controlled by the municipality, for which they pay. Just like in any other towns, they can't just go and park any and everywhere and deliver. They have to use trollies to deliver or handcarts and that, for Lucea, could result in more employment and income."

On Sundays when there is free flow, it takes 45 minutes to take guests from Grand Palladium to Negril, he stated, explaining that on weekdays, it takes one hour and 30 minutes, because motorists spend 45 minutes to get from Keep Left to Church Street.

"I counted 12 delivery trucks last week Wednesday on Main Street; that should not have happened," said Parkinson.

At a recent NCOC meeting, JHTA Negril President Kevin Levee also attributed the congestion to inadequate parking and the actions of the truckers, some with 40-foot trailers, who, he said, block the road and bring traffic to a standstill while delivering their goods in a happy-go-lucky manner.

"I had an experience where the traffic – and I am not exaggerating – went to the top bridge. All the goods trucks were unloading; it was like they were in their warehouse; men with their shirts off stretching out. It was like they were working in somebody's backyard ... and that is unacceptable," Levee said.

Cruise ship passengers are also feeling the pain, and tours by them to Negril have been curtailed as a result.

tourism and he says that that is one of the top priorities the Government is working on to have done as quickly as possible. We are hoping that we will have some good news this year, because I am told that US\$200 million has been allocated for the Montego Bay bypass, Hopewell, Sandy Bay and that it includes Lucea.

"Whether through the hills or on the coast, it has to be done. It is critical if we are going to have a vibrant tourism industry in

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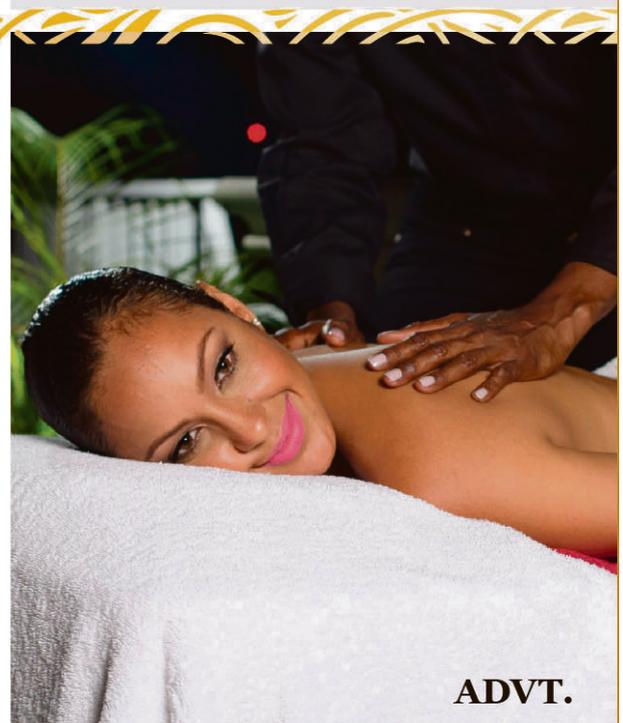
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