

## Hands-On Education at Eco-Camps



What are the Friends Summer Eco-Camps all about? Hiking to beautiful remote beaches, trekking through knee-deep mangrove mud, observing termites under microscopes, and sleeping in rustic cabins, that's what. For the fourth straight year, over 100 local youth ages 8-12 spent 3 fun-filled days and two nights at the Virgin Islands Environmental Resource Station (VIERS) located on the remote end of St. John at Lameshur Bay. This summer we offered four camps for Virgin Islands students with the support of Disney Cruise Lines, the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture, Prosser/ICC Foundation, Texaco Caribbean Inc, and AT&T of the Virgin Islands.

While spending time in such a quiet and remote setting of Virgin Islands National Park, campers got the opportunity to witness things they wouldn't normally see. White-tailed deer foraged around the cabins, snowy egrets perched in the mangrove snags and phosphorescence sparkled in the moonless night sky. Through interpretive hikes, scavenger hunts, art projects, stargazing, National Park videos, and fun games like "marine jeopardy", campers were able to expand their knowledge of the ecology of the islands.

When asked what new piece of information they learned during camp, many children spoke of the mangrove trees, a vital part of an island ecosystem. Nine-year-old Kaila from St. John proudly declared, "the three types of mangroves, black, white and red, provide shelter and food for small fish and marine life". A favorite experience for most campers during those three days was walking through the muddy mangrove field. Faces turned as toes squished through the slimy muck, causing kids to shriek with disgust and delight.

Eco-Camps have become a significant educational program that the Friends plan to continue for many years to come. When asked

how he enjoyed Eco-Camp, 10 year-old Hasani said, "It was so much fun! I'm coming back 'till I can't come back no more!" The impact these three days have on the children will last a lifetime, changing the way they see and understand their natural environment. These youth will become our future stewards, helping to protect and preserve the Virgin Islands for generations to come.

## Welcome to Superintendent Art Frederick

The Friends is very pleased to welcome Art Frederick as the next superintendent of Virgin Islands National Park. He should be arriving at about the same time you receive this newsletter, so it is an opportune time to welcome him to the Virgin Islands and wish him a productive and enjoyable tenure as superintendent.

We have been assured by the NPS Regional Office that Art has the qualities that were advocated for in a new superintendent: he has experience leading parks through planning processes; he has strong communications and community relations skills; he has a demonstrated commitment to the park's resources; and, he is committed to effective partnerships. By all accounts he has done an excellent job as superintendent of Cumberland Island National Seashore and this bodes well for his success at our park as he has effectively dealt with issues similar to the ones that await him here.

Art Frederick, a Florida native, began his Park Service career at Fort Caroline National Memorial in Jacksonville in 1978 after graduating from Florida State University with a bachelor's degree in history. He also worked for four years as a park ranger at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (Pa. and N.J.) and for 12 years at the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina, where he rose to the position of chief ranger. Before transferring to Cumberland Island, he was assistant superintendent at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site in Atlanta. Prior to joining the Park Service, he served in the Navy as a member of a special anti-submarine warfare unit.

Welcome Art. We look forward to getting to know you and working with you to help make VI National Park a model of resource protection and cultural preservation that is cherished by all who experience this unique national treasure.

### Friends' Mission:

*The Friends of Virgin Islands National Park is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural resources of Virgin Islands National Park and promotes the responsible enjoyment of this unique national treasure.*

## • TIDINGS NOTES •

### Farewell Beth!

Every year the Friends of Virgin Islands National Park offers a summer internship opportunity with our non-profit organization. This year Beth Jackendoff was selected to fill this 9-week position. She currently attends the University of Massachusetts in Boston, pursuing her degree in environmental studies, and in the past has worked for such organizations as the Red Cross and AmeriCorps NCCC. Beth showed a broad understanding of environmental issues and a passion for protecting natural resources and wildlife. She expressed that she would someday like to pursue a career in the field of environmental education, which she demonstrated during her stay at our Summer Eco-Camps. Beth attended one full camp (3 days and 2 nights) as a volunteer assistant and cabin counselor for thirty-four 8 to 12 year-olds. In addition, Beth assisted with SCA logistics, grant research, a local economic study and general office duties. We wish her the best of luck.



### The Friends Welcomes New Development Director Karen Brady

The Friends is pleased to announce that Karen Brady has joined the Friends as our new Development Director. She replaced Kim Lyons September 15. While we will miss Kim, we are very excited to have Karen on board.

After serving more than a decade in the Minneapolis/St. Paul non-profit sector, Karen joins the Friends with much experience in fund raising and non-profit management. She played key roles in a variety of non-profit organizations, each one with a unique mission and diverse constituency; including retirees, inner city youth, homeless animals and developmentally disabled individuals. She has also worked with government agencies, foundations and other non-profit organizations to develop collaborative efforts that create program awareness and provide services to communities. Karen is eager to meet our members and looking forward to becoming an active member of the St. John community.

Kim is leaving the position to pursue public relations and marketing consulting work and spending more time with her daughter Savannah. "I will definitely miss working here," says Lyons. "It has been a great experience working with Joe and the rest of the Friends team. As a native St. Johnian, I remain committed to preserving the beauty of this island and to the Mission of the Friends. I absolutely intend to stay involved."

*During the period between John Kings' departure and Art Fredericks' arrival VINP has had three interim superintendents. Mark Woods was here for ten weeks immediately following John's departure and Rafe Boulon, VINP's Chief of Resource Management, succeeded him for another three weeks. Troy Lissimore followed Rafe and will stay until Art Frederick is in place. Troy's "real job" is Assistant Regional Director for Strategic Planning based in Atlanta. The Friends thanks Troy, Rafe and Mark for making room on their already full plates to help out VINP; and, special thanks to Troy for contributing this piece.*

## From the Superintendent

*by Troy Lissimore,  
Interim Superintendent*

A standard part of any greeting in the Virgin Islands, and especially on St. John, is the inviting, welcoming, intonation of the word "good!" Wherever one goes or whomever one meets, there is always heard the familiar refrains of "Good morning," "Good afternoon," or "Good evening!" This is a great tradition and a wonderful disposition that "Virgin Islanders" display in putting their particular positive spin on things, in the interest and desire for each part of the day to be good. So, "Good Tidings" to members, friends and readers of Tidings from the Virgin Islands National Park and Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument National Park Service Family.

By the time you are reading this column, the Park may have already closed fiscal year 2003. It is possible, too, that I may have also closed out my interim sojourn as Acting Superintendent, and the incoming Superintendent will be on board and poised to take the Park to a level that each of us will be proud to reference.

There was no need to convince me that the cultural, recreational, and natural resources for which the Park is named present a wonderful place to visit, work and experience the amalgamated blending of many cultures. The magical allure of Virgin Islands National Park takes the mind away from the concerns of the hustle and bustle of "business as usual," but this means "business as unusual" for a noble but struggling staff and increasing degrading impacts on resources that we are loving to death.

Short and unadorned, Virgin Islands National Park and the recently designated Virgin Islands Coral Reef NM need more dollars and bodies. Significant to mitigating these needs is the sustainable work and support of Friends of the Virgin Islands National Park . . . to whom I say thanks!

**Memberships can now be renewed on-line by  
going directly to our website at:**

**[http://www.friendsvinp.org/new\\_stuff/joindirect.htm](http://www.friendsvinp.org/new_stuff/joindirect.htm)**



**If you would like to receive the Friends' newsletter  
in the future via email, please drop us a line:**

**[newsletter@friendsvinp.org](mailto:newsletter@friendsvinp.org)**

## Archeology and the Friends – a Brief Update

by Ken Wild, Park Archeologist/ Cultural Resource Manager

Archeological research continues to grow thanks to the Friends. Over the last six months research at Cinnamon Bay has had a variety of participants. Friends sponsored interns have helped to make it possible for anyone to experience archeological work in progress. Participants have ranged from PhD candidates to those in the process of completing their BA in Anthropology/Archeology. We have also had a number of long term volunteers that have included teachers, high school students, a group of Elderhostel volunteers, as well as several college groups from the states. This summer we benefited greatly from Americorp students as well as the University of Southern Maine's Archeological Field school. We were also fortunate to have students from the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) and Northwestern University. The students from UVI have now become part time park employees while continuing their education, and both will continue to work at Cinnamon Bay on a limited schedule that opens the laboratory on Saturday for the first time in years. One student will be assisting us with the exotic plant removal project that benefits the preservation of our historic ruins.

In June, I went to the International Congress on Caribbean Archaeology thanks to assistance from the Friends. While there I gave a paper on the Reef Bay Petroglyphs that details our new understanding, as evidenced from the archeological findings at Cinnamon Bay, about this wonderful rock art that exists throughout the Caribbean. The paper will be published in the Congress proceedings. In the meantime I have written a paper for the public about these findings that we will soon be posted on the Friends web page along with a number of other papers written about the research the Friends have sponsored.

While at the Congress, I used the opportunity to open our program to students of the Caribbean region or who attend Universities that do research in this area. I felt this was now possible with the continued support from the Friends and the new funds that keep the program on-going. I think that all Friends members can feel proud that we offer one of the only full time programs in archeology that allows the public to participate, at no cost, and at the same time provides valuable lessons to those sponsored students who can take this public approach and use it in their own communities. With this in mind, it seems only natural that we should involve and educate students from nearby islands that face similar research questions, and problems in the preservation of their cultural resources. So be on the lookout for students from Jamaica, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Britain, Puerto Rico, Holland, France, Grenada, Trinidad, and the rest of our island neighbors.

## Moorings installed in the Monument

The Resource Access Mooring Project is our highest priority natural resource protection project. As most members know, the project seeks to facilitate the continuation of permitted activities within the Monument while respecting the no-anchoring provisions of the proclamation. We will do this by installing a storm refuge system and day-use moorings in Hurricane Hole and fishing moorings (for blue runner only) and dive moorings in Monument waters south of St. John. In the initial construction phase, which was completed in July, we installed eleven day-use mooring in Hurricane Hole and six fishing moorings near Cabritte Horn Point, between Lameshur and Salt Pond Bays. Plans for the storm moorings are progressing and we expect the technical design to be completed shortly. If our fundraising efforts are successful, the entire project will be completed early in 2004.



## SCA Students Improve Trails and Reduce Erosion

This summer, Virgin Islands National Park hosted a group of young conservation leaders who worked tirelessly to improve St. John's popular hiking trails. For the past three years, the Friends has worked in conjunction with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to create a program on the island that would give students the experience of living in the Caribbean while learning how to protect our valuable natural resources. For five weeks, eight students and two crew leaders constructed or repaired waterbars, retaining walls and rock steps, cleared brush, and cleaned drainage ditches on six miles of trails. This maintenance will not only provide hikers with a safer and more enjoyable hiking experience, it will also help prevent erosion, insuring the future of these trails and protecting the coral reefs from sedimentation.

Waking up at dawn from their tents at Maho Bay Camps, a typical day for the crew started by eating breakfast, packing a lunch then heading out to the site. The majority of their work was completed on the Caneel Hill/Margaret Hill Trail system (trail heads located right next to the VINP Maintenance area and across the road from the Caneel Bay entrance). The crew also rehabilitated the entire length of the Bordeaux Mountain Trail, performed minor work on the Lind Point Trail and hauled out approximately 2,000 lbs. of debris from Drunk Bay! After a hard day's work, members usually engaged in a refreshing swim or nap until suppertime.

The Friends put a new twist on the program this year by adding two Virgin Islands students to the group. Leia LaPlace and Sean Richardson were proud recipients of the Friends' John King Scholarship Program, which every year offers local students a \$1,000 academic scholarship for studying biology, natural resource management or other related subject. The SCA summer program was offered to them as an internship, which they both gratefully accepted. Leia and Sean added a dynamic cultural aspect to the team that was appreciated by all.

While the SCA crew spent most of their time on the trails, they were also able to participate in many environmental and cultural activities. Trips to Annaberg, Reef Bay, Waterlemon Cay, Lovango Cay, and a talk from archeologist Ken Wild allowed the SCA crew to acquire a genuine interest in their surrounding area and the learn the importance of their work. If you or someone you know are interested in conservation service, please visit the Student Conservation Association website, [www.thesca.org](http://www.thesca.org), for more information.

## Save the Date for Upcoming Friends Events!!!

- **Last Chance to Book Arawak Expedition!!** As an exclusive benefit to the Friends, Arawak Expeditions is offering a kayak expedition package around St. John. From October 6–10, Arawak will lead a small group of 10–12 kayakers and two guides on a “St. John Adventure. The tour will depart from Cruz Bay and completely circumnavigate the island.
- Friends will host a **Fine Dining Progressive Dinner** next March 27th. The Dinner will be hosted at three exclusive villas in the enclave of Peter Bay on St. John’s beautiful North Shore. Space is limited, so reserve your space early!
- On Sunday May 30th, 2004 the Friends will host its first **Friends Beach-to-Beach Power Swim**. The race will begin at Maho Beach and end three miles later at Hawksnest Beach. There is also a short course to Cinnamon Bay. Start time is 8 a.m.

For more information about the Friends events, please call Karen Brady at 340-779-4940.



## President’s Message *By Joe Kessler*



The summer has been a very active and busy period for the Friends as well as a period of transition for both the Park and the Friends. The highlights of this summer were Eco-camps, Trail Improvement and Moorings. We sponsored more than 100 young Virgin Islanders at VIERS for our Eco-Camps. This was a great experience for the kids and helped them begin their journey as future environmentalists. The

camps were so popular that there were waiting lists for most of the camps. We again sponsored an SCA trail crew, which included our two scholarship recipients; together they improved about six miles of Park trails this summer. And, we also began work on the Resource Access Mooring Project and installed 17 moorings in Hurricane Hole and south of St. John. Thank you for your support – you made this important work possible!

In the midst of all this activity a number of significant changes are going on. You read about the Park getting a new superintendent and the Friends is pleased to welcome Art Frederick in that post. While VI National Park is one of the crown jewels of the National Park System

and St. John is an idyllic part of American Paradise, the job of Superintendent here is not an easy one. The Friends stands ready and willing to assist him in any way possible to be successful here. We urge him to continue the good work of his predecessor and be diligent in seeking to resolve the problem facing the Park, particularly those that affect community relations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Kim Lyons for her service as the Friends’ Development Director this past 1-1/2 years. While we are sorry to see her go, we wish her well in her new endeavors and are pleased that she has agreed to serve on our Advisory Council. We are also pleased that we were able to attract someone as talented as Karen Brady to the Friends team as the new Development Director. Please join me in welcoming Karen and helping make her feel at home.

The one thing that has remained consistent is your support. It is you, Friends members, who give us strength by your numbers and sustenance by your contributions – both financial and in volunteer time. Please continue to keep VI National Park as one of your philanthropic priorities – **the Park needs you, now more than ever!**

Friends of   
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NATIONAL PARK**

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