



Spring break / Spring broke

By Yannick Nesta Pessoa

*“All cities are mad: but the madness is gallant. All cities are beautiful: but the beauty is grim”
~Christopher Morley, Where the Blue Begins*

Montegonians one and all, it is the ides of March and spring break, as well as Carnival (the ‘carn’-al fest-‘ival’) with its usual crowd of revellers is here again. It is not without irony that all this falls in the season of lent, where not only should most of our city and islands Christian population be mediating upon the tribulations of Christ. Spring break for many is a break from many things. For this writer Spring break is simply Spring broke, and I suspect it is the same for all the Montegonians who in this season of breaking traverse the Hip Strip. So it seems we are all “Spring Broke” and “Spring Bruk Pockets”

Spring break is primarily a breaking of lots of legal barriers and flouting of the law. Pale skinned revellers from the north all a buzz in MTV mode seek ‘sensi,’ sex, sea, sand and anything far from sobriety. Montego Bay transforms into the nexus of indulgence that spans from Negril to Ocho Rios. Wanton frolicking, can be seen in the Margaritavilles in each of Jamaica’s tourist resort towns and in the biggest and smallest of hotels, motels and inns. Various public and community acts are violated without reprimand or even a slap on the wrist. Spring break the law and all the rules.

Spring break is also a time when Montego Bay becomes too friendly a city. You can find the various assortments of rent-a-dreads and tour guides getting very friendly in every nook and cranny of the Hip Strip. However, it is rather sad to note that none of these friendly relations make it beyond a night or two weeks at most. People let down their moral guards for the festivities we have so diligently created for the enjoyment of foreigners. Montegonians bask in a spring break from reality.

Spring break is also the season of inventive and creative parties. In an attempt to let both foreigners and local partygoers expend what little cash they already have, promoters and club owners push the envelope with what can be done entertainment wise. Wacky

Wednesdays, Margaritaville, Brewery, Coral Cliff and Pier One all take things to another level in the “session” department. Oh well, we spring break the creative mould for partying.

Many opportunities for cultural exchange and business are lost during spring break due to the routine partying. Spring break mainly is about taking a break but still much more can be done. Little is done to offer more than sand and sea during hours between parties. With so much to offer, Montego Bay has made too little an effort to offer it. It might do the relevant tourism authorities well to note, that some people are interested in the music as well as the sand, and that not all our tourists are North American or English speaking and it might to some good to set up systems to facilitate those other tourists.

The friendly city needs to stop spring breaking and start spring building on the opportunities that we have as to create more business, more wealth, more jobs and more prosperity for Montego Bay.