

The Gleaner

Hospitality Jamaica

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2018

Moon Palace
treats workers'
kids for
Child Month

Taino
Heritage
Camp
hosts
Areyto Day

LONGEST
SERVING
TOURISM
IN THE
COUNTRY



GREAT FOOD
FRIENDLY PEOPLE
FAMILY FUN

AUTHENTIC

ALL-INCLUSIVE
JAMAICAN VACATION



BOOK DIRECT & SAVE

www.seagardenjamaica.com
Phone 876.979.7761
Intl. Toll Free: 844.742.7778
Uk Toll Free: +442037695341



CONTRIBUTED

Chairman of Half Moon's Board of Directors Guy Steuart III presents a photo collage of Wordsworth Watson and Half Moon colleagues over the years. Wordsworth Watson celebrated 60 years of employment at Half Moon on June 5.



Wordsworth Watson cuts his 60th anniversary cake with Erma Clarke, Half Moon's human resources director.

WORDSWORTH WATSON MY LIFE AS A TOURISM WORKER

Janet Silvera

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

HE HAS served Queen Elizabeth II, her sister Princess Margaret, son Prince Charles and other royalties, spanning the globe.

After 60 years at Half Moon, one of Jamaica's most fabulous resorts, Wordsworth Watson can lay claim to being the longest-serving tourism worker employed to any hotel in the country, and no one could possibly dispute this.

The 83-year-old estate manager, who entered the industry at age 19, has a long list of renowned world leaders, including the late Fidel Castro, Monaco's Prince Rainier and Africa's Desmond Tutu on his belt.

Watson, who has responsibility for the 400 acres of land which he oversees, can be seen driving a golf cart, dressed in a straw hat that protects his face from the effects of the sunshine, looking large and in charge. He does not look a day over 75, and his faculties are in order.

Watson sat down with **Hospitality Jamaica** last week, reminiscing on his time at the award-winning resort, which was once a member of the Elegant Resorts of Jamaica.

"Queen Elizabeth was my favourite person to serve, because dealing with her taught me more than 50 per cent of the things that helped carried me through the industry," Watson said, adding that it was easy to follow the rules of Buckingham Palace.

"Working with the queen taught me a lot about protocol. While going to school I was told about the queen, but never knew the day would come when I would serve her," he beamed with pride.

According to him, having dealt with so many personalities has prepared him like a university would.

Before working with Half Moon, Watson spent four years at the Gloucester House (now Doctor's Cave Beach Hotel), and his memories of those years are as special.

"When I started in the industry, the chamber of commerce was in charge of tourism, then the tourist

board was created," he revealed, noting that while at Gloucester House, the board members were regular clients who hold their meetings there, but couldn't afford to spend more than seven shillings and six pence per person.

"This would buy them coffee, orange juice, toast and muffin and fruits, but within hours they would be hungry. So, although I was warned not to give away the food, I would give them whatever they wanted from the buffet because they were hungry."

Tourism in those days, he said, was subjected to poor infrastructure – many of the hotel rooms never had air condition and the sewage system was bad.

Those, too, were the days when the resorts would boil their sheets, towels and napkins, and hang them under the tree to dry.

From as early as those days, Half Moon was renowned as the number one resort, and every Monday evening, Watson said, he would watch a pickup pass by his workplace with the steel band contract-



Wordsworth Watson (second left), Half Moon's estate manager, marks the special occasion of his 60th anniversary at Half Moon with (from left) Richard Whitfield, retired managing director of Half Moon, member of the board of directors and chairman of Half Moon's pension fund; Peter Kellond, managing director of Half Moon Bay Ltd and member of the board of directors; and Guy Steuart III, chairman of Half Moon's board of directors.

ed to perform there.

"They would play at Half Moon's barbecue, but they would play the steel band from the truck. This was what spurred the excitement in me, in wanting to work here."

Before long, he was employed as a busboy, whose job it was to mop the floor, clean the brasso and look

after the buffet for three months.

"When I came, there were only 25 guests in house, but because England had opened up to the Caribbean and workers were migrating, they decided to take me."

Watson witnessed the growth of the property from 35 acres to 400

acres and worked with the longest-serving managing director at the property, Heinz Siminitsch.

“Heinz was brought in for one year, he ended up spending 39 years. He was behind a lot of the growth at the resort. We moved from 100 employees to 800.”

He also pointed out that Curtis Stueart, one of the original owners, was among the group of 16 Americans who originally started Half Moon. “Anyone with a problem, he would rescue them, and purchase their interests if they couldn’t afford to. He was a great person, he took Simo as his own son and gave him full reign of the property; anywhere he went and saw anything that suited Half Moon, he would tell Simo to buy it.”

Today, Steuart’s son Guy II has taken over as chairman.

Watson is up at 5 a.m. walking the areas where the guests and staff would normally walk to ensure everything is in order and Half Moon’s Operations Director, Shernett Crichton, says his love and passion for the industry and the people he works with make him an asset to Half Moon.

“He is a brand ambassador – he tells the Half Moon story so well and epitomises it. It is one of dedi-



Erma Clarke (left), director of human resources at Half Moon, and Shernette Crichton, director of resort operations, celebrate with Wordsworth Watson, estate manager, on the 60th anniversary of his employment at Half Moon.

cation to the uplifting and promotion of Jamaican culture and people, while offering discerning travellers the opportunity for remarkable experiences and memories.”

As estate manager with 400 acres of property and two miles of beachfront, Crichton says Watson is the ideal person to have as the steward of the landscape and the

physical environment.

He manages a team of approximately 120 people from beach attendants to landscapers. He is in charge of keeping the property

optimally running, coastal upkeep and he’s a core member of the emergency response team.

“One of his key projects that has had a long-lasting impact on the property and its eco-sustainability was executed by Mr Watson – the channelling of storm water and rainfall flowing into a dam, where the water is collected and used for irrigation. The dam was named after him, Watson’s Dam.”

His long-time friend and former colleague, Myrtle Dwyer, also had glowing words saluting the stalwart.

She said: “Tourism in Jamaica was built on the shoulders of stalwarts such as Wordsworth Watson.”

She is of the opinion that he should be used to address the young persons joining the industry as he has an illustrious story to tell. “His life depicts true dedication and hardwork which lead to success,” she stated.

According to her, Watson is the face of tourism, as his interaction with heads of government, celebrities, company executives, have kept them returning year after year, owing to his special touch.

Jamaica is richer for having sewn the seeds of a Wordsworth Watson.

janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com

www.atljamaica.com | [Twitter](#) [YouTube](#) [Instagram](#) [Facebook](#) @atlunbeatable

DON'T BE LEFT IN THE DARK

DON'T LOSE PRODUCTIVE BUSINESS HOURS BECAUSE THE LIGHTS ARE OUT. KEEP THE LIGHTS ON WITH A PRIZM GENERATOR.

Starting as low as
J\$49,195

FREE*
EXTERNAL 40L FUEL TANK
with the purchase of a 13KW and 8.5KW Generator

1.888.ATL.SERV(285-7978) KINGSTON • MONTEGO BAY • OCHO RIOS

*Conditions apply. While stocks last.





PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

Accepting her trophy in a playful way, the 2017 Sandals Ultimate Award winner, Jardine Vassell, throws up a foot, while posing with her boss, deputy chairman of Sandals, Adam Stewart, during the award ceremony last Thursday night at Sandals Southcoast.



From Left: Roger-Pierre Louis, from Sandals Halcyon (Saint Lucia), Ultimate Team Member 2011; Patrice Beckford, formerly of Sandals Negril, now based at Beaches Turks & Caicos, Ultimate Team Member 2015; Maxine Salmon, Beaches Turks & Caicos, Ultimate Team Member 2014; Earl Cummings of Sandals Royal Caribbean Ultimate Team Member 2013, and Patricia Bucknor-Cox of Beaches Ocho Rios, the very first Ultimate Team Member – Ultimate Team Member 2008 .

JARDINE VASSELL

2017 Sandals Ultimate Award winner



Beaches Ocho Rios human resources manager Michelle Jankie (left) hugs Jardine Vassell.

Janet Silvera
Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

JARDINE VASSELL embodies the very essence of excellenc; hence, it came as no surprise that the Snapshots supervisor at Beaches Ocho Rios made history when she won the 2017 Sandals Ultimate Award last Thursday night in Westmoreland.

A person of unquestionable character, Vassell trounced 25 other star-quality employees, representing Sandals resorts throughout the Caribbean and Jamaica, taking home a purse of US\$20,000, in addition to trips, jet transfers, and bragging rights.

“Jardine is part of a group of nominees representing the best off the Sandals/ATL Group. She is a team member who fits the criteria of professionalism,” the resort group stated in its tribute to the Ultimate awardees.

In fact, the judges looked for ambassadorial qualities, attendance record, community and environmental stewardship, team spirit, and training record when selecting the winner of the coveted competition, and Vassell, by virtue of her outstanding track record with colleagues, guests, and customers, was selected.

It is the first time that any hotel company in Jamaica has ever awarded such a large purse at a staff-recognition event.

Lost for words when the announcement was made, Vassell said that it was difficult to express the happiness she felt receiving the prestigious title.

“I am immensely ecstatic, overwhelmed – to say the least – and appreciative of being the Sandals Ultimate Awardee for 2017,” she beamed, even as her tear ducts welled up in anticipation of the road ahead.

“Without a doubt, any individual who walks away with this title is an asset, not just to Sandals/ATL Group, but to the service industry in general,” said the company in its tribute.

A message from chairman of the group, Gordon ‘Butch’ Stewart, encouraged Vassell to take a moment to bask in the celebration, but not stop here. “Continue setting new goals and pursue them with tenacity and vigour as what you have accomplished is monumental.”

The Group’s deputy chairman, Adam Stewart, in his acknowledgment and commendation of the Ultimate winner, said that her name would be forever be etched in history.

“You are a legend among legends, and I want to personally thank you for all you have done.”

The others nominees who competed for the Ultimate Award



The 2017 Sandals Ultimate Award winner, Jardine Vassell (centre holding trophy), of Beaches Ocho Rios, is flanked by her colleague competitors from across the Caribbean and deputy chairman of Sandals Adam Stewart during the award ceremony last Thursday night at Sandals Southcoast.



Roger-Pierre Louis from Sandals Halcyon (Saint Lucia) (left) and deputy chairman of Sandals Adam Stewart.

included Amoy Solomon of ATL Automotive; Imari Dawes, Beaches Negril; Roosevelt Joseph, Beaches Turks and Caicos; Romaine Daley, Grand Pineapple Negril; Marsha Banton, Island Routes Caribbean Adventures; Deidre Small, Sandals Barbados; Patrick Robinson, Sandals Inn; Nicola James-Greene, Sandals Grande Antigua; Richie James, Sandals Grenada; Khadijah Preville, Sandals Halcyon; Dwight Goodman, Sandals Regency La Toc; Kadeen Black, Sandals

Montego Bay; Sheldon Patterson, Sandals Royal Caribbean; Simone Folkes, Sandals Royal Plantation; and Laura Smith, Sandals South Coast.

Marvin Alfred, Sandals Grande St Lucia; Dwayne Simpson, Sandals Emerald Bay; Romeo Clarke, Sandals Golf and Country Club; Javada Parkes, Sandals Ochi Beach Resort; Romaine Adams, Sandals Negril; and Sherie Brooks, Sandals Resorts International, are among the 26 nominees.



The champion, Jardine Vassell (centre), being escorted to the stage by general manager of Beaches Ocho Rios Charles Blacher and the first Sandals Ultimate awardee, Patricia Bucknor-Cox.

New architecture for tourism required

David Jessop

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

SPEAKING RECENTLY in New York, Jamaica's Tourism Minister, Edmund Bartlett, could not have been clearer. Tourism, he said, as presently structured in the Caribbean, needs to change if it is to deliver greater economic value, increase growth and better support those who work in the industry.

Addressing a Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) Council of Tourism Ministers meeting, he told colleagues that the region's thinking must change if it is to capture the benefits of the four to five per cent annual growth forecast for tourism globally over the next few years.

To extract the maximum value, he stressed, would require the region to think in new ways about the industry's future development, its offering, and the changing global market demand, especially among millennials. The Caribbean, he suggested, needed to develop a multi-dimensional, collaborative response to ensure sustainability and the retention of value within the region.

"As a region, we need to recognise the indispensability of the



David Jessop

tourism industry to economic development and act to consolidate and increase shares of the global market," he said.

Minister Bartlett's call to rethink the Caribbean tourism model is long overdue. In an industry that tends to sit back in times of plenty and reap the rewards, his remarks suggest that at least Jamaica and a few thoughtful souls elsewhere in the industry recognise that the structural changes taking place globally in tourism raise questions about the long-term social and economic value the industry brings.

Tourism is increasingly a price-

based commodity, benefiting mainly those who own its 'hardware': hotels, the airlines and cruise ships, and the industry's multifaceted marketing operations that determine its supply. Economic globalisation is leading this part of the industry towards consolidation, resulting in a sector increasingly dominated by a very few powerful brands, and the homogenization of the product within specific price categories. The consequence is that, before long, what is on offer in the Caribbean and elsewhere will become hard to differentiate, with the owners of the 'hardware' offering similar experiences in all warm-water destinations, whether they be in the Maldives, Fiji, Barbados or the Dominican Republic.

DIFFERENTIATE ITSELF

This suggests that unless the Caribbean – the owner, as it were, of the 'software,' – can successfully differentiate itself, it will find it increasingly difficult to grow the value, own or retain its share of the global market.

Up to now, the response of governments to capturing value has largely been to stimulate the supply side of the industry and, by extension, the number of visitor arrivals. This has

involved encouraging ever-larger foreign investments in upscale resorts – Baha Mar in the Bahamas is a good example – incentivising new airlift to open new source markets, finding new ways to encourage cruise ship calls, and through the provision of extensive marketing support. It is an approach governments have been able to justify because it enables them to tax an ever-larger number of arriving visitors.

Unfortunately, it is a strategy that has done little to address the pitifully low level of retention of the tourism dollar within the Caribbean economy.

Recent research indicates that of each tourism dollar spent within the region, just US\$0.15 cents at the low end and US\$0.40 cents at the high end remains, meaning that tourism consumption by visitors continues to vastly outpace local production, with host countries failing to absorb and benefit from the domestic demand it could create.

This cannot be right. Tourism in the Caribbean should be harnessed in such a way that it becomes less about numbers and more about delivering lasting nationwide social and economic growth. That is to say, be of greater benefit to the small and medium-size businesses

and individuals who make up 80 per cent of the industry in the region; result in genuine human resource development; enable many more Caribbean people to graduate to management positions; and be encouraged to promote an authentic national identity in all that it offers to visitors.

Thankfully, Minister Bartlett and several of the region's more thoughtful industry professionals now recognise that if the region is unable any longer to control the hardware, – the supply side of the industry, – its future emphasis must be on securing control of the supply side or the software.

It is a form of economic nationalism that recognises that in the face of globalisation, small nations need to retain and find ways of leveraging their identity to the long-term value of their own people.

In practical terms, this means the region must now work to determine how to obtain the maximum social benefit from the sector, and capture more of the tourism dollar through much greater economic integration. It suggests that tourism must find ways to ensure that the Caribbean's cultural uniqueness is infused into all that is offered to visitors.

Excellence Award for five consecutive years due to our consistent standard of excellence. This resulted in us being nominated for the Hall of Fame Award," said an excited sales manager, Trishawana Davidson.

According to her, it was an honour for FDR to receive the prestigious award, which was a reward to all staff members, especially the nannies, who are recognized as the signature service offered at the resort.

"The Hall of Fame Award reflects the commitment and dedication that we have provided as a team to achieve the highest level of guest satisfaction and surpass our customers' expectation," stated Davidson.

She added that in the hospitality industry, guest reviews were very important.

"I want to express our sincere appreciation to our guests for their loyalty, consistent contribution and positive feedback about the FDR experience."

Another award puts FDR in TripAdvisor's Hall of Fame

FOR THE fifth straight year, Jamaica's favourite family resort, Franklyn D Resort (FDR) has claimed TripAdvisor's Certificate of Excellence.

In claiming the award for five years in a row, the Runaway Bay, St Ann-based resort has now been placed in the Hall of Fame category.

Staff and management at the property are basking in the recognition.

"Many hotels in Jamaica have received awards from TripAdvisor – the world's largest travel site each year for outstanding performance. However, what makes us distinct is because we have received the TripAdvisor's Certificate of





RÉMY MARTIN®

ONE LIFE / LIVE THEM



Must be 18 Yrs & Older to Drink. Enjoy Responsibly!





Sherene McGhie and her 10-year-old daughter, Dameonique, joke around while her five-year-old daughter, Caliyah, enjoys the action.

Moon Palace treats workers' kids for Child Month

Carl Gilchrist
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

SCORES OF children of workers at Moon Palace Jamaica Grande in Ocho Rios turned out last Saturday to enjoy the hotel's treat in celebration of Child Month.

The children, aged four to 12 years old, enjoyed a full day of activities such as arts and crafts (including tie and dye), face painting, ball games and bounceabout.

They were also treated to performances by a contortionist and enjoyed all their favourite snacks - chicken and chips, pizza, hot dogs, popcorn, snow cones and cotton candy.

Staff members were extremely delighted for the move, which was organised by the hotel's Human Resource Department.

"I think it's an amazing thing, and it's nice for them to consider our children for Child Month," said Sherene McGhie,

whose two children, Dameonique and Caliyah, were among those who enjoyed the fun day.

"On behalf of the Security Department we want to say thanks for making our babies feel special. As team members, quite a few of us as parents have volunteered to make sure that the children are monitored, so everything is under control. To the HR (Human Resource) Department, hats off, and thanks!"

Explaining the reasoning behind the treat, Human Resource Manager Joy Chung said: "We are closing off May by celebrating Child Month and Mother's Day ... For two consecutive Saturdays, our Moon Palace Foundation celebrated the empowerment of children, so this is actually a culmination of several activities that we've been having, celebrating our children, our employees' children and children from the community as well."



Ashley Hamilton shows off her handiwork, a tie-and-dye shirt.



Human Resource Manager Joy Chung (left) and other team members (in blue) pose with some of the children attending the treat.



Ryan Thomas from the Steward Department and his six-year-old daughter, Sonia, admire some artwork.



Children doing arts and crafts.



Five-year-old Alexia Rose enjoying a cool drink.



Three-year-old Gilana Moncrieffe examines her masterpiece.



Employee Stephen Patterson and his wife, Dr Kenisha Campbell-Patterson, with daughter Stephanie.



John Woolcock with the Landmark team during the blitz.



From left: Jamaica Tourist Board representatives at the blitz. Front Row: John Woolcock, groups and conventions manager, Jamaica Tourist Board (second right), is surrounded by (from left) David Shields, Director of Island Routes DMC; Linda Lawrence, Director of Group sales and marketing, Round Hill Resort; and Bert Wright, executive vice-president, Jamaica Tours Ltd. Back row from left: Shellie-Ann Norton-Ramsingh, director of sales groups of Island Routes DMC; Mavoy Smith, director of sales of the Montego Bay Convention Centre; Lylibeth Eaton, area group sales manager for Jamaica of AM Resorts; and Margaret Clarke Wheatley, business development officer, Jamaica Tourist Board.

JTB team blitz Midwest with key partners for 2018 roadshow

JOHN WOOLCOCK, the Jamaica Tourist Board's (JTB) manager of groups and conventions, and business development officer Margaret Clarke-Wheatley recently hosted a number of meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) with planners from the US Midwest region.

A number of key Jamaican supplier partners, including hoteliers, destination marketing companies and representatives from the Montego Bay Convention Centre, joined the JTB sales blitz team travelling through Chicago, Minneapolis and St Louis. The blitz saw the team meeting and networking with approximately 150 meeting planners in an effort to promote and position Jamaica as the destination of choice for their groups, conventions and incentive programmes.

According to **Traveldailynews.com**, the global MICE industry was valued at \$752 billion in



2016 and is projected to reach \$1,245 billion in 2023. Its future looks bright as the demand for meetings, incentives, conferences and events is still on the rise. The industry is evolving with the creation of curated experiences that showcase a balance between work and the unique aspects of the destination. This new paradigm is being driven by millennials who desire to be fully engaged. This trend prompts destinations to look for creative options for group activities, to include facilities in

surrounding areas for gatherings of varying sizes. With increases in the global travel and tourism industry and international business travel, many companies are investing in face-to-face meetings, which augur well for the MICE market.

Jamaica is an ideal location for meeting and incentive planners as there are many unique and interactive activities and meeting spaces. The island boasts the most diverse meeting facilities in the English-speaking Caribbean fit to host seminars, corporate retreats,



John Woolcock (right standing) with his team at Wrigley Field, Chicago.

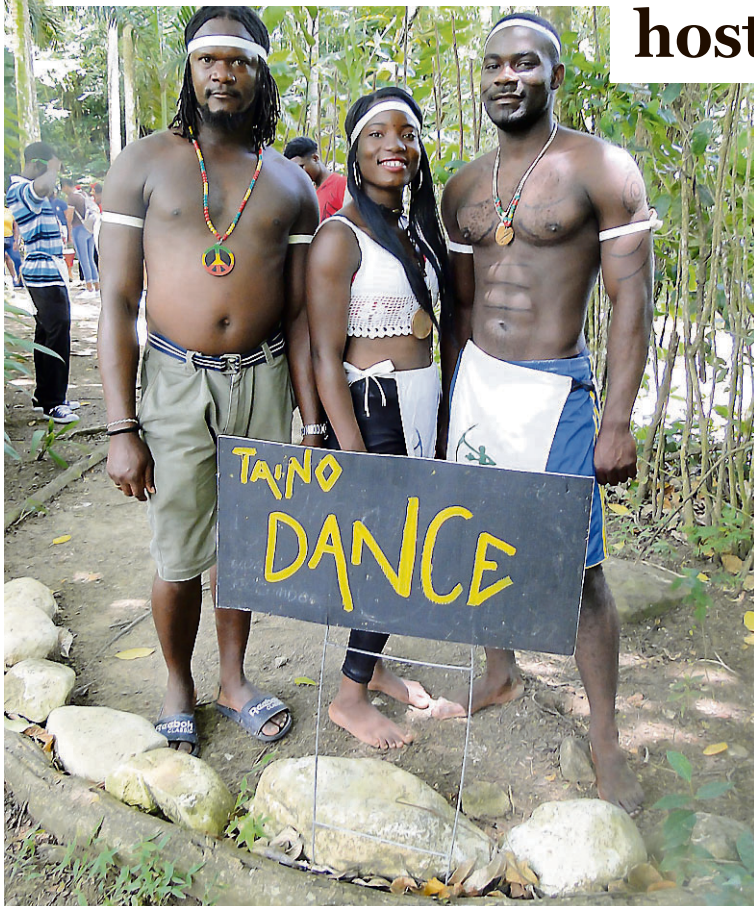
reunions, team-building and leadership workshops or conferences of all sizes. The more Jamaica responds to the trends in the international marketplace, the more likely the destination will be able to increase her share in the MICE market.

John Woolcock is very optimistic about the blitz and had this to say: "We are always pursuing opportunities to update the market on the

new developments that are happening in Jamaica. The blitz was very timely, and along with our tourism partners, we got the opportunity to meet with influential planners in the Midwest region, including the biggest incentive house in Chicago."

The planners, he added, were receptive during the training and networking sessions, and this will redound to the benefit of Jamaica.

TAINO HERITAGE CAMP hosts Areyto Day



PHOTOS BY PAUL WILLIAMS

From left: Devon Dennis, Iesha Aikens, and Thorn Edwards are some of the 'Taino' hosts at the Taino Heritage Park at Eden Hill in St Mary.



From left: Minister of Education Senator Ruel Reid and Florence Gregory of the Taino Heritage Park at Eden Hill, St Mary, talk about an earthenware oven on the property, recently.

Paul H. Williams
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

THE TAINOS were the people who were living in Jamaica when the Europeans, led by Christopher Columbus, arrived here in the late 1400s.

Over a short period of time, hundreds of the Tainos died. Others fled to the interior, where they were to be joined by Africans who fled plantation and pen slavery. Africans were brought across the Atlantic to replace the dwindled Taino population.

Though the Tainos are the race of people represented on the Jamaican Coat of Arms, it is widely felt that they were all killed. Yet, over the past few years, it has been revealed that people of Taino ancestry are still living here.

And there are two entities on the island that are preserving and promoting the Taino heritage and culture. One of them is the Taino Heritage Camp (THC).

The Taino Heritage Camp, located on Eden Hill, near Jack's River in St Mary, is operated by the Gregory family and is marketed as "Jamaica's first interactive Taino village".

Visitors are engaged in activities that the Tainos participated in such as storytelling, dancing, face painting, camping, a ball game called Batey, and wrestling.

"The park has a strong collaboration with a number of Taino groups and organisations. This has ensured that the guests get an authentic educational experience," the THC said. The programmes and activities are designed for schools, families, and corporate groups.



The gallery at Taino Heritage Park at Eden Hill in St Mary.



Leon Gregory of the Taino Heritage Park at Eden Hill, St Mary, leading a procession on the property during an Areyto celebration, recently.



The finalists in the mask challenge. The eventual winner, Kevorn Callum of Ferncourt High School in St Ann, is second from left.

On Thursday, May 31, the camp hosted its annual Areyto, a day of fun and celebrations. There were tours of the property, participation in Taino dances, wrestling demonstrations, and an exhibition of Taino artefacts mounted by the Institute of Jamaica.

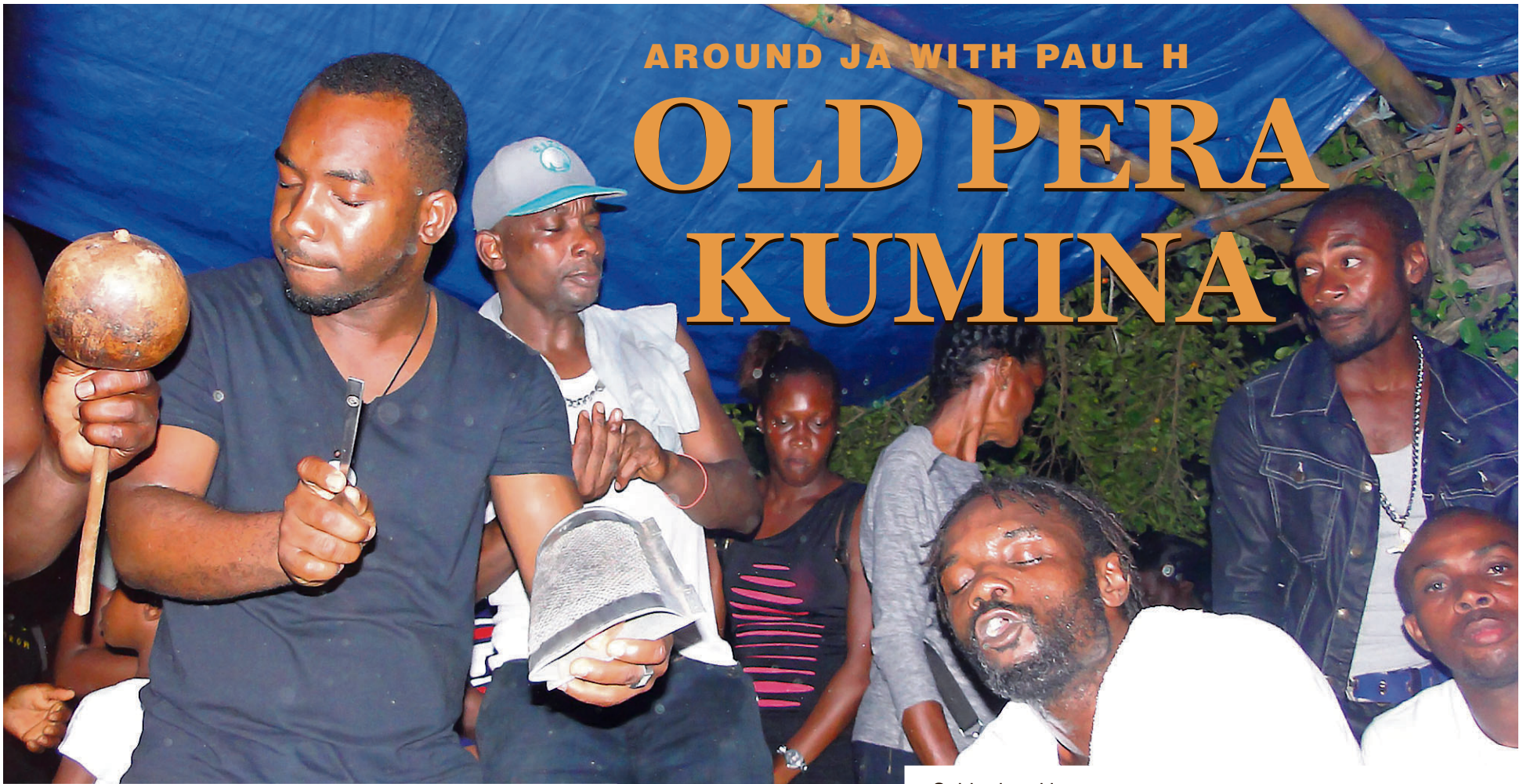
One of the highlights of the day was the judging of the mask compe-

titition. Some students turned up with masks that they were challenged to make. Out of six finalists, Kevorn Callum of Ferncourt High School in St Ann was declared the winner.

Callum was congratulated by education minister Senator Ruel Reid, the keynote speaker, who toured the property.

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H

OLD PERA KUMINA



Spirited and intense.



Kumina drummer Cha Cha Benz is well known for the intensity with which he plays.

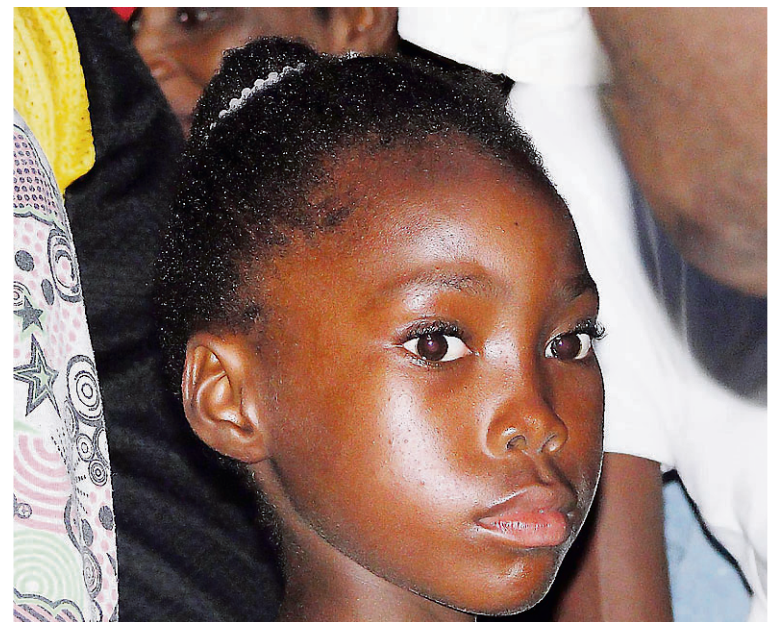
THE TOSS-UP was between Calabash Literary Festival at Treasure Beach in St Elizabeth in the west and Kumina at Old Pera in St Thomas in the east. And the west lost.

I could not give up the electricity and excitement of Kumina for listening to people reading, reciting and discussing literature, being a member of the literati myself.

I had been to Old Pera once before and learned how much of a Kumina melting pot it was. Its connection to Bowden Wharf is also a very interesting story, one that you seldom hear, so when I heard of the Kumina session there, I was immediately tossed into a whirlwind of indecision. Calabash is every two years, but there is a Kumina in St Thomas perhaps every week.

I chose St Thomas because some associates of mine were going and I heard the spellbinding, pulsating sounds of the drums calling me from atop the hill, and more importantly, it was Cha Cha Benz's band that was going to play.

Cha Cha Benz is an engaging,



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS PHOTOS

She is enchanted by the sounds of the drums.

excitable master Kumina drummer from Seafort in St Thomas, and I had not seen him play for quite a while. Moreover, the road to Old Pera was shorter than that to Calabash, which I will definitely patronise next time around.

We, in two vehicles, left Kingston about 7:30 p.m. With a few stops along the way, and the journey up the rough, narrow,

winding road, we reach at about 10. At a certain point the car in front of us stopped, and we saw a tall man enter it. I thought to myself, it was someone on his way to the Kumina, or a duppy.

About 10 minutes after that the car stopped again, and the tall man alighted at a gate. It turned out that he is someone I know and was planning to interview. I shouted



In unison and in the spirit of Kumina.

out his name. When he saw me he grinned broadly, and we exchanged greetings. The people in the other car also knew him, and as we drove off I reflected on the reason I wanted to speak with him.

He is a fifth-generation descendant of an African king and his family who were brought to St Thomas after Emancipation. They were the ones who brought Kumina into the parish, right there at Old Pera, and the rest is history. Three of these men are buried on the property on which he lives.

'DEAD YARD'

Later in the night, near the 'dead yard', we chatted some more about his Kumina heritage and the legacy of his ancestors.

When we arrived at the dead yard, two youths were selecting revivalesque songs, the ones that seem to play at all wakes. I am yet to warm up to them. They are not authentic Revival songs, and thus have no value for me. They remind me of the 'Made-in-China' Jamaican flags.

Around midnight, the spotlight moved to Cha Cha Benz and his band. The real thing. No commercial revival songs. After a few songs Cha Cha Benz got up from the drums disgruntled, because he was not feeling it, nor were many of us spectators. Many drummers tried, but the singing was weak, not inspiring the drummers.

I noticed that the singers and the drummers were all men, and no

dancing women around the ring. And despite the lacklustre performances, I reflected on how these men could have been elsewhere, but there they were retaining a tradition that the Congo people brought to Old Pera over a century and a half ago. They sang and played spiritedly, telling stories with their voices, hands and faces. My camera was kept busy until there were no more space for pictures.

A few minutes after two the momentum built up, and the magic that people wanted to see started to appear. The men's voices were harmonising and the drums gradually woke up, surrendering to the hands of the drummer. Yet, my sleepy head was conflicting my body. I could not tell the last time I stayed awake for an entire night, and it was now minutes after two.

I was jolted from my drowsiness when Cha Cha Benz returned to the drums, and went into animation. The looks on his face, his crouching, lithe frame, the flailing of his hands, and the penetrating beats of his drum gripped me, and moved me somehow. The tantalization was over.

By then, most of those who had passed by had gone, leaving styrofoam plates and cups strewn all over the yard, to be cleaned up by the relatives of the deceased. I shook my head.

We drove away about 3:35 a.m. Just before we did, I realised I did not know whether the deceased was a man or woman, girl or boy.



Just getting started.



The proper placement and movement of the heel is integral to achieving the peculiar pulsating sound of Kumina.



PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

From left: Taneka Gibson, Mangu Carnegie and Saneka Azan.

CALABASH 2018 A SUCCESS

NOT ONLY did Calabash 2018 succeed in its mandate of 'lighting up' the spoken and written words, but the literary arts festival's purpose of boosting community tourism was achieved two weekends ago in

PLEASE SEE **2018**, 15



Renee 'Irensiren' Lynch (left) and Lee Rose.



Dollis Campbell (left) and Andrine Higgins.



Ina Sotirova and her son, Kai Sotirov.

Gail Moaney receives prestigious PR award in New York City



Gail Moaney

ONE OF the hospitality industry's pre-eminent leaders in marketing and public relations (PR) was hailed this week for her service to the sector. Gail Moaney, APR, received the Marcella Martinez Award in memory of the meritorious and productive life of the late

Caribbean public-relations professional and diplomat.

Bevan Springer, who leads the non-profit Caribbean Media

Exchange, congratulated his fellow board member "for capturing this prestigious honour, which, in turn,

honours one of Jamaica's most accomplished daughters".

"Gail is indisputably deserving of this award not only for her unmatched contributions to our profession and her service to the Caribbean, but also

for her unstinting generosity to the youth of the region," said Springer, who, inspired by Moaney, established MarketplaceExcellence, a New Jersey-based public-relations practice.

The award, first presented in 2005, honours individuals and organisations that have made outstanding contributions to strengthening the marketing programs of Caribbean destinations. Winners are singled out for their work with the region's communities, as well as for providing consistent support for the Caribbean's cultural values and heritage.

HUMBLLED

"I am so touched and humbled by this," said Moaney, the founding managing partner of the New York City-based global firm Finn Partners. "Marcella Martinez was a dear colleague, mentor and friend. I remember her face so vividly when we told her that the Jamaica Tourist Board was establishing this PR award in her name," she reflected.

"It was towards the end of her battle with cancer, and I was so happy that she was able to participate in the announcement. Although she left us before the awards ceremony, I always felt good knowing that she knew that her legacy would live on," said Moaney.

The award was presented to Moaney during Caribbean Week in New York, a city where the late Martinez made her mark in public relations and international diplomacy.

Moaney, who in 2016 was an honouree in the inaugural Diversity in PR award program presented by PR News, has more than 25 years of experience in agency and corporate public relations. She also spent 12 years in broadcasting as a producer and executive producer for NBC/WRC-TV, PBS, and Warner Amex Cable Communications.

An adjunct professor at New York University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies, where she teaches master's-level courses, Moaney has amassed an impressive list of clients in the Bahamas, Barbados and Jamaica and has provided philanthropic support to the University of the West Indies and other regional organizations.

A fine arts graduate of Howard University, Moaney also earned Master of Arts degree from American University. Among her many positions, she is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists, as well as an accredited member of the Public Relations Society of America, for which she has served on the board of directors. She is a member of the Caribbean Tourism Organization, the Hotel Sales and Marketing Association International, and an allied member of the American Society of Travel Agents.

Moaney serves on the board of The LAGRANT Foundation, the New York Urban League, and the American Foundation for the University of the West Indies.

2018

CONTINUED FROM 14

Treasure Beach, St Elizabeth.

Opening avenues for economic benefit for local small entrepreneurs who offer a unique, educational and authentic Jamaican experience was made one of the promises and this was evident as residents and owners in Treasure Beach celebrated the biennial event.

Hospitality Jamaica brings you highlights of the literary lovers who invaded the peaceful southern community, spending on hotel rooms, food, transportation, and attractions and contributing to many persons being employed temporarily.



Jazz Grant and Dylan Brennan.



From left: Ruschiene Deidrick, Anette Salmon and Dr Lesline Davis.



From left: Joyce Perry Jacobs, Beverly Manley Duncan and Dorothy Buchanan at Calabash.

Caribbean gearing up for culinary showcase in Miami

Taste of the Caribbean and Caribbean305 to be held this month

TWELVE TEAMS are getting ready to participate in the highly anticipated Taste of the Caribbean culinary competition taking place from June 22 to 26 at the Hyatt Regency Miami.

Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bonaire, the Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Jamaica, St Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos have selected their best chefs and mixologists for this year's competition, which is hosted by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA).

A combined team representing chefs from some of the Caribbean destinations that were impacted by last September's hurricanes will also compete. The team comprises members from Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands.

Since 1993, the Caribbean's best chefs and culinary teams have met at Taste each year to compete, demonstrate their skills, learn from each other and offer the travel trade a scintillating exhibition of the



Barbados won Caribbean National Team of the Year in 2017.

most delectable culinary treats of the region.

The Caribbean cultural showcase also provides a forum for

food and beverage professionals to gather practical information,

develop skills, sample and purchase, strengthen and establish supplier relationships and meet new vendors. "In addition to the exciting competitions, food and beverage managers and hospitality professionals will once again participate in innovative and exciting educational sessions that promise to enhance individual skills and increase the value of their businesses," said Frank Comito, CHTA's CEO and director general.

He added that due to hurricane recovery efforts in some of the islands, CHTA was delighted to welcome a united "Caribbean Strong" team, a significant development as the trade association emphasises the need to develop superior food and beverage professionals across the entire Caribbean.

In addition to judging the best chefs, mixologists and culinary teams from the region, CHTA will feature the cuisine of 16 Caribbean destinations in one night when the general public can enjoy the second annual Caribbean305 culinary and cultural spectacular on Saturday, June 23, 2018, at 8 p.m. at the Treetop Ballroom in Jungle Island in Miami. Tickets are available at www.caribbean305.com.

Both Taste of the Caribbean and Caribbean305 run concurrently with CHTA's fourth Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum, taking place from June 22 to 24.

White River Fish Sanctuary gets help from WI Petroleum

Carl Gilchrist

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

EFFORTS BY the management of the White River Fish Sanctuary to implement its no-fishing plan for the area received a welcome boost on Thursday when West Indies Petroleum gifted them an unlimited amount of petrol.

Charles Chambers, the company's CEO, handed over a gas tank fitted with a pump to sanctuary manager Dalelan Anderson with a commitment to deliver 60 gallons of fuel every two weeks.

The gas will be used to power up the warden's boat, which is used to patrol the area.

Chambers said he was committed to assisting the sanctuary and will continue doing so for as long as his company is able.

"As long as there is the wherewithal, we'll be part of this," he committed.

He hailed the efforts of those involved in the sanctuary, saying they should be incredibly proud.

General Manager of Jamaica Inn Hotel and sanctuary advocate Kyle Mais, in expressing thanks to Chambers, said fuel was one of the biggest expenses they incur in maintaining the sanctuary and the donation will make a big difference.

Anderson, in the meantime, disclosed that since operations began last year, there have been signs of increases in fish, population and the reef has been growing.



Charles Chambers (right), CEO of West Indies Petroleum, along with (from left) warden Gifton Allen, sanctuary manager Dalelan Anderson, and Andrew Peat, president of the White River Fishermen's Association, relaxing in the boat 'Interceptor', which is used by the wardens in to patrol the fish sanctuary.