



Rotary Club of Naples North P.O. Box 1307, Naples, FL 34106

TO: Naples North Rotarians
RE: Jamaica adventure
PHOTO CREDIT: **PJ Obrecht**

Hey, Mon,

Just returned from di Jammin Jamaica trip. It be good fun and we did good work. And met many beautiful Jamaicans, a beautiful people from generations of ethnic mixing. Paul Jones did an 'irie' job of settin' this trip up for us.

After a 4:30 A.M. bus trip to Ft. Lauderdale for our Air Jamaica flight, we arrived at the Pegasus Hotel at 10 A.M., standard time, where we went to the noon Rotary meeting on the 17th floor, with a good view of Kingston and the harbor. Very full hour and a half meeting where we first met our fellow Rotarians and began our Jamaica adventure. Paul Jones announced the large grant **(\$32,000)** which he had put together with matching funds, and that of course received a loud round of applause. After lunch, a trip to the Laws Street Trade School, which Rotary helped to start and fund. They teach baking skills, sewing skills, and computer skills and are a source of employment in Kingston for the less fortunate people.

Then, a trip by the waterfront, which hopefully one day will flourish as it has prime views of the harbor and seas, but suffers from blight as do many big cities. A quick change of clothes and then off to an excellent welcome dinner at the beautiful home of a local Rotarian. More good, local food, music and good conversation, and of course, Red Stripe beer and Appleton Rum.



Friday morning a visit to the Dunrobin Primary School, where **LeeAnn Kirwin** and the rest of us gave toys and supplies to the preschool kids and their teachers. These kids were eager to meet and talk with us. The main school has the grades separated by color coded uniforms, a good idea.



Lou Foley is pictured left with one of the students.



Then off to the Kingston YMCA to paint the trailers and other areas. Oil based paints, bright blue and red and beige - many of us have the stained hands and clothes to prove our participation.



A worthwhile venture with a great result that really showed what a fresh coat of paint can do. Home for a quick nap for me and some more Red Stripes for the others by the pool, then off to a local jazz club and bar, The Quad, which is a happening place. A local Rotarian became very attached to Heather Henning and was talking her into visiting Jamaica again, but she was rescued by a few of us. Don York was almost ready to invest in a deal to export commodities to Haiti with a "UN guarantee". The Quad was very crowded, so we left for dinner at D'Rooftop restaurant around the corner and up three flights of stairs. Bob Moates loved the steps. Dinner was very good, but it took time to serve all of us, so we were eating at about 10:30 PM, but the view of the Jamaican sky was beautiful and the conversations were entertaining and stimulating. PJ loved the local goat, which we think we saw on the street the day before. Home for most of us by midnight, but a few went back to the Quad, and you will need to ask the ones who went back about that.

Saturday, off at 9 for a trip across the island to Ocho Rios and a climb up Dunn's River for most of us, and the beach for the others. And, of course, Red Stripe and some meat and chicken patties to hold us till lunch. Then to Dolphin Cove for lunch on the beach and to watch the dolphins swim around the large inlet, and the tidal pool full of sting rays. A quick tour on the Dolphin Cove's Jungle Trail, where Leeann Kirwin was seen scratching her ass, better known to you all as a donkey. Heading home by 4:30 with a stop at the midway Jerk Center, with your choice of local foods, jerk chicken, pork, fried cornbread, and cow cod soup (which none of us tried). Red Stripe refills again, for those who had not had one in a few hours.

Saturday night, some went to a local Cuban restaurant, but most of us stayed at the hotel. Sunday morning check out and drive to the Blue Mountains for a coffee plantation tour and brunch at Strawberry Hill, a beautiful spot high in the mountains. The road was so steep that we had to all get out of the bus for the last quarter mile so the bus could make it up the hill.

6 PM plane ride home to a 9 pm arrival at Ft. Lauderdale. Ray Rheault was detained by Canadian immigration for about a half hour. Something about a green card, but he was rescued by Bob Moates and Paul Jones. So, we waited to leave the airport until after 10. Ray has now been renamed the "late man", my previous title.

Other highlights : Rob Stoneburner's Red Stripe blood level never got below one beer. Alex Garland and Rob were roommates and were a very cute couple. Roadside stop on the Ocho Rios trip to see a special rock formation, where we backed up into a small car, but no injuries and no police and no lawyers. Emancipation Park across from the hotel with its two, 20 foot high, anatomically correct statues representing freed slaves. The model for the male statue was not any member of our trip. The climb up Dunn's River Falls, where no one lost their bathing suits in the falls, I think.

Home by 12:30 am. A busy and full 4 days in Jamaica. Maybe Paul will help us do it again next year. A real international experience. Once you meet and dine with other people in the world, any religious or racial differences disappear.

It was definitely an " Irie "(first class and excellent) trip.

Gary Layton