

Welcome
to Friends
Tidings!

Welcome to *Friends Tidings*, the quarterly newsletter of the Friends of Virgin Islands National Park. While this newsletter is normally reserved for Friends members, this edition (and hopefully future winter editions) is being shared with the entire St. John community to increase understanding of the Friends and of VI National Park. Friends members will note that this edition is twice as big as usual, since there is so much going on and being planned. We hope that all readers enjoy this edition and find it informative and useful. We also hope that non-members reading *Friends Tidings* will consider joining us in our quest to make Virgin Islands National Park a model of natural resource protection and cultural preservation while promoting the responsible enjoyment of this unique national treasure. Membership information is enclosed.

Welcome VI National Park Superintendent, Art Frederick



“I wanted to come to St. John. I put in the work to make the move happen,” said Art Frederick, new Superintendent of Virgin Islands National Park. Art had visited St. John five or so years ago, and fell in love with the island’s natural beauty. When the superintendent position became available, Art knew he wanted the job.

Since arriving on St. John and taking the helm at the Park on September 22nd, Art has immersed himself in learning about the island’s history, culture, and its issues. He says that his initial approach to learning about his job is to read everything he can find on St. John and the Park, and points to a stack of books and reports on his desk. He has also been out meeting with community leaders, and local residents, as well as speaking to various clubs and organizations. These are essential steps that Art is taking to ensure the lines of communication are open, and that a basis for dialogue is established between Park leadership and the community.

Art is experienced at bringing together a community to focus on what’s important.

As he takes on the challenges of our Park, he will use this experience to invite the community into the Park to work with National Park Service staff, and forge a team that will assist in the creation of a new General Management Plan (GMP). It is vital to the success of the management plan that local community members are *actively involved* in its development, as this will be the road map for the Park’s future.

Art said he doesn’t have any plans to make any major changes during his first year. However, he will be working to create better community awareness of the National Park Service, its mission and how he intends to practice excellence in stewardship of our Park.

Projects for 2004

The Friends is best viewed by what we do, and the Board of Directors recently approved an ambitious and challenging program plan for the coming year projected to cost more than \$400,000. This includes new projects proposed by the Park, projects that have previously been approved but not yet completed, and new Friends-initiated projects.

Each fall, the Superintendent of Virgin Islands National Park submits a prioritized list of needs to the Friends’ Board of Directors. Given limitations of federal funding for the Park – it typically meets only 70% of the Park’s budgetary needs – Friends’ support is often the only way critical natural resource protection, cultural preservation and environmental education activities can take place.

The Friends’ Board carefully considers the projects in the Park’s Support Request. Those projects that are approved, along with Friends-initiated projects that the Board chooses to undertake, constitute our annual program plan.

There are a number of projects that are closely identified with the Friends and we will once again be supporting the following “signature” projects:

Resource Protection Moorings (\$185,000): Install storm refuge moorings in Hurricane Hole

SCA Trail Crew (\$25,000): This year’s project will feature a crew of young Virgin Islanders.

Adopt a Trail/Beach (\$1,000): Groups to adopt beaches and trails for periodic cleanups.

Annaberg Cultural Presentations (\$42,400): Cultural presentation and volunteer docent program at Annaberg.

Archeological Artifact Preservation (\$30,000): Preservation of the thousands of artifacts uncovered in the archeological digs.

(Cont’d. on page 7)

**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.

From the Superintendent

Greetings Friends of Virgin Islands National Park!

Since my arrival several weeks ago, I have been constantly meeting with individuals from a variety of entities within the St. John community. I have also been called upon to speak to a couple of organizations, and I am presently making preparations to join civic groups on St. John. A few of the common themes that have surfaced during my conversations with just about everyone, has been the fine work of the Friends of Virgin Islands National Park, and the status of the General Management Plan (GMP).

Prior to my arrival, I was informed about the Friends strong commitment in supporting Virgin Island National Park (VINP) efforts to preserve/protect this precious resource and the outstanding job that my predecessor, John King had done in terms of building a great relationship with the Friends. It is indeed my intent to nurture and foster the relationship between the Park and the Friends, and continue to build upon the great work of my predecessor. Moreover, it has become abundantly clear to me, the important role that you play in aiding VINP in meeting its mission. This became apparent to me when I received the list of projects recently approved by the Friends Board. After reviewing the VINP budget for the 2003 fiscal year, it would have been virtually impossible for the park to implement these projects without assistance from you.

Concerning the GMP, this is perhaps the most important project facing the park. The current GMP was developed in 1983 and is of course a rather outmoded document. The GMP planning effort for VINP will be launched within a few months and will take approximately three years to complete. I encourage each of you to participate in the planning process. Attend public meetings and voice your concerns. Also, a website will be established wherein you will be able to email your responses. I will provide you with specifics once the planning process is launched.

As you have realized, the management of VINP is extremely problematic, particularly when one considers meeting park goals when staffing and funds are limited, dealing with a myriad of impacts that are threatening the resource, addressing conflicting interests, and making decisions about varying and competing interests for management and use of VINP resources, etc. However, if we plan carefully, establish priorities, make sound science-based decisions, we should be able to address issues facing the park in a proactive and effective manner. The park is dealing with some extremely difficult challenges, but through your support and strong commitment, we should be able to galvanize our efforts, raise our level of excellence and continue to protect/preserve this precious resource, and maintain it in an unimpaired state to be enjoyed by the visiting public.

Finally, I want to thank you for your support and interest in VINP, and as superintendent, I look forward to working with you.

Please Come!

FRIENDS FAMILY FISH FRY *Join us for a traditional fish fry on the beach*

January 31, 2004
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Oppenheimer Beach

A shuttle service will be provided from the National Park maintenance area near Mongoose Junction.

VINP Update

Friends members have been following the progress of a number of projects and activities undertaken by VI National Park. Below is the latest on these projects:

Hawksnest Beach facilities renovation: This project was supposed to have begun on June 23rd and was scheduled to be completed by about now. Work has been delayed due to contracting problems and work will start once these problems are solved, hopefully in the next few weeks.

Transportation planning study: Will be launched next year.

Mooring fee collection: Collection of fees for the overnight use of the moorings installed with Friends funding will begin the first week of December 2003.

Bay host program: The Park is interviewing applicants and the program will be implemented along with the mooring fee collection program in December.

Exotic/feral animal control: The programs for the control of cats, rats, mongooses and hogs are still ongoing and have been reasonably successful. An environmental assessment for the control of feral goats and sheep in the Park is under review by the SE Regional Compliance Office. Upon their review, it will be returned to the Park and released to the public for a 45-day comment period.

Annual Meeting

The Friends cordially invites you to our 2004 Annual Meeting! We are proud to announce that our keynote speaker for the afternoon will be Tom Kiernan, President of the National Park Conservation Association (NPCA). The NPCA is the nation's foremost advocacy organization for the scenic beauty, wildlife, and historical and cultural treasures of our national parks. Tom will address us on the roles of Friends groups and its members as advocates for parks.

Also present at the meeting will be the new VI National Park Superintendent, Art Frederick who will give the "State of the Park" address, and Friends President, Joe Kessler who will present the Friends Annual Report.

Be sure to mark your calendars for **Sunday, January 18th, from 2:00 – 4:00pm**. The T'ree Lizard Restaurant at Cinnamon Bay will be hosting the meeting once again, and a shuttle service will be provided from the NP Maintenance area near Mongoose Junction. Please call to confirm your attendance, (340) 779-4940.

Simonsen Book Celebrates the Natural Beauty of St. John



Renowned St. John photographer, Steve Simonsen, recently published *Living Art*, a beautifully bound, 200 page coffee table book that celebrates the natural beauty of St. John in 182 stunning photographs. This book is a "must have" for anyone who knows and loves St. John.

This book will be available from hotel gift shops, bookstores and other fine shops on St. John. It will also be available from Amazon.com and, of course, **directly from the Friends**. When purchased from the Friends, a portion of the price may be considered a tax-deductible charitable contribution, as the proceeds will be used to help protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources of Virgin Islands National Park. Please call, come by the office or visit our website for ordering information.

Friends Field Seminars

St. John offers an enticing world of natural wonders and cultural traditions awaiting exploration, and the Friends invites you to discover more about St. John by providing annual field seminars. This season get out there and learn more about the island's native plants and underwater ecosystems, explore historic sites from land and sea, or express yourself through photography, creative writing and drumming.

Experts in these disciplines volunteer their time to Friends of Virgin Islands National Park as a fundraising effort. Field seminars range in price from \$20 - \$60 for members, \$25 - \$70 for non-members, and last from two to six hours. All proceeds are a donation to the Friends. Call 779-4940 to sign up, space is limited.

JANUARY	
Jan. 10, Sat.	– Tropical Photography – Accompany professional photographer Steve Simonsen on a trip around St. John, and learn to use your own camera to take beautiful magazine-quality photos.
Jan. 17, Sat.	– Nature Writing Workshop – Join accomplished author and photojournalist Cristina Kessler for a workshop on how to make your writing come alive.
Jan. 21, Wed.	– Historical Sugarworks Stroll at Caneel Bay – Take a step back in time with St. John Historical Society President Chuck Pishko, and rediscover Caneel Bay.
Jan. 24, Sat.	– Archaeology Boat Trip – Set a course through pre-history with Park archaeologist Ken Wild, while circumnavigating St. John.
Jan. 28, Wed.	– Make Genuine Coconut Oil – Park Ranger Deanna Somerville will lead you through the steps of making this popular caribbean skin treatment.
FEBRUARY	
Feb. 1, Sun.	– Local Plants of St. John – Plant ecologist Gary Ray will help you identify the many different root-possessing species of our island.
Feb. 7, Sat.	– Bird Watching Tour – Go on a search for our migratory friends with Laurel Brannick-Trager, Park Ranger and St. John Audubon Society President.
Feb. 11, Wed.	– TBA
Feb. 14, Sat.	– Discover Historic Little Reef Bay – Explore the ruins of a modest cotton and livestock plantation owned and operated throughout most of the 19th century by a community of formerly enslaved Africans with historian David Knight.
Feb. 15, Sun.	– Marine Biology Sailing Trip – Snorkel the underwater treasures of St. John's reefs with NPS Marine Biologist Jeff Miller aboard the catamaran <i>Adventurer</i> .
Feb. 21, Sat.	– The East End Experience – Learn with local residents Bernie Kemp and Guy Benjamin about how changes in economics and technology transformed the future of the East End community.
Feb. 21, Sat.	– Stars and Their Stories – Lay back and let astromythologist Kelly Hunter guide you through the constellations of the night sky.
Feb. 25, Wed.	– Afro-Caribbean Drumming Workshop – Learn new rhythms and beats from local drum master Eddie Bruce.
•Please tear out this page and save it to use as a reminder.	

MARCH	
Mar. 3, Wed.	– St. John Architecture – Architect Glen Speer will take you through some of the island's finer homes to explain their structures and significance.
Mar. 6, Sat.	– Coastal Ecology – Learn all about mangroves, sea grasses and coral reefs as you circumnavigate the island with NPS Chief of Resource Management, Rafe Boulon.
Mar. 13, Sat.	– Traditional West Indian Cooking – Park Ranger Denise Georges will show you how to make a customary dish with whelk that will make your mouth water!
Mar. 17, Wed.	– Leinster Bay: A Piece of Ireland in the Danish West Indies – Join historian David Knight for a walk in the ruins of James Murphy's grand estate house above Leinster Bay and the Murphy grave site.
Mar. 20, Sat.	– Explore Hurricane Hole by Kayak – Paddle with Arawak Expeditions through the Coral Reef National Monument, stopping to snorkel in the mangroves.
Mar. 27, Sat.	– Coral Reef Research – Be a research scientist for a day as USGS Marine Ecologist Caroline Rogers takes you through monitored sites of endangered elkhorn corals.
APRIL	
Apr. 3, Sat.	– Intro to Bush Medicine – Native resident Eulita Jacobs will help you identify local medicinal plants used to treat various ailments.
Apr. 5, Mon. & Apr. 9, Fri	– Taino Pottery Pit Firing Workshop – Create pottery with locally dug clay, bone dried in pits the traditional way with artist Gail Van de Bogurt, and archaeologist Ken Wild.
Apr. 10, Sat.	– TBA
Apr. 14, Wed.	– Tropical Photography – Accompany professional photographer Steve Simonsen on a trip around St. John, and learn to use your own camera to take beautiful magazine-quality photos.
Apr. 17, Sat.	– St. John Architecture – Architect Glen Speer will take you through some of the island's finer homes to explain their structures and significance.
Apr. 24, Sat.	– Turtle Identification and Monitoring – NPS Conservation Biologist Thomas Kelley will discuss the biology and nesting behaviors of leatherback, green and hawksbill sea turtles.
Apr. 25, Sun.	– Snorkel the 6 Ecosystems of Scott Bay – Snorkel these sites from shore with Caneel Bay's Chief Snorkologist Lucy Portlock.

Research on Elkhorn and Staghorn Coral

*Dr. Caroline S. Rogers,
USGS Caribbean Field Station*

The US Geological Survey and the National Park Service are working together on a new research project on elkhorn and staghorn corals in Virgin Islands National Park, Buck Island Reef National Monument, and Biscayne National Park. These corals are now being considered for the Endangered Species List because of their extensive decline throughout the western Atlantic and Caribbean from disease and storms in the last 15-25 years. For most people, mention of the Endangered Species List brings to mind pandas and tigers, animals that are a bit more appealing than hard, slimy corals. No corals are currently on this list.

Most of the work so far has been done on elkhorn corals on a reef in Haulover Bay, formerly one of the best elkhorn reefs around St. John. The study involves mapping of colonies with GPS units; photographing of colonies with a digital camera in an underwater housing; recording of signs of predation, disease, and physical damage; and sampling of diseased tissue for pathogens. If you have been snorkeling recently in Haulover you may have noticed numbered plastic tags near the elkhorn corals. We have been surprised at the changes in the colonies since we began to monitor them last February. Several small colonies have died, although many corals have shown rapid new growth. White pox disease has killed portions of some colonies, but in some cases these dead patches have healed. Coral-eating snails have caused tissue loss on some colonies. In a few cases, branches have been broken off by snorkelers and fishing line.

Many bays in the US Virgin Islands and British Virgin Islands have new elkhorn colonies, but no reefs have as many elkhorn corals as they did in the 1970s. Because elkhorn coral grows in very shallow water, they are very vulnerable to damage from hurricanes, snorkelers and boats. In April 2002, a large ferry boat ran aground on Johnson's Reef in the Park, causing extensive damage to the elkhorn there. Additional research has begun on Johnson's Reef and in Hawksnest Bay. This study will be expanding over the next 3 years and should help us determine if these species are actually recovering.

The Friends will sponsor a coral research seminar in March 2004, that will provide more detail of the state of coral in this region.

Seagrass and Water Quality Monitoring

*Rafe Boulon,
Chief of Resource Management*

The Park's Resource Management group has recently been busy working on the monitoring of seagrass communities within the Park, and pulling together the data that have been collected over the past 14 years on water quality. Undertakings of this sort are needed to periodically evaluate field studies to assure that they are producing the kind of information that Park resource managers need for making responsible decisions.

There are two aspects of the seagrass monitoring program: examining trends in seagrass health in 3 bays, (Borck Creek, Brown Bay, and Greater Lameshur Bay), and tracking changes in seagrass communities that exist in close proximity to the Park's 200+ mooring buoys that were installed by the Friends. The goal in the former case is to see what changes are occurring to seagrass in the entire bay, while the latter instance involves assessing if seagrass communities are recovering in those areas where mooring buoys have been installed and are in use.

The types of water quality data that have been collected around St. John include: visibility, turbidity, salinity, pH, dissolved oxygen, nutrient and sediment values, and temperature. Current efforts are concentrating on organizing and analyzing this data so it can be used to understand what is happening while examining other data such as trends in coral reef health, coral diseases, seagrass habitats or numbers of reef fish. When water quality trends are negative in a particular bay, the Park attempts to determine the source of the impacts and then reduce or eliminate those sources. If due to inholding development, the Park works with DPNR-CZM as well as the landowners to mitigate their impacts using paving, sediment retention practices or landscaping (preferably native species).

Future efforts are aimed at updating the Park's list of terrestrial and marine animals and vascular plants, and assembling a database that contains information on all the various scientific studies that have been conducted over the Park's 50 year history.

Introducing the Official Friends Membership Card

Friends of Virgin Islands National Park has just introduced membership cards. When you join Friends or renew your membership, you will receive a membership card to carry with you as a symbol of your commitment to helping preserve and protect Virgin Islands National Park.

Membership dues form the basis of our support to the Park. Our work is critical to improving the health and stability of this national treasure, and your membership is vitally important in ensuring the work will continue. In response to members' requests, we created this card to encourage membership, and provide a vehicle by which we can offer benefits to our members through our Affinity Program.

The Affinity Program includes local businesses that wish to demonstrate their support for the Park and our community by

providing Friends members with a special discount on products or services, assist with fund raising, or donate proceeds.

Local merchants currently in the Affinity Program include R&I Patton, Low Key Watersports, Arawak Expeditions, Maho Bay Camps, and Canvas Factory. (Please see our website for a current list of Affinity Partner offerings.) We will continue to cultivate new partners in order to expand the variety of products and services offered to our members.

Carry your card with pride, use it and enjoy the following benefits:

- Subscription to *Friends Tidings*, our quarterly newsletter;
- Special rates and priority booking for Friends Seminars;
- Special "Friends Discounts" from selected Affinity Partners;
- Members' discount (10%) when purchasing Friends merchandise (except license plates & books) directly from the Friends.

If you have any questions regarding membership, available benefits or about becoming an Affinity Partner, please contact Karen Brady at the Friends.

Affinity Program Encourages New Membership

The desire to protect the natural beauty of Virgin Islands National Park is a sentiment many of us share. The Affinity Program was created to provide a vehicle for local businesses to partner with the Friends to support the important work we do for the Park.

The program works as follows. There are two types of Affinity Partners:

1. A merchant/service provider who offers a discount on a product or service to Friends members only, or donates the proceeds of the sale of a particular item.
2. A merchant/service provider that requests a donation on behalf of the Friends.

These are real, substantial perks and programs that merchants are willing to provide because they know how important it is to protect the Park, not only from an environmental standpoint, but also because tourism is at the heart of St. John's economy. The Park draws more than a million tourists each year. Our beaches are known worldwide for their pristine white sand, turquoise blue water, and vibrant coral reefs.

We are working to make our member benefits program enticing to attract potential members and give existing members true perks for their continued support. An example of an existing Affinity Partner offering is the 10% discount given to Friends members at Maho Bay Camps during the summer months. Another example, R&I Patton donates the proceeds of zemi replica necklaces to fund cultural preservation programs. The offer may be as unique as the product or service.

This is an excellent opportunity for your business to give back to the Park. If you would like to become an Affinity Partner, but are not sure what type of offering is right for you, please call Karen Brady at the Friends. Karen can help you create an offering that is tailored to fit your needs. Your business will also be listed on our website as an Affinity Partner and members are encouraged to patronize our partners.

Please consider joining, your support is vitally needed.



Kayakers with a Mission

On October 6th, 2003, eight kayakers and two guides left the safe shores at Low Key Watersports and headed around St. John's rugged coastline on a mission to circumnavigate the island. It was a beautiful day to begin such a trip, bright sun and calm water lured our brave paddlers away from the beach to start a weeklong adventure to benefit the Friends.

Arthur Jones, owner of Arawak Expeditions and guide for our daring adventurers, in partnership with the Friends, developed this unique trip that included rarely seen parts of St. John's East End and South Shore, and private interpretive sessions with Park Rangers.

Arthur leads a number of kayak tours into parkland waters every week, and felt it was important to give something back to the Park to help maintain this valuable resource. "We receive so much from the Park," says Arthur, "but we rarely do anything in return for the Park. If it weren't for the Park, I wouldn't be here – Arawak Expeditions wouldn't be running the trips that they run, and I probably wouldn't live on this island because it would be just like any other over-developed Caribbean island."

Arthur has been impressed with the results of Friend's projects over the past couple of years, and felt the best way to give back to the Park was through a contribution to the Friends.

On behalf of the National Park Service and the Friends, we would like to thank Arthur and Beth Jones of Arawak Expeditions for their leadership role in helping to protect and preserve our Park. Their efforts are truly a model for other businesses to emulate.

A special thank you to all of our paddlers; Kate, Annie, Kevin, Connie, Cindy, Marcy, Scott, and Patricia. We hope to see you all back next year!

A big thank you to all of our sponsors for their participation: Caneel Bay, Cinnamon Bay Campground, Maho Bay Camps, Starfish Market, Skinny Legs, VIERS, and Vie's Snack Shop and Campground.

Thank you to our very knowledgeable Park Rangers, Laurel Brannick-Trager, Rafe Boulon and Ken Wild, and last, but certainly not least, our courageous guide Han Winogron from Arawak Expeditions.

Thank you. You all played key roles in making this event so successful!



***Are you still driving
around with those
unsightly yellow and
black license plates?***

***Please help keep our
roadways scenic!***

**Order your Friends license plates today
and help us protect the Park.**

Pick up an order form at the Department of Motor Vehicles,
order directly from our website at www.friendsvinp.org,
or call Jackie at the Friends office at 779-4940.

Get creative and personalize your plate — serial numbered plates
are also available.

Personalized plates are \$105. Serial numbered plates are \$55.00.

*Your contribution to Friends of Virgin Islands National Park
is tax deductible.*

Thank You!

The Friends enjoyed great success this year because of the generous support of many people, businesses and organizations, whose donations contribute to helping protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources of Virgin Islands National Park and promote the responsible enjoyment of this unique national treasure.

Recognition of donors would not be complete without first thanking Rosalie Stahl and Donald Sussman, whose visionary donations in the past fundamentally changed the Friends and our support of the Park. The impact of their contributions continues to be felt every day.

The Friends has more than 3,000 members and your contributions, whether it's annual dues, donations to special appeals, sponsoring individual projects or purchasing Friends' merchandise, all help us to support the Park. We heartily thank all of you and are humbled by your generosity. We are especially grateful to the following individuals and organizations for their support this past fiscal year.

First, we would also like to make special mention of the considerable support of Rob Blakeney and Ed Guerlich, whose contributions clearly demonstrate their commitment to the protection and preservation of Virgin Islands National Park and their special interest in archeology, cultural preservation and environmental education.

Donors of more than \$10,000:

Rob Blakeney & Ed Guerlich
Caneel Bay Resort
The Environmental Protection Agency
Maho Bay Camps
Andy & Joy Stillman
Trust Asset Management LLP

Donors of \$5,000 – \$9,999:

Arawak Expeditions
Disney Cruise Lines
Gumpel-Lury Foundation
Prosser-ICC Foundation
Roosa Family Foundation
The Westin Resort

Donors of \$2,500 – \$4,999:

Best Winters Land Surveyors
Carper Foundation
Glen & Radha Speer
Texaco Caribbean Inc

Donors of \$1,000 – \$2,499:

Christine & Paul Borthwick
Pat & Hal Brown
First Bank
Alan & Margot Hunt
Hyland & Beth Johns
Koonce Foundation
Anna & Tom Lawson
Ned & Sally Lemkemeier
Donald & Betty Lentnek
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
Christie O'Neil
Sue Sawyer & Rick Jay
Miles & Susan Stair
Lucy Waletzky
The West Indian Company
Efrem Zimbalist III

Donors of \$250 – \$499:

Margaret & Joel Black
Myron & Ruth Blumenfeld
T.A. Carter
James & Elizabeth Casner
Gail & John Chester
William & Marjorie Coleman
Stephen Conley
Steve Cummins
Richard Decker
Rebecca Faeder
James & Denise Gentile
Anthony & Florence Jorgenson
Patricia Kaufman
Beth & Seth Klaman

Donors of \$500 – \$999:

Joan Bermingham
Caribbean Villas & Resort Management
Koke & Cheryl Cummins
Frank Darabout
Hal & Shirley Eis
Robert Fagenson
Bente Hirsch
Jim & Donna Kalbach
Bob & Ann Klenke
Jone LaBombard
Alex McBride
Richard & Elizabeth McMullen
Dan Caughey
Steve Simon & Helen Porter
Weldon & Ellie Wasson

Dennis & Sherrie Martin
Eric & Rene McEntyre
Lawrence & Deborah Mitchell
Mongoose Junction Merchants Assoc
Bob Nellis
Steve & Fran O'Day
Glen & Mary Pizzini
Jeanne & Bill Rayne
Rotary Club of St. John
Al Sayegh
Alexis Smith
Fred & Alice Stanback,
Richard Taylor
Doug & Leslie White

Please let us know if we inadvertently omitted your name or placed you in the incorrect group. Thanks!

VINP & The Friends Need Your Help – Volunteer Today!

As a member of Friends of Virgin Islands National Park you've already done so much to help us reach our goals – and we thank you warmly for that! Your generous donations have funded projects within



Sharita Mitchell, after school office volunteer

the Park, helping to preserve historic ruins, increase awareness of our fragile ecosystems, and educate visitors of the cultural history of the Virgin Islands.

But there is still so much left to do and the Friends needs your help! Become a volunteer today, and gain a whole new appreciation for the Virgin Islands National Park. Through hands-on work, you'll learn new skills, meet new people and feel good that you did something to better our community and environment.

Each year Friends volunteers contribute thousands of

hours to the Park. Check out what volunteer projects and activities are in store for 2004.

- **Annaberg Docent Program**
Learn the fascinating history of the Annaberg sugar factory and plantation while you share this knowledge with visitors. Volunteers will be trained by Park Rangers to answer questions and give tours.
- **Archaeology Digging and Data Recording**
Assist Park archaeologist Ken Wild and interns at the archaeology laboratory recording information on artifacts excavated from Cinnamon and Trunk Bays.
- **Adopt-A-Beach/Bay/Trail**
Help local businesses/organizations/school groups who adopt beaches and/or trails to keep these beautiful places clean of trash and debris.
- **Resource Management Assistance**
Assist researchers on a variety of projects such as water quality testing, beach profiling, bacterial monitoring and sea turtle monitoring (available on a quarterly basis).
- **Historic Structures – Vegetation Removal**
Uncover historic structures from the bush while learning about the fascinating history of St. John.
- **Trunk Bay Kiosk**
Operate the Friends booth at Trunk Bay, greeting guests, selling t-shirts and hats, and providing information.
- **Front Desk Assistant**
Welcome guests to the National Park Visitor Center by answering questions about St. John's culture and natural history, selling books and gifts, and answering phones.
- **Office Assistant**
Three full-time staff aren't enough to get all this work done! Assist with a variety of different projects in the Friends office at Mongoose Junction, Cruz Bay.

If you are interested in lending a hand, call Emily at (340) 779-4940.

Projects for 2004

(continued from page 1)

Hassel Island Restoration (\$8,000): Restore the Creque Marine Railway area while promoting community involvement in the further restoration of Hassel Island.

Folklife Festival (\$7,000): Premier cultural festival held during Black History Month.

Cultural Theatre Presentation (\$10,600): Weekly theatrical presentation (January – April) by Carabana Ensemble Theater Company entitled "Da Market Woman"

Eco-Camps (\$20,000): Summer camps for Virgin Islands youth at VIERS.

Scholarship Fund (\$4,000): Scholarships and summer internships for two Virgin Islanders in their junior or senior year of university studies related to natural resource management.

This year's new projects include:

Feral/Exotic Animal Outreach (\$6,000): Develop a series of pamphlets to educate VINP visitors and island residents about feral/exotic animals and their impacts on the cultural and natural resources of VINP.

Boating Outreach (\$9,000): Develop and distribute instructional and cautionary materials to instruct boat operators, particularly of small powerboats, where and how to anchor in the waters of VI National Park and the Monument.

Historic Structures Preservation through Computer Graphics (\$15,000): Support and provide logistics to begin developing 3-D computer models of the Park's historic structures.

Parks and Classrooms (\$8,000): Provide small grants to assist teachers in St. John schools to creatively incorporate the Park in class studies, and support transportation costs to facilitate classes to participate in VINP programs.

Learn to Swim (\$1,500): Provide equipment and materials for free swimming lessons for children during the summer school break. Park staff & volunteers conduct the lessons at Trunk Bay.

Members wishing more information, or wishing to become involved with any of these projects, are welcome to come by the office or call. We invite members who are particularly interested in one of these projects to consider being a special sponsor of the project. Please contact Karen for more information.

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

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

Upcoming Friends Events!

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the upcoming Friend's events:

Annual Meeting

January 18th at 2:00 p.m. at the Tree Lizards Restaurant at Cinnamon Bay. Guest speaker will be Tom Kiernan, President of National Parks Conservation Association.

Family Fish Fry

The first Friends Family Fish Fry will be held January 31st at 1:00 p.m. at Oppenheimer Beach. A shuttle service will be provided from the NP maintenance area near Mongoose Junction.

Jewelry Trunk Show

Fine jewelry maker Bethany Savage will host a Trunk Show at Caneel Bay, February 26-27 to benefit Friends. Beautifully crafted gold and white gold pieces will be available for sale.

Friend's Gala Event

Due to logistical difficulties, the Friends' Fine Dining Progressive Dinner will take on a new form. The date remains the same, March 27th, so please keep that date available for an elegant gala event. More details will be forthcoming as we confirm the venue.

Beach-to-Beach Power Swim

On Sunday May 30th, Friends will host its first annual Beach-to-Beach Power Swim. The race will consist of two courses: a short course from Maho to Cinnamon, about 1-1/4 miles; and, a long course from Maho to Hawksnest, about 4 miles. You can compete in the long course as an individual or as part of a 3-person team. Swimmers assisted by snorkel and/or fins may also compete.



President's Message *By Joe Kessler*

I am pleased to be able to share this edition of the Friends *Tidings* with all of our neighbors on St. John as well, of course, with all of our members. We hope that you all find this newsletter interesting and useful. If you are not a member, as you learn more about us you may wish to

join the organization – I would be pleased to welcome you as a “friend”.

A lot has happened in the last few months; probably the most notable is the arrival of the new VI National Park superintendent, Art Frederick. We introduce him to you in the profile inside and he presents some of his thoughts and ideas in the Superintendent's column “News from VINP”. I hope that you get the opportunity to meet him personally and welcome him to St. John.

As you know, the superintendent's job is not an easy one, and if we want Art Frederick to be successful in effectively managing the Park and solving the problems that confront it, we all have to help – in an open, constructive and flexible manner. I believe that you will find Art committed to improving the Park although he will undoubtedly face some of the same challenges his predecessors did in making improvements here – improvements mean change and folks are generally resistant to change. As you think about what you can do to help, please consider the following:

- Change takes time and we have to give the in-coming superintendent a sufficient grace period – a honeymoon, if you will. These are complex issues; to fully understand them, let alone deal with them, takes time.

- We have to understand what things can be changed and what cannot be changed and then focus on what is possible. We have to appreciate that the National Park Service's mandate makes a number of issues non-negotiable and despite their real or perceived “wrongness” they will not be changed. Again, we need to concentrate on what is “doable”.

- Supporters of the Park need to be more vocal and generally better at showing public support. Public meetings are best attended by critics and those with “issues” and this possibly gives a false impression. Please get out there and show your support.

So, let's all work together in making VI National Park even better! Aside from the people of St. John, it is VINP that makes our island so special – and most importantly, it is what will keep it so special.

And to our members, **Thank You** once again for your continued support. It is you that 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 – **our Park needs you, now more than ever!**

Friends of 
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NATIONAL PARK**

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