



Dr. Vincent Jones II and Raymond Jessurun with participants in the Social Media Research workshop.

20 attend USM workshop on social media research, sparks interest

PHILIPSBURG--University of St. Martin (USM) hosted on Wednesday, June 12, what it referred to as "an enlightening workshop" on how research on social media platforms can be used for the common good.

USM invited Dr. Vincent Jones II, a regular visitor to the island, to share his expertise with the community. The event brought 20 participants from various public and private entities who were interested in how the methodology could inform policy.

Jones, who is an assistant professor of Community Health and Director of the Health Promotion Center at York College, City University of New York, first explained the need for social media research and gave an overview of research methods. Because social media reflect reality, valuable insights can be derived from the analysis of these platforms.

Jones used two of his co-authored TikTok content analyses as teaching tools. One documented discrimi-

nation against Black people attempting to flee at the onset of the 2022 Russo-Ukrainian war, and the other focused on racial discrimination against Asians and Asian Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic, USM said in a press release. These studies highlighted the need for mental health and policy resources for those represented in the videos.

Social media can provide awareness and draw attention to people in crisis and issues that affect their mental health. Using social media research can address public health inequalities for under-represented groups in society.

Attendees brainstormed issues they may be interested in researching using this methodology, including poverty, firearms, affordable housing, the decline of strong families, vote-buying and corruption, access to quality education, and the legal status of children born in St. Maarten. They were provided with resources to continue the work.

USM research coordinator Dr. Raymond Jessurun offered the participants interested in conducting this social media research the support and facilities of USM's St. Martin Science and Research Institute. Jones also offered his help in kind. "We are optimistic about strengthening our relationship, recognising the importance of research in improving society," USM said in its release.

MPs to have IPKO debriefing, talk draft dispute regulation

PHILIPSBURG--Members of Parliament (MPs) will have a debriefing on the Inter-Parliamentary Kingdom Consultations IPKO and discuss the draft Kingdom Law on the dispute regulation as presented by the Parliament of Aruba during a meeting today, Tuesday.

The Permanent Committee of Kingdom Affairs and Inter-Parliamentary Relations (CKAIR) meeting is set to start at 10:00am. The public can attend parliamen-

450 persons visit tall ship 'Picton Castle' on open day

MARIGOT--Caribbean Sail Training (CST) estimated around 400 persons visited the square-rigged barquentine "Picton Castle" during Sunday's open day at the Galisbay commercial pier.

The vessel, built in 1928, was due to visit Anguilla before returning to her home port in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. A cocktail reception in the evening was held for a number of invited guests who were also given tours of the ship by the crew or trainees on board.

This special visit, not actually on the itinerary, marked an amazing eighth circumnavigation of the world on "Picton Castle" by Captain Daniel Moreland who announced his impending retirement last year.

Captain Moreland in his speech to the guests, focused on the purpose of sail training in the Caribbean and to highlight the work of CST.

"It's not actually training to sail, but training to learn life skills under sail," he said. "Sail training was developed in the 19th century as a system of providing mariners for the steamships and for the navy. It saved shipping companies money in the long run, training officers on sail training ships."



Captain of the "Picton Castle", Daniel Moreland (centre) talks to guests at a reception on board as President of Caribbean Sail Training Jan Roosens (left) and Port Director Albéric Ellis (right) look on. (Robert Luckcock photo)

He explained sail training in the Caribbean puts young people in the environment that they are familiar with and offers powerful leadership and vocational opportunities. It brings jobs to young people and benefits the islands.

"Sail training is a powerful tool for citizenship development. It fosters enterprise, strength of character, critical thinking, and life skills that are useful. But the power and the value far exceeds the shoreline and the water and the boats, so I encourage you to support the CST and we are very proud to be a member.

"Again, we are training life skills in ways that the Internet and push-button technology can't teach. You can't press pause and change channels."

Captain Moreland presented CST President Jan Roosens with a painting of Picton Castle by artist William Gilkerson.

Port Director Albéric Ellis was also present for the reception and was presented with a signed colour print of "Picton Castle" and in turn Ellis reciprocated with a gift. The port over the years consistently waives the fees for CST member vessels.

"Picton Castle" is a completely refitted barque that

observes the rigorous standards of Germanischer Lloyd's for steel-hulled Cape Horners. She is 179 feet overall, with riveted steel hull, clear oiled-pine decks, steel masts, and wooden and steel yards. She carries 12,450 square feet of canvas sail.

The ship also has a powerful 690 hp Burmeister & Wain alpha diesel engine for occasions when sailing is not feasible. The galley is on deck, and its 1893 cooking stove is similar to those used on commercial sailing ships 100 years ago.

There are berths for 40 sail trainees and 12 professional crew members (usually about half of the trainees are men and half women. Their ages range from 18 to 60 plus, with the majority under 35.) Sleeping accommodations are bunkroom style, in two tiers of pilot bunks. Bunks have curtains for privacy and individual reading lights.

Captain Daniel Moreland is one of the most respected sailing ship masters at sea today. An internationally recognized authority on square-rig and traditional sailing ships, he started his career sailing in the West Indies in island schooners, brigantines, and passenger windjammers.

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