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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2017

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Ready, set, here comes **AIRBNB**

Janet Silvera

Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator

GLOBAL HEAD of policy and public affairs at Airbnb, Christopher Lehane, said Jamaica has some of the most incredible home hosts in the world and is a perfect destination for community tourism.

Lehane, who was recently in the island for the three-day United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Montego Bay, added that Jamaica's move to

diversify its tourism product will reap rich dividends and also give the country an edge over its regional competitors.

"Jamaica's home hosts get some of the highest reviews seen anywhere in the world," he noted. "We see this island as a place that will be very successful in our Airbnb programme and we want to encourage more homeowners to get involved."

Lehane added that the growing perception of Jamaica being a country that is big on hospitality



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Visitors checking out Trench Town in Kingston.

has not been the least bit exaggerated, noting that "the reviews we have had are a

testament to that fact".

"While I was at Scotchies' Jerk Centre (Montego Bay) shooting the breeze the other night, it was said to me that the secret is that Jamaicans have a passion for everything they do ... it's called having a soul," Lehane further pointed out.

"People are just genuinely great hosts here and what you will see is that there will be a lot of visitors wanting to come to Jamaica through our Airbnb network."

MULTIPLE ATTRACTIONS

Lehane added that what makes Jamaica so unique is the fact that persons book their tickets to the island for different reasons, noting that the country has now moved way beyond "the typical sand, sun and sea tourism."

"Obviously people are coming for the music and the weather, but they are also coming for the food, the arts and the culture. Personally I love the whole Bob Marley experience."

Lehane further noted that, globally, the typical Airbnb host earns US\$3,100 per month sharing their primary home, with 49 per cent of a typical host's income used on everyday expenses like rent and groceries.

"Women hosts have earned US\$10 billion in income through Airbnb and 50,000 women have used this income to support their own entrepreneurship, as have some of our immigrant hosts," Lehane further explained.

"Rural communities are increasingly partnering with Airbnb to help with revitalisation, with more than US\$1 billion earned by rural hosts in a select set of countries in 2016."

Lehane said that by 2030, he expects that more than 400 million Airbnb guests will have arrived in developing countries since the company was founded in 2008.

"These guests will have been welcomed by over 28 million hosts," he added.

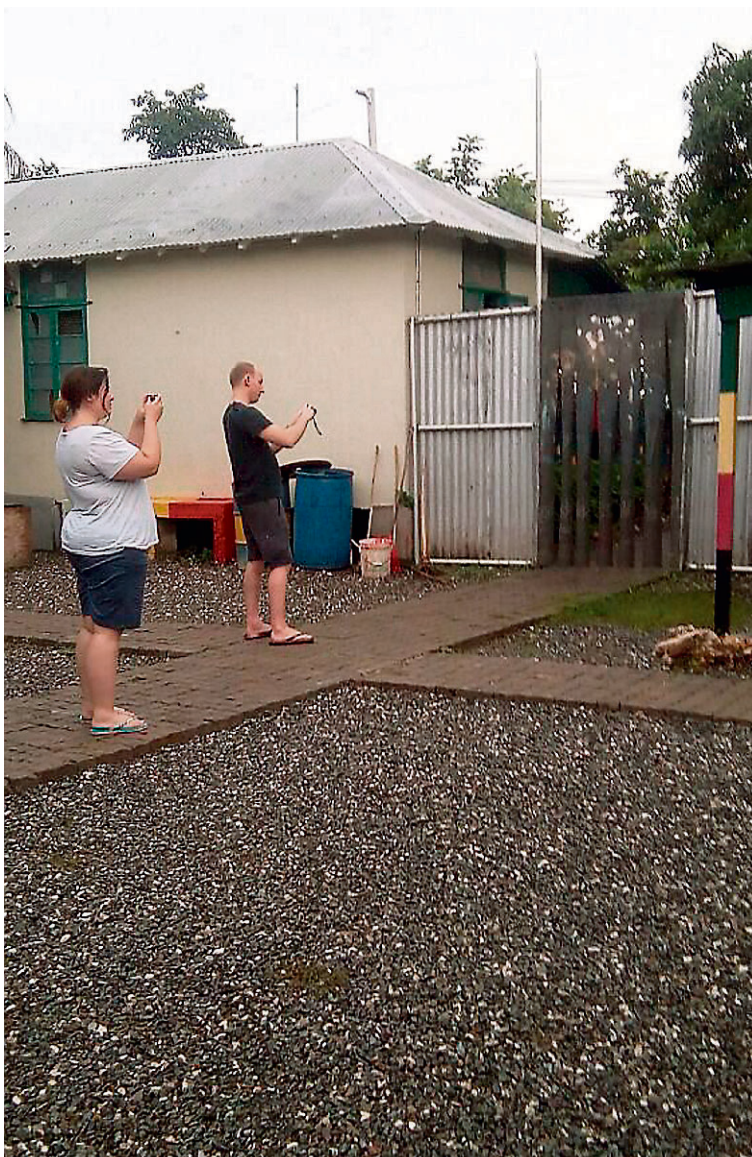
Lehane added that some 55,000 visitors have come to the island so far this year through Airbnb and where 3,000 hosts have benefited by providing accommodations.

"We are in communities such as Trench Town and Spanish Town," he pointed out. "You will find us in places where you wouldn't expect to find the typical tourist and that is what makes the Airbnb experience so unique," he further pointed out.

One hundred and sixty per cent



Christopher Lehane



Visitors checking out Trench Town in Kingston.



Having visited Trench Town, these visitors bid farewell using the peace sign.

growth in one year

“We have grown in Jamaica by 160 per cent since last year, doubling the 1,500 we started out with. Word of mouth is also a very powerful advertising tool and what you will find is that news will start to spread rapidly as it relates to the quality experiences persons have been having here in Jamaica and where more people will want to come.”

“Another wonderful thing is that the money that is earned stays within the communities where there is a trickled down effect. There is also quality interaction where the visitor comes into the home as a guest and by the time they leave they are family,” Lehane added.”

Lehane said he is very impressed with the forward thinking approach of the Jamaican government, noting that it is clear there is a recognition that tourism is a can't-miss investment that will assist the country economically.

“I met with Prime Minister Andrew Holness as well as having regular dialogue with Minister Edmund Bartlett and I have been very impressed how eager they are to do what is necessary to build on your wonderful tourism product. The future indeed looks very bright for Jamaica's tourism.”

Founded in August 2008 and based in San Francisco, California, Airbnb is a trusted community marketplace for people to list, discover, and book unique accommodations around the world - online or from a mobile phone or tablet. With up to 97 per cent of price of listings going into the pockets of hosts, Airbnb helps households generate significant income.



Global Head of Policy and Public Affairs at Airbnb Christopher Lehane (left) and Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett at a press conference during the recent UNWTO Conference.

Caribbean hotel insurance rates to increase by 10-40 per cent

CARIBBEAN HOTELIERS should plan now for an increase in insurance premiums anticipated to range from 10 to 40 per cent following two Category 5 hurricanes that struck several destinations in the region in September.

Scott Stollmeyer, managing director, Barbados and Eastern Caribbean for CGM Gallagher Insurance Brokers, made the recommendation during a Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) webinar last month entitled 'Hotel Property Insurance After the Storms'.

Stollmeyer and other panellists advised that now was the time to review coverage to ensure that it is adequate to insure against possible future damages, and without compromising coverage, and to look at ways to minimise the expected premium increases.

Stollmeyer said that for the past eight years, the Caribbean has enjoyed reduced insurance rates, but that will now change. He said that following the hurricanes, insurance companies had begun reaching out to their clients, informing them of the increases that would occur in their next renewal cycle for inland and beach properties. He explained that this would lead to a 'hardening' market: "We are going to be in for some challenging times in the next few years."

The increases will affect the entire region, not only those islands that were struck by the hurricanes. "The Caribbean is ... lumped into one general region ... it's where the



AP PHOTOS

Lawrence Carriere checks on the home of his neighbor after a tree fell on it and crashed through the roof, in Biloxi, Mississippi, in the aftermath of Hurricane Nate in October.

reinsurance markets are looking at the Caribbean as a general region. Everybody is going to be impacted," Stollmeyer reported.

Stanley Smith, certified public accountant and licensed adjuster with Smith Orloff & Associates, advised hotel owners and managers to be proactive and be their own advocates when handling insurance claims. "It pays to know your policy

well before a disaster strikes. First, making sure you're adequately insured, understanding what's covered and what's not, and keeping good records are fundamentals that hoteliers should adhere to."

He provided examples of the claims process and how, because of inadequate planning or not fully understanding their policy, many hoteliers fail to fully recover insurable losses through their claim. He advised that retaining one's own advocate or adjuster can assist with facilitating a claim.

Magnus Alnebeck, general manager of Pelican Bay Hotel, Grand Bahama Island, advised hoteliers that before a storm, checklists must be made and photos taken of everything. After the storm, staff must get a grasp of the state the property is in, taking photos of any damage, and managers should make sure that their staff is looked after as they are the most valuable asset.

"What we have found is that the quicker you can manage to create some sense of normality, or as we call it 'the new normal', you get



Some of the damage left in St Maarten after it was ravaged by Hurricane Irma.

people into their routines and it will make the process of getting back quicker," stated Alnebeck.

He advised hoteliers not to wait until the insurance company visits to start repairing the property, that but to ensure had they document any repair work they have done.

He also recommended that hoteliers, who usually have a lot on their plate after a storm, delegate an individual to be responsible for insurance claims.

CHTA's next webinar on December 6 will cover business resiliency and rebuilding for recovery.



This September 23 photo shows some of the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Maria in Roseau, the capital of Dominica.

Promote authenticity to attract millennials

THE QUESTION of how to attract millennials to the Caribbean was an issue which was echoed over the three days of the recently concluded Global Conference on Jobs and Inclusive Growth: Partnerships for Sustainable Development, which was held at the Montego Bay Convention Centre, from November 27-29.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) predicts that by Year 2020 there will be almost 370 million travellers in the millennial generation, accounting for a total spend of some US\$400 billion. However, industry officials attending the UNWTO Conference seemed to be at a loss about how to cater to this emerging market, who are defined by their savviness with information and communication technologies; liberal views and ideals; and a strong sense of civic responsibility.

It was a team of female millennials, studying hospitality and tourism at the Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada, who outlined a list of strategies that Caribbean destinations, especially Jamaica, could consider to market the region's tourism product to this group globally, and improve the Caribbean's stake of the travel market. Their keen marketing strategy led them to walk away



CONTRIBUTED

Nathalie Brown (at the microphone), leads the presentation on behalf of the team from the Ryerson University in Toronto. With her are her teammates and peers, from left: Jessica Owusu-Bonsu, Kelly-Ann Wright and Whitney Peprah-Addo.

with the first-ever Jamaica Tourism Innovation Challenge Award. "Millennials are very active on social media; therefore, by having social media events; hosting pop-up events, to remind

us throughout the school year that Jamaica is there; and market a sustainable tourism aspect of Jamaica [we can attract more of them]," opined 21-year-old Whitney Peprah-Addo, a member of the

four-woman strong winning team.

And, millennials aren't simply a group of party-going young people with little to spend, another member of the team, Nathalie Brown, underscored. By 2020 they will be outspending generations before them she stated. Her facts are supported by a UNWTO 2016 Global Report on Youth Travel, which stated that while millennials are not rich, they spend more time in destinations than usual tourists; and, therefore, spend two thirds more on average than the typical tourist.

GREAT MARKETING STRATEGY

"Targeting millennials now is a great marketing strategy for any company to go after," she urged.

And, Jessica Owusu-Bonsu, said some practical ways of attracting them now, are through targeted experiential learning.

"For many institutions, their strategic goal is to have experiential learning; and most millennials learn by doing, not only by reading. Consequently, they welcome these experiential learning courses where they can learn about community-based tourism," she noted as an example.

What Jamaica needs to do is to attract more millennials, the group of women agreed; and broaden the brand beyond sun, sea and sand and capitalise on its identity.

"It needs to incorporate those authentic experiences that Jamaica has. It's not only the beaches; it's the people, the culture, the food and the community. It's the interactions they can have," Jessica added.



FILE

Desmond Henry

IIPT International Year of Community Tourism and Peace declared for 2018

LOUIS D'AMORE, founder/president of the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT), has designated 2018 the IIPT International Year of Community Tourism and Peace in collaboration with Countrystyle/Villages As Businesses.

In 1994, the IIPT branded Jamaica the 'Home of Community Tourism' in recognition of the two pioneers of the community tourism brand and programmes, Diana McIntyre-Pike, founder/president, Countrystyle

Community Tourism Network and her late business partner Desmond Henry.

In 2013, on the recommendation of the IIPT Caribbean Chapter, the IIPT welcomed the Caribbean region to join as partners. The Caribbean was then also given the same brand.

"The IIPT International Year of Community Tourism and Peace will mark the 40th anniversary of community tourism, which Countrystyle/Villages as Businesses

began in Jamaica and is now an international movement," said McIntyre-Pike in a media release.

She noted that the celebrations in Jamaica will begin on January 1 with a gospel concert in Apple Valley Park, Maggotty, St Elizabeth, and will continue at the 15th Annual Resource UNIA-ACL Marcus Garvey Fair in Cross Keys, Manchester on February 25.

In 2018, the group will also commemorate IIPT's 30th anniversary.



Diana McIntyre-Pike

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FILE
Local and visiting government officials making their way to the UNWTO global tourism conference in Montego Bay last month.

David Jessop
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

ALITTLE over two weeks ago in Montego Bay, an international tourism conference formally endorsed a new and potentially challenging way of seeing the future of tourism.

The thinking, which emerged at a well-attended United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) event, organised with the support of the Jamaican Government and its international development partners, envisages the industry's growth is directed in future in ways that drive economic development. It sees the industry becoming a driver of social change and playing a central role in delivering the UN Sustainable Development Goals that aim to end poverty globally.

The multifaceted conference was, as its intellectual author, Jamaica's Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett, imagined. It variously attempted to look over the horizon in the manner of the annual World Economic Forum in Davos; recognised that the Caribbean is in a pivotal position to change global thinking as one of the world's most tourism-dependent regions; and created an opportunity for that the region to position itself to benefit from future concessional development financing related to tourism's sustainability.

UNCLEAR RESPONSE

Although the conference was welcome, timely and thought-provoking, it is not clear what the response will be to what is a quasi-statist approach. This is because some cruise lines, big hotel chains, and those who sell the product, despite paying lip service to the ideas discussed, in private express

THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

Transforming the Caribbean tourism model



DAVID JESSOP

concern that implementation may disadvantage them commercially.

Nor is it clear whether all Caribbean governments and ministers genuinely accept the premise, the multisectoral interdependence implied, or would sign on to a position that would require all new developments in tourism to spread their income and inputs more widely.

At the end of the conference, the UNWTO issued a 15-point Montego Bay Declaration. This sets out how the process might move forward between now and 2030.

The ideas it contains are being driven globally by some govern-



Two members of the audience deeply engrossed in the UNWTO conference.

ments, multilateral institutions, and non-governmental organisations. They are also being considered in a commercial setting by more thoughtful hotel groups and those in the industry, and its associations, who recognise that visitor demand is changing, and that this necessitates a different product and greater social responsibility.

No doubt, the Jamaican Government will in the coming weeks indicate how it, together with the UNWTO intends to

proceed. However, if the UNWTO declaration is to have legs in a Caribbean context, it now requires discussion and more generally, the buy-in of the private sector and civil society, and its endorsement by all Caribbean heads of government.

That said, the event was also of importance for the many interesting ideas and case studies presented in its working sessions.

Of significance was the view that the changing nature of visitor's interests may help drive the changes envisaged.

At the event, there was something close to a consensus that the growing international demand for the authentic and experiences, rather than a homogenized product, would necessitate reorienting tourism in ways that brought benefits to communities away from the beach.

Crucially in this context, the conference heard from leaders of Jamaican, Dominican and Spanish hotel chains who have already recognised changing international and visitor sentiment and are rising to the challenge of encouraging development beyond their properties. They spoke about how they are already working through foundations and partnerships, and in the case of the Punta Cana, was willing to explore on a region-wide basis how their social development programmes might be transferred elsewhere in the region.

The meeting also heard many fascinating presentations, for example, on the use of advanced ICT applications to support staff training; how religious faith can drive environmental and social awareness; developing folklore centres to drive rural tourism; and how the experience of Sunday brunch with her parents had provide one female entrepreneur with the stimulus to develop a business inviting visitors to experience the authentic over a meal in homes in The Bahamas.

The politicians and the industry will likely now debate how to take forward the big ideas reflected in the conference declaration. Let us hope, too, that the many practical and thought-provoking ideas that emerged, which could revolutionise the Caribbean's tourism model, are not forgotten.



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TPDCo collaborates with The Travel Foundation to boost sustainable tourism

JAMAICA'S TOURISM Product Development Company (TPDCo) signed a memorandum of understanding with international sustainable tourism NGO, The Travel Foundation, during the UN World Tourism Organization's Global Conference on Sustainable Tourism, which held in Montego Bay from November 27-29.

The agreement establishes a framework of cooperation and collaboration which will support both organisations to work more closely on sustainable tourism initiatives in Jamaica. Their partnership will focus on increasing local economic benefits from tourism, for instance, by supporting craft markets and other tourist attractions to make changes to their practices, and by encouraging visitors to explore outside their hotels.

It will build on their existing partnership, which recently launched a Warm Welcome campaign for Montego Bay. As part of the campaign, a team of trained resort ambassadors has been created to help visitors get the most out of Montego Bay during their stay. Initially comprised of frontline hotel staff, and soon to be joined by contract carriage drivers and district constables, Warm Welcome resort ambassadors will receive training

and resources so that they can confidently impart insider 'top tips' that help promote the best of the local area.

Dr Andrew Spencer, executive director of TPDCo, said, "The Warm Welcome campaign is about utilising our greatest asset – the passion all Jamaicans have for their place of home – and sharing this with our guests. And by encouraging people to explore beyond their hotels, local businesses and traders are more likely to benefit from the tourist spend. We intend to roll out this best practice approach to visitor engagement in other resorts across Jamaica, with The Travel Foundation's support."

The Travel Foundation's CEO, Salli Felton, said, "We know that we can achieve so much more by working with TPDCo. Their commitment and drive to build the capacity of the Jamaican people, creating new opportunities from tourism that can improve their quality of life, matches our own sustainability ethos. As well as sharing our knowledge and expertise on the Warm Welcome campaign, we'll also be working with TPDCo to build capacity for craft traders to meet international visitor demand and support tourist attractions to improve their practices and meet sustainability criteria."



CONTRIBUTED

Executive director of the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo), Dr Andrew Spencer (second left), and The Travel Foundation's CEO, Salli Felton (second right), sign a memorandum of understanding during the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's Global Conference on Sustainable Tourism, held in Montego Bay on November 29. Sharing in the moment are the strategic relations manager for Travel Foundation Jamaica, Eleanor Crichton Hussey, and Chairman of TPDCo Ian Dear. The agreement establishes a framework of cooperation and collaboration which will support both organisations working more closely on sustainable tourism initiatives in Jamaica.

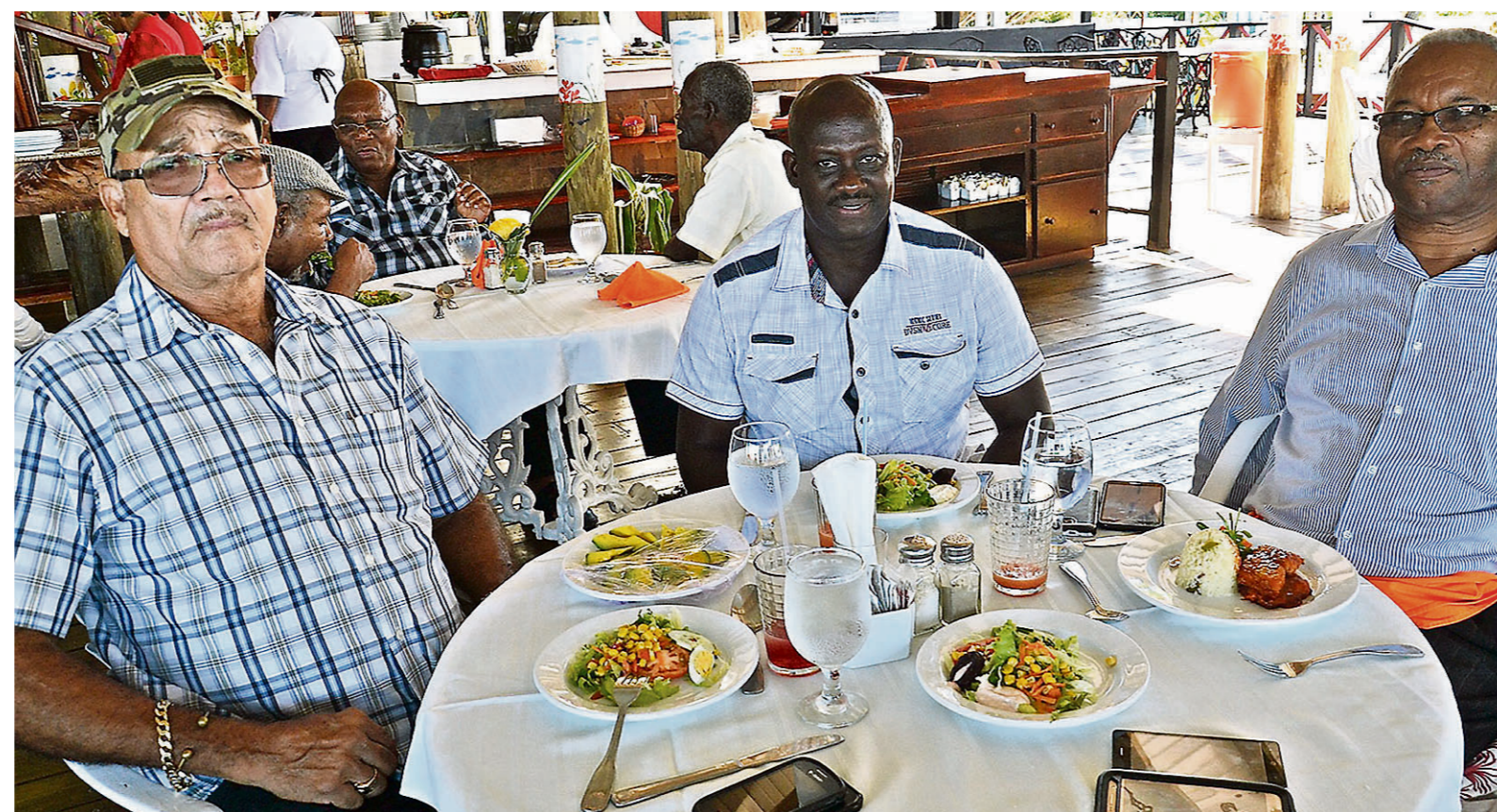


PHOTO BY CARL GILCHRIST

Retired members of the Island Special Constables Force relaxing at Franklyn D. Resort and Spa recently.

FDR hosts retired special constables

Carl Gilchrist
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

JUST LIKE the hotel did last year, Franklyn D. Resort and Spa recently hosted a group of retired special constables at the property in Runaway Bay, St Ann.

Around 20 former 'specials', drawn from the northern region of the Island Special Constables Force (ISCF) Retired Members Association, attended the one-day social that was sponsored by the Public Sector Employees Co-op Credit Union.

"As an association, each year we host a one-day social," explained Rankin Clarke, a former assistant commandant of the ISCF. "We have retired members from St Mary, St Ann, Trelawny, and even from Kingston joining us today."

Two other former assistant commandants, Daniel Williams, who served the ISCF for over 40 years, and Alfred Scott, who served for 33 years, were happy for the social.

"It's good to be here, I'm enjoying it, the ambience and the atmosphere," Williams said.

"Once a year we try and have this so that we



can remember our own, as very often, police who have retired are forgotten, but we try to keep that alive," Scott pointed out.

The former officers had lunch and then mostly relaxed and took it easy for the day.

Assistant sales manager at Franklyn D, Janique Johnson, said the resort was happy to host the retired officers for yet another year.

"We love having them here," Johnson told Hospitality Jamaica.

"They come, they don't really do much, just enjoying each other's company, having a drink and enjoying the nice atmosphere," she added.

"Last year was the first time I see them go on a glass-bottom boat ride, but this year they're just sitting it out."

Regional collaboration is the path to investment – Bartlett

CARIBBEAN GOVERNMENT ministers and senior officials of investment promotion agencies have been told they must embrace regional collaboration and harmonisation of policies as a valuable strategy to promoting investment in the region.

The charge came from Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett in his keynote address at the Ministerial Roundtable on Investment Promotion in the Caribbean, held recently at the Iberostar Rose Hall Suites in Montego Bay. The event was hosted by the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) in collaboration with the Caribbean Association of Investment Promotion Agencies and JAMPRO.

Bartlett pointed out that the Caribbean was vulnerable and each country going it alone did not give them the economies of scale. However, with a combined population of 40 million, "if we project the region as one, there is a bigger market to appeal to investors who, for instance, could set up an operational base in Jamaica and reach out to the other islands".

Quoting from the World Investment Report 2017, Bartlett pointed out that "global foreign direct investment (FDI) lost momentum in 2016, showing that the road to recovery remains bumpy".

FDI inflows decreased by two per cent to US\$1.75 trillion "amid weak and significant policy risks", said the report, which went on to state that the downward trend in FDI flows to Latin America and the Caribbean accelerated, with inflows falling 14 per cent to US\$142 billion, owing to continued economic recession, weak commodity prices and pressures on exports.

FDI is seen as the largest and most constant source of finance for Caribbean economies with positive spillover effects in such areas as technology transfer, job creation and insertion into the global value chain, which are essential not just to trade arrangements that we put together, but indeed, as we look for investment within the region as well.

REGION'S PRIORITY

Underscoring the importance of deliberations by the association, Bartlett said that with investors often looking at the region before making a decision in which country to invest, "making the Caribbean brand ... must become a priority for us if any of us is to benefit from



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (second right) as he gives the keynote address to government ministers and senior officials of investment promotion agencies of the Caribbean in attendance at the Ministerial Roundtable around Investment Promotion in the Caribbean, held at the Iberostar Rose Hall Suites, Montego Bay, on Tuesday, December 5. He is flanked by (from left) Financial Controller Russell Franklyn; Deputy Executive Director of Caribbean Export Development Agency Espicion Oliveira; CAIPA President Diane Edwards; and Professor Alvin Wint.



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (second right) with (from left), Joseph Cox, assistant secretary general, trade and economic integration, CARICOM Secretariat; Ambassador Malgorzata Wasilewska, head of delegation, European Union; Pamela Coke Hamilton, executive director, Caribbean Export Development Agency; and Diane Edwards, president of Caribbean Association of Investment Promotion Agencies. The power brokers were captured together at the Ministerial Roundtable on Investment Promotion in the Caribbean, held at the Iberostar Rose Hall Suites, Montego Bay, on Tuesday, December 5. Minister Bartlett delivered the keynote address to government ministers and senior officials of investment promotion agencies of the Caribbean in attendance.

investments. We must proactively engage with each other and face this challenge of low foreign investment together as we face other challenges that confront us in the face of our new realities".

Among issues that he said must be addressed were climate change, regional security, regulation of the foreign service sector, unemployment in general and poverty as an offshoot "as we seek to build out a strategy to drive more investment in

our region". Adding investment promotion and policy dialogue were also necessary, he said, as survival of small economies depended on that.

Of major concern to many, said Bartlett, was how to make Caribbean integration work with countries struggling to achieve economies of scale because of their size and the transportation challenge, which, he said, was at the core of efforts to do collaborative activities.



PHOTOS BY JANET SILVERA

The Top 10 Jamaica Travel Specialists from the USA, Canada and the UK, poses with Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett (5th right), Miss Universe Jamaica, Davina Bennett (4th right) and interim Director of Tourism, Donnie Dawson (right), at the 'One Love Agent' Rewards ceremony at the Moon Palace Jamaica last Saturday night.

Jamaica's Top Travel Specialist out of Canada, Darlene Rhoden (centre) shares lens time with Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett (right) and regional director, Jamaica Tourist Board, Canada, Philip Rose.

2017 a dream year for Jamaica, says Bartlett

ON THE eve of the country welcoming four million visitors for the first time in its history, Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett has declared 2017 to be "a dream year for Jamaica".

"We've annexed all sorts of new horizons and frontiers; we're going to make four million visitors this year and we're going to earn in the region of US\$3 billion," he told top-producing travel agents from the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom at Moon Palace Jamaica, Ocho Rios, Saturday night. "It will be a truly historic moment for our tourism sector and I thank you for the role that you are playing in helping us to reach this important milestone and another record-breaking year in visitor arrivals," said Bartlett.

The all-white affair gala recognised the top 50 travel agents who have booked visitors to Jamaica this year. Combined, they accounted for 130,000 rooms representing about US\$39 million in business. They were treated over three days under the theme, 'Fly Me To The Moon ... Be Among The Stars'.

Bartlett outlined to them a list of



Top Travel Specialist, USA, Lindsey Johnson (right), her husband, Scott (left) and Jamaica Tourist Board's Sean-Pierre Webster.

outstanding achievements by Jamaica and Jamaicans during 2017. Among them, the legendary Usain Bolt retiring from an active career as the world's greatest athlete; the staging of a high-profiled US college basketball tournament at an indoor facility here (Montego Bay Convention Centre) for the first

time, giving Jamaica widespread international coverage; the hosting of the first ever global tourism conference on job creation and inclusive growth; and Jamaica's Davina Bennett placing as second runner-up in the Miss Universe contest.

In other tourism developments, the tourism minister said he was

pleased that Canadian market had recovered from having "slipped badly" by 17 per cent, to record an eight per cent growth. Also, "groups and conventions have taken off and we're beginning to see something new and exciting in that area," he said.

Meanwhile, the UK market is also showing growth and five of the top producing agents were among the awardees.

HUMANITY OF TOURISM

Underscoring "the invaluable role" many of them have played in sustaining Jamaica's tourism industry, Bartlett referenced the importance of technology in connecting people and enhancing experiences, but stressed that tourism was all about the human touch and artificial intelligence would never replace the warmth of human intelligence.

Lindsey Johnson of Tropics Travel Agency LLC emerged first place this year among the top 50 leading booking agents. Joining her in the top 10 were Donna Daniels (Fox Travel American Express), Michelle Wiseman (Toms Tours),



Marlene Johnson, one of the top travel specialists from the USA shows off her plaque at the 'One Love Agent' Rewards ceremony at the Moon Palace Jamaica last Saturday night.

Anthony Tucker (All Inclusive Outlet), Sharon Little (Wedding and Honeymoon Travel Group), Darlene Rhoden (The Travel Net Inc.), Marlene Johnson (MJ Travel Group), David Parker (All The Way Travel), Kimberly Felix (Honeymoons Inc), Mark Henngan (Dreamer's Travel) and William 'Bill' Munroe (Barrhead Travel).

876 Craft Extravaganza for Montego Bay

MONTEGO BAY is set to benefit from a craft fair, courtesy of the Craft Department of the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) Limited, tomorrow Thursday, December 14.

TPDCo will stage the annual craft fair at the Whitter Village Promenade in Ironshore, Montego Bay. The event, which will commence at 10 a.m. and end at 3 p.m., is a move by the tourism development team to give craft producers and traders recognition and support.

This will be done by showcasing local producers' authentic, handcrafted pieces as well as the work of trainees from a recent craft training activity in tie-dye and the use of coconut shell. This entails making craft items such as bags and earrings from the dried outer shell of the fruit. The initiative is in support of the notion that visitors come to Jamaica in search of unique handmade pieces that are reflective of the island's bold culture.

It is envisioned that the fair will present networking opportunities for the 26 craft producers and traders who are expected to participate in the activity. For the day, the craft producers will have the option to take their items to a large and open space that allows for greater interactions with both



Ocho Rios craft vendor Susan.

local and international buyers.

Apart from craft items which will include clothing, jewellery and furniture, among other pieces, patrons will be treated to entertainment from the Pinchaz Sound System, cultural performances by the John Rollins Success Primary School, along with giveaways.

Locals are encouraged to support the event which will provide a range of items for gift-giving for the upcoming festive season.



Irving 'Mana' Burton puts a finishing shine on a piece of art, crafted from cedar, at the Success Craft Market in Rose Hall, St James.



Linda Cunningham, a craft vendor in Savanna-la-Mar who makes tams, bead chains, dolls, bags, shakers, knitted swimwear, and jewellery from coconut shells.



CONTRIBUTED

Le Plaza Hotel in Haiti.

Hotel in Haiti promotes history and culture

TRAVELLERS INTERESTED in exploring the rich cultural history of the French-Creole Caribbean nation of Haiti are being wooed by one of its distinguished hotels.

Located in the capital, Port-au-Prince, the 60-year-old Le Plaza Hotel, a boutique 95-room property, wants travellers from North America, Europe and beyond to experience the diverse offerings of the country which, along with the Dominican Republic, is part of the island of Hispaniola.

"We are increasing our marketing activity to show travellers what makes us unique and special in the Caribbean," said Marc Pierre-Louis, general manager of Le Plaza Hotel.

At Le Plaza Hotel, guests can bask in warm Haitian hospitality, exceptionally high levels of guest service and organic ambience. The family-run hotel offers comfort and convenience with an outdoor pool, fitness room, business centre and Internet access in all rooms and public areas.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY OFFERS

The property, which hosts a live twoubadou band on Sunday nights, is gearing up for a strong winter season with special offers to celebrate the holidays, including entertainment and festivities for everyone.

"Le Plaza is continually revitalising our hospitality product and experience to showcase our rich history and culture, including the incredible artistic repertoire of the Haitian people," Pierre-Louis reported, noting that today's discerning travellers are looking for more than sun, sand and sea.

The hotel is just a few minutes' drive from the iconic Mupanah (Musee du Pantheon National Haitien), the National Museum of Art and Marche de Fer (a public market dating back to 1889), which guests are encouraged to visit.

Le Plaza Hotel features authentic Haitian cuisine.

In addition to learning about Haiti's history, visitors can get a taste of authentic Haitian Creole cuisine at Le Plaza. "We offer a holistic travel experience and we look forward to welcoming many more travellers from around the world, including members of our vast Haitian diaspora," Pierre-Louis stated.



CONTRIBUTED

A section of the back lawn at The Inn at 6

Stylish comfort in The Inn at 6

Paul H. Williams

Hospitality Jamaica Writer

IT IS not a five-star hotel, but the high quality of the rooms in The Inn at 6, located in the Barbican, Kingston 6, area of St Andrew, rivals that of any big hotel.

There are four bedrooms of different sizes and occupancy; the largest has two queen-size beds. They are well lit, superclean and fresh, cosy, artistically accented, and exquisitely furnished, mostly with creatively designed furniture. At any one time, there is accommodation for 10 people as there are shared bedrooms.

In addition to the bedrooms, there are interestingly furnished living and lounging spaces, a balcony, and a spacious multipurpose downstairs patio from which the well-manicured lawn and garden in the backyard can be accessed. There are some fruits trees, flowering plants, and a picnic table.

It is a bed-and-break



PHOTO BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

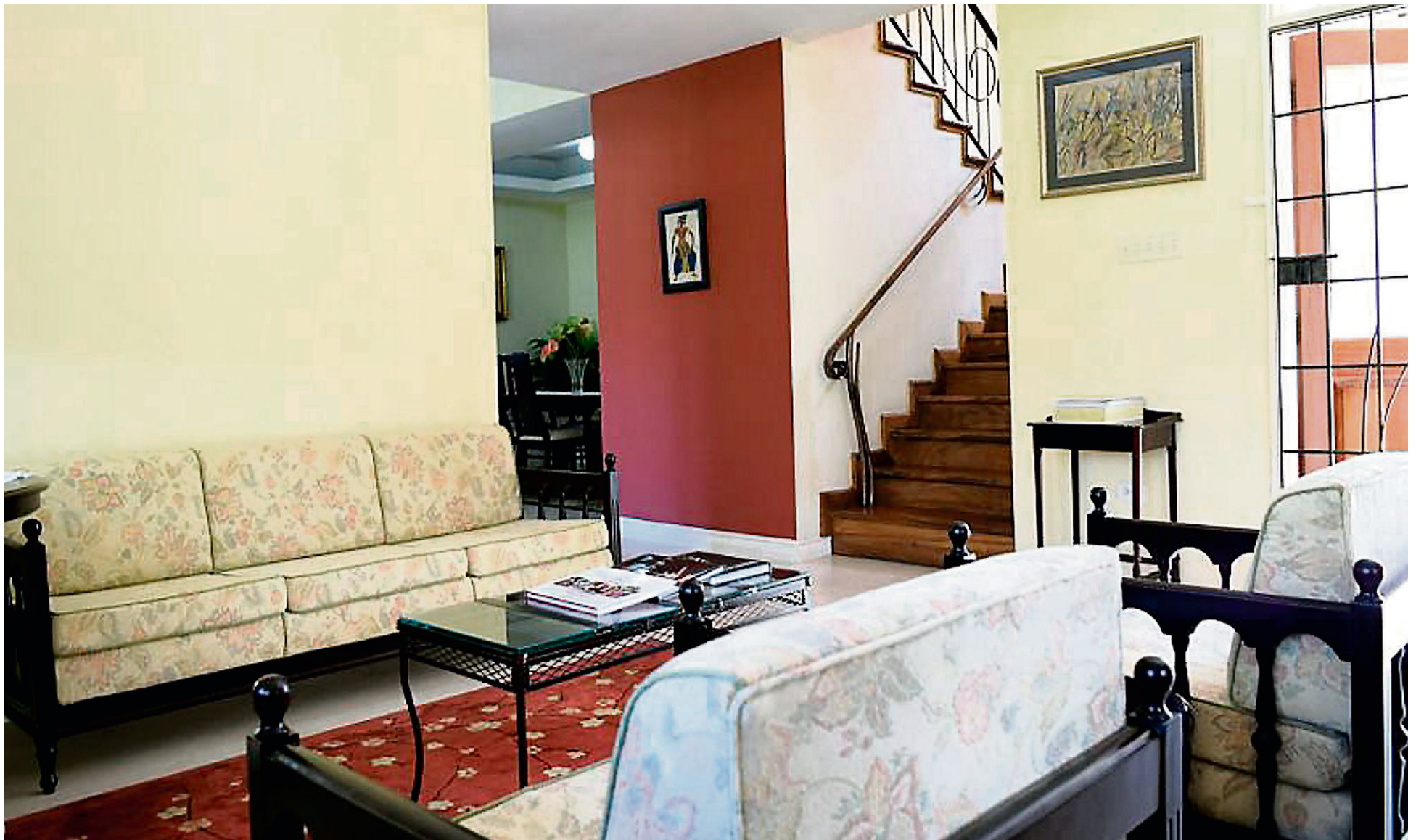
A spot to relax at The Inn at 6.

accommodation with a difference. The food and cooking facilities in a spacious kitchen are provided for the guests, but they are free to prepare their own breakfast and meals and serve themselves. Traditional Jamaican breakfasts are also available upon request at an additional cost.

"I don't do breakfast in the regular sense of the word ... I serve a continental breakfast unless people specifically request a Jamaican breakfast. It's a self-catered operation ... people clean up after themselves," Carol Pryce, owner-operator, told *Hospitality Jamaica*.

Helper and catering services are also available upon request, and so are additional linens.

Though Chester Avenue is located in a quiet section of the Barbican community, away from the hustle and bustle of city life, The Inn at 6 is centrally located to and from the major commercial centres of Liguanea and Barbican. Anything that guests want is about five minutes away. And through linkages



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

A lounge area in The Inn at 6.



A section of one of the bedrooms in The Inn at 6.

with other players in the hospitality industry, The Inn at 6 provides guests with contact information for out-of-house service producers.

The Inn at 6 is a classy, casual, and cool place for night-overs in Kingston and St Andrew and has

a home-away-from-home air about it. It is not uncommon for guests and hosts to have casual conversations way into the night. Privacy is guaranteed, and so is a warm, welcoming Jamaican hospitality.



The kitchen inside The Inn at 6.



PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

One of Imuzi Thompson's surrealist pieces that created a stir at the Liguanea Art Festival on Sunday, December 3.

AROUND JA WITH PAUL H.

Cultural feast at Liguanea Art Festival 2017

THE LIGUANEA Art Festival is an event I look forward to every year for many reasons. And one year, I hope to have my pieces showcased there. So while I wait for the transition from patron to exhibitor, I cannot help but embrace all that it has to offer.

In terms of the number of exhibitors and patrons, over the years, the event had outgrown the Liguanea Plaza parking lot, where it is held. One year, it was moved to a venue farther up the road. Last year, a section of Old Hope Road was closed to vehicular traffic to accommodate the festival.

This year, there was no need to find a new venue or block off the road as the additional space created by the demolition of a section of the plaza and the expansion of the parking lot seemed to be sufficient. So, was it a bigger and better event this year? Perhaps. What I can say, though, is that I thoroughly enjoyed it.

The works of over 130 painters, sculptors, costume jewellers, ceramists, and photographers were exhibited, but the pieces that provoked and enthralled me the most were the surrealist ones done by new artist at the festival Imuzi Thompson of Beaufort, Westmorland.

I still can't get over his pink creature that swirls and contorts herself as she shows off the pearl she found somewhere in her body. Thompson outdid himself with that one. People



Kenyan-Jamaican artist Mazola is known for the pieces that he put together from arbitrary objects.

were quite interested in his pieces, and I foresee many festivals for him.

Apart from the visuals, there was much



Some members of the International Youth Fellowship from Korea climaxing their Gangnam Style dance with Usain Bolt's 'To the World' pose.



Zimbabweans Tino Magura and Tinashe Chirume are happy to have met Roots FM radio personality Ras Isachar, who drapes the Zimbabwe flag around his neck.

meeting and greeting. I chanced upon people I had not seen for quite a while. It was also a rich and varied confluence of cultures. I was pleasantly surprised to see the Dominican Republic's ambassador and a compatriot showcasing their paintings.

The Japanese Embassy, a fixture at the festival, had representatives teaching calligraphy and other aspects of Japanese culture. Once again, I reflected on their laid-back, easy-going demeanour. If only.

There was more of an Eastern presence by way of young representatives from the International Youth Foundation of Korea. They

were back this year with several dance pieces, including the international mega-hit, Gangnam Style, which ended with Usain Bolt's 'To the World'-pose, much to the delight of onlookers.

And anywhere the arts go, political rhetoric follows. While we Africans, including Mazola from Kenya, Benji from Ghana, Tinashe and Tino from Zimbabwe, were taking pictures and greeting one another, Benji got into an intense argument with Tino after he declared that Zimbabwe was now free with the departure of Robert Mugabe. Benji didn't believe so.

Earlier, Tino was seen dancing



Artist, Dominican Republic Ambassador Dr José Tomás Ares Germán (fourth from left) poses with compatriots in front of some of his pieces.



Yvad Campbell doing a portrait of a patron at the Liguanea Art Festival last Sunday.

and waving the Zimbabwe flag, while his countryman beamed as the Akwaaba musicians played a particular 'revolutionary' piece. The Akwaaba musicians them-

selves are fast becoming a staple at the event. They never fail to impress patrons with their variety. Name the genre and these Jamaicans will play.

Much sampling of food took place, and my eyes caught this delicious-looking ham still in its wrap. I asked when it was going to be unveiled. Was told 5:30 p.m., and, at 5:30, I went back.

To my horror, the ham had morphed into what Miss Lou would call "scrapes meat", little bits and pieces. My palate was very upset. Crestfallen, I got three little pieces on a toothpick. I reminded my taste buds that it was just sampling, not a feast, though the festival in its entirety was.

In speaking to June Wong, the organiser of the event, about the outcome of this year's installation, she said she was "very pleased, very, very pleased".

"It was fantastic! I think we had a great crowd ... It's just a lovely day," Wong said. And I agree, except for the 'tree lickle piece a ham'.



Artists and siblings Imuzi Thompson and Christal-Ann Thompson are happy to be at their first Liguanea Art Festival on Sunday, December 3.



The Akwaaba musicians helped to keep the festive mood going at The Liguanea Art Festival last Sunday.



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