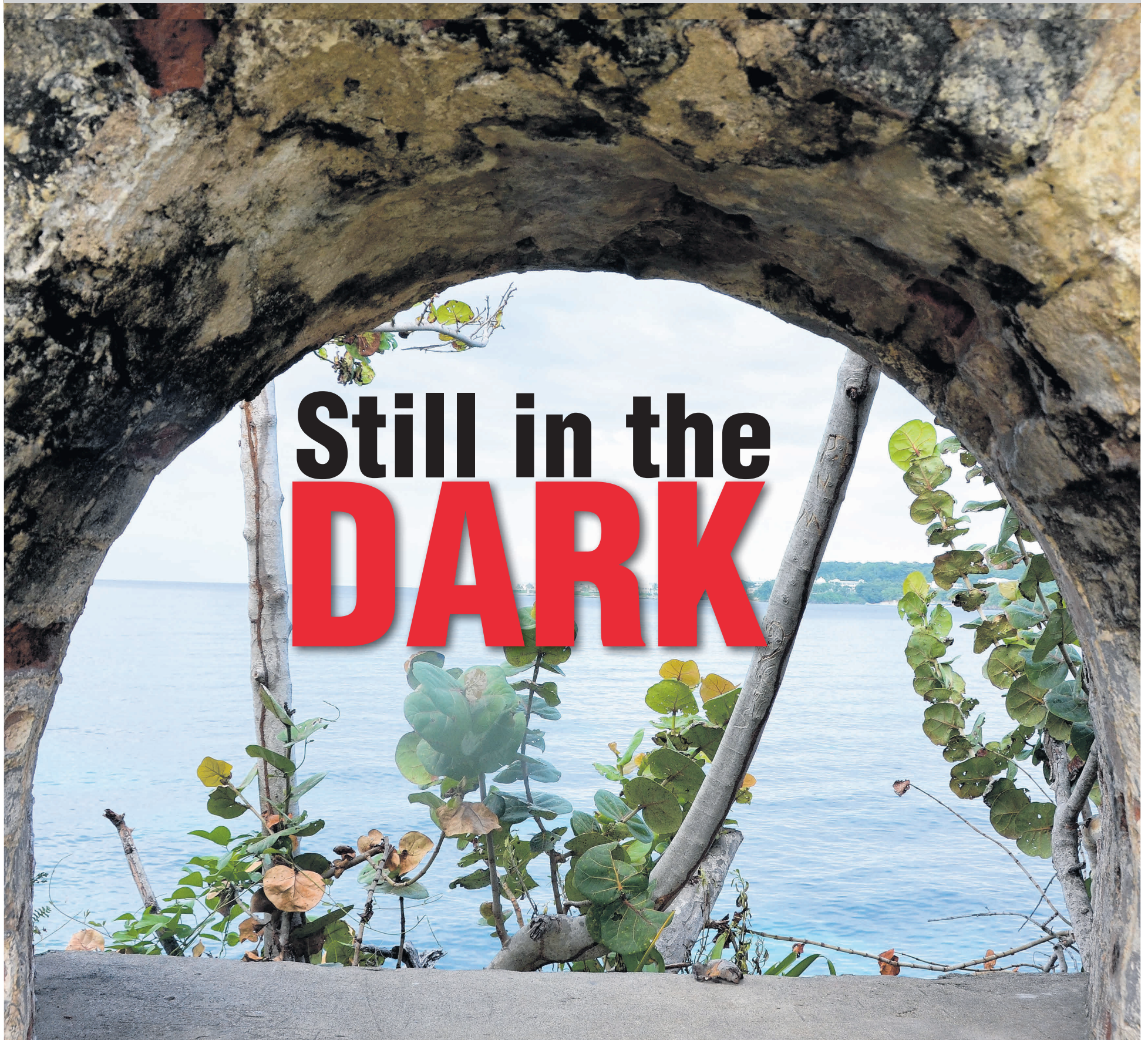


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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2019



Still in the
DARK

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Culinary experience at CIH

Still in the **DARK**



A view of Fort Charlotte and the Lucea Bay, which Lucea Mayor Sheridan Samuels says are among the treasures of the town and ought to be incorporated under the New Negril Development Plan. PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

Hanover groups await clarity on New Negril plan

LUCEA MAYOR Sheridan Samuels says the Hanover Municipality Corporation (HMC) is still seeking a clearer understanding of the objectives and justification for the proposed New Negril development plan.

According to Samuels, who is also councillor of the Cauldwell division, the local authority is hoping for a follow-up meeting with the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), to bring clarity



Mayor of Lucea Sheridan Samuels.

to the plan, which includes the construction of buildings of unlimited heights in the area, similar to Cancun in Mexico and South

Beach in Florida.

The NEPA has engaged the corporation in two meetings so far, one which Samuels says was held a few weeks ago, where the organisation had said the boundary would extend to Esher, a dormitory community in Lucea. He said concerns were expressed during the meeting that the New Negril boundary is only extending deeper into Hanover, with no extension in Westmoreland.

“They were outlining the whole thing, but council has concerns re where the extended boundaries that come up to Esher ... and were wondering, because we did not get a definite motive as to why it is extended that far and if it is just for the development of the parish,” Samuels explained.

“When we looked at the extension of the New Negril boundary, up to Esher, we don’t

see much land space there where any major development can take place, so we still need to understand. As for the unlimited heights, we can understand that aspect of it. But is the New Negril just being formed for that?” he questioned.

Mayor Samuels said the New Negril proposal would better serve Hanover if its boundaries were extended to Lucea, which has been starved of tourism development despite being regarded as a heritage tourism town with a plethora of ecotourism and historic assets such as Fort Charlotte, the Lucea Town Hall and the centuries-old Hanover Parish Church.

He is of the opinion that if it is extended to Lucea, the benefits would be tremendous, and it would not change the name of the town itself. Ideally, the area will be covered

under the New Negril, and this, he said, offers a lot of potential.

The mayor believes the plans have not been finalised, because there remains room for discussions.

Anxious to have a clearer understanding, he said he supposes the planners will return, owing to the concerns that were expressed. “The main point is that we are waiting to have further discussions because we want to understand,” he emphasized.

In November 2018, at the Physical Planning and Environment Committee of the HMC, Senior Physical Planner at the NEPA, Isau Bailey, had introduced the New Negril plan which, he said, was commissioned by the Cabinet, and which would guide future growth and development of the area.

Bailey had also said several government agencies, and community-based organisations would be consulted to give their input in the development of the \$50-million plan, which would result in an updated area profile, including physical, social and economic development; as well as financial and infrastructural development in order to come up with a vision of what the New Negril would look like.

He had also told the meeting that by July 2019, NEPA would have some “3D models and by October 2019, the draft master plan document would be fully prepared and ready for the surveying so that the various stakeholders could give their comments and feedback”. Bailey had also made similar statements at a New Negril consultation which took place during a Negril Chamber of



An aerial view of the 202-year-old Lucea Town Hall which houses the offices of the Hanover Municipal Corporation.

Commerce meeting in March.

However, when contacted last Friday, President of the Hanover Parish Development Committee, Dwayne Clayton, said his organisation, which is the main civic body of legal entity in the parish, had not been informed about such meetings, and members of his organisation said attempts to schedule a meeting with NEPA had proven futile.

“The PDC had approached NEPA to have a meeting, but

it never happened. I have not heard of any community consultation meetings being held. I personally reached out to them and did not get any answer. I was told that I would have been called, but I never got that call,” Clayton said.

When the NEPA’s Physical Planning Department was contacted on Friday, spokesperson Sharon Heron said the agency had not yet streamlined the dates for its

consultation meetings with all the relevant community members and other stakeholders in Hanover, but noted that one meeting was held with a Lucea group from Bulls Bay in Westmoreland.

“We are in contact with the other groups down there and we are trying to get the dates for the meetings; we have not been able to confirm the dates as yet with the CDCs (Community Development Committee), the SDC (Social Development

Commission), all the various groups down there; we are trying to get as much as possible. It will be a series of consultations. We are trying to put the dates together,” she said.

“We will be having more and we will be trying as best to contact all the community groups; we are trying to arrange them as we speak,” she added.

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A view of the Grand Palladium Hotel from Fort Charlotte in Lucea.



‘Keep it nice’

Hanover eco-hotelier fears Green Island’s natural beauty will be destroyed by New Negril concrete plans

Half Moon Bay property owner Andrew Marr believes natural coves and bays like these, which are still unique to Hanover, should remain pristine and will lose their natural rustic luxury charm if the area is overrun with high-rise buildings. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

AT LEAST one eco-hotelier is expressing concerns that the ecological integrity of the Hanover coastline will be compromised if the area is converted into a high-density tourism area.

Andrew Marr, operator of the Half Moon Beach in Green Island, Hanover, in his response to news that plans for a New Negril, which will take in areas from as far as Long Bay to Green Island, Cousins Cove and beyond, will spoil what is left as an unspoiled area.

He said the Rutland Point to Green Island coastline comprises pristine virgin territory and is among the last remaining natural spaces in western Jamaica, with some of the best coral reefs. According to Marr, he has faithfully preserved the area where he grew up as a child, felling only few trees over the years, with the Half Moon Bay now a fish sanctuary.

He is calling for the area to remain free of massive concrete structures. “They are going to spoil it. This is one of the last little unspoiled places; don’t come put up 50 stories here. Up here, they should be encouraging more environmentally friendly tourism because that is really what this area needs,” Marr said.

“What’s new in ‘New Negril’ (Green Island), is old Jamaica. It’s



Sections of the Half Moon Beach and cabins in Green Island, Hanover, which have been attracting numerous visitors, including international superstars.

still like the days before what I would consider an overdeveloped Negril, and I love nature and I certainly would not want to cover this place in concrete ...,” the environmentalist said.

His Half Moon property is ranked at number five of the top 25 things to do within the Negril area. It comprises a great house, a placid stretch of white-sand beach with several small coves and the Pirate Calico Jack Island, which is a haunt for superstars who prefer being in a

natural, less-commercialised setting.

It is also home to several wooded cabins which tourists from across the world book for ‘glamping’ (glamorous camping). Several international television sitcoms have been shot at the location as well as Jamaica Tourist Board photo shoots. With talks by the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) of buildings of unlimited heights in the area, Marr believes the area is in for a grave challenge.

“Nowadays, they are calling this



Natural coves and bays at Half Moon Bay in Hanover.

New Negril, but I like to think of it more as the Old Negril in a way. But Negril, with so many concrete monstrosities it has changed quite a bit,” Marr said.

He argued that the ‘New Negril’ was where one comes to get away from it all, spend time and rejuvenate.

He is suggesting that the authorities should continue to build high-rises in Negril where they already exist, and keep the area proposed for development like the old Negril, “because it is still unspoiled up here”.

Marr said he understood the need

for investment, but that it ought not to come at the expense of the natural environment. He said any addition to the room stock must be done in a sustainable manner, mindful of the natural ecosystems.

“We need the tourists; that’s for sure. We need the investment. But keep it nice so that it doesn’t run away with itself; and when it does, you have all the other problems associated with it that spoiled it.”

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Agri sector agrees with multistorey buildings for New Negril

... but other concerns still pressing

JUSTICE OF the Peace and Vice-President of the Hanover branch of the Jamaica Agricultural Society, Colin Johnson, says he is in agreement with the Cabinet proposal to enable future hotel developments within the proposed New Negril to be of unlimited heights.

"I am for vertical buildings instead of horizontal, because we do not have sufficient land space. If they go laterally, it will take up too much land, which could be used for other purposes," Johnson said.

According to the lay magistrate, contrary to suggestions by some hoteliers in Negril that it would be more beneficial if future construction is done laterally, high-rise building would be more beneficial as there is not enough land space along the Hanover coastline to facilitate horizontal expansion.

"Different people have their own agendas and are looking about their own interests," he continued. "We need to look at the wider picture, and that is why we need to have a development order for the entire Hanover and whichever developer is coming in [they] conform to the rules ... We must do what is in the national interest and not what suits particular people or interest groups."

He added: "You cannot eat your cake and have it. We don't have the land mass. Land is limited here in this country, so the further they go horizontally is the more land they



Collin Johnson, one of the biggest advocates for development in Hanover. CONTRIBUTED

are going to take up."

Using countries such as Singapore as an example, he said they built their cities vertically due to limited land mass, suffering no adverse environmental impacts.

"Go up," he declared. "I hear

everybody talking about Singapore. Singapore's buildings go up, high in the air, so they have land for other purposes on the ground."

He is convinced that the way to go is to copy the Singapore model, because they have

'Different people have their own agendas and are looking about their own interests. We need to look at the wider picture, and that is why we need to have a development order for the entire Hanover and whichever developer is coming in [they] conform to the rules ... we must do what is in the national interest and not what suits particular people or interest groups.'

small amounts of land and they go up because they have a large population. In fact, that country's development was done gradually.

"They did their assessments as they went along, just like Cuba. Cuba's approach to tourism right now is they build and they implement a moratorium, and do an assessment before going any further," he added.

Turning to other concerns, Johnson also expressed unease that since the announcement about the New Negril was made by representatives of the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) in March at a Negril Chamber of Commerce

meeting in Westmoreland, only one community meeting has been held by the agency for Hanover, which had less than 10 people in attendance.

He also noted that many persons in Hanover were concerned that decisions continue to be made in Kingston and then imposed on them without them being involved in the decision-making process. He argues that the use of the name New Negril to label lands that span as far as the outskirts of Lucea town appeared to be a real estate marketing ploy.

"Geographically, Negril is Negril. It should not be New Negril. What they're trying to do is market it as Negril in order to charge a higher price for the real estate; I have no problem with that. But the same way they developed Negril from scratch from the hippie days, why can't they call it Green Island? There is no New Negril. Negril is Negril," he said.

He sees these things as having motives behind them. He describes it as like the playing a poker game, whereas the players don't show their cards at the table.

"Why is Black River not called Mandeville? Why is Treasure Beach not called Black River and look how close they are? There are some motives behind that, which are not coming on the table. I think they will strategically, over time, brand Lucea as Montego Bay," he said.

He added: "These guys in Kingston sat behind their desks and decide what they want to do, like the buccaneers, seeing Hanover as the new frontier for invasion, because the seven-mile beach in Negril is gone," he said.



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*Boutique ships, experiential tourism can
bring back birthplace of the industry*

A boutique ship docked at the Ken Wright Pier in Port Antonio in 2016. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



The highly vegetated drive way leading to Bay View Villa and Eco Resort.

GARETH DAVIS Sr

Contributed

DOLPHIN BAY, PORTLAND:

BUSINESSMAN AND hotelier Gordon Townsend believes that the time is ripe for the Ministry of Tourism to seek to attract boutique-type vessels to Port Antonio, which could revive the already-fragile sector after decades of decline.

Townsend, who owns and operates several properties in Portland, told **Hospitality Jamaica** last weekend that mega liners, which can easily fit into the ports at Ocho Rios, Montego Bay, and Falmouth, will never be seen at the pristine Ken Wright shipping pier in Port Antonio because of their abnormal size.

“Gone are the days of the 1970s and ‘80s, when we (Port Antonio) managed to attract as many as seven cruise ships per week,” commented Townsend.

He continued: “In those days, two or three cruise ships were spotted in Port Antonio almost daily, and we were envied at that time. The reality now is that the smaller boutique ships are disappearing and the mega liners have assumed ownership of the sea and ports, which leaves us with only one option.”

He noted that the cradle or birthplace of tourism,

Port Antonio, has experience a nosedive in both cruise shipping and land-based arrivals and, therefore, is in dire need of a revival.

“There is need for a change, as Port Antonio still has its potential and is renowned for its picturesque beauty and friendly people. The local culture in Port Antonio is still relevant to the sector, and tourists from Europe, the Middle East, North America, and Africa are finding their way into this neck of the woods to experience the real culture.”

According to Townsend, Bay View Villa and Spa, which is owned by him, has been able to attract tourists from these particular regions owing to their keen interest in mingling with the local people in rural communities, while basking in the cultural experience.

“They fly into Montego Bay and are transported to Port Antonio via Knutsford Express. These visitors spends three or four days here, but most of that time is spent at Frenchman’s Cove beach and Winifred Beach. Gastronomy is also one of the key areas that has gained their favour, as the local food and other delicacies are heavily consumed by them. They have developed a craving for Boston jerk pork, rice and peas, steamed fish, run dung, and other indigenous food,” Townsend explained.

It is against that background that Townsend is hoping that the Ministry of Tourism will consider Port Antonio as a major tourist destination, while undertaking a vigorous marketing strategy to attract boutique ships, in order to ensure that tourism industry players benefit and earn from the activity, with the trickle-down effect reaching rural communities.

He added that he is witnessing new interests (tourists). “Whenever they are on the beach in Portland, they willingly eat out of the pot of ordinary residents and expressed keen interest in our Patois and dialect.”

He argued that in the absence of luxurious, all-inclusive hotels on the eastern end of the island, the real cultural experience of travelling into the Blue Mountains, Moore Town, and savouring local dishes is more than an attraction.

“If pursued, it could very well reap the desired results. Getting 500 to 700 people into Port Antonio aboard boutique ships could be just what the tourism doctor ordered.”



Spa area at Bay View Villa and Eco Resort in Port Antonio.



Above: The walkway leading to the villas, dining, and pool area at Bay View Villa and Eco Resort.

Left: Another ship docked at the Ken Wright Pier in Port Antonio a few years ago.

Time to ask difficult questions about the value of cruise tourism



THE VIEW FROM EUROPE

CRUISE TOURISM has become a big business, with the Caribbean now accounting for more than 35 per cent of all such vacations globally. This year, more ships will sail in or through Caribbean waters than in any other part of the world, with many of the hundreds of new vessels under construction destined to do the same.

Despite this, no government or industry body has yet been able to come to terms with how little the cruise lines contribute to the local economy, government revenues or Caribbean development. Nor have they found ways that equitably relate cruise tourism to the national economic importance of the hotel sector, the ancillary onshore demand that long-stay visitors create, or the higher taxes they pay.

Statistics produced by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) show that there were 29.2m cruise ship arrivals into the Caribbean in 2018, a figure roughly equal to the 30.2m long-stay visitors who came by air to stay in hotels and other onshore facilities.

However, these figures are misleading. Cruise ship passengers almost all stayed for only a small part of a day and visited multiple countries, raising questions about double counting. In contrast, visitors who arrived by air stayed on average in a single location for seven nights contributing, according to CTO, 11.5 times more than cruise passengers to the local economy and government revenues.

Unfortunately, there seems to be little in the way of consistent or reliable recent reporting as to exactly how much either category of visitors spend.

Figures produced by the cruise industry, governments and tourist boards provide some indication, but, for not well-explained reasons, vary significantly from country to country and are not up to date.

Reports relating to 2015, indicate that cruise visitors to the US Virgin Islands spent between US\$138 and US\$158, while the average visitor arriving there by air spent between \$200 to \$250 each day of their stay. However, figures for other destinations for the same year are much lower with, for example, cruise visitors to The Bahamas



recorded as spending US\$83 and to Barbados US\$78.

Help is, however, at hand to better understand the impact of cruise tourism.

In June, the Washington-based Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) published a detailed and balanced study. **Cruise Tourism in the Caribbean: Selling Sunshine**, edited by the organisation's outgoing executive director, Dr Martha Honey, sets out for industry professionals the ways in which governments, tourist boards, citizens, and the industry might change the nature of future discourse with the cruise lines.

REFORMS NEEDED

Apart from containing a contemporary analysis of cruise tourism, its environmental and social impacts, and the effects of climate change and overtourism, its 180 pages outline the reforms needed if cruise tourism is to bring greater benefit to the region.

Although some of the solutions it proposes will undoubtedly prove controversial with the cruise industry, the publication identifies practical ways to resolve the many conundrums the industry has created. It

offers ideas as to how to address the issue of the low head taxes that the cruise lines presently pay to governments, suggests the need to incentivise home porting, indicates the important lessons to be learned from the negative experiences of Venice and Barcelona, discusses length of stay, and points to the positive models elsewhere that the region might emulate.

But more importantly, **Selling Sunshine** suggests the need for a cruise industry that is genuinely Caribbean-focused rather than one that exists solely to benefit the big cruise companies. As such, its narrative and recommendations require serious consideration by any Caribbean politician who genuinely has at heart the need for national and social development.

The publication follows an earlier just-as-interesting commentary by Robert MacLellan, the managing director of MacLellan & Associates, the Caribbean-based hospitality consultancy.

He suggests that to have the normally intransigent cruise companies bring greater benefit, Caribbean governments should

learn from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and establish an Organisation of Tourism Economy Countries (OTEC). He argues that the weak negotiating position of individual Caribbean and Central American governments has many similarities to OPEC member states 60 years ago, and that a 'rebalancing' strategy should now be pursued by the Caribbean when it comes to the cruise lines. In this way, he suggests, not only could the issue of head taxes be addressed, but other issues of benefit to the region might be considered.

Recent conferences on tourism, held in Jamaica and Washington, demonstrate that there is a growing appetite and anger among Caribbean participants, who believe that what is required is a more equitable basis on which cruise ships operate in the region.

As they, Martha Honey and Robert MacLellan, suggest, the time has come to ask difficult questions about the value of cruise tourism.



The bounce-about was very popular among the kids. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Royalton Resorts fêtes kids with back-to-school treat

ON SATURDAY, August 24, the Royalton Resort opened its arms of charity to more than 2,000 persons. It was a two-in-one event that combined the resort's first-ever family fun day with a back-to-school treat hosted at the Elliston Wakeland Centre in Trelawny.

On a day that promised rain, families, inclusive of scores of children, were not deterred. Everyone turned out in their numbers to enjoy a festive day, complete with fun and games, food, music and, of course, their back-to-school packages. The organisers' careful planning bore great fruits from the start of the day to the very end, just before nightfall.

There was food in abundance. Royalton took its food and beverage team to ensure that patrons were lavished with tasty meals and an assortment of beverages for both children and adults. When the children were not indulging in the fun day cuisine, they were fully entertained by the bounce-about, mechanical bull, trampoline, ferris wheel, dance competitions and so many more activities that kept the laughter on their faces. When the heavens opened later in the afternoon, it was more akin to blessings to cool down the hot day, and as soon as it stopped, people were back to enjoying



Shawn Moses, junior general manager, Royalton White Sands, shares lens time with a mother and daughter at the resort's back-to-school treat and family fun day.

all that was prepared for them. The wetness and mud were no hindrances to the day's festivities.

The cherry on top of a fun-filled day was generating more joy and happiness for the children when they were gifted with

well-stuffed packages that included books and supplies. Families were grateful for the effort of the resort, because there were no doubts that they had been helped to alleviate the back to school expenses.



Angeline Anderson, human resources director, and Leonard Anderson, WOW factory manager.

General Manager of the resort, Daniel Cazarin, spared no expenses in ensuring that the event had come to fruition and the happiness expressed proved to be a great return on his investment.

Planned by a team that included Human Resources Director Angeline Anderson, Financial Controller Terron Hewitt, and the resort's food and beverage team, Royalton extended gratitude to Ky-Mani Marley, who sponsored the venue.

JTB LAUDS DIASPORA FOR MARKETING JAMAICA

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) recently hosted a luncheon for key members of the diaspora, thanking them for their role as ambassadors in promoting the destination.

JTB's Regional Director for the Northeast United States, Philip Rose, and District Sales Manager Marcia Sinclair met with the representatives as part of an overall effort towards strengthening and deepening its relationship with the diaspora, which has been key to the organisation's marketing and promotional efforts.

Rose expressed his gratitude to the diaspora for their role in helping to make the Northeast the top market for Jamaica's stopover arrivals for the first half of 2019. He urged greater

collaboration, especially in the sharing of resources, while reiterating the JTB's commitment to the diaspora and their role in the success of the destination.

Representatives from the Campari Group, owners of J. Wray & Nephew Ltd, outlined a number of initiatives currently in the pipeline which will target second- and third-generation millennials from the diaspora. One such effort is through the J. Wray & Nephew Foundation, which provides scholarships and mentorships for talented young mixologists.

For more information about the Jamaica Tourist Board, visit www.jtbonline.org.



JTB's Philip Rose, regional director, Northeast USA (fifth right) and Marcia Sinclair (fifth left), district sales manager, Northeast USA, with members of the diaspora following a luncheon at the Consulate General of Jamaica. PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA

GAME! SET! MATCH!

JTB serves aces at Citi Taste of Tennis

THE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) showcased the soul of the island at the 20th annual Citi Taste of Tennis event, held at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York City. The annual event, which is a precursor to the start of the highly anticipated US Open tennis championships, brings together the world's best tennis players and presents signature cuisines from the city's leading chefs.

The JTB partnered with Walkerswood Caribbean Foods and Appleton Estate Rum, offering guests mouthwatering treats and refreshing cocktails. Jamaican chef Wenford P. Simpson dished out pulled jerked chicken tacos with pico de gallo and tomato, and roasted corn bruschetta with guava balsamic vinaigrette that kept patrons flocking to the JTB's booth all night.

Additionally, the JTB collaborated with VP Records, the world's largest reggae music company, to open the night with a distinctly Jamaican vibe. VP Records recording artiste, Jamaican Naomi Cowan, mesmerised the audience with her guitar and soulful voice, showcasing why she's one of Caribbean music's top rising stars.

The evening's festivities included, for the first time, a cooking competition between Serena and Venus Williams. Using the format of the popular Food Network show, **Iron Chef**, the Williams sisters were given a basket of food from which they were to prepare a dish in 15 minutes. Attendees looked on as they chopped their way to the final dish.

The JTB's sponsorship of the Citi Taste of Tennis is part of the organisation's ongoing marketing objective of using high-profile events to showcase Destination Jamaica to potential travellers.



VP Records recording artiste Naomi Cowan brings Jamaican vibes during her performance at Citi Taste of Tennis New York. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Jamaican chef Wenford P. Simpson (centre) takes a break from offering attendees a slice of Jamaica spice to pose with the JTB's Kristopher DaCosta (left), digital marketing manager, and Philip Rose (right), regional director – Northeast USA, at Citi Taste of Tennis New York.



Calcia Peart-Peters, Elroy Peters, and son, Joshua, with some of the artwork done by the campers.



Tyreca McIntosh and mom, Tafrica Jenkins.

Moon Palace Foundation Summer Art Camp readies kids for high school

Carl Gilchrist
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

THE ANNUAL Moon Palace Foundation Summer Art Camp that ended recently at Moon Palace Jamaica in Ocho Rios provided more than just fun for the children of employees at the hotel.

Manager of the foundation, Natalie Boreland, declared the annual camp a success for yet another year as dozens of children benefited.

For several of the participants who will begin high school this September, the week of activities provided them with an insight into life in high school.

Educational trips to places such as the National Art Gallery, Gordon House, Little Theatre, among others, and in-house activities that included visual arts, music, dance and drama were well received by the children.

Tyreca McIntosh, who begins life at St Hilda's Diocesan High School in Brown's Town this month, while totally enjoying herself participating in several of the activities, used the experience to ready for school.

"The camp was nice, I really enjoyed it,"



Two youngsters drumming at the Moon Palace Summer Art recently at the Ocho Rios resort. **PHOTOS BY CARL GILCHRIST**

Tyreca said as she chatted with **Hospitality Jamaica** in the company of her mom, Tafrica Jenkins.

"I did music, dance, drama and visual arts; in visual arts, we made flowers, lilies,

using paper. I think the entire experience will benefit me a lot as I start high school."

Her mom was glad she took the first-timer to the camp.

"The camp was quite educational for her,"

Jenkins admitted. "She got to meet a lot of interesting people, she went to places she hadn't been before. She got the exposure and the experience. The art camp was a wow factor for me, personally. Palace Foundation has been doing a lot of stuff for the kids, educational wise. Next year, again, it's a must."

Meanwhile, for Calcia Peart-Peters, who works with Moon Palace Foundation, it was even more of a family affair as she and her son seven-year-old Joshua, were joined at the camp by husband and dad, Elroy.

Peart-Peters said that apart from the great benefits of the camp, it was good for staff members to take their children so they could see where their parents work.

"It's very good for us because coming to work, you can just bring the children with you for them to see where you work and enjoy part of what Palace does for the staff and children," she explained.

Elroy Peart was happy he was able to accompany his son to the camp and he, too, praised the work of the foundation.

For young Joshua, who was camping for the third year, it was an enjoyable event.

"It was so nice. I enjoyed myself," he stated.

Sandals Foundation donates equipment to St Ann's Bay Regional Hospital

SANDALS FOUNDATION has utilised more than \$600,000, raised from its Sandals Golf and Jerk Festival, held in May, to purchase equipment for the Physiotherapy Department of the St Ann's Bay Regional Hospital.

The items included a recumbent exercise bike, mirror therapy box, two nine-hole pegboards, two rehabilitation hand, shoulder and arm skates, a treadmill, one digital stimulation unit, and two pinch pin resistance therapy exercises for fingers and hands.

Project manager at Sandals Foundation, Karen Zacca, who handed over the equipment, commended the hospital on its community outreach programme, which the equipment will also serve to enhance.

"Access to healthcare is very important, and what you do to bring awareness to our communities so they can understand prevention rather than treatment is commendable," Zacca noted.

In accepting the donation, manager of physiotherapy services at the hospital, Debra Treasure, underlined the importance of the equipment, saying it would help patients from outside the northeast region.

"The closest physiotherapy department outside of this region would either be at Falmouth or at Spanish Town Hospital. Recently, they opened one in Linstead, but it's still not yet fully functional. So persons in Guys Hill, St Catherine, or Kellits in Clarendon, which is quite a few hours away, still find it easier to come here for physiotherapy," Treasure said.

Sixty-seven-year-old Daisy Campbell-Barrett, who suffered a stroke four months ago, was the first patient to utilise the rehabilitation arm skate, saying afterwards that it was a good exercise.

The 2019 Sandals Golf and Jerk Festival was held at the Sandals Golf and Country Club in celebration of the foundation's 10th anniversary.

Proceeds from the tournament also support the foundation's Care for Kids junior golf programme.

Major partners included Best Dressed Chicken, Caribbean Producers Jamaica Limited, Starbucks, Walkerswood, Sandals Ocho Rios, Beaches Ocho Rios, and Sandals Golf and Country Club.



From left: Chairman of the St Ann's Bay Regional Hospital and Mayor of St Ann's Bay, Michael Belnavis, and Debra Treasure, manager of physiotherapy services at the hospital, speak with Karen Zacca, project manager, Sandals Foundation, at the handover. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS**



From left: Karen Zacca, project manager, Sandals Foundation, and Lyndsay Isaacs, regional public relations manager at Sandals Resorts St Ann and Boscobel, look on as stroke rehabilitation patient Daisy Campbell-Barrett exercises arm mobility with the new rehabilitation arm skate. Assisting Campbell-Barrett is Debra Treasure, manager of physiotherapy services at the St Ann's Bay Regional Hospital.



The students who planned and executed Culinary Explosion. At the extreme right is their senior instructor, Melissa Thompson Williams. PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

‘Culinary Explosion’ at CIH

Paul H. Williams
Contributor

THE CARIBBEAN Institute of Hospitality (CIH) has been quietly producing skilled and creative personnel for the hospitality industry.

This was evident when the culinary management class of 2019 hosted ‘Culinary Explosion’ on the campus located at 29 Courtney Walsh Drive (Derrymore Road) on Tuesday, August 27.

It was a student project in partial fulfilment of their *chef de partie* course, which is a supervisory-level programme, in which students are trained to plan and execute events.

Tuesday’s event was an examination which took the form of a buffet presentation.

And there was an explosion indeed, whether against the palates of guests, the layout, or on the table *d’hote* menu, on which were listed vegetable soup, coconut curried goat, honey-roasted pork chops, chicken breast rollatini, pan-seared jerked fish, that could be served with rice and peas, polenta (seasoned cornmeal), Irish potatoes and vegetable pasta.

In addition, there were tossed garden salad, sautéed butter



From left: External examiner Sheldon Hays, senior instructor Melissa Thompson Williams, and instructor Whitcliffe Doyle.

vegetable, Meikle Island and citrus vinaigrette dressing. The crescendo came when it was time for the desserts. The bread and sweet potato puddings, tarts, cookies, cake pop, macaroons, sacher torte, red velvet, pineapple upside down and Black Forest cakes certainly hit the spot on the sweet tooth.

The evening started out with a cocktail hour before diners were welcomed to the huge dining hall

decorated in red, gold and white. By way of entertainment, Deshaun Fender of FENDER SAX was superb with his renditions of some well-known pieces as patrons dined. Diners were also songs from two of the student chefs.

Speaking of her journey, final-year student Shawna-Kay Henry said she felt that she and her colleagues exceeded the expectations of their teachers.

“We have completed the task that was given ... What we have learnt we have implemented in the dishes today. They have met the expectations, myself and the others are proud; we are ready for the culinary world,” she declared.

They had reasons to be proud. Christopher Brown, a professional sous chef, and one of their part-time food and beverage tutors, spoke glowingly of their achievements,

particularly with pastries.

Brown’s colleague, Executive Chef Kenard Swaby, was also present to see and taste what the students had produced.

“It is always very encouraging, and it’s a nice feeling when I see young people work together, and also execute.”

Both Brown and Swaby addressed the gathering, offering words of advice and encouragement, telling the students what to expect in their chosen industry, and how to deal with the challenges therein.

Melissa Thompson Williams, senior instructor in culinary management, also expressed her words of encouragement to the students. “They really went all out, and on this special occasion, and, literally, in Jamaican term, put their feet out. It’s a good evening. Just by walking around, looking at the faces of the guests. I can see that they enjoyed the meal ... That is our aim here at Caribbean Institute of Hospitality. We take students in from the ground up ... and we elevate you up to another level,” she said.

According to her, the students exceeded what they were required to do.



A bright smile and organic food are some of the things that are waiting for you at Harmony Heights. PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA

Harmony Heights

THE VIEWS, THE BREEZE AND THE FOOD



Sculptures such as this one are a fixture at Harmony Heights. PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

FROM BELOW, along the main road, I could see it. Perched on top of a hill, it glowed orange above the greenery. To reach it, we had to travel a narrow, winding road. As we ascended, the sea came into view, the sea, which I do not want to get into as yet.

In a few minutes I was there, on the lofty heights of Fairy Hill, where ocean and sea views of Harmony Heights Villa command a breath-stopping view of the expansive, azure Caribbean Sea and the turquoise waters of Boston Bay in Portland. I felt like I was being pulled into their magical embrace. I



A place among the trees to chill and take a 'meds'



One of the immaculate bathrooms at Harmony Heights.



A spacious bedroom at Harmony Heights.

was on Fairy Hill, remember.

To the east of Boston Bay, a rugged headland separates it from a bigger alcove. The various shades of blue glowing from the two bodies clashed with the light-blue sky against which rows of clouds of various forms remained still, above the horizon. It is this same horizon that sun rises from every morning, giving the sea a range of shades, from glittery gold to dazzling silver.

On my trip, John crows soared, showing off their skills, sailing on the breeze which rushed over to the patios. To the northeast of the concrete structure are the Boston Hills and a continuous greenery that stops near the structure from which I could look down on very tall trees swaying gently in the wind. I saw a few baldpates, and I was told by the operator, Syble Watson, that those trees harbour a variety of species, including a woodpecker, and one that comes to sing every day.

THE TRANQUILITY OF THE WOODS

I was brought into the woods to see how tranquil it is, and it really is. Affixed to some trees are board seats on which to sit, relax, and take a 'meds', while listening to the rustling of the wind-blown leaves of the tall trees, and the peculiar sounds of the creatures within. A nature trail meanders through the trees, going deeper into the woods.

From my research, the lands around were once owned by a well-known family, whose name I will refrain from calling. It was once a pimento plantation it seems, and there are the ruins of a thick-walled, stone structure



If this isn't the view to die for, then what is?



As inviting as the views and breeze is the food at Harmony Heights. **PAUL WILLIAMS**

along the winding road. They look like the remnants of a fort. I am still doing my research, for I saw heaps of stones marking what we suspect to be ancestral graves.

At the start of the nature trail, I did a brief tour of the 'farm' in which a variety of vegetables and ground provisions are grown in the red earth among the rocks. The plants look sturdy and healthy. Fruit trees are among the lot. I saw June plum, soursop, guava, all of which I love. From this plot, guests can be fed with whatever is in season, and available.

Chickens and their eggs, too, are ready for the huge glass dining table inside the three-suite

guest quarters, which has a big sitting area, kitchen and dining space. Each spacious breezy suite is exquisitely furnished and accented.

I remarked to Watson that they look just as nice as five-star hotel rooms. I was also impressed with the scent of the place. It was clean and smelled really fresh, like the sea and mountain breeze that merge thereon.

All around are sculptures and other accents depicting Afro-centric themes, a plus for me. I could live there, if not for the conversational pieces and the food, but for the views and the air. And the rising sun.

Couples thank Sandals for bringing them together

WHEN THOMAS and Nancy McGann visited Sandals Negril in 1994 on their honeymoon, they were expecting a luxury-included, romantic getaway with a generous serving of sun, sand and sea. They got that, but with only two days left in their vacation they came upon something more; a chance meeting with Sharon Amrose that would blossom into a 25-year friendship.

"We had gone out waterskiing when we met Sharon out in the water and struck up a conversation with her," said Nancy. "We learned that she would be moving to Boston, where we lived at the time."

"Personally, I wasn't trying to meet anyone, I just wanted to connect with my new wife," said Thomas. But Sharon introduced the couple to her husband, David, and something just clicked.

The couples soon learned that not only were they both on their honeymoon, but they had both gotten married just one day apart.

"Those two last days of our vacation spending time with Thomas and Nancy were the best," said Mrs McGann. "We exchanged numbers and promised to stay in touch." Now, we know how those promises often go, but not this one. David and Sharon Amrose didn't have a phone, as they were moving. But the moment they got one, they reached out to the lovely couple they met in Jamaica.

"We were so happy to have David and Sharon living in Boston," said Mrs McGann. As a matter of fact, still a little homesick from their amazing Sandals vacation in Jamaica, the couple invited their new-found friends over and prepared a Jamaican meal. This would be their first dinner together.

"That food turned out to be the worst meal we had ever prepared", said Thomas McGann. "It was so bad we had to order takeout."

However, not even a terrible first meal could put a damper on this budding friendship, and not only have they lived to laugh over that meal, but they've had many amazing dinners together over the years.

"Every time we get together it's a fun time, a great memory," said Mr Amrose. There have been many more great times, many memories and many firsts.

Between both couples, there are five sons of which Toddy, the McGann son, is the first. "I'll never forget the day Toddy was born, and I held him for the first time, or changed his diaper," said Mrs Amrose. "He was the little practice child for me and David."

When she became pregnant, she says her



From left: Sharon and David Amrose share lens time with Nancy and Thomas McGann. CONTRIBUTED

friend was her go-to mom. "I think I called her every minute," she says, laughing.

Currently, the McGanns live in Idaho, Colorado, and Sharon and David live in Washington, Florida. They're approximately 2,000 miles apart, but according to them no distance can keep them apart.

The Amroses both work in the health sector; David Amrose is a doctor and his wife, a physical therapist, while Thomas

McGann works as a university administrator and his wife is a lawyer by profession.

Perhaps their most notable difference is their approach to travel. David and Sharon Amrose have spent a considerable amount of time island-hopping across the Caribbean, even putting down anchor in Sandals Royal Bahamian for their 10th anniversary. Thomas and Nancy McGann waited on the super special 25th anniversary to make the

trip back to Jamaica.

And for such a milestone, where better to celebrate than Sandals South Coast!

"When Tom and I are back home we play hockey together, but when we're in the Caribbean we drink together," says David Amrose. And with all the memories these two probably have to mull over, it's a good thing that Sandals keeps the drinks coming without the worry of running up a bar tab.