

Reflecting on Events of Jamaican Pride in 2005

With the old year now behind us and the new year looming ahead, I thought it would be good to reflect on some of the events Jamaicans could look back on with pride for 2005.

The success of 18-year-old Asafa Powell in gaining the title for the fastest recorded time at the World Junior Sprints was an achievement that endeared many Jamaicans toward this young man and to his future possibilities. The continuation of the island's premier agricultural event, The Denbigh Agricultural Show, for its 53rd year, is strong tes-



by Ralston Blair



timony of its organization and its appeal. Jamaica held its own in the IAAF World

Athletics Championship in Helsinki, Finland, where it secured an accumulation of

eight medals (one gold, five silver, two bronze) in addition to ranking an astonishing ninth place in the overall medal standings, over many larger and more developed nations. Jamaica also became the leading cruise ship destination for the Caribbean in 2005 and boasted 1.13 million arriving by cruise ship (a 3.3 percent growth over the previous year) along with a 1.4 million figure for land-based visitors.

In key areas, such as entertainment, sports, tourism, as well as some aspects of business and agriculture, Jamaica maintained a solid reputation in these respective markets.

The History of the Jamaican Maroons

The name Maroons, from the Spanish word *cimarron*, an expression used from the 16th century onward, was used to describe African slaves who escaped to freedom from slavery after the British captured the island from the Spanish. While the two European forces waged war for dominance of the island, these former slaves either took the opportunity to escape into the hills or were released, in some cases, by their Spanish captors. After taking to the hills, they hid deeply within the thick undergrowth of the interior areas of the island. After the Spanish were conquered by the British in 1655, they tried to recapture these former slaves. In response, guerilla warfare was successfully waged against the British forces by the Maroons.

Maroons were regularly in conflict with the British colonial authorities in Jamaica throughout the 18th century. They proved to be a thorn in the side of the British; raiding plantations and stealing valuable rations, and deftly melting back into the bushes. Many

British soldiers became casualties from efforts to infiltrate the Maroons in their mountain hideouts.

Eventually, a peace treaty seemed the wisest option for the British and in 1739 one of the major Maroon leaders, Cudjoe, agreed to sign the treaty, thereby agreeing to cease all raids of plantations in return for complete immunity and freedom from capture, along with control of an agreed lot of land. A clause was also included whereby the Maroons were required to return any runaway slaves from the plantations back into the hands of the British. This clause made it far more difficult for any slaves choosing to escape thereafter, as they could no longer depend on the kind mercies of the Maroons in that part of the island.

And so it came about that these Maroons, after a long and courageous struggle, having achieved their objectives of freedom and the right to manage their own affairs, gave up their revolutionary role and became the allies of the British Government. Originally moved by a passion for freedom and justice, these African men and women, virtually weaponless, relying on their own skills, their courage, their own will, their own capacity for leadership and organization, waged war against England for more than 60 years and secured their freedom and independence.

Until next time, stay Irie!

Ralston Blair is a Jamaican writer and journalist who has worked the past several summers on Mackinac Island. He is writing this year from Jamaica. Ideas and comments about his column can be delivered in care of the Town Crier.

Study Explores Integrating Ambulance, Island Medical Center To Generate Funds

By Karen Gould

A study is being conducted to determine if integrating the Mackinac Island Medical Center with ambulance operations on the Island will generate more money. Currently, the City of Mackinac Island owns the ambulance, but contracts with Allied EMS Systems, Inc. of Petoskey to operate the ambulance service. The city budgets \$30,000 a year to subsidize the ambulance operation, which includes wages and benefits to staff it, but the actual subsidy, said Allied's executive director, Dave Slifka, is determined by the number of ambulance runs made during the year. The more runs the ambulance makes, he said, the less funding the city needs to contribute.

Rod Nelson, the chief executive officer at Mackinac Straits Hospital in St. Ignace, which manages the Mackinac Island Medical Center, said a new arrangement whereby the ambulance service would be operated by the medical center might be able to generate more money for the facility and reduce the burden on the city.

He envisions the Medical Center leasing the ambulance from the city and then contracting with Allied to operate the service for the Medical Center, instead of the city. The Medical Center, he reasons, could be eligible for higher Medicare reimbursements than the city.

To find out if such a plan would work, the hospital has

hired Gary Wingrove of Wingrove Consulting in Buffalo, Minnesota. Aaron Reinert, a paramedic, will be working on the Island study for Wingrove.

To be successful in generating more money, hospital officials know that the Medical Center must be awarded a special Medicare designation for ambulance service. This would enable the facility to receive Medicare cost-based reimbursement, said Mr. Wingrove, which could be based on the actual operating cost of the Mackinac Island Medical Center. One of his jobs will be to seek that designation.

"It would be advantageous for the city for the ambulance depreciation to be under the hospital and replacement under the hospital," said Mr. Wingrove.

Additionally, Mr. Wingrove said the study will take into consideration the cost of running the ambulance if the cost-base reimbursement status does not come through. The study also will include general recommendations regarding the service.

Mr. Nelson said the study will look for ways to have non-residents help support the service. He said now about 600 people support the Island's infrastructure, while visitors enjoy the benefits of the taxes those 600 people are paying.

Another part of the study will include the number of patients transported to St.

Ignace and a review of the cost for those transports. Depending on circumstances, this can include travel by boat, plane, or with the U.S. Coast Guard.

Mr. Wingrove, who also works for an ambulance company in Rochester, Minnesota, estimates the study should be completed by the end of February, depending on the complexity of the project and how quickly Medicare responds to the cost-based reimbursement status request.

The ambulance made 218 runs in 2005, mostly from May through October during the tourist season, but not all the runs brought patients back to the Medical Center. Only 168 runs returned with patients, said Clinic Coordinator Kay Hoppenrath, the others involved patients refusing transportation or not needing transportation, and patients being transferred directly to the mainland for further care.

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Mackinac Island Public School Honor Roll

Second Nine Weeks

8th Grade: Jane Finkel, Paul Fisher, Tymon Horn*, Shelbie Mosley, Thomas Rilenge.

9th Grade: Darcy Brodeur-Bunker*, Robert Chambers, Fuller Cowell*, Shay Mosley.

10th Grade: Woody Beardsley, Karlena Mosley, Caleb Straight, Kyle Sweet*.

11th Grade: Kristi Kamphuis.

12th Grade: Melissa Bunker, Eric Cowell*, Sam Kamphuis*, Christina McLean, Miranda McMahon*, Ben Mosley, Jason Petit, Supechar "Gap" Sapruang, Emily St.Onge.

First Semester

8th Grade: Jane Finkel, Paul Fisher, Tymon Horn*, Shelbie Mosley, Thomas Rilenge.

9th Grade: Darcy Brodeur-Bunker, Robert Chambers, Fuller Cowell*, Shay Mosley, Danielle Wightman.

10th Grade: Woody Beardsley, Karlena Mosley, Kyle Sweet*.

11th Grade: Kristi Kamphuis.

12th Grade: Melissa Bunker, Eric Cowell*, Sam Kamphuis*, Christina McLean, Miranda McMahon*, Ben Mosley, Jason Petit, Supechar "Gap" Sapruang, Emily St.Onge.

*Denotes all A's