



Friends' president Joe Kessler with David Rockefeller Jr. and VINP Superintendent Art Frederick

Friends 2006 Annual Meeting

Noted conservation philanthropist, David Rockefeller Jr. presented the keynote address at the Friends of Virgin Islands National Park's 2006 Annual Meeting. Held January 22nd at T'ree Lizard's Restaurant at Cinnamon Bay, more than 200 people turned out to hear the nephew of Laurance S. Rockefeller share his perspective of the future of our nation's National Parks.

Recognizing the plight of our nation's most treasured places, Mr. Rockefeller underscored the need for government and non-government entities to work together to establish effective partnerships that would foster an open atmosphere of trust, communication, and cooperation to accomplish our common goals in protecting our parks.

Business Accomplished at the Annual Meeting

Board nominee, Sam Hall was presented to the members in attendance and voted onto the Friends' board of directors for a two-year term.

Friends of Virgin Islands National Park Update

Friends' president Joe Kessler gave an overview of the past year's program accomplishments, including a new 3-year strategic plan and an active advocacy campaign on behalf of Maho Bay. Kessler also noted that \$400,000 was invested in various projects and programs in the Park last year. In addition, Kessler discussed the challenges the Friends face in 2006, including increasing membership and volunteer opportunities, and meeting an ambitious annual budget goal of \$772,000.

State of the Park Address

Virgin Islands National Park Superintendent Art Frederick recapped the Park's accomplishments and gave a status report on the North Shore Road rehabilitation project. Frederick also indicated the General Management Plan had been approved by the National Park Service, and is available for public review. He also made note of the many activities and events that will be occurring throughout the year in celebration of VI National Park's 50th anniversary.

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2006 Seminar Series

We are already well into the Friends 2006 Seminar Series, which began January 14th with the Turtle Adventure Sail to Buck Island, St. Thomas. Seminar participants sailed from Charlotte Amalie to "Turtle Cove" on the Wildlife Refuge of Buck Island to snorkel with the many Green and Hawksbill sea turtles who have made Turtle Cove their permanent home. During the sail, guests gathered on the catamaran's fore-deck to hear park ranger Sheri Caseau give a lecture on sea turtles. As soon as the boat dropped its sails, the first Green turtle was already spotted! The seminar was a huge hit, and one of many new seminars for this year's series.

Other new and exciting additions to the Series include Explore Susannaberg Ruins, Coral World Boat Trip, Beach Cat Adventure Sail, Caneel Bay-50 Years, Salt Pond Ecology, Video Workshop, Traditional West Indian Cuisine, and Bio/Geological Shoreline Walk.

Explore Susannaberg Ruins was another popular seminar. On January 22nd, historian David Knight and host Ronnie Jones teamed up to provide visitors a glimpse into what life on Susannaberg Estate was



Ronnie Jones points at the windmill on his family's estate during the Explore Susannaberg Ruins seminar

like in the Danish Colonial Period from 1717 to 1917. Seminar attendees were also treated to memories of Ronnie Jones' youth and life on the Estate during the 1940s and 50s, when Ronnie's grandfather, Neptune Richards owned the land. Although the weather did not cooperate, the 38 in attendance were not discouraged. A highlight was waiting out a passing shower huddled in the Estate's windmill, which is, according to David, one of the most original structures on the island due to its lack of stabilization attempts.

Friends members receive discounted rates, and kids 12 and under receive 50% off all seminars with the exception of boat trips. Stop by the Friends office or visit our website at www.friendsvinp.org for a more complete seminar schedule. Space is limited so sign up today by calling (340) 779-4940!

**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 •

Carabana Theater Presents: "Distant Voices"

Please join us for the latest production of the Carabana Ensemble Theater Company, "Distant Voices," a dramatic presentation of Caribbean slave narratives. This weekly play will run every Thursday at 7:30 pm from Jan. 12–Apr. 27 at the Cinnamon Bay Amphitheater. This theatrical performance is free and open to the public.

SCA Summer Trail Crew Opportunities

The Friends is seeking students from the Virgin Islands to participate in a month-long summer trail crew program in conjunction with the Student Conservation Association. This is a one of a kind opportunity to live and work in Virgin Islands National Park on St. John maintaining hiking trails. Crew positions (ages 17–20) and crew leader positions (ages 21–25) available. Call Kristen for more information at (340) 779-4940.

Friends T-Shirts More Accessible

Big Planet, located in Mongoose Junction, is now carrying our "Circle of Friends" t-shirts! All proceeds go to the Friends.

2006 Scholarship Program

The Friends Annual Scholarship Program is once again being offered. The purpose of the scholarship is to encourage study among Virgin Islanders at the university level in fields related to marine biology or natural resource management and protection. The scholarships will be in the amount of \$1000 per academic year, and will continue through the senior year. Contact Kristen for an application and more information on eligibility requirements.

Seeking Summer Intern

If you or someone you know is interested in spending 8–10 weeks working for the Friends, please let us know! We're looking for an enthusiastic and creative student who is entering their junior or senior year of college and has a particular interest in environmental science, conservation, or environmental education. Accommodations at Maho Bay Camps and a modest stipend are provided. Please send resumes to intern@friendsvinp.org, or contact Kristen for more information at (340) 779-4940.

Eco-Camps!

Attention parents, Summer Eco-Camps are almost here! The Friends is again sponsoring environmental summer camps for children ages 8–16. These 3 day/2 night camps take place at the VI Environmental Resource Station at Lameshur Bay, and will introduce kids to the wonders of our island's ecosystems. Eco-Camps are free of charge to U.S. Virgin Islands students. Please call VIERS to register (340) 776-6721.

From the Superintendent



Greetings Friends of Virgin Islands National Park!

A few weeks ago, I made a presentation to the National Park Service Director and Deputy Director on the General Management Plans (GMP) for the Virgin Islands National Park and Coral Reef National Monument. Prior to holding public meetings where Alternatives and Management Prescriptions

would be presented to the public, the GMP presentation must be approved at the Washington level. The meeting took about an hour, which included a short question and answer session. They were pleased with the material and the GMP presentation for both units was approved. This was a huge hurdle in the GMP planning process and now we can move forward with this important park project.

Sometime during the period of mid March to early April, the GMP Planning Team will have a series of public meetings. Our intentions are to have one meeting on St. Thomas and similar meetings in Cruz Bay and Coral Bay on St. John. We will primarily be presenting the Zones that have been established and the type of activities that will occur within those Zones. The Zones are as follows: Visitor Contact and Operations Zone, Resource Protection Zone, Nature and Heritage Discovery Zone and the Backcountry Experience Zone. After the public meetings, there will be a 30 day comment period. A website will be made available for those of you who would like to comment via email. You will also be able to review the Plans from this website. We are requesting that, if possible, you attend the public meetings as direct dialog is important. However, if you are unable to attend a public meeting, please review the Plans on the website and comment on the Plans during the public comment period.

As always, I thank you for your continued support of the Virgin Islands National Park and I look forward to working with you during 2006.

Art Frederick,
VINP Superintendent

Friends 2006 Annual Meeting

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Awards

Tribute was paid to the late **David Denny** for his dedication to the Annaberg Docent Program. His wife, Pat Denny accepted the Friends' Volunteer of the Year award on his behalf.

Also recognized for her volunteer efforts was **Midori Buchanan**, who received the Park's Volunteer of the Year award.

This year, VINP Chief of Resource Management, **Rafe Boulon** was awarded the Park Partnership award for embodying and supporting the spirit of partnership and collaboration that is essential to the relationship between VI National Park and the Friends.

Lastly, Virgin Islands Delegate to Congress and last year's keynote speaker, Donna Christensen also attended the meeting and gave an impromptu update on the recent attempt to change the National Park Service mandate.



New Limited Edition 50th Anniversary Commemorative Plate!

In honor of V.I. National Park's 50th Anniversary, we are offering limited edition commemorative logo license plates. Get your plate today and show your support by helping the Park celebrate its 50th year!

Personalized plates are \$105. **Serial numbered plates** are \$55.

Call or stop by the Friends office, (340) 779-4940, to purchase your commemorative plate.

Your contribution to Friends of V.I. National Park is tax deductible.

Friends of
VIRGIN ISLANDS
NATIONAL PARK

Friends Proud to Announce 2005-2006 Park Study Grant Recipients

Friends' Park Study Grant program was designed to encourage St. John teachers to utilize V.I. National Park in their teaching. Grant funding provides students with Park related experiences both in and outside of the classroom. Activities supported by this program are intended to familiarize students with the Park, and help them develop a greater appreciation for its natural and cultural resources. This year, Friends sponsored five Park Study Grants for the 2005-2006 school year.

Two of these grants went to Julius Spruave School teachers, Ms. Mary Tyler and Ms. Jolie Meyrovitz, to support their fourth grade Park Study Grant projects. Retractable classroom maps were purchased for Ms. Tyler's project "How Does Our National Park Compare to National



Ms. Tyler's 4th grade class pose in front of their classroom's new retractable maps

Parks Around the World?" Her students are studying mangrove ecosystems in V.I. National Park; they are learning about the geographical characteristics required to support mangrove growth and determining other locations around the world where these characteristics exist.

Ms. Jolie's project "Discovery of Plants and Animals of the Virgin Islands" is intended to teach students about native plants and animals through in-class research, planting, and experimenting with plant growth con-

ditions. These activities will be followed by direct observation during a guided hike with a park ranger along the Lind Point Trail.

Mrs. Daisy Callwood of St. John Methodist Preschools received a grant for her project "Animals in Our Environment." Through the use of classroom safe science specimens and activity kits, preschoolers will learn to identify animals and classify living things by their physical attributes. The students will then utilize their identification skills during a park ranger guided nature and seashore walk.

The St. John School on Gift Hill received two grants thanks to project proposals submitted by Mr. Jim Willen and Mrs. Kathleen Cooke. Mr. Jim's high school chemistry class received funds to support "The Nocturnal Entomology of the USVI." The students will photograph and identify nocturnal insects attracted to black light at two locations, one within Park boundaries and the other outside of the Park.

Mrs. Kathleen's eleventh and twelfth graders taking marine biology at the St. John School on Gift Hill will take part in a project called "Marine Biology and Seagrass Bed Survey." After extensive research and guest lectures by park marine biologists, the students will conduct in depth marine surveys, focusing on collecting data on fish and coral species at three different locations within the Park. The data will be collected using REEF fish kits and identification books, and later will be correlated and compiled into a booklet.

The Friends is proud to support these projects and appreciates the teacher's efforts to utilize the Park and it's resources in educating our youth. In doing so they are helping to develop and reinforce a conser-

vation ethic in St. John students, and familiarize St. John's youth with their island's precious resources. The Friends is still accepting Park Study Grant applications. Please contact Kristen at 779-4940 for more information.

Friends' Rang In the New Year in Elegant Fashion

This is a special year for Virgin Islands National Park as we celebrate its 50th anniversary. We began this historic year with a New Year's Eve gala hosted by Jim & Debbie Hayes at their beautiful villa Isla Vista high above Cruz Bay.

Indeed an enchanting evening of fine dining, fantastic music, incredible views, French champagne, and truffles, we launched the anniversary celebrations in "F. Scott Fitzgerald style", while raising money to fund natural resource protection and cultural preservation projects and programs in Virgin Islands National Park.



Our thanks go out to our gracious hosts Jim & Debbie, and a special thank you to all of our guests, including a special guest appearance by Kenny Chesney, who joined us New Year's Eve to celebrate this occasion and support Virgin Islands National Park.

There are many hands that make an event such as this so extraordinary. We thank the many volunteers, artists, and companies that helped us put together such a special evening. We could not have done it without their involvement.

Thank You for Your Support

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| American Paradise Real Estate | Kaleidoscope Video & K2 Video |
| Anne Marie Weddings | Kat Sowa |
| Bajo el Sol Gallery | kaze design |
| Beauty in Balance | La Tapa |
| Bellows | Lani Clark |
| Blue Palm Jewelry | Larry Lipsky |
| Blue Tang Yacht Charters | Liz Ford |
| Bougainvillea Shops | Mary Tomas |
| Caneel Bay Resort | Matt Horbat |
| Cape Air | Palm Jewelers |
| Caravan Gallery | R&I Patton |
| Coconut Coast Studio | Rose Cleveland |
| Cruz Bay Canines, Cats & Critters | St. John Ice Co. |
| Donald Schnell Studio | The Best of Both Worlds |
| Fabric Mill | The Canvas Factory |
| George Hollander | The Clothing Studio |
| Health Care Connection | The Gallery Inn |
| Hurricane Alley | The Mail Center |
| Ivanne Farr | The Westin Resort St. John |
| Jeff Rocha | Tim & Patty Tacquard |
| Joan Dallos | West Indies Co. |
| Joy & Andy Stillman | Ziya Neema |

Upcoming Friends Events!

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

2006 Beach-to-Beach Power Swim

Plans are coming along swimmingly for the Memorial Day weekend Beach-to-Beach Power Swim! Mark your calendars for May 28, 2006 and plan to join us for this challenging open water swim in the pristine and protected waters of VI National Park.

There are three courses to choose from, all of which start at Maho Bay Beach. Swim to Cinnamon Bay, swim to Trunk Bay, or go all the way to Hawksnest Bay!

Advance registration begins March 1st until May 14th, and is \$25 per participant. Swimmers can register on-line at our website www.friendsvinp.org, call us at the Friends' office, or stop into Connections on St. John, and Endurance Sports on St. Thomas and St. Croix. See our website for more details and course map.

Earth Day Celebration

Earth Day is April 22, 2006! Help us celebrate by cleaning your adopted beach on the morning of Earth Day, and then joining us that afternoon for an Earth Day Environmental Fair in the Park! Kids will learn about coral reefs, native plants, and recycling, and enjoy favorite games such as the "Queen Termite Game" and "Marine Jeopardy." Take part in the fair's cleanup competition to see who collected the most trash. If you would like to adopt a beach or trail, or just lend a hand on the morning of the clean-up, contact Kristen at 779-4940. Watch our website for details!

50th Anniversary Events

Dec. 1, 2006 – Virgin Islands National Park Commemorative Program
Dec. 2, 2006 – Friends of the Park Gala at Caneel Bay Resort

Call the Friends (340) 779-4940, or visit our website for more information on these events.

Chairman's Message By John Fuller, Chairman

Filling the space normally devoted to the President's Message is bittersweet. Our President, Joe Kessler is currently in "the States" undergoing treatment for lymphoma and asked me to fill in for him this issue. I know you join me in wishing him successful treatment and a speedy return to St. John. Cheery cards and letters may be sent to Joe via Friends.

I am happy to report that we are already in high gear to help VI National Park celebrate its 50th anniversary. We started a successful kick-off with a gala on New Years Eve. As you can see from the events listed above, we have a busy year ahead. Commemorative events include the naming of a new park boat "In the Line of Duty," establishing an interpretive philanthropic garden at the Visitor's Center, hosting a research symposium in November to highlight research in the Park, participating in a day-long commemorative celebration on Dec. 1, followed by the 50th Anniversary Gala at Caneel Bay Resort on Dec. 2. I'm sure that I will see many of you at these events.

I am excited by the response we have seen to the 2006 Seminar Series thus far and hope that it is indicative of the support yet to come. Work has already begun on the 3rd Annual Power Swim, which I am proud to say has become a significant athletic event in the region. Our fund raising efforts toward completing the Resource Protection Mooring Project in the Coral Reef National Monument have been successful and we will install the last 46 hurricane mooring slots on schedule.

There are many additional projects we face, and thanks to the continued support of you, our members and partners, we are able to face them with confidence. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank you all for your support and assistance, and trust that VI National Park will remain one of your philanthropic priorities even in light of increasing demands on your generosity. Together we do make a difference.



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