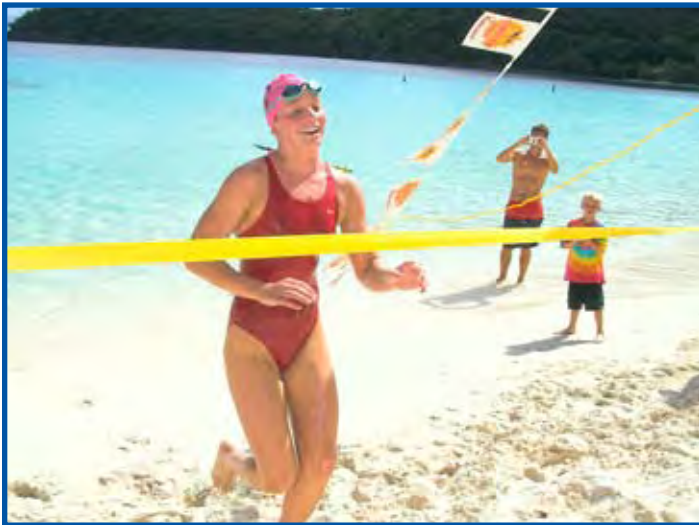


Photo Courtesy of Lincoln Berry



Annie Myrvang crossing the long course finish line.



Earth Day Fair attendees.

## Girl Power Rules at the 3rd Annual Friends Beach-to-Beach Power Swim!

With an overcast sky and flat water, a record 138 swimmers lined up at Maho Bay beach to participate in the 3rd Annual Friends Beach-to-Beach Power Swim over Memorial Day weekend.

15 year-old Annie Myrvang from St. Croix was the overall winner with a time of one hour eighteen minutes and seven seconds (1:18:07). Jack Leavitt, also from St. Croix, followed in second place with a time of one hour twenty minutes forty-seven seconds (1:20:47); and 3rd place was Timothy Fitzpatrick from Vienna, VA with a time of one hour twenty-one minutes forty-nine seconds (1:21:49). Please see our website at [www.friendsvinp.org](http://www.friendsvinp.org) for a complete list of race results.

It's a family affair! A family of three won the overall spot in the relay race. Diana Hall and Tomas Gonzalez from St. John, VI won the relay race with a time of 2:01:14. At the transition points, their relay included the careful hand-off of the couple's infant daughter, along with the car keys to get to the next transition point, and the baby's bottle... now that's teamwork!

This event is possible only with the support of all of our sponsors, and we thank them all for their contributions. Major sponsors include; St. John Insurance Agency, Mongoose Junction, Scotia Bank, Alfredo's Landscaping, Theodore Tunick Insurance, Hawaiian Tropic, NBC-WVGN TV14, Buzz Radio, American Paradise Real Estate, Starfish Market, and Maho Bay Camps.

Another important component required to make this event work, are the people that get out of bed early on Sunday morning to lend a hand. It takes more than 60 volunteers to staff this event; we can't thank them enough for their time, talent and energy! We truly appreciate everyone's efforts to make this a safe, fun and challenging event.

## Friends Celebrates Earth Day!

Thank you to the students and teachers who attended Friends of VI National Park's 1st Annual Earth Day Environmental Fair. More than 400 students from Guy Benjamin School, St. John School on Gift Hill, Methodist Pre-School, St. John Christian Academy, and Julius E. Sprauve School attended the fair. Students learned essential ecological lessons and useful tips from experts in the fields of agriculture, recycling, and environmental education, while visiting various booths with interactive and captivating demonstrations.

There were a number of volunteers that made this event happen, and we thank them for their time and effort. We also want to thank the representatives from Alfredo's Landscaping, Animal Care Center, Cooperative Extension of UVI, Department of Agriculture, IGBA, Maho Bay Camps, National Park Service, St. John Recycling Forum, VIERS, Virgin Forests Restoration, and VI Waste Management Authority – all were on hand to teach our youth about the importance of taking care of our fragile island environment.

A special thank you to VI Audubon Society, Cool Signs, Pan Dragons, Peter Alter, St. John Ice Company, TLC Pet Supply, Transportation Services, Varlack Ventures, VI Fire Department; and the cookie and juice box donors: Baked in the Sun, Cost-U-Less, Deli Grotto, Dolphin Market, and Pine Peace Market.

Friends continued its celebration of Earth Day, sponsoring beach and trail cleanups throughout the weekend. Participants of the Friends' *Continued on Page 3*

**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 •

### Distant Voices

This year's Carabana Ensemble Theater Co. performance, *Distant Voices*, a dramatic presentation of Caribbean Slave Narratives, was a hit! The performance ran weekly from January 12th–April 27th at the Cinnamon Bay Amphitheater. Thank you to our sponsor Tropico Management on St. Croix, because of their support, admission was free to all.

### Summer Eco-Camps

Attention parents, Summer Eco-Camps are 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. Sign up now... Space is limited!

### 2006 Seminar Series a Success!

Due to the many knowledgeable and devoted seminar instructors and generous boat owners, Friends' 2006 Seminar Series was a great success. Over 430 people attended the 27 seminars, raising over \$14,000 that will help support environmental and cultural programs in the Park.

Special thanks to: Arawak Expeditions, Guy Benjamin, Rafe Boulon, *Breath*, Eddie Bruce, *Calypso*, Caneel Bay, Sheri Caseau, Rob Crane, Dr. Barry Devine, Eleanor Gibney, Kelley Hunter, David Knight, Low Key Watersports, Maho Bay Camps, Jeff Miller, Michael Milne, Don Near, Chuck Pishko, Dr. Caroline Rogers, Dr. Gary Ray, *Sadie Sea*, Steve Simonsen, Deanna Somerville, Elroy Sprauve, Joyce Sprauve, Carrie Stengel, Ms. Vie's Snack Shack, Rob Waara, Ken Wild, and Han Winogrand. We couldn't have done it without all of you!

Help to make next year's series even more successful! Planning starts in the early fall, so if you have any suggestions for changes or additions, please call us. We would be happy to accommodate your interests.

### Seas of Change

Friends was proud to host the premiere screening of "*Seas of Change: Spawning Aggregations in the Virgin Islands*" June 1st at the Cinnamon Bay Amphitheater. This documentary film, created by U.V.I., The Nature Conservancy, The Ocean Conservancy, and Friday's Films, tells the story of VI fish spawning grounds, the struggle of fishermen to preserve their livelihoods, and the scientists racing to understand how these huge schools of spawning fish can restore and maintain fish populations across the Caribbean.

If you were unable to attend the screening, and missed the film's public debut on TV2 June 8th, the Friends have extra copies of the video we'd be happy to lend you.

### Preserving Historic Structures

Within the boundaries of VI National Park lie the remains of the most complete representation of the Danish Colonial Period and post-emancipation era including plantations, forts, military barracks, and other structures. Only a few of these ruins of buildings have been stabilized due to the prohibitive cost of preserving historic structures. In March 2006, the University of Maine, in partnership with the Friends, VI Humanities Council and the National Park Service, continued work developing a three-dimensional computer imaging model that offers an alternative, "virtual", cost-effective form of preservation. They continued their work on Leinster Bay ruins, which began during their first visit in 2004. You can view the results of this project at [www.umaine.edu/set/met/virginislands.htm](http://www.umaine.edu/set/met/virginislands.htm).

## From the Superintendent



### VI National Park Welcomes Summer!

Last week, the summer season arrived and so did a number of youths, who are participating in programs in Virgin Islands National Park this summer. One of the programs is the Student Conservation Association (SCA), which is funded through Friends of VI National Park, and is comprised of students from the US mainland, and the Virgin Islands. The SCA is a national organization that connects young people to the natural environment by working on projects that require hands-on service to the land.

The other group is the Youth Conservation Corp (YCC), which primarily consists of youths recruited from St. John and St. Thomas, ranging in age from 14–18. This year, the Park hired 8 YCC enrollees who will work in the Park for 8 weeks. The YCC is another national program, which focuses on employing local youths in work projects that will provide them with exposure to environmental education, and help foster an appreciation for and understanding of the natural environment.

The Park also received a grant from the National Park Foundation that will fund the services of a college sophomore from the University of Calif. at San Diego. This student will assist the Park in developing our Junior Ranger Program; a program that is designed to teach children ages 12–16 about the natural and cultural resources around them through fun, hands on activities, such as scavenger hunts, word searches, and nature hikes. It is an excellent program that is being implemented throughout the Park Service. The Park and the Friends intend to implement this program in local schools next year.

We are delighted to have these, and other groups of young people working in the Park this summer. Some of the work is grueling, such as the trail maintenance, removal of vegetation from historic ruins, and maintaining grounds at historic landscapes. But, on the other hand, the youths will find that this will be an experience that they will remember for the remainder of their lives, and one that will certainly be rewarding and educational.

Art Frederick,  
VINP Superintendent

## Living Art



...the spectacular photographic essay of St. John, is the perfect gift from, or to, those who love St. John and Virgin Island National Park. This 200-page coffee table book (now with improved readability), by renowned St. John photographer Steve Simonsen, celebrates the natural beauty of St. John in 182 stunning photographs.

A PORTION OF THE PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF ALL BOOKS BENEFITS THE VI NATIONAL PARK AND HELPS TO PRESERVE THE SAME NATURAL BEAUTY THE BOOK CELEBRATES. PLEASE CALL, COME BY THE FRIENDS OFFICE, OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR ORDERING INFORMATION.

# Happy 50th Anniversary Virgin Islands National Park!

On December 1, 1956 VI National Park became our nation's 29th National Park. Laurance S. Rockefeller along with territory leaders, local residents and committed associates gave form to this Park, and dedicated it to our nation with a celebration in Cruz Bay.

Dec. 1, 2006 marks a significant milestone in the history of VI National Park as it celebrates its 50th anniversary. In honor of this special occasion, VI National Park along with Friends of VI National Park will celebrate in a similar fashion by hosting a community Commemorative Day Celebration on Dec. 1, 2006 with a BBQ at the National Park Ballfield in Cruz Bay. National Park Service director Fran Mainella will join us as our honored guest and keynote speaker.

This event is open to the public and all residents are invited and encouraged to attend to celebrate this historic day.

In the works are plans to create a philanthropy exhibit and garden in front of the Visitor's Center in Cruz Bay, which will document the history of philanthropy in our nation's National Parks, and the important role that it has played in the establishment of VI National Park. A fund raising effort to support this project is currently underway, and based on outcome, completion is scheduled for late Nov., in time for the garden to be dedicated on Dec. 1st at the Commemorative Day Celebration.

Following the community BBQ, festivities will continue at Caneel Bay Resort with a gala event that will round out what has been a year-long celebration commemorating this important milestone. For more information about these events contact Karen Brady at the Friends' office (340) 779-4940.

## Greetings from Friends' Summer Intern Audrey Penn



As my college career came to a close, Kristen Maize, Friends' program manager notified me that I had received the 2006 summer intern position with Friends of VI Nat'l Park. I was truly excited due to the variety of projects Kristen had planned for me. As any graduate knows, it's good to finally know what your plans are when you leave school, since that is certainly the most frequently asked question. My acceptance of the intern position assured me that returning to my island home was going to be both educational and exciting.

I graduated from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, with a degree in Anthropology and a minor in African and African American studies. During my college career I was fortunate enough to travel to Merida, Mexico on an archeology trip, and also spent a semester abroad in Sydney, Australia. In my travels I met a variety of people, which I enjoyed since I find it easy to get along with all ethnicities. In fact, one of the things that excites me the most about working with the Friends is the diverse group of donors and volunteers that are involved with the organization.

I hit the ground running on my first week as an intern; I began just days prior to the 2006 Beach-to-Beach Power Swim, one of the Friends' busiest events of the year. It was great to be welcomed, and fit right into such a well-organized team. For the remainder of the summer I will primarily be helping with the SCA Trail Crew Program and Summer Eco-Camps at VIERS. I find both of these programs particularly exciting because they foster cultural exchanges between children with different backgrounds. I am sure my experience working with the Friends will be not only challenging, but culturally enriching as well.



Front row: Heather, Henrietta, Belinda, Barbara, Callum  
Back row: Dean, Jeff, Vincia, Shanya, and Katie

## SCA Summer Trail Crew Program

This is the sixth summer Friends of VI National Park has worked in partnership with Student Conservation Association (SCA) and VI National Park to sponsor a student trail crew for four weeks during the months of June and July. Friends' SCA Trail Crew Program provides students ages 16–19 with a unique outdoor experience repairing and maintaining hiking trails while living in VI National Park. Through this program, trail crew members are introduced to a variety of topics including outdoor work, camping and hiking skills, low impact outdoor living, and a basic cultural and ecological knowledge of the island.

This summer's crew consists of four VI students, from both St. Thomas and St. Croix, and two leaders from the continental U.S. At the request of the Park's Maintenance Dept., the crew has been clearing vegetation, building and repairing stone steps, repairing damaged drainage ditches, removing loose rock, and installing water bars on the Lameshur Bay Trail, Caneel Hill Trail, Cinnamon Bay Trail, Ram Head Trail and Reef Bay Trail. The effects of their work will reduce erosion to trails vulnerable to deterioration due to steep slopes, shallow topsoil, and severe rain.

In addition to learning about trail maintenance and developing an understanding of their role as responsible stewards of the environment, the students will learn important team building and leadership development skills living together at Cinnamon Bay Campground for the month. The crew's combination of local residents and non-Virgin Islanders also provides the participants with a unique and beneficial cross-cultural experience.

At the end of the four-week program, the Park will have between 6–8 miles of four of its most heavily utilized trails in safe and environmentally sound condition. Our National Parks continue to face severe maintenance challenges due to continued federal budget cuts. More and more, VI National Park relies on volunteer groups, like SCA, to help maintain the natural and cultural resources of the Park.

## Friends Celebrates Earth Day!

*(Continued from Page 1)*

Adopt-A-Beach/Trail program removed debris from their adopted beach/trail as part of an island-wide cleanup. Kudos to Fraser Drummond and company, Maho Bay Camps, St. John Brewers, St. John Land Sharks and St. John Phone Book, VI Audubon Society, and William Neill and Carla Cox for cleaning their adopted sites on Earth Day!

Mark your calendars! Friends will host the 2nd Annual Friends' Earth Day Environmental Fair on Friday, April 20, 2007. THINK GREEN!

## Upcoming Friends Events!

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

### December 1, 2006:

- Virgin Islands National Park Commemorative Day Celebration
- Friends of Virgin Islands National Park Gala at Caneel Bay Resort

Please see inside story about these exciting events. Contact Karen Brady at the Friends' office (340) 779-4940 for more information.



## New Limited Edition 50th Anniversary Commemorative Plate!

In honor of **VI 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 VI National Park is tax deductible.*

## President's Message *By Joe Kessler*



Greetings! Please let me begin by extending Cristina and my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all of you who sent us cards and e-mails, have telephoned, and have sent so many positive thoughts. As we confront my health challenges, your support and encouragement has touched us deeply and it has certainly contributed to my recovery. Thank you.

The Friends has been very busy over the last several months supporting projects and activities to assist VI National Park. During the summer we turn much of our attention to projects focusing on children, and specifically work to fulfill our mandate to help nurture the next generation of conservation minded citizens in the Virgin Islands. The hallmark project is our Eco-Camp program in partnership with VIERS. Due to the extraordinary generosity of our donors, we are pleased to be able to provide 150 young Virgin Islanders the opportunity to spend three days in the Park learning about marine and terrestrial ecology. Additionally, we sponsored a trail crew in partnership with the Student Conservation Association. The trail crew consists of eight young people,

who work in the Park for a month repairing popular hiking trails while learning important leadership and conservation skills.

During the school year we support a number of other education based activities. We host a day-long environmental fair to celebrate Earth Day. This year the fair was attended by over 400 school children on St. John. Each year we also provide: grants to teachers in St. John schools so that they may undertake projects involving Park resources as part of their classroom studies, grants to facilitate school trips in the Park, and scholarships to university students studying the natural sciences.

Our goal is to develop within young Virgin Islanders a conservation ethic and an understanding of the natural world. We are confident that these projects and activities will fulfill this mandate. The Virgin Islands and the Park deserve nothing less, for these students will be the future leaders and citizens of the islands, as well as the stewards of the environment and the Park.

I thank you for your generous support of these and other Friends' projects. Please continue to keep VI National Park as one of your philanthropic priorities. I hope to see you back in the Park in the not too distant future!

Friends of   
**VIRGIN ISLANDS  
NATIONAL PARK**

P.O. Box 811  
St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands 00831  
Phone: 340-779-4940 • Fax: 340-693-9973  
[www.friendsvinp.org](http://www.friendsvinp.org)

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