

Legislature advances bill to check Mapp's power

Governor's top officials skip hearing as they are off-island, in another meeting, say it's outside their purview, or just don't show **Page 2**

87th year, No. 24314

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 2018

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DAILY NEWS



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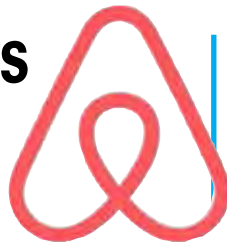


Daily News photo by BRIAN O'CONNOR

Early voters fill out ballots Tuesday on St. Thomas. So far, 1,560 ballots have been cast on St. Thomas, 963 ballots have been cast on St. Croix, and 54 ballots have been cast on St. John, according to Elections Supervisor Caroline Fawkes. Early primary voting, first held in the territory for the 2014 election cycle, concludes today. **Page 5**

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Committee votes to curb emergency powers

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — A Senate committee has voted to approve a measure that would impose limits on Gov. Kenneth Mapp's emergency powers.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Tregenza Roach and co-sponsored by numerous other senators, now moves from the Government Affairs, Veterans, Energy and Environmental Protection Committee, chaired by Sen. Sammuell Sanes, to the Rules and Judiciary Committee.

If approved, Bill 32-0185 would require Mapp — or any governor — to seek renewals of a declared State of Emergency after a first declaration and single renewal, for a total of 60 days. Subsequent renewals would require approval by the V.I. Legislature, unless the Legislature failed to act, at which point, the State of Emergency would automatically renew.

Out of seven testifiers, most of them executive branch officials, only VITEMA Deputy Director of Planning and Preparedness Denise Lewis was available for questions. The following testifiers did not show:

- Robert Graham, executive director, Virgin Islands Housing Authority, who offered no explanation for his absence.

- VITEMA Director Mona Barnes, who was said to be off-island.

- Adjutant Gen. Deborah Howell of the Virgin Islands National Guard, who said she would not testify because the bill was outside her purview.

- V.I. Property and Procurement Commissioner Lloyd Bough Jr., who sent a letter saying he was in a Cabinet meeting on St. Croix.

- V.I. Licensing and Consumer Affairs Commissioner Devin Carrington, who gave no reason for his absence.

- FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Bill Vogel, who said the bill was



Daily News photo by BRIAN O'CONNOR

Members of the Government Affairs, Veterans, Energy and Environmental Protection Committee voted in favor of a bill to curb the emergency powers of the governor. Senators Tregenza Roach, left, Alicia Hansen, Marvin Blyden, Janette Millin Young and Jean Forde voted in favor. Sen. Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly was recorded as absent. Sen. Sammuell Sanes also voted in favor.

a local matter, and said the Federal Emergency Management Agency could only testify before the U.S. Congress.

Lewis testified that extending the bill would provide continued access to federal funding. Requiring approval could delay emergency decision-making, Lewis said.

"It is the agency's position that placing another level of approval to extend the State of Emergency during a time of crisis may delay the ability to make extremely critical decisions on behalf of the residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands," she said. "The State of Emergency is a factor in many of the decision-making of our federal partners, thus rendering additional benefits to the territory."

At least one component of federal funding isn't dependent on approval.

FEMA spokesman Eric Adams said last week the agency's funding will remain available regardless of an ongoing disaster declaration in the territory.

Lewis said she'd been able to renew the Emergency Medical Assistance Compact prescription benefits as a result of the program, meaning medicine would be available to medical evacuees now on the mainland.

Both Lewis's prepared testimony and Howell's letter contained exact portions word-for-word.

"It is the governor who is responsible for meeting the dangers to the territory and the people presented by emergencies or other major disasters," Lewis and Howell both said.

Senators on the committee — many of whom are involved in gubernatorial campaigns — say the

What the V.I. Code says

According to V.I. Code, in a State of Emergency the governor may:
Suspend the provisions of any statute prescribing the procedures for conduct of territorial business, or the orders, rules, or regulations of any territorial agency.

Utilize all available resources of the territory.

Transfer the direction, personnel, or functions of territorial departments and agencies or units thereof.

Subject to any application requirements for compensation under section 1130 of this title, commandeer or utilize any private property.

Direct and compel the evacuation of all or a part of the population from any stricken or threatened area within the territory.

Prescribe routes, modes of transportation and destinations in connection with evacuation.

Control ingress and egress to and from an affected area, the movement of persons within the area and the occupancy of premises, including barges, boats, ships and other watercraft therein.

Suspend or limit the sale, dispensing, or transportation of alcoholic beverages, firearms, explosives, and combustibles, or any other materials deemed to be critical for the health and safety of the people of the Territory of the Virgin Islands.

Make provision for the availability and use of temporary emergency housing.

Through the Commissioner of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, take action necessary to freeze and maintain costs of goods and services to the public at a price level existing immediately prior to the Governor's proclamation of the state of emergency. Such price freeze shall include, but not be limited to, food items, water, beverages, health and medical care products, fuel, rents, construction goods and services, clothing, furnishings, and such other goods and services as are deemed appropriate under the circumstances presented.

Take any other action he deems necessary.

central issue isn't Mapp, but Mapp's exclusion of the Legislature from the recovery process.

"It's not about who is sitting in this chair," Sen. Jean Forde said. "It's about the next governor and the next governor and the next governor after that."

Sen. Marvin Blyden said requiring renewal would involve legislators in the process.

"As a senator during that difficult period of our history, and as the chair of the housing committee, I felt helpless in some ways, because many in-

dividuals looked toward myself and other senators in terms of information and assistance and at the same time we did not know much because we were not invited to meetings, et cetera," he said. "We had no clue really what was going on."

Senators Blyden, Forde, Roach, Alicia Hansen, Janette Millin Young, and Sanes voted in favor of the bill.

Sen. Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly, who attended the session earlier in the day, was recorded as absent for the vote.



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Airbnb, villas rise as hotels recover from storms

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Like any popular destination, the Virgin Islands relies on accommodations to attract tourists and sustain a thriving tourism industry. But with hurricanes Irma and Maria damaging many of the territory's most beloved hotels, the need to repair and ultimately revive the territory's most lucrative sector is urgent.

So believes V.I. Tourism Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty, who sat down this week with The Daily News to provide an update on accommodations territorywide.

Put simply, she said, "we don't have full restoration of our hotel product."

"Overall, the projections indicate we will not be at the level of 2016-17," she said. "In most cases, hotels are still having dialogue with insurance companies. Many of them are also looking at enhancements as they go through the phase of reopening. Do they reopen rebuilding what was there before or do they take this opportunity to enhance the product? What we're hearing is the properties are looking to enhance and become more competitive in the region."

An interesting trend in the interim has been the rise of the "sharing economy" via Airbnb and villa accommodations, both of which, according to Nicholson-Doty, have contributed to an upward trend in airlift.

"The availability of accommodations in the sharing economy has made it possible for many people to travel to the territory, especially dur-



Daily News photo by A.J. RAO

V.I. Tourism Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty, right, leads a staff meeting at the Tourism Department on Monday on St. Thomas. Nicholson-Doty said the rise of the "sharing economy" via Airbnb and villa accommodations has contributed to an upward trend in airlift to the territory.

“

The availability of accommodations in the sharing economy has made it possible for many people to travel to the territory, especially during our recovery period.

— V.I. Tourism Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty

ing our recovery period," Nicholson-Doty said. "Year-to-date, St. Thomas has received 10,200 visitors staying in Airbnb properties. St. John has re-

ceived 2,200 guests and 4,800 people have stayed in Airbnb locations in St. Croix."

Nicholson-Doty said the agreement the government has in place with Airbnb allows for the collection by Airbnb of the 12.5 percent Hotel Room Occupancy Tax on behalf of hosts and the subsequent remittance of those funds to the V.I. Internal Revenue Bureau.

In terms of traditional overnight

accommodations, such as hotels, bed and breakfasts, resorts and timeshares, there are approximately 1,050 rooms available on St. Thomas, nearly 150 rooms on St. John, and around 600 units available on St. Croix, according to Nicholson-Doty.

There also are approximately 600 villa units and 200 charter yachts available in the St. Thomas-St. John district and about 300 villa units on St. Croix, according to Nicholson-Doty.

"Bringing travelers to the USVI, both during our recovery and in the months and years to follow, is one of the department's highest priorities," she said. "By offering a variety of options we believe our visitors are able to make the decisions that suit them best."

Nicholson-Doty said the number of rooms available in the territory ultimately determines whether airlines will increase the frequency of their flights to the Virgin Islands and their overall air capacity. She said her department is meeting with airlines and providing monthly updates on what hotels have come on-line.

On St. Croix, airlift is above pre-storm levels, while on St. Thomas, officials expect airlift will be 65 percent to 75 percent restored by winter, Nicholson-Doty said.

Flights coming into St. Thomas have a weekly total capacity of 10,000 seats compared to 17,000 seats before the storms. Flights coming into St. Croix have a total capacity of more than 5,000 seats compared to approximately 4,500 before the storms, she said.

V.I. hotels at a glance

Open on St. Croix

- Arawak Bay The Inn at Salt River
- The Buccaneer
- Caravelle Hotel and Casino
- Chenay Bay Beach Resort
- Club Comanche Hotel St. Croix
- Cottages by the Sea
- The Fred
- Holger Danske Hotel
- Hotel on the Cay
- The Inn on Strand Street (formerly known as the Frederiksted Hotel)
- King Christian Hotel
- Kings Alley Hotel
- Mount Victory Camp Eco-Lounge
- The Palms at Pelican Cove
- Sand Castle on the Beach
- Sugar Beach Condo Resort

Closed or limited availability on St. Croix

- Club St. Croix Beach & Tennis Resort is hosting relief workers with limited availability for leisure visitors
- Colony Cove Beach Resort is hosting relief



Daily News file photo

Marriott's Frenchman's Cove on St. Thomas reopened on Feb. 16.

- workers with limited availability for leisure visitors
- Divi Carina Bay Resort & Casino is slated to reopen in June 2019
- Renaissance St. Croix Carambola Beach Resort and Spa anticipates reopening in the first quarter of 2019.
- Sugar Beach Condo Resort
- Tamarind Reef Resort is currently housing relief workers only. The property anticipates having availability for leisure guests by the end of the year.

Open on St. Thomas

- At Home in the Tropics Bed & Breakfast Inn
- Bellavista Bed & Breakfast
- Bellavista Scott Hotel
- Blue Sandcastle Villas
- Bolongo Bay
- Bunker Hill Hotel
- Emerald Beach Resort
- Flamboyant on the Bay Resort & Villas at Magens Point
- Galleon House
- The Green Iguana
- Villa Viento
- Lindbergh Bay Hotel and Villas
- The Mafolie Hotel
- Margaritaville
- Marriott's Frenchman's Cove
- Olga's Fancy
- Pavilions and Pools Villa Hotel
- Point Pleasant Resort
- Sapphire Beach Resort Condominiums
- Two Sandals by the Sea
- Secret Harbour Beach Resort
- Windward Passage Hotel

Closed or limited availability on St. Thomas

- Bluebeard's Castle Resort is scheduled to

reopen in 2020

- Marriott's Frenchman's Reef Beach Resort is closed until 2020.
- The Ritz-Carlton is scheduled to reopen in 2019
- Sugar Bay Resort and Spa

Open on St. John

- Gallows Point Resort
- Garden by the Sea
- Grande Bay Resort
- Sea Shore Allure
- St. John Inn
- Estate Lindholm

Closed or limited availability on St. John

- Caneel Bay
- Concordia Eco Resort
- Hotel Cruz Bay or the Cruz Bay Boutique Hotel has been housing relief workers but also has vacancies for leisure guests
- Samuel Cottages
- Serendip Vacation Condos
- The Inn at Tamarind Court
- Westin St. John Resort & Villas is scheduled to reopen in the first quarter of 2019

VINGN says Viya cut cables on purpose after storms

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — A government-owned telecommunications company has accused a private sector competitor of intentionally cutting its cables.

Mark McGibbon, the executive director of the Virgin Islands Next Generation Network, said Viya intentionally severed his network's fiber optic cables following hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Alvaro Pilar, CEO of Viya, said some fiber had been severed, but maintained it was the fault of a contractor, never intentional, and said his company had paid for the damage.

The testimony drew pointed questions from senators.

"Have you made any official charge against any commercial company?" Sen. Jean Forde asked.



VINGN Executive Director
Mark McGibbon

McGibbon told senators he'd called V.I. Attorney General Claude Walker.

"The investigation was conducted and concluded and the matter was set-



V.I. Legislature photos by BARRY LEERDAM
Viya CEO Alvaro Pilar

tled," McGibbon said. "Payments were made for damages."

Walker declined to release any documents on the investigation in an email to The Daily News, saying it was still ongoing.

"It was a contractor, but more importantly it was unintentional," Viya's Pilar said.

The exchange happened during testimony before the Government Affairs, Veterans, Energy and Environmental Protection Committee during discussion of Bill 32-0204, which would require government agencies to give private companies the opportunity to add communications conduits to public road projects at their cost.

McGibbon said allowing private companies like Viya to compete with VINGN's wholesale Internet model would put the agency out of business and invalidate federal and local funding investments in the \$125 million network. Allowing private companies to insert their cables into VINGN's conduits also



WAPA Executive Director
Lawrence Kupfer

could raise security concerns, and put federal recovery dollars at risk, McGibbon said.

"I respectfully submit that you do not want to return to the days when Virgin Islands telecommunications was run by a few private players at the expense of the community," he said. "In summary, I agree Bill 32-0204 appears to be a great bill on the surface, when the hood is lifted, a more comprehensive picture is presented."

Instead, McGibbon said senators should encourage Viya to become VINGN's customer.

McGibbon's defense of VINGN prompted bill sponsor St. Croix Sen. Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly to insinuate McGibbon was defending a government-run monopoly.

"It gives me great sorrow to sit here with you gentlemen and hear you say 'Force them to do business with me. I am better than him,'" she said. "Listen, I don't believe in monopolies. I don't support monopolies. I'm known for busting monopolies, and you are no

better than they."

Absent a way to include Viya conduits with federal recovery plans, the company would still move its cables underground more slowly and at customer expense, Pilar said.

"The only people that are going to be affected by that are the local Virgin Islanders," he said.

V.I. Water and Power Authority Executive Director Lawrence Kupfer said the utility is planning to build additional communications conduits as it prepares to put large sections of the transmission line underground. Federal officials had objected to specifically including Viya as part of the discussion, Kupfer said.

As WAPA places large sections of the utility's power grid underground, the utility plans to place two additional conduits underground for private sector communications.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has set aside roughly \$600 million in mitigation dollars for the utility, of which \$400 million is earmarked for burying lines, Kupfer said. If spare conduits have a specific company name attached to them, WAPA could potentially lose federal funding, Kupfer said.

But, a conduit that would be available to any company in the future has received preliminary FEMA approval, Kupfer said.

"If the requirements are promulgated as proposed, the authority would have to attempt funding through its own cash-strapped resources," he said.

Senators Forde, Tregenza Roach, Marvin Blyden, Alicia Hansen, and Jannette Millin Young voted to hold the bill in committee. Rivera-O'Reilly cast the lone opposing vote.



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Daily News Publishing Co. Inc. owned by VIDN Holdings, LLC publishes The Virgin Islands Daily News daily, except Sunday, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, at 9155 Estate Thomas, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, VI 00802. First class postage paid at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. U.S.V.I

USPS 144-180

POSTMASTER, send Form 3579, Notice of Address Change, to: Circulation Director, Daily News, 9155 Estate Thomas, St. Thomas, VI 00802.

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The Virgin Islands
DAILY NEWS

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Campaign events

The **Albert Bryan/Tregenza Roach** gubernatorial ticket will host campaign events this weekend in both districts.

A Night of Jazz with Albert and Tregenza and the music of Eljahie and Friends, with complimentary hors d'oeuvres, will be held on Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Bryan/Roach headquarters on St. Thomas.

A 10-Tastic Cricket Extravaganza will be held on Saturday at 4 p.m. and Sunday at 10 a.m. at the Ezra Fredericks Ball Park in Frydenhoj, St. Thomas. Competing teams include Dominica, St. Lucia, Windball Masters, and President XI. Admission is free.

Out with the Old and In with the New! will be held at Coconuts Night Club on Saturday at 9 p.m. in Estate

Paradise on St. Croix, featuring four DJ's. Admission is \$10.

For more information call **340-201-3418** or visit [facebook.com/bryanforgovernor](https://www.facebook.com/bryanforgovernor).

Senatorial candidate **Kenneth L. Gittens** is making a "Neighborhood Whistlestop" tour of St. Croix on Saturday. The islandwide tour is from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The committee to re-elect **Janelle K. Sarauw** presents Fried Fridays, with food, music and conversation on Aug. 3 at 6 p.m. at the Fort Christian parking lot on St. Thomas. The menu includes johnny cake for \$1, chicken wings for \$2 and fish starting at \$12, priced per size.

How to submit your campaign news

Attention candidates!

Send your campaign news and information for publication in The Daily News. Tips and updates about events and appearances can be sent via email to Elections@dailynews.vi.



Daily News photo by BRIAN O'CONNOR

Early voters fill out ballots Tuesday on St. Thomas.

Early voting ends today for Aug. 4 primary election

Daily News Staff

Early voting for the Aug. 4 Democratic Party primary will end today. Residents can vote at the Election System offices on all three islands

from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. today:

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Temporary Customs office to open at Red Hook terminal

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Construction of a temporary U.S. Customs and Border Protection checkpoint in Red Hook has been completed, according to a V.I. Port Authority press release.

The checkpoint, located inside the Urman V. Fredericks Marine Terminal, will open as soon as the agency finishes installing its equipment, the release continued. It did not give an opening date.

The temporary checkpoint will be used to process passenger ferries arriving from foreign ports that want to stop in Red Hook, according to Port Authority spokeswoman Monifa Marrero Brathwaite.

“All charter boats and private pleasure vessels will continue to be screened by [Customs] at the Victor Sewer Marine Facility — also known as The Creek — on St. John,” she said.

Since the Customs office on St. John doesn't process passenger fer-



Daily News file photo

A temporary U.S. Customs and Border Protection checkpoint is located inside the Urman V. Fredericks Marine Terminal in Red Hook on St. Thomas.

ries, the Red Hook checkpoint will prevent them from making the nearly two-hour detour to the Edward Wilmoth Blyden IV Marine Terminal in Charlotte Amalie.

Brathwaite said the Red Hook checkpoint will be in operation until

a permanent office is constructed on St. John by the end of the year or early 2019.

The permanent office is expected to service international ferry, charter and pleasure vessels, according to Port Authority officials.

Today, July 25

Carnival Glory (2,980) 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Havensight
Oasis of the Seas (6,296) 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Crown Bay

Thursday, July 26 to Sunday, July 29

No ships

Monday, July 30

Carnival Fascination (2,634) 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Havensight

Tuesday, July 31

Carnival Magic (3,675) 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Havensight
Harmony of the Seas (6,780) 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Crown Bay

Wednesday, Aug. 1

Disney Fantasy (4,000) 6:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Havensight

Thursday, Aug. 2

Freedom of the Seas (3,634) 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Crown Bay

Friday, Aug. 3 to Sunday, Aug. 5

No ships

Monday, Aug. 6

Carnival Fascination (2,634) 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Havensight

Numbers in parentheses indicate passenger capacity



Governor's Agenda

Today

No public appearances are scheduled today.

Government House did not provide Gov. Kenneth Mapp's agenda.

Caribbean Lottery

All results posted are manually entered and are subject to error. Validate all results with the local lottery office or a lottery retailer.

Pick 3 (July 24)

Morning
1st prize 8 6 4
Midday
1st prize 2 4 3
Sunset
1st prize 2 3 3
Evening
1st prize 3 0 8

Mega Millions

(July 24) Next draw: Friday
1 2 4 19 29
Mega Ball: 20
Megaplier: 3X

Pick 4 (July 24)

Morning
1st prize 1 2 6 7
Midday
1st prize 4 8 6 6
Sunset
1st prize 4 6 5 8
Evening
1st prize 8 8 6 8

Powerball (July 21)

Next draw: Today
09 23 56 58 68
Powerball: 01
Powerplay: 2X

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Deaths

Peter Albert Robles Sr.

Services will be held Friday, Aug. 3, 2018, for Peter Albert Robles Sr., who died Wednesday, July 18, 2018.

The first viewing is from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 2, at Turnbull's Funeral Home. The second viewing is from 10 to 11 a.m. Friday, Aug. 3, at Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church, with the service at 11 a.m. Interment is at Western Cemetery No. 1.

Robles, 61, passed away suddenly at his residence.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Thelma T. Robinson; his godmother, Louise Solina Wheatley-Arnett; and his father, Donald L. Robles Sr.

Robles is survived by his siblings, Patrick Avery Robinson Sr., John Alexander Hodge, James Ashley Hodge, Senator Myron D. Jackson, Beatrice Robles, Lorne Robles, Laverne Robles, Larsen Robles, Diane Robles, Rita Robles and other brothers and sisters too numerous to mention; his aunt, Lorraine Robles; his children, Renelda Rosalia Robles, Anthea Nicole Robles-Woodard, Ebony Gabrielle Robles; daughters of Peter Robles Sr. and

Stephanie Christian-Robles; Peter Albert Robles Jr., son of Peter Robles Sr. and Bernitta Kennebrew, Daniel Dimitri Robles, son of Peter Robles Sr. and Berecia Scatliffe-Robles; and stepchildren, Nasheba Hunte, Louis

Mahoney, Ebony Mahoney, Monique Powell Mahoney, Kenneth Mahoney Jr., Kimmel Mahoney Todman; son in-law, Clay L. Woodard; sisters in-law, Monique Robinson and Olivet Robinson; grandchildren, Allani C. Alfred, Maddox C. Robles-Maltie; and nieces and nephews, Tonya, Thelma, Nicole, Rochelle and Patrick Robinson Jr., Patricia Kennedy; nephew-in-law, Damon Kennedy; niece-in-law, Charnelle Robinson; great-nieces and nephews, Tyree Caruth, Eugene Bell III, Emaiya Bell, Nicholas-Carter Stewart, Nia Joseph and Addison Kennedy.

Aside from his immediate family, Peter is known and cherished by family and friends too numerous to mention.

Say not, in grief, that he has gone,



Peter Albert Robles Sr.

but we give thanks that he was ours.

Professional funeral services are entrusted to Turnbull's Funeral Home and Crematory Services.

Thomas Alexander

Services will be held Friday for Thomas Alexander, affectionately known as "Dick," who passed away July 12, 2018, at the age of 69 at his residence.

The viewing will begin at 9 a.m. Friday at Celestial Chapel of Hurley Funeral Home, with service immediately following at 10 a.m. Interment is at Eastern Cemetery.

Thomas Alexander is survived by his sons, Thompson J. Alexander, Trask Alexander; daughters, Kerl Joseph, Rusan Hiebert, Mahalia Alexander; brother, William Alexander; sisters, Melanie Alexander, Marie Alexander, Julienne Cuffy; sister-in-law, Graciela Alexander; granddaughters, Faybiene Angol, Kasey Joseph, Paige Alexander, Quinn Alexander; grandsons, Kaydon Alexander, Drake Hiebert, Andrew Hiebert, Sanjay Alexander; stepdaughter, Yolanda L. Registe; stepgrandchildren, Adalia Registe, Nathaniel Registe; sons-in-law, Trenton Joseph, Tony Hiebert; daughter-in-law, Kelyc Alexander; nephews, Clement, Maynard, Anselm Bougouneau; nieces, Sheryl, Mayfair, Melrose Bougouneau, Michelle Lomencoborrea, Yordona Loblack, Nicole Leatham, Nicaise



Thomas Alexander

Leatham; and special friends, Sandra, Gordon, Elizabeth, Paul and Melanie Alexander.

Arrangements are under the care of Hurley Funeral Home and Cremation Center of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.

For online directions and condolences visit us at www.hurleydavisfuneralhome.com.

Roystein Brown

A memorial service will be held Friday, Aug. 3, 2018, for Roystein Brown, better known as Iceberg or Spoggy, who died July 7, 2018.

The service will be held at 10 a.m. at Turnbull's Funeral Home.

He was preceded in death by his sisters, Barbra Smith and Beryl Brown.

He is survived by his daughter, Trescia Brown; son, Roystein Brown; grandchildren, Talisha, Rasean, Raj and Tahir Brown Kaylah, Kaylen and Jayden Allen; sisters, Deverelle Brown Donastorg, Editha "Edith" Borges, Jacqueline "Jackie" Wong Shing; brother, Allan "Soup" Brown; nieces, Mercedes Donastorg, Mika Donastorg, Shelby Jones, Monifa Brown, Anya Joseph, Verna Malone, Trina McFarlane and Kaisa Edwards; nephews, Miguel, Adlah, Rudolph Donastorg, Harold Evans Jr., Troy Evans, Jahbahri Brown, LaRon Smith, Leayle Jr. and Leando McFarlane; niece-in-law, Karen Donastorg; nephews-in-law, Kenny Jones, Jerry Malone Sr.; aunts, Glantel Smiten, Glova Abindego, Edris Prentice, Elaine and Evelyn Braithwaite, Magret Hutton, Caroline Parsons and Dr. Arthurlyn Thomas; uncles, Enos, Ishmeal, Edric, Edward and Wesley Braithwaite

and retired Police Lt. Alvin W. Brown; godsister, Irma George; special friends and family, Wayne Thomas, Chato Rivera, Leayle McFarlane Sr., Juliette Cuffy, Altona Hill family, Brown family, Brewley, Braithwaite, Tacking, Nesbitt and Simonds families.

Funeral arrangements are entrusted to Turnbull's Funeral Home and Crematory Services.

Glenn Higgins

Services will be held Friday for Glenn Higgins — a beloved local man and the owner of "The Yak Shak," a water business located at Magens Bay — who died Tuesday at his home in Hull Bay.

The celebration of life will be Friday at 2 p.m. at Shed 1 at Magens Bay.

He is survived by two sisters, Sue Ann and Wendy; two step-sisters, Sallie and Suzanne; a daughter, Carly; and his business partner and incredible friend, Sharie.

Come celebrate Glenn's life with us. He will be truly missed.

Arrangements are entrusted to Turnbull's Funeral Home and Crematory Services.



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Deaths

Gerda Marie Lloyd

A memorial service is set for Sunday for Gerda Marie Lloyd, who died July 6, 2018, at her residence in New Jersey.

The service will be held at Holiday Inn Windsor Ballroom 1 in East Windsor, N.J.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Frederick A. Lloyd and Bernice V. Joseph.

She is survived by her daughter, Rashida Kimon Lloyd; sisters, Gretta Lloyd-Williams (Fenton), Delphine Lloyd Lewis (Emile), Glinda Moses-Johnson (Russell); brothers, John Lloyd (Elisha), Garry Aubrey Sprauve (Cheryl), and Percival Gerardo Taylor Jr. (Helen); aunts, Emma Townes, Althea Farrell, and Tina Pe-

tersen Williams; uncles, Kenneth Clendenin and Irvin Petersen; nieces, T'Wanna Lloyd-Connor, Ieesha Adams Isom, Kamilah L. George, Safiya D. Williams, Donna Sprauve-Hendricks, Gwenette Harrigan, Sandra Robinson-Wilson, Folashade Bolarinwa Eggert, and Shanell Johnson and T'iana Kernan Taylor; nephews, Gary A. Sprauve II, Gary E. Lewis, Vincent A. Doward, Stephan Lewis, Olushola Bolarinwa, Samuel Moses III, and Brandon J. Thomas; along



Gerda Marie Lloyd

with the Abramsen, Durant, Petersen and Knight families of St. Thomas, and the Lloyd family of Harrigan Estate, Tortola, BVI; and other relatives and a host of friends.

Condolences may be sent to GerdaLloydMemorial@gmail.com.

Janice Thomas

Services will be held Saturday for Janice Thomas, who passed away July 14, 2018.

The first viewing will be held 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, July 27, 2018, at Turnbull's Funeral Home. The second viewing will be held 9 to 10 a.m.

Saturday, July 28, 2018, at Christchurch Methodist with services to follow right after at 10 a.m. Interment is at Eastern Cemetery.

She is survived by her husband, Louis Thomas; children, Cherise Thomas, Euclin Thomas, Anique Harrigan, Vern Thomas, Kimberly Thomas and Akeem Thomas; grandchildren, Isaiah, Emmanuel and Kahmya Wheatley, Lailah and Leeah



Janice Thomas

Thomas, Athany and Azai Harrigan, Malik, Makayla and Maliha Francis; brothers, Vancito Christopher, Roiley Christopher, Raymond Christopher, Arnold Christopher and Alford Christopher; sisters, Bernice Stapleton, Lucille Christopher and Ena Christopher; sister-in-laws, Yvette Christopher, Luz Christopher, Myrna Christopher, Laura Daniel, Lyra Harrigan and Louise Lettsome; and brother-in-laws, Edward Mathias, Elroy Thomas, Elridge Thomas, Leon Thomas and Ludrick Thomas.

Funeral arrangements are entrusted to Turnbull's Funeral Home and Crematory Services.

Princess Cruises joins list of cruise lines ordering giant ships

By GENE SLOAN
USA Today

Princess Cruises is going big with its next series of cruise ships.

The Love Boat line on Monday announced plans for two new vessels that will measure 175,000 tons — more than 20 percent bigger than its biggest ships to date.

Scheduled to debut in 2023 and 2025, respectively, the as-yet-unnamed vessels will carry approximately 4,300 passengers at double occupancy. That's about 700 more than recently unveiled Princess ships such as Regal Princess.

Princess said the new ships would be

built by Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri at its shipyard in Monfalcone, Italy.

If unveiled today, the two new ships would be the fifth and sixth largest cruise vessels in the world. But they won't rank that high when they begin debuting in 2023. Other cruise lines such as Royal Caribbean and MSC Cruises have even bigger ships on order for delivery between now and 2022 that will push the new Princess ships down in the size-leader rankings.

Princess didn't release design details for the new ships other than to say they would be powered by liquid natural gas — a first for the line.

Princess currently operates 17 ships.

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Refinery gets green light

Senators cite jobs, economy in approving restart, 9-5, after marathon session Page 3



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Billing snafu costs Luis millions in reimbursements

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — St. Croix's Luis Hospital potentially lost millions of dollars in federal reimbursements due to physicians with improper credentialing, a revelation Monday that had senators question the hospital's financial competence and management.

The issue was raised before the Senate Finance Committee on St. Thomas, where Luis Chief Executive Officer Wanda Ruben gave an overview of the hospital's outstanding challenges, a sobering run-through of post-Hurricane Maria hardships including crippled facilities, a census cut in half and up to 80 layoffs.

When Sen. Kurt Vialet questioned whether the hospital is billing again, Chief Financial Officer Deepak Bansal said it had resumed in November. However, he added, an Office of the Inspector General audit revealed that certain Luis physicians were not properly credentialed as per the requirements of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

As a result, the hospital failed to receive millions in CMS reimbursements from November to May, when billing was eventually corrected, Bansal said.

"We have since fixed those problems, but CMS allows us to only go back 30 days to get proper credentialing done — so there are instances



V.I. Legislature photo by BARRY LEERDAM

Luis Hospital Chief Executive Officer Wanda Ruben testifies before the Senate Finance Committee on St. Thomas this week, where she gave an overview of the hospital's outstanding challenges and presented a tentative General Fund appropriation of \$22 million for fiscal year 2019.

where we're not going to be able to bill for those amounts," Bansal said. "We are trying to get a waiver for that 30-day requirement, but we haven't gotten anything back yet."

Vialet, visibly irritated, called out the hospital leadership for making excuses and "throwing money down the drain." He said Luis is squander-

ing a unique opportunity to recoup 100 percent of Medicare and Medicaid services.

"By us not having a system in place to collect, you have lost a substantial amount of money that you could have utilized for capital improvement or the Government Employees' Retirement System," Vialet said. "Collec-

tion is something that doesn't take months to figure out — it takes days. Medicare and Medicaid are going to deny all the backlog that we have because they're looking at us as being inefficient."

Ruben pushed back on Vialet, insisting the former billing vendor for Luis — Practice Management Software, or PMS — was ultimately to blame.

"Juan Luis will take responsibility for certain things regarding the collection and the billing, but this Senate also needs to acknowledge that PMS is really the company that's under investigation," Ruben said. "It's because of PMS that we are here now looking for a new billing company. It's because of PMS that we have millions of bills that have not been billed."

Other issues discussed included the accountability of the hospital's professional contracts.

According to Bansal, most of these contracts were kept on the third floor of the hospital and were destroyed in last year's hurricanes. He said hospital staff are going through a process to make electronic copies of all existing contracts.

Vialet said he didn't agree with this explanation.

"You can't come with a blank document and say that contracts were destroyed on the third floor since September," Vialet said. "You must know what contracts you have and you must know the amount that you

paid. This is totally unacceptable because we don't even know who you're paying."

Vialet also questioned why hospital staff had not submitted a personnel listing to the post auditor, a report that allows committee members to see all employee positions under the hospital and their salaries.

Bansal said he would provide the report to the committee.

Budget

Ruben presented a tentative General Fund appropriation of \$22 million for fiscal year 2019 — a \$2 million increase over fiscal year 2018.

Following hurricanes Irma and Maria, Luis was promised a total of \$22 million in Community Disaster Loans. To date, the hospital has received a total of \$13 million and is awaiting the remaining \$9 million, according to Ruben.

As of July 19, Luis reported a total of \$69 million in outstanding debt. Current liabilities consist of payables from 2010. The top five payables owed by the hospital are: Internal Revenue Bureau at \$19 million; V.I. Water and Power Authority at \$13.7 million; GERS at \$10.8 million; Advanced Radiology at \$8.5 million; and Worldwide Travel Staffing at \$4.3 million, according to the Luis post audit report.

— Contact A.J. Rao at 340-714-9104 or email ajrao@dailynews.vi.

Queen Louise employees protest nurse, supply shortages

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Complaints of insufficient supplies and licensed personnel at the Queen Louise Home for the Aged on St. Thomas led a handful of current and former employees to launch a protest Wednesday morning outside the facility and later at the V.I. Legislature.

The group, comprising certified nursing assistants and licensed nurse practitioners, made their way to the waterfront with handmade signs, each listing an array of deficiencies impacting the facility, from a lack of food and hygiene supplies to limited beds and wheelchairs.

According to Sophia Rogers, a certified nursing assistant, another issue is the facility's lack of licensed nurses, a deficiency that puts the facility's 20-plus elderly population at further risk, she said.

"I want the public to be aware of the situation — we have elderly here that have different diagnoses and diseases and if we don't have the trained or licensed personnel, we could be prone to liabilities," Rogers said. "The commissioner of Human Services is telling the public one thing, but we as nurses know what is going

“
I want the public to be aware of the situation — we have elderly here that have different diagnoses and diseases and if we don't have the trained or licensed personnel, we could be prone to liabilities.

— Certified nursing assistant
Sophia Rogers

on — we are overworked, tired and it's really a crisis. Enough is enough."

Rogers said the facility does have two temporary nurses, but both will likely leave once the school year begins.

The lack of adequate personnel has led to some certified nursing assistants to working 16-hour workdays, Rogers said.

The Daily News reached out to the Human Services Department, but did not receive a reply by presstime Wednesday.



Current and former employees of the Queen Louise Home for the Aged on St. Thomas launched a protest Wednesday morning outside their facility in response to insufficient supplies and licensed personnel.

Senate clears way for refinery restart

In 9-5 vote, legislators weigh benefits to economy and jobs versus unknowns

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Oil and money will begin flowing again on St. Croix following an early Thursday morning vote in the V.I. Legislature.

How legislators will spend funds from a multimillion-dollar revenue sharing agreement for the restart of about a quarter of the former HOVENSA oil refinery — potentially worth as much as \$600 million — is yet to be determined.

Senators voted 9-5 to approve the two separate agreements with ArcLight Capital Partners — a terminal operating agreement and a refinery agreement — following a second all-day Committee of the Whole meeting Wednesday on St. Thomas.

ArcLight is the majority owner of Limetree Bay Terminals and has said the restart will entail a \$1.4 billion capital investment.

The vote came after a motion by Sen. Neville James to remove the agreements from a slew of legislative measures allocating money from the deals.

The Mapp administration's plans for the revenue from the deals — including a loan for a St. Thomas hotel, the purchase of Havensight Mall by the Public Finance Authority, money for Paul E. Joseph Stadium on St. Croix, and contributions to the Government Employees' Retirement System — will be held at the discretion of Senate President Myron Jackson.

Wednesday's vote clears the way for the resumption of oil refining on St. Croix.

Senators Janelle Sarauw, Samuel Sanes, Nouvelle Francis Jr., Marvin Blyden, Kurt Vialet, Jean Forde, Neireida Rivera-O'Reilly, Myron Jackson and James voted in favor.

Senators Tregenza Roach, Alicia Hansen, Janette Millin Young, Dwayne DeGraff, and Positive Nelson opposed the measure.

Sen. Brian Smith — a vocal supporter of the refinery — was absent.

Sanes — like many senators who voted in favor — alluded to the 2012 closure of the HOVENSA refinery and a chance to make up for past economic woes.

"In 2012, we suffered an economic Hugo," he said, referring to the destruction wrought by Hurricane Hugo.

Senators admitted some flaws, but voted in favor anyway, like James.

"Tonight is a bases-clearing triple," he said. "It ain't a home run. Because I believe that we have better negotiators in the Legislature than we do in



V.I. Legislature photo by BARRY LEERDAM

Representatives from the public and private sectors testify on Wednesday before the V.I. Legislature on St. Thomas. Senior adviser for economic consultants Gaffney, Cline and Associates Bill Cline, left, Geoffery Eaton with law firm Winston and Strawn, environmental consultant Chris Swanberg, Limetree Bay Terminals CEO Darius Sweet, ArcLight Capital Partners principal Evan Schwartz, V.I. Finance Commissioner Valdamier Collens, Planning and Natural Resources Commissioner Dawn Henry, Deputy Attorney General Joseph Ponteen, Chairman and CEO of Island Capital Group Andrew Farkas, and CEO of Island Global Yachting Thomas Mukamal answered questions from senators.

“

Oil on our beaches would mean a sudden stop to tourism. Unhealthy air would mean that the eco-friendly, health-conscious tourists we cater to would choose to travel elsewhere instead.

— Ryan Flegal, owner of the Sugar Apple Bed and Breakfast

the executive branch.”

Senators who voted in opposition, such as Nelson, called for more time, and said the deal could be renegotiated for better terms. They pointed to a legal consultation — said by minority members to cost \$50,000 — that was not entered into the record.

“If we're going to do this dirty business, we should at least try to get a very equitable deal,” he said.

Caution wasn't unreasonable, DeGraff said.

“I am in support of the economic boost to the territory, but I don't want to be bamboozled and fleeced,” he said.

Millin Young said caution outweighed a short-term balance sheet.

“I wish I could vote yes today,” she said. “But I must say no, because I have too many unanswered questions.”

The deal means \$70 million in advance financing will flow into government coffers, consisting of a \$40 million advance payment of revenues and \$30 million for housing near the terminal.

The terminal agreement has a floor of \$7 million in payments, and the refinery agreement has a floor of \$14 million and a ceiling of \$70 million.

The payments start at \$22.5 million and move up or down depending on oil production.

The decision also potentially means 1,300 construction jobs and 600 full-time jobs in the territory, officials have said.

Refinery operations will be exempt from most forms of tax, according to the agreement.

Testifiers included Ryan Flegal, owner of the Sugar Apple Bed and Breakfast, who said an oil refinery could make for a potentially disastrous neighbor for the island's blossoming eco-tourism industry.

“When the oil refinery has an oil spill that may wipe out our business,” he said. “Oil on our beaches would mean a sudden stop to tourism. Unhealthy air would mean that the eco-friendly, health-conscious tourists we cater to would choose to travel elsewhere instead.”

Finance Commissioner Valdamier Collens used part of his prepared testimony to call for all parts to be ratified.

“I respectfully urge this august body to ratify the operating agreements and enact the rest of the legislation as a single package, today,” he said. “This is because there is no telling when such a confluence of circumstances may present itself again.”

Members of Government Retirees United For Fairness crowded the hearing in the morning, though their numbers had dwindled by the

post-midnight vote, leaving senators to make speeches to an empty legislative hall.

The group opposes a planned \$25 million sale of Havensight Mall to the West Indian Company, which is owned by the PFA, said Helen Hart, the group's president.

“To eliminate any room for doubt, we want to make it crystal clear, that we do not favor, support or recommend the sale of this property in any way, shape or form,” she said.

Havensight has been appraised at \$41 million, and generates \$2.1 million per year in revenues, officials have said. The proposed agreement would have put the \$25 million as a down payment, and then split revenues from the mall evenly between WICO and GERS going forward, according to WICO Executive Director Clifford Graham.

Under questioning from senators about his company's share of the economic contribution, ArcLight principal Evan Schwartz said his company sees a square deal.

“This agreement is very beneficial to the government in terms of the overall economics inclusive of the tax,” he said.

Windward Passage Hotel in storm damage dispute

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — The Windward Passage Hotel is in a dispute with its insurance underwriter over hurricane damage.

The underwriter of the harborfront hotel, Catlin Syndicate Limited, filed a complaint for declaratory judgment and injunctive relief against the hotel's owners Monday in U.S. District Court.

According to the complaint, the hotel's insurance policy includes a \$12 million limit for building coverage, and

the insurer has made advance payments of \$5 million in connection with the building claim.

While the underwriter believe the advance payment fully covers the hotel's hurricane-related damages, the hotel contends its insured damages reach its \$12 million policy limits, according to the complaint.

Built in the 1960s, the four-story, open-atrium hotel includes leased retail shops, a restaurant, bar and conference rooms on the first floor, with approximately 150 guest rooms on the upper floors, according to the complaint.

While both parties agree Hurricane Irma caused damage to the hotel, the underwriter believes "damage to the ground level was caused from tidal surge and flooding. Tidal surge and flooding are not covered by the policy," according to the complaint.

The hotel's insurance policy includes an arbitration clause, and the parties entered into arbitration in May.

However, in the claim filed Monday, the insurance company claims Windward Passage's legal team appointed a biased arbitrator.

The insurance company, meanwhile,



The Windward Passage Hotel in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, and its insurance underwriter disagree over the amount of the hotel's storm damage and insurance payments due, according to a complaint filed by the underwriter on Monday in U.S. District Court.

said it appointed a mediator and arbitrator who they claim is unbiased and neutral.

The underwriter goes on to cite a case that they claim shows how "public adjusters, the insureds represented

by the public adjusters, and attorneys subsequently retained on behalf of the insureds" could colluded to profit from appraisal or arbitration results, according to the complaint.

The complaint is seeking a judg-

ment that would prevent the hotel's choice of an arbitrator from serving in the dispute.

— *Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@dailynews.vi*

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Support strong for V.I. National Park plans to rebuild

By **ANDREA MILAM**
St. John Correspondent

ST. JOHN — Virgin Islands National Park officials presented their plans Tuesday night to address the loss of employee housing and two structures at Maho Bay due to Hurricane Irma.

Approximately 20 residents attended the meeting at the park's Visitor Center in Cruz Bay. Most offered support or constructive criticism; no one outright spoke against the plans.

Park officials estimated they lost about 17,500 square feet of employee housing on St. John, which is scattered throughout various locations on the island. After considering several sites on both St. Thomas and St. John to build new employee housing, Lind Point location, a 2.8-acre parcel that is already home to several park houses, was selected. Lind Point was also the home to Natural and Cultural Resources offices, which will be rebuilt as well.

Effects to the environment and the viewshed were considered, and it was determined that impacts would be minimal to both these areas. Brion Morisette, who owns the Estate Lindholm hotel adjacent to the Lind Point park housing, asked if officials would consider placing each unit's cistern



Daily News photo by ANDREA MILAM

V.I. National Park Chief of Interpretation and Natural and Cultural Resources Dave Worthington presents a plan for the Lind Point project on Tuesday night at the park's Visitor Center in Cruz Bay, St. John.

next to its structure rather than beneath it, reducing each building's height.

"This would minimize the impact on the view, which will be significant from the north shore," Morisette said.

Park officials agreed to take Morisette's concerns into consideration.

Resident Lorelei Monsanto suggested the addition of a playground or park space to the housing development for employees with young children, an idea that Caribbean Parks Superintendent Randy Lavoisier agreed would be good to implement.

Residents can view the Lind Point project's environmental assessment at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/VINP_lind_point_construction and comment on the proposal through Tuesday.

The other project park officials presented Tuesday night was the rebuilding of pavilions at Maho Bay, which were destroyed during Irma. Unlike the Lind Point project, which will be federally funded, the Maho Bay proposal is to be funded by donors via the Friends of the V.I. National Park organization.

"We received tremendous support from people all over the world who said they wanted the park to be restored," said the Friends Development Director Tonia Lovejoy. "Our mission was to restore the things the community enjoyed en masse, and many people have celebrated weddings and birthdays at Maho."

The proposed reconstruction at the north shore beach would involve three pavilions — two 12-foot by 12-foot structures consisting of concrete pillars sunk into the sand to support wood beams leading up to a simple roof structure, and one 20-foot by 12-foot pavilion with a floor laid with pavers.

"The intent is to be inexpensive and somewhat expandable," said Chief Ranger Rick Gupman. "We want to have buildings that water can

come through and back out again, and we don't want the kind of damage that happened during Irma."

The three pavilions would all be at the southern end of the beach, where the old structures were previously located, as this area offers the highest elevation and the greatest distance from the water. Less invasive options, like the park providing tents to visitors who want shade at the beach, were suggested by residents.

"If we do anything at Maho, it will be controversial, and if we do nothing at Maho, it will be controversial," said Natural Resource Manager Thomas Kelley, who pointed out that tents with posts that dig into the sand would not be allowed at National Park beaches to protect turtle nesting sites. "We're trying to walk that challenging line between providing minimal services such as shade while still having a small footprint, and doing something that's almost temporary in that it might be lost in six months but it may be there for 16 years."

Because the Maho project is being funded by private donations, no public comment period is required, but park officials emphasized their desire to take the community's wishes into consideration.

Prominent photographer, Hillary Hodge Sr., dies

Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Prominent Virgin Islands photographer and former Virgin Islands Daily News employee Hillary Hodge Sr. has died.

In addition to working for The Daily News, Hodge worked for the St. Croix Avis and as an official photographer for several government agencies. Gov. Kenneth Mapp acknowledged Hodge's contributions to the territory Wednesday.

Mapp, who worked with Hodge when he was lieutenant governor during the Schneider administration, called Hodge a loyal supporter.

"He was my friend," Mapp said.

"Mr. Hodge documented many of



Hillary Hodge Sr.

the most important events in our recent history," Mapp said. "He was a talented and kind individual who touched many lives during his lengthy career as a photographer. It was not long ago that Hillary and I met and spoke. I was pleased to know that he was recovering well from a recent illness. Mr. Hodge was a true Virgin Islands' treasure and will be missed by many."

No funeral information was available at presstime Wednesday.

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Monday, July 30

Carnival Fascination (2,634) 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Havensight

Tuesday, July 31Carnival Magic (3,675) 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Havensight
Harmony of the Seas (6,780) 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Crown Bay**Wednesday, Aug. 1**

Disney Fantasy (4,000) 6:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Havensight

Thursday, Aug. 2

Freedom of the Seas (3,634) 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Crown Bay

Friday, Aug. 3 to Sunday, Aug. 5

No ships

Monday, Aug. 6

Carnival Fascination (2,634) 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Havensight

Numbers in parentheses indicate passenger capacity

'Nuisance trip' causes power outage in St. Thomas-St. John

By **A.J. RAO**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — A three-hour districtwide power outage affected St. Thomas and St. John on Wednesday after a so-called "nuisance trip" sent a number of generating units offline, according to V.I. Water and Power Authority spokesman Jean Greaux Jr.

According to Greaux, the service interruption began at 2:45 p.m. after the nuisance trip — which is an unwarranted circuit breaker trip — sent Unit 27 and later Units 14 and 26 offline at the Randolph Harley Power Plant on St. Thomas.

Power was fully restored by 5:20 p.m.

Greaux said personnel are still going through the data from the generating units to determine what exactly caused the trip.

Greaux added that a WAPA contractor had been troubleshooting another unit earlier in the day, but it is still undetermined whether this contributed to the trip.



Daily News photo by BRIAN O'CONNOR

Three Wartsila generators were transported to the Randolph Harley Power Plant on St. Thomas earlier this month. A "nuisance trip" caused a three-hour power outage on St. Thomas and St. John on Wednesday afternoon.

Court records: No one has come forward for stolen package

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Federal authorities have been unable to identify the sender or recipient of a package stolen from the U.S. Post Office in Emancipation Garden on St. Thomas in April, according to court documents.

The missing package was stolen by Allen Springette, a homeless crack cocaine user with a long history of breaking into stores and restaurants around Charlotte Amalie, court records show.

Springette, 45, has been in prison on pretrial detention since his arrest April 17. He has pleaded guilty to one count of burglary of a U.S. Post Office and could face a maximum five-year prison term and a \$250,000 fine. Sentencing is set for Oct. 18.

The government's case against Springette includes surveillance video showing him breaking into the Emancipation Garden post office in the early morning of April 16, blood droplets from where he cut himself on a window he had smashed open with a brick, and footage of him leaving the building with at least one package.

VI. Police identified Springette from the video footage and quickly located and arrested him.

Springette was wearing the same clothing as in the surveillance video and admitted to police he broke into the post office with the intention of stealing items, and said he had smoked crack cocaine shortly before the burglary, according to court records.

The break-in follows a yearslong pattern of similar burglaries of St. Thomas stores and restaurants attrib-

uted to Springette. He has a history of apparent mental illness and substance abuse.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Meredith Edwards filed a restitution report in U.S. District Court on July 18, putting the total cost to repair damages to the post office at \$872.

"The United States has been unable to identify either the sender of the stolen package or its intended recipient. Therefore, unless a claimant comes forward who can prove the value of the item stolen, the total amount of restitution in this case will be limited to the repair and replacement costs listed above," Edwards wrote.

It's unclear what Springette may have done with the package and its contents, and court records do not indicate what the package may have contained.



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Photo by BVI TOURIST BOARD

Hundreds of Puerto Rican boaters crowd the beach at Pond Bay in Virgin Gorda over the weekend during Christmas in July.

'Puerto Rico Navy' brings relief to BVI businesses with armada

Daily News Staff

A Puerto Rican armada filled anchorages in the British Virgin Islands over the weekend.

An estimated 400 boats brought 4,000 visitors to the territory as part of Christmas in July, according to the BVI Tourist Board.

"Many Puerto Ricans visiting for the event rent hotel rooms or villas in Virgin Gorda and Tortola, they also rent vehicles, take taxis, charter sailboats, take marina slips and moorings along with paying government taxes and levies," said BVI Tourism Director Sharon Flax-Brutus.

"Christmas in July is also a model

event exemplifying the collaboration of multiple agencies."

According to a Tourist Board statement, the invasion was the result of a combined effort of the board, Customs and Immigration, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour, police, the Red Cross and VISAR, as well as volunteer groups such as the Rotaract Club of Virgin Gorda, students from Bregado Flax Educational Centre's Secondary Division, Women of Power and High Potential, and the Virgin Gorda Festival Committee.

As officials made sure potential boaters understood the rules of visiting the territory, volunteers built boardwalks and cleared trails so

beaches could be accessed, set up swim lines and buoys and hauled out trash when the event was over, the Tourist Board said.

During the three-day event, visitors were treated to special events organized by businesses like Foxy's Tamarind Bar & Restaurant in Great Harbour, Jost Van Dyke and Nanny Cay on Tortola.

"We started the event 15 years ago and the people respect the country, and its people," said event producer Marcos Rivera. "We are pleased to help the economy here. BVI residents should recognize that we are here to vacation and party and we are happy to help the local economy."

Police search for missing St. Croix man with dementia

Daily News Staff

Police are asking for the public's help in locating a St. Croix man with dementia who was last seen Tuesday in Christiansted.

The man, Timothy Howard, was reported missing by a family member, who said he was last seen leaving his home at 8 a.m. and has not been seen or heard from since, according to V.I. Police spokesman Glen Dratte.

Howard, 57, is a white man, five-feet, six-inches tall, weighing about 150 pounds, with blue eyes, brown hair, and a light complexion,



Timothy Howard

according to Dratte. He has a slim build and was last seen wearing a navy blue baseball cap, blue jeans, and brownish tan sneakers.

Howard suffers from dementia and frequents the Princess area in Christiansted.

Anyone who comes into contact with Howard is asked to contact police at 340-773-2530, or call 911.

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Campaign events

The **Albert Bryan/Tregenza Roach** gubernatorial ticket will host campaign events this weekend in both districts.

A Night of Jazz with Albert and Tregenza and the music of Eljahie and Friends, with complimentary hors d'oeuvres, will be held tonight at 7 at the Bryan/Roach headquarters on St. Thomas.

A 10-Tastic Cricket Extravaganza will be held on Saturday at 4 p.m. and Sunday at 10 a.m. at the Ezra Fredericks Ball Park in Frydenhoj, St. Thomas. Competing teams include Dominica, St. Lucia, Windball Masters, and President XI. Admission is free.

Out with the Old and In with the New! will be held at Coconuts Night Club on Saturday at 9 p.m. in Estate Paradise on St. Croix, featuring four DJ's. Admission is \$10.

For more information call **340-201-3418** or visit facebook.com/bryanforgovernor.

...

Senatorial candidate **Kenneth L. Gittens** is making a "Neighborhood Whistlestop" tour of St. Croix on Saturday. The island-wide tour is from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

...

The committee to re-elect **Janelle K. Sarauw** presents Fried Fridays, with food, music and conversation on Aug. 3 at 6 p.m. at the Fort Christian parking lot on St. Thomas. The menu includes johnny cake for \$1, chicken wings for \$2 and fish starting at \$12, priced per size.



Deaths

Tedbert Daniel Isaac

A celebration of life will be held Saturday, Aug. 11, 2018, for Tedbert Daniel Isaac, better known as "T-Bag or T," who passed away at Schneider Hospital on July 1, 2018.

The celebration of life will be at 8 a.m. at Sapphire Beach Point, St. Thomas.

T-Bag was born Nov. 22, 1946, in St. John's, Antigua, to Fredrick Isaac and Gladys Thomas.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Chaisson, who passed away six short months prior to his death.

He is survived by his daughter, Nicole Isaac; son, Daniel Isaac; sisters and brothers, Ashton Lewis, Peggy Morgan, Muriel Polydore, Daphnie Isaac, Ethlyn Ferris and Basil Hewlett; nieces and nephews, Chirwid Lewis, Cicely Lewis, Albert Lewis, Althea Lewis, Winston Lewis, Desmond Lewis, Andrew Lewis, Dion Zachariah, Kim Morgan, Denise Morgan, Roland Morgan Jr., Elilhue Polydore, Janice DeFrancisco, Gregory Polydore and Vivian Ferris; grandchildren, D'Maine Isaac, D'Nasia Isaac, Cassidy White; and other relatives and friends too numerous to mention.

Arrangements are entrusted to Turnbull's Funeral Home and Crematory Services.



Tedbert Daniel Isaac

Marie Valentine Berry

Services will be held Friday for Marie Valentine "Val" Berry, who passed away Thursday, July 19, 2018, at the age of 86 in Florida.

The first viewing will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. today at Celestial Chapel of Hurley Funeral Home. The second viewing is at 9 a.m. Friday at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Chapel in Mafolie with the Mass of Christian burial at 10 a.m. The interment is at Mafolie Cemetery.

She was preceded in death by her loving parents, Louis Elphege and Angelina Marie Berry; her brothers, Andre Berry and Larry Berry; and her sister, Emelda Ann Querrard.

Marie "Val" Berry is survived by her brothers, Joseph, Arthur, Cyril, Emile, Francis, Milton and Michael Berry; sisters, Evadnie Querrard, Noreen LaPlace, Angela Bryan and Ellen Berry-Gillott; sisters-in-law, Maria, Gloria, Velma, Angie, Clely, Ann and Carol Berry; brothers-in-law, Emanuel "Manny" LaPlace and Teddy Bryan; and other relatives and friends too numerous to mention.

Arrangements are under the care of Hurley Funeral Home and Cremation Center of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.

For online directions and condolences, visit us at www.hurleydavisfuneral-home.com.



Marie Valentine Berry

In Memoriam of Colleen Marie Francis-Carter

May 20, 1964 - July 26, 2017



Not a day passes that I do not think about you. My life has forever changed since the day you departed. I love and miss you dearly. You were my wife, my friend and my rock. My bug-dog-lady. I know real love because of you and I can love harder and better because of you. Thank you for sharing your life with me, for allowing me to be your husband and a father to our beautiful daughters. What a blessing it was to have been married to you. Until we meet again. Love you today, tomorrow and always.

Dennis, Symone and Syrena

Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened. - Dr. Suess

Caribbean Lottery

Pick 3 (July 25)	Pick 4 (July 25)	Mega Millions (July 25) Next draw: Friday
Morning	Morning	01 02 04 19 29
1st prize 1 6 0	1st prize 1 3 1 5	Mega Ball: 20
Midday	Midday	
1st prize 7 5 9	1st prize 0 5 2 0	Powerball
Sunset	Sunset	(July 26) Next draw: Saturday
1st prize 5 4 7	1st prize 0 7 7 4	02 18 41 44 64
Evening	Evening	Powerball: 26
1st prize 0 5 4	1st prize 4 7 1 5	

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Elmore Stoutt High School Pages 2-3



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'More nails on the coffin' for Main Street merchants



Daily News photo by BRIAN O'CONNOR

A banner hung by merchants in a block under heavy construction contrasts with a sign announcing the closure of Regency Jewelers and Boutique on Main Street, St. Thomas. Shopkeepers said Thursday the often-delayed Main Street Revitalization Project has compounded economic woes from the 2017 hurricanes. **Page 4**

U.K. experts to investigate fatal BVI plane crash

Page 6



Milt Newton

Vin Baker

Milt Newton bringing star power to hoops camp

Back Page

Stormy lizards



How reptiles survived Irma **Page 13**

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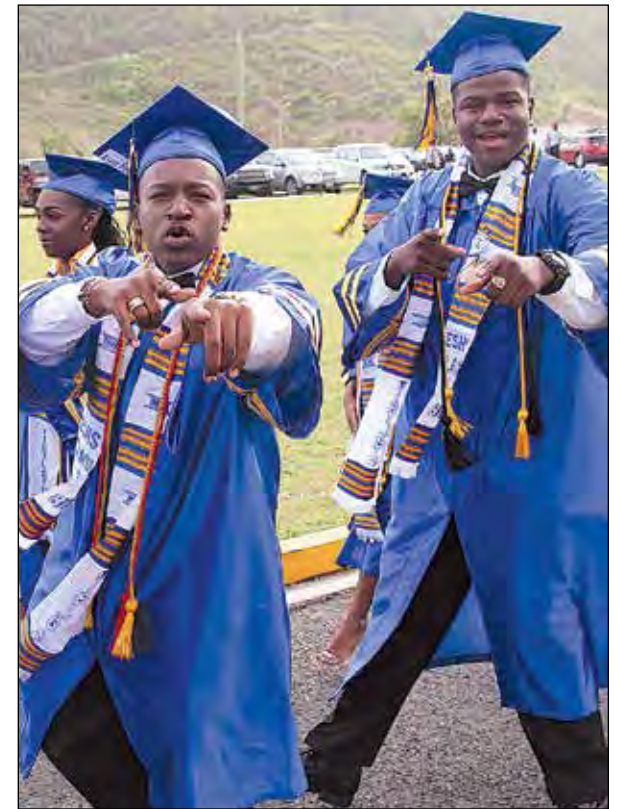
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Graduating members of the Elmore Stoutt High School Drum Corps, Diamante Gumbs, left, Ajani Hassan, Abigail Christopher and Dijmon Gumbs march with the band for the final time before joining their class.



Elmore Stoutt High School graduates show their spirit.

Daily News photos by DEAN GREENAWAY

Students wait for their names to be called to collect their diplomas at the Elmore Stoutt High School commencement on Thursday afternoon on Tortola.



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Daily News photos by DEAN GREENAWAY

Members of the 2018 Elmore Stoutt High School graduating class march from the Eileene Parsons Auditorium to the graduation hall on the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College campus on Tortola on Thursday afternoon. A moment of silence honored classmate Shadeka Patrick, who died on June 25, inset.

Elmore Stoutt sends off 124 after challenging year

By DEAN GREENAWAY
Special to The Daily News

TORTOLA — On the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College campus on Thursday afternoon, 124 graduates of the Elmore Stoutt High School were recognized for their resilience in the most tumultuous year in school history, after an Aug. 7 flood damaged their school and Hurricane Irma on Sept. 6 destroyed it.

Principal Sandy Underhill said that the Class of 2018 was historic as the first 12th grade class in secondary school history in the British Virgin Islands.

“What a year 2018 has been,” Underhill said. “In the words of Pastor [Henderson] Tittle during Sunday’s valedictory service, ‘You are a big deal.’ You symbolize not only the heart and resilience of our school, but the strength, determination and strong will of our Virgin Islands.”

Underhill said despite the destruction of the school from Hurricane Irma, a change of venue, lack of resources, changes to hours and programs and noisy classrooms, the graduating class was not deterred. They adjusted their minds and attitudes and could sit triumphantly at the graduation ceremony.

“Anyone who saw the destruction



Shakima Langford



Beyonce DeFreitas

after Sept. 7 couldn’t imagine it was possible for the Elmore Stoutt High School to have school, let alone a graduating class in 2018,” Underhill said. “But here we are today, celebrating your remarkable achievements, which is also symbolic of the unique strength, courage and character of our entire school.”

Of the 124 graduates, Underhill said there were 67 honor roll students, 63 receiving honors and four with high honors. Some 37 of the graduates earned credits at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.

Valedictorian Beyonce DeFreitas, who earned the first BVI Commonwealth Youth Games female medal in the 200 meters in the Bahamas last year, loves math and science and wants to become an engineer.

“To be honest, I don’t like school,”

“
You symbolize not only the heart and resilience of our school, but the strength, determination and strong will of our Virgin Islands.

— Elmore Stoutt High School
Principal Sandy Underhill

said DeFreitas, who is the student of the year and plans to attend college in January. She lists Texas Tech and UCLA among her choices, but she hasn’t firmed up her decision. “Hopefully the college experience will be different. Becoming the val wasn’t a surprise though.”

DeFreitas said her only challenge early in her student career was balancing school and track and field, but then she learned to manage her time.

“There were nights I had to stay up late studying, then had practice early in the morning,” she said. “I had to find a way to cope with that. Then returning to school after the hurricane was a bit hard because I was going to school half-day. Having to get all the work done was a bit

difficult.”

Adjusting to the split days after the storm wasn’t as bad as she thought it would be, she said. Classes were smaller and she could pay attention better, she said.

When she saw Irma’s destruction of her school, DeFreitas said she wondered how she would finish her final year.

“I can’t even find the words to describe how I felt when I saw it,” she said.

Salutatorian Shakima Langford said she wasn’t surprised with her placing.

“It was one of my goals, so I wasn’t really surprised,” she told The Daily News. “It just means to me, whatever you put your mind to, you can actually do. Once you think it can happen, then it actually can.”

Langford aspires to become a surgeon and will begin her college career at H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.

Langford’s only challenge was moving from 10th to 11th grade when she switched to the science program. She said there were things she wishes she had known.

“I had to quickly catch on, but in 11th grade, it was actually easy and in 12th grade, the classes were easy but at the beginning, I wasn’t living at home (because of Hurricane Ir-

ma’s damage) so I had to pack a bag every week, every Sunday, and go to my relatives. Some days I didn’t want to go and some days I stayed at home,” said Langford.

“With no electricity, I had to take a lamp to do my schoolwork. It wasn’t nice, but I had to do it,” she said.

With her home damaged and her community service hours completed, Langford became a Red Cross volunteer, so she could stay occupied and keep her mind off not having the pre-Irma conveniences.

“When I got my homework, I would practically do it right after,” said Langford. “I just wanted to keep myself occupied so I wouldn’t have to think of anything.”

Adjusting to the 1 to 5 p.m. shift in her senior year, after going to school from 8:40 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. since her freshman year, had its good and bad parts, she said.

The good part was being at school for half of the day.

“When I was on the morning shift (Oct. 4 to Nov. 3) and went to school early, I would do my homework in the afternoon, and when I went on the afternoon shift, I had more time to sleep in,” she said. “That was very nice.”

Senior Shadeka Patrick, who died June 25, was recognized and her parents given an honorary diploma.

Main Street project worsens economic woes, merchants say

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — As workers laid bricks and mixed cement outside two stores he owns near the west end of Main Street, Gary Motiani listed factors that have his 35-year-old business on the brink.

“This is nothing else but more nails on the coffin,” he said. “Two Category 5 hurricanes back-to-back. My house was destroyed. It’s under construction. Hotels is definitely more than 70 percent of our business, depending on the hotel, and cruise ships people, they’ve been already told, ‘Do not go to Main Street, there’s construction going on.’”

Wednesday was particularly grim for Paradise Jewelers and Paramount Gift Shop, Montiani said. Two large cruise ships visited local ports: Carnival Glory at the West Indian Co. dock and Oasis of the Seas at Crown Bay. Their combined capacity is about 8,400 people.

About 10 made it to Motiani’s stores. No one bought anything, he said.

The absence of customers has made the decision clear for his business, if not easy, Motiani said.

His son has a store at Havensight Mall, which contributes on ship days, but not enough to cover the mounting WAPA bill, Motiani said.

“It’s getting bad to worse,” he said. “Now we come to the conclusion: what do we do next? Shut the door, or wait and watch situation? Wait and watch situation is going to cost us money,

“**This is nothing else but more nails on the coffin.**”

— Paradise Jewelers and Paramount Gift shop owner
Gary Motiani

which we do not have.”

Motiani wasn’t alone. Next door at the Golden Star Jewelry Store, Sam Sampat said his foot traffic is down 90 percent since construction started.

Sampat and Motiani did everything they could to draw customers. They approached Island Roads contractors and asked for construction to be suspended for a day (Island Roads obliged). They hung a banner across the main street labelling the area a “Bargain Block Open For Business.”

The Regency Jewelers and Boutique across the street, where conversation is sometimes barely audible over the churning cement mixer, is closing its doors. Construction is one of multiple reasons, owner Larry Khiani said.

Khiani says he’s had to clean his counters five times a day to keep the dust off.

The block has struggled with construction for years, first under the Main Street Revitalization Project’s original contractor, Tip Top Construction, and then under the new contractor Island Roads, Khiani said.

“We cannot even hear the customers, and hardly anybody is walking in

our block,” he said. “It’s extremely bad. We can’t even describe it. It’s bad, bad, bad, in every way.”

“The way it looks like I don’t think it is going to be over in the near future,” Khiani added.

Amit Khemani, a manager at Beverly’s, said he felt Island Roads personnel were doing their best, but coordination seemed patchy, and promises have been broken.

“We were promised that there was going to be no work during the day, and there’s work during the day,” he said. “They promised that they’d do the work, cover up, and come and work at night and nothing like that has been done.”

Khemani sympathized with the need for a new road.

“There wouldn’t be a better time to do it, but also it’s not a worse time to do it, because I’m sure everybody, the entire system is stressful,” he said.

Mary Chan, a saleswoman at Linen House, also was philosophical. The dust and noise were unavoidable, she said.

“You cannot blame everything on the government,” she said. “I live here, too, so I want to see a new road.”

VI. Public Works Commissioner Nelson Petty Jr. said the project was making good progress. When local businesses first raised the dust issue, he and representatives from Island Roads worked to establish watering of the site to keep the dust down, though water was not evident Thursday.

Some daytime work was unavoidable, Petty said.

“There are times, particularly when



Daily News photo by BRIAN O'CONNOR

Island Roads workers mix cement and lay bricks Thursday, feet from the entrance to Regency Jewelers and Boutique on Main Street in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. Shop owners say construction — delayed for years over contractor disputes — has compounded economic woes from the 2017 hurricane season.

we are doing concrete paving, when we’ll have to work during the day,” he said. “There are times when the roadway will have to be closed because the roadwork requires the concrete to cure.”

The project’s ultimate long-term benefits outweigh the short-term agony, he said.

“This project is going to improve the tourism product and bring us to where we were a couple of years ago,” he said.

Motiani says he doesn’t doubt there

are good times ahead, particularly for landlords. He just doubts his stores will be around to see them.

“If their property is going to be upgraded one day, they will be able to double the rent, triple the rent from the new tenant,” he said of landlords. “They at least have high hopes for that. But what kind of hopes do we have? For three years we’ve been digging money from our pockets and savings.”

— Contact Brian O’Connor at 340-714-9130 or email boconnor@dailynews.vi.

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USPS 144-180

POSTMASTER, send Form 3579, Notice of Address Change, to: Circulation Director, Daily News, 9155 Estate Thomas, St. Thomas, VI 00802.

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Gunmen posed as utility workers

Daily News Staff

The V.I. Police Department is warning residents to check the identification of utility employees after a brazen armed home invasion on St. Croix.

Shortly after 3 p.m. Tuesday, three gunmen gained access to a Lavallee, Christiansted, home after one of the men knocked on the front door and told the victim they were looking for the meter, according to police spokesman Glen Dratte.

With the door opened, the supposed utility workers, one of whom was wearing a yellow hard hat, then

pulled guns and began demanding the safe, money, credit cards and other items from the part-time residents who had relatives with them in the residence.

The gunmen took cash, cell phones, credit cards, personal documents and a Jeep Wrangler from the four victims, police said.

According to V.I. Water and Power Authority officials, all WAPA employees and contractors doing business on the authority's behalf possess photo identification, which should be on display.

Should a resident have any doubts of a utility worker's veracity, police

and WAPA officials urge residents to demand the "employee's" identification before admitting them to their home or office.

Additionally, all WAPA employees and contractors working in the field use vehicles bearing either WAPA's logo or that of the contractor, according to police.

Viya CEO Alvaro Pilar also stated that all Viya employees and contractors carry identification and all vehicles display the Viya logo.

If an individual says he or she represents a utility company and is unable to provide identification, police warn residents to call 911.

Arrest made after shots fired in Frederiksted

Daily News Staff

Reports of shots fired Tuesday afternoon in the Mount Pleasant area of Frederiksted, St. Croix, resulted in an arrest later that evening.

At 12:17 p.m., a caller told 911 dispatchers that a man had fired three shots before driving off, according to V.I. Police spokesman Glen Dratte.

Responding officers investigated the shooting, and at about 5:20 p.m.,



Jose Manuel Rivera

a Criminal Investigations Bureau team arrested 18-year-old Jose Manuel Rivera on a charge of assault in the third degree in the incident.

Bail has been set at \$25,000 and Rivera was

remanded to Golden Grove Adult

Correctional Facility pending his advice-of-rights hearing.

The police department thanked the community for its assistance in making the arrest.

To report information about a crime to the Criminal Investigations Bureau, call **340-774-221** on St. Thomas or St. John; **340-778-2211** on St. Croix; or call the Crime Stoppers V.I. anonymous tip line at **1-800-222-8477** or **911**.

BVI plane crash victim remains unnamed

By BRIAN O'CONNOR
Daily News Staff

Details remained scant in a July 18 plane crash off Beef Island in the British Virgin Islands.

Officials have not yet formally identified the pilot of the single-engine Cessna 150M that overran the runway at Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport at about 4 p.m.

The sole occupant and pilot of the plane died in the crash after boaters and divers pulled him from the wreckage of his plane.

Reached by phone Thursday afternoon, Denniston Fraser, managing director of the BVI Airports Authority, said he wasn't ready to release the name of the crash victim.

"If you call back tomorrow, I may have that name for you," he said.

However, some details from the crash were available. The Aviation Safety Network gave the plane's registration number as N66777, which appears to match photos of the salvaged wreckage circulated after the crash.

The registration number matches the Cessna 150M of a George R. Stone, with an address given as Rising Fawn, Ga. Rising Fawn is a rural

The registration number of the crashed plane matches the Cessna 150M of a George R. Stone, with an address given as Rising Fawn, Ga.

unincorporated area of Dade County.

The FAA Airmen's Certification Database shows a Student Pilot Certificate issued to a George Randy Stone, also of Rising Fawn, in 2015. Student pilot certificates are required before undertaking solo flights.

As the one-week anniversary of the crash passed, the U.K. Air Accidents Investigation Branch — the rough analog of the Federal Aviation Administration — is sending a team to investigate the crash, according to a press statement issued by the agency on July 19.

According to a timeline of investigations available on the branch's website, an initial report could be completed within 30 days of the crash. A formal report could take as long as a year to be made publicly available, according to the branch's website.

Police need help finding missing teen

Daily News Staff

Police are appealing to the community to help locate De' Jahnei Philip, 14, who has been missing since Tuesday.

According to police, he was last seen at about 10:20 p.m. Tuesday in the Bovoni housing community on St. Thomas and has not returned home since then.

He was last seen wearing a white tank top and multi-colored tie-dye leggings.

De' Jahnei is described as being of dark complexion, 5-feet, 5-inches tall and weighing 115 pounds.

Police ask that anyone seeing De' Jahnei call Detective Rael Donastorg or Detective Chereese Thomas at **340-715-5541**, **340-715-5542**, **340-715-5540** or **911**.

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Caneel Bay donates supplies to camp, after-school programs

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

St. John's Caneel Bay Resort recently donated a wealth of its children's games, supplies and equipment to the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation youth summer camp and after-school programs.

The resort's Director of Operations Chad Prentice said the donation — \$7,000 worth of merchandise — stemmed from a simple request made by Elroy Hill, a longtime acquaintance and the department's deputy director.

"Mr. Hill has been intimately connected with every children's program on the island," Prentice said. "During a casual walk through town, he said he had a summer program with over 75 kids on the island and that he could really use some extra stuff."

Caneel Bay, while badly damaged and forced to close for the 2017-18 season as a result of last year's hurricanes, had a relatively unscathed teen center and kids club, according to Prentice.

"We had a lot of stuff just sitting there," he said.

Grateful for the donation, Hill picked up the merchandise Thursday.

"I was excited because we are very



St. John's Caneel Bay Resort recently donated \$7,000 worth of children's games, supplies and equipment to the Sports, Parks and Recreation Department.

Photo by CHAD PRENTICE

limited in resources on St. John," he said. "Whenever we can get donations for the children, for our summer camp and after-school programs, we grab them as quickly as possible."

The donation includes: 75 board games and accessories; a full-size indoor ping pong set; 12 bean bag chairs; 12 basketballs; eight footballs; 100 tennis balls and rackets; two full-size indoor air hockey tables; and three Xbox consoles and remotes.

Caneel Bay Resort does not have a

projected opening date at this time.

Prentice said he is "certain" the resort will replenish supplies for its teen center and kids club when it eventually reopens.

— Contact A.J. Rao at 340-714-9104 or email ajrao@dailynews.vi

Today, July 27 to Sunday, July 29

No ships

Monday, July 30

Carnival Fascination (2,634) 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Havensight

Tuesday, July 31

Carnival Magic (3,675) 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Havensight
Harmony of the Seas (6,780) 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Crown Bay

Wednesday, Aug. 1

Disney Fantasy (4,000) 6:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Havensight

Thursday, Aug. 2

Freedom of the Seas (3,634) 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Crown Bay

Friday, Aug. 3 to Sunday, Aug. 5

No ships

Monday, Aug. 6


Carnival Fascination (2,634) 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Havensight

Tuesday, Aug. 7

Caribbean Princess (3,600) Noon to 10 p.m. Havensight
Carnival Magic (3,675) 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Havensight
Celebrity Equinox (2,850) 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Crown Bay

Numbers in parentheses indicate passenger capacity





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7 years have gone since you were called home on July 25, 2011.
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9 great grandchildren: Shelrisa, Shellya, Sheldon Jr., Zyanna, Kayden, Kyrie, Jahmima, Josiah and Layla*

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2018 Elections Calendar

Aug. 4: PRIMARY ELECTION

Aug. 9: Registrars in the VI. Elections System commence registration.

Sept. 11: First day for receipt by the Elections supervisor of applications for absentee ballots for the General Election.

Sept. 20: All federal ballots to be mailed out to military and overseas personnel per the MOVE Act of 2009.

Oct. 7: Last day for registration.

Oct. 7: First day for examination of voting machines and instructions in use of electronic voting machines.

Oct. 7: Last day to investigate all questions relating to registration of electors.

Oct. 15: First day of early voting

Oct. 17: Last day for examination of voting machines and instruction in use of electronic voting machines.

Oct. 17: Deadline for qualified electors to petition the Board of Elections to cancel the registration of any registered elector for cause shown.

Oct. 17: Deadline for appeals to the Superior Court by persons whose claims for registration were denied or whose previous registration was canceled and who has exhausted all administrative remedies.

Oct. 29: Last day of early voting.

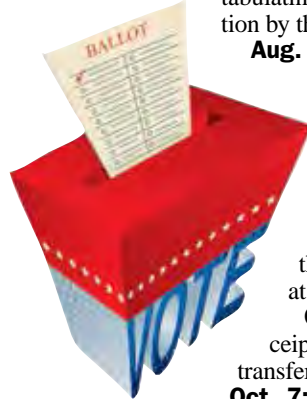
Nov. 6: GENERAL ELECTION

Nov. 20: Run-off election day.

Nov. 25: Registrars in the VI. Elections System commence registration.

For the candidates

Today: Testing of electronic voting machines and



tabulating equipment; certification by the Board.

Aug. 28: Casting of lots for General Election ballot.

Aug. 31: In case of a tie vote in the primary election, the candidates receiving the tie votes shall cast lots before the Elections supervisor at noon.

Oct. 7: Deadline for receipt of removal notices and transfer of registration.

Oct. 7: Last day for change of enrollment of political party and cancellation of party enrollment.

Oct. 9: Official public notice of General Election due.

Oct. 12: Testing of electronic voting machines and tabulating equipment; certification by the Board.

Oct. 16: Deadline for receipt by the Elections supervisor of applications for absentee ballots for the General Election.

Oct. 17: Deadline for persons whose application to be registered has been denied to petition the Board of Elections for review of the matter.

Oct. 17: Appointment of election officers.

Oct. 31 to Nov. 1: Testing of electronic voting machines and tabulation equipment; certification by the Board.

Campaign events

The **Albert Bryan/Tregenza Roach** gubernatorial ticket will host campaign events this weekend in both districts.

A 10-Tastic Cricket Extravaganza will be held on Saturday at 4 p.m. and Sunday at 10 a.m. at the Ezra Fredericks Ball Park in Frydenhoj, St. Thomas. Competing teams include Dominica, St. Lucia, Windball Masters, and President XI. Admission is free.

Out with the Old and In with the New! will be held at Coco-nuts Night Club on Saturday at 9 p.m. in Estate Paradise on St. Croix, featuring four DJ's. Admission is \$10.

For information call **340-201-3418** or visit facebook.com/bryanforgovernor.

Senatorial candidate **Kenneth L. Gittens** is making a "Neighborhood Whistlestop" tour of St. Croix on Saturday. The islandwide tour is from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The **Angel E. Dawson/Marise C. James** gubernatorial ticket will host their general meeting at 6 p.m. on Wednesday at the campaign headquarters in the Barren Spot Village Mall on St. Croix. Their weekly Mix & Mingle with bingo, karaoke, and T-shirt design contest will follow. Food and drinks will be available for sale. For more information call **340-473-3779** or **340-573-0727** or visit facebook.com/AngelDawson340.

The committee to re-elect **Janelle K. Sarauw** presents Fried Fridays, with food, music and conversation on Aug. 3 at 6 p.m. at the Fort Christian parking lot on St. Thomas. The menu includes johnny cake for \$1, chicken wings for \$2 and fish starting at \$12, priced per size.

How to submit your campaign news

Attention candidates!

Send your campaign news and information for publication in The Daily News. Tips and updates about events and appearances can be sent via email to Elections@dailynews.vi.



Notice to the Public

Notice is hereby given to the owners of trailers, carnival booths, vehicles and any other structures stored at 2C Estate Ross #8 New Quarter, St. Thomas, VI adjacent to the Charlotte Amalie High School.

These items are located on VIHFA property and can no longer be stored at this location and will be towed and impounded at the owner's expense if not removed within the next seven days. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

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Jazz in the Park



Visitors begin to line up for food and drinks at the start of the Jazz in the Park on Friday on St. Thomas. The event — held in and around Franklin Delano Roosevelt Virgin Islands Veterans Memorial Park — featured music by Lourdes & The Switch and the Warren Wolf Quartet. **Page 5**

Daily News photo by A.J. RAO



Pelosi visits P.R. ahead of St. Thomas, St. John tour today

House Democratic leader to survey recovery efforts

Page 6



Oops

Camping game stirs fear, mayhem on St. Croix **Page 3**

V.I., BVI athletes head into final week of games



Back Page

St. John Rescue, V.I. government near deal on body transports **Page 3**

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Voting machines put to the test

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Members of the V.I. Board of Elections demonstrated the DS200 and ExpressVote voting machines Friday to a host of polling place judges who will oversee voting in the 2018 primary election, scheduled for Aug. 4.

The demonstration, given by election technician Lesean Moses, covered the proper way to fill out and insert ballots into the machines, as well as how to deal with error messages and closing the polling station by 7 p.m.

Judges had an opportunity at the end of the demonstration to use the machines on sample ballots.

A similar testing session was scheduled for St. Croix, but was rescheduled due to a bomb threat that turned out to be a false alarm near the Sunny Isle Shopping Center annex, where the St. Croix Elections office is located.

The testing is now scheduled for 9 a.m. today at the St. Croix Elections office.

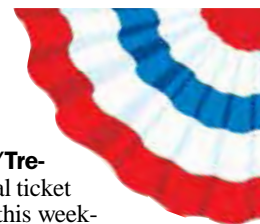
— Contact A.J. Rao at 340-714-9104 or email ajrao@dailynews.vi.



Election technician Lesean Moses demonstrates how to use the DS200 and ExpressVote voting machines to a group of polling place judges Friday at the St. Thomas Elections office.

Daily News photo by A.J. RAO

Campaign events



The **Albert Bryan/Tre-genza Roach** gubernatorial ticket will host campaign events this weekend in both districts.

A 10-Tastic Cricket Extravaganza will be held today at 4 p.m. and Sunday at 10 a.m. at the Ezra Fredericks Ball Park in Frydenhoj, St. Thomas. Competing teams include Dominica, St. Lucia, Windball Masters, and President XI. Admission is free.

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Senatorial candidate **Kenneth L. Gittens** is making a "Neighborhood Whistlestop" tour of St. Croix on today. The islandwide tour is from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Supporters of senatorial candidate **Donna Frett-Gregory** will hold a pre-primary Meeting & Mixer on Monday from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at Sabroso Restaurant on St. Thomas. For more information, visit www.donnafrettgregory.com.

The **Angel E. Dawson Jr./Marise James** gubernatorial ticket will host their general meeting at 6 p.m. on Wednesday at the campaign headquarters in the Barren Spot Village Mall on St. Croix. Their weekly Mix & Mingle with bingo, karaoke, and T-shirt design contest will follow. Food and drinks will be available for sale. For more information call **340-473-3779** or **340-573-0727** or visit facebook.com/AngelDawson340.

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Walker says morgue set to open in late October

By SUZANNE CARLSON
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — The territory's new morgue facility is expected to open in October and will eventually become a forensic laboratory capable of analyzing crime scene evidence locally, according to Attorney General Claude Walker.

Walker announced the project in January 2017, and Sen. Novelle Francis Jr. said at the time that he'd been working to get a morgue facility for forensic examination of crime victims and a crime laboratory established for more than a decade.

The hurricanes delayed the project somewhat but the building — the former Creque Funeral Home on Bjerger Gade on St. Thomas — suffered no structural damage, according to Justice Department Assistant Director of Forensics Anthony Hunt.

Walker said the project is long overdue and "I'm just amazed this is the

“**We're in the process of doing all the plumbing, it's moving ahead at a very good pace and we're anticipating the end of October that we should be functional.**

— Justice Department Assistant Director of Forensics Anthony Hunt

first ever such facility" in the territory.

The department is renting the privately owned building, and Hunt said a contract for construction of the space was signed last month.

"We're in the process of doing all the plumbing, it's moving ahead at a very good pace and we're anticipating the end of October that we should be functional," Hunt said. "All the equipment is on board, everything is on board, everything that we need to function as the medical examiner's office is in place."

Currently, Medical Examiner Francisco Landron examines bodies in

morgue facilities at the St. Thomas and St. Croix hospitals, as well as the Myrah Keating Smith Community Health Center on St. John.

Having a dedicated morgue facility for the territory will enable Landron to better control his work and operate more efficiently, Hunt and Walker said.

In the future, the facility will grow to include a forensic crime laboratory capable of analyzing DNA evidence, ballistics, drug testing and toxicology, Walker said.

"We're trying to do it in phases. To do a complete lab it's a humongous

task," Hunt said.

Investigators must currently send out forensic evidence samples to a federal crime lab, and having a facility in the territory will reduce the time and expense for that analysis.

"It will cut the time down as far as sending evidence to the FBI lab or any other lab that basically gives us a number and we have to get in line," Hunt said.

The FBI lab processes evidence for all territories, states, and local jurisdictions needing such services, "so they process the evidence based on the time it comes in," Hunt said.

That means investigators are sometimes forced to request expedited processing in advance of a trial, and frustratingly long waits for crucial evidence that could help solve major

crimes. Having a local lab will also shrink the chain of custody and simplify documentation of crime scene analysis work.

"This is an effort to move in some sequential way in order to make a complete process. So, this is just the beginning," Hunt said.

The territory received a federal grant of \$441,000 for renovations to the morgue, and Hunt said only \$414,000 of that has been expended "so we're getting it done a little bit cheaper, as far as the cost."

Additional federal grants are helping to purchase expensive laboratory equipment and local funding is paying for the facility's rental costs, Walker said.

Walker said the project has been aided by U.S. Attorney Gretchen Shappert and other federal partners, and Shappert "shares a lot of the same objectives we have in terms of modernizing a lot of things that pertain to crime in the territory."



Claude Walker

St. Croix bomb scare linked to summer camp game

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

An apparent bomb scare Friday near the Sunny Isle Shopping Center annex on St. Croix turned out to be a false alarm after police linked a suspicious object in the roadway to a game of "Capture the Flag" played by a youth group the night before.

According to V.I. Police spokesman Glen Dratte, officers and emergency personnel responded to the annex shortly after 9 a.m., when a caller reported seeing a possible explosive device off Queen Mary Highway.

After traffic was diverted and the area secured, an FBI bomb unit flew from Puerto Rico to St. Croix around 12:30 p.m. to examine the device, which, according to Dratte, looked "exactly like a pipe bomb."

By 2 p.m., the device was deemed a fake and the area cleared, Dratte said.

Further investigation revealed the device belonged to a nearby

After interviewing the camp director, police said students had been playing "Capture the Flag" the night before using the bomb replica and had hid the object on a truck. The following morning, the object fell from its hiding place as the truck started moving.

summer camp for students hosted by Youth With A Mission.

After interviewing the camp director, police said students had been playing "Capture the Flag" the night before using the bomb replica and had hid the object on a truck. The following morning, the object fell from its hiding place as

the truck started moving.

Police said the matter remains under investigation by the Criminal Investigation Bureau and Human Services.

The Daily News reached out to Youth With A Mission on Friday but did not receive a reply.

A rumor circulating online that the bomb scare was a distraction for a nearby Scotiabank robbery was dismissed by Dratte.

"I think people saw the emergency vehicles near Scotiabank so they may have assumed the bank was robbed — but that's false," he said.

In addition to the traffic inconvenience, the bomb scare also caused employees of the V.I. Water and Power Authority office at Sunny Isle to evacuate and close early Friday.

According to WAPA Executive Director Lawrence Kupfer, normal operating hours will resume Monday.

— Contact A.J. Rao at 340-714-9104 or email ajrao@dailynews.vi.



A metal object in the road near the Sunny Isle Shopping Center annex on St. Croix sparked an investigation by an FBI bomb unit from Puerto Rico on Friday. The device turned out to be a bomb replica used by summer campers playing a "Capture the Flag" game the night before.

AG: Government close to agreement with St. John Rescue

Nonprofit group threatened to stop transport of dead bodies without pact

By SUZANNE CARLSON
Daily News Staff

The government and St. John Rescue are finally nearing an agreement in regard to the transport of dead bodies on St. John, according to Attorney General Claude Walker.



Claude Walker

Walker said he and Justice Department Director of Forensics Anthony Hunt met with the nonprofit group and their attorney on St. John to discuss a draft memorandum of understanding.

"We heard from them about some of the frustrations that they've had, rightfully so, about this, and what we've done is we've committed to making changes to the last draft," which was given to the group for their review, Walker said.

Andrea Vacharat, president of St. John Rescue, sent a letter on behalf of



Photo by ST. JOHN RESCUE

St. John Rescue, a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization, provides emergency rescue and medical support services on the island, including from its 26-foot power cat rescue boat.

the group's board of directors on July 13 to Walker and the various agencies responsible for providing emergency services in the territory, saying that the group's volunteers "will cease to respond to and transport deceased individuals on the island of St. John," effective immediately.

"Currently, there is no memorandum of understanding in effect between the Government of the Virgin Islands and St. John Rescue Inc. The government has yet to specify which training and certification are required for St. John Rescue Inc. to transport bodies, and has not agreed

to defend, indemnify, or otherwise shield St. John Rescue Inc. from liability resulting from transportation of remains," Vacharat wrote in the letter.

The issue has been ongoing for a decade, and in 2015, St. John Rescue signed a memorandum of un-

derstanding with the V.I. government that would give some protection to the volunteer organization as it provides a much-needed service for the island.

"We've been waiting seven years for this," St. John Rescue Training Officer Bob Malacarne said at the time.

The 2015 agreement went to Gov. Kenneth Mapp's desk, but apparently was never signed.

Walker said in an effort to improve communication between emergency operations stakeholders on St. John, they've proposed a working group comprising members of the V.I. Police and Fire departments, the Health Department, the Justice Department, and St. John Rescue.

The plan is for the working group to "meet regularly to talk about the challenges and the issues to make sure that we're on the same page concerning having to pick up the bodies and transporting them over to St. Thomas," Walker said. "We just need to make it better by talking more to each other and having these regular meetings, which is what we've all agreed to do."

Walker said the memorandum of understanding has not yet been signed, but he expects the situation will be resolved soon.

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@dailynews.vi.

Senators OK horse racing commission nominees

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

The Committee on Rules and the Judiciary has approved two of Gov. Kenneth Mapp's nominees to serve on the St. Croix Horse Racing Commission and their names will be forwarded to the full Legislature for further vetting.

Henry Schjang and Ronald Phillips received unanimous approval from senators present during Friday's committee hearing.

Schjang currently serves as a po-

lice recruiter in the V.I. Police Department and previously worked for more than 15 years as a casino inspector for the V.I. Casino Control Commission. He was nominated to serve a three-year term.

"Although I personally have never been a horse owner, unless you count the horses in my grandparents' yard, I prepared for my potential new role on the commission by immersing myself in all things racing," Schjang testified Friday. "Coming from a family that has had members who have worked in the industry, I turned to my family's institutional knowledge of an industry that has long been a part of the fabric of the Virgin Islands community and that has the ability to be an integral part of economic growth and diversification of our territory."

Phillips is an engineer who started working at Dow Chemical in 1986 and served in various capacities at V.I. and St. Croix Alumina, at HOVENSA from 1997 to 2012, and has been working at the V.I. Waste Management Authority since 2013. He was nominated to a two-year term.

Phillips described his exposure to



Daily News file photo

Horses race to the finish line at the Randall "Doc" James Racetrack on St. Croix. The Committee on Rules and the Judiciary has approved two of Gov. Kenneth Mapp's nominees to serve on the St. Croix Horse Racing Commission — Henry Schjang and Ronald Phillips. Their names will now go to the full Legislature for approval.

horse racing starting in the late 1960s, when Randall "Doc" James was the promoter at Flamboyant Park Racetrack at Manning Bay, and his interest in the sport throughout the years.

He has read and studied the com-

mission's rules and regulations "and I concluded that the rules are very good," Phillips said, but "the overall issue from my perspective is enforcing the rules."

Committee Chairman Novelle

Francis Jr. said there will be additional nominees that require vetting in future hearings.

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@dailynews.vi

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Evening of jazz on St. Thomas



Daily News photo by A.J. RAO

Onlookers watch a performance by Lourdes & The Switch at the Jazz in the Park festival on Friday in Franklin Delano Roosevelt Virgin Islands Veterans Memorial Park on St. Thomas. Vendor's Row offered a variety of local products, food and beverages and a kid zone featured complimentary entertainment and activities for young guests.

Deaths

Hillary Constantine Hodge Sr.

We, the family, regret to announce the passing of our dearly beloved father, brother and uncle, Hillary Constantine Hodge Sr.

He passed away on St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, at 74 years of age. His sunrise was Jan. 24, 1944, and sunset July 23, 2018.

He leaves to mourn two sons, Hillary Hodge Jr. and Aksel Hodge, and is preceded in death by Avery Hodge; one daughter, Alison Hodge; two grandchildren, Aksel Hodge Jr. and Nikai Hodge; four sisters, Phyllis Hodge, Bona Hodge-Powell, Grace Richardson, and Bernadette Richardson, and is preceded in death by Agnes Gumbs.



Hillary Constantine Hodge Sr.

He also leaves to mourn two brothers, Barnebus and Douglas Hodge, and is preceded in death by Reginald "Son" Hodge; special cousins Merle and Lucien Proctor, Cousin Dora and Nelson and Miriam Hazell; special friends Doreen Hanley, Iris Webster, Bro McKay, George Mathew, and Reginald Christmas; and many other nieces and nephews, relatives and friends too numerous to mention.

He was the son of Violet and Rupert Hodge. He was formerly married to Honica Hodge and Goldine James-Hodge.

A funeral announcement will be forthcoming.

Ann Josephine Ledee

We regret to announce the passing of Ann Josephine Ledee, who passed away on July 21, 2018.

Viewing will be held on Thursday from 9 to 10 a.m. at Holy Family Church, with services to follow right after at 10 a.m.

Interment will be in Mafolie Cemetery.

Spouse (Preceded in Death):

She was preceded in death by her husband, Joseph Gilbert Ledee. Her family includes her children (preceded in death): Lucille Ledee, Yvonne G. Bryan, Anita Ledee; sister Donecia Ledee; brother Leon Bryan; son-in-law Leon A. Bryan; grandchildren Wayne A. Bryan, Stacey A. Bryan, and Sheila E. LaPlace; granddaughter-in-law Lahren Pandolfi; grandson-in-law Joseph E. LaPlace; great-grandchildren Justin LaPlace, Sean Bryan, Cody Bryan, Kaitlin LaPlace, and Savina "Anna" Vira.

Funeral arrangements are entrusted to Turnbull's Funeral Home and Crematory Services.



Ann Josephine Ledee

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Tuesday, July 31
Carnival Magic (3,675) 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Havensight
Harmony of the Seas (6,780) 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Crown Bay

Wednesday, Aug. 1
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House minority leader, representatives, tour V.I.



Daily News photo by BRIAN O'CONNOR

V.I. Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, second from left, and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) address a press conference Saturday at the University of the Virgin Islands on St. Thomas. Also taking part was Gov. Kenneth Mapp, at left. Page 3

Ecology program marks 25 years

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App helps keep BVI residents safe

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Tap & Still opens on St. John

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Youth gardening and ecology program marks 25 years

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — The Junior Gardening and Ecology Academy Inc., is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, a milestone that founder and CEO Mario Francis attributes to the group's passion for youth and commitment to healthy, self-sufficient living.

During the last 25 years, more than 2,000 students, both local and international, have taken part in the nonprofit's blend of outdoor activities, academic tutoring and life mentoring.

Indeed, seeing a second generation of students — whose parents also participated in the program — has been an eye-opening experience for Francis.

"It really is a milestone," he said. "I'm really proud of this program and that we came this far."

The nonprofit's programming comprises three parts: an after-school program, a weekend adventure program and its hallmark summer enrichment program, which averages about 50 students every year.

"What we do is we teach youngsters to produce their own food," said Francis, of the summer program. "We talk about health and teach the kids they can only be healthy if they know the source of their food."

Francis said living in a tropical environment gives children ample opportunity to plant their own food year-round wherever they live on the island.

"Whether it's in a suburban home with a backyard



Instructors with the Junior Gardening and Ecology Academy Inc. show students different plant life as part of the nonprofit's summer enrichment program. The Academy recently celebrated 25 years in operation.

Photo by JUNIOR GARDENING AND ECOLOGY ACADEMY INC.

or in a housing community where you can start a little garden on the porch, you can grow peppers, tomatoes, herbs, lemongrass — anything," Francis said. "We're trying to give youngsters something constructive to do that's beneficial to themselves

and to the community."

Francis said the weekend adventures further augment a student's love of nature, with activities ranging from kayaking and snorkeling to identifying wildlife in mangroves and determining the age

“

Whether it's in a suburban home with a back yard or in a housing community where you can start a little garden on the porch, you can grow peppers, tomatoes, herbs, lemongrass — anything

— Mario Francis, founder of Junior Gardening and Ecology Academy Inc.

of trees.

Francis said the summer program was not held this year due to hurricane damages to the Seventh-day Adventist School on St. Thomas, where the group typically meets. He said discussions on new locations and ways to enhance the academy further are already underway.

"What we want to do is increase the number of participants," he said. "We may open two facilities in the countryside — one in the Tutu area and one in town to help kids in different neighborhoods."

For more information about the academy, contact **340-776-1610** or email marioafrancis@yahoo.com.

— Contact A.J. Rao at 340-714-9104 or email ajrao@dailynews.vi

BVI introduce disaster-alert app for phones

Daily News Staff

Technology is now helping keep British Virgin Islanders safer.

On Friday, the BVI Disaster Management Department and Digicel introduced BVI DDM Alert, an app that sends alerts about events impacting the territory directly to smartphones and other iOS and Android devices.

"The app serves as an important part of the territory's early warning system and is another means of al-

lowing us to reach the masses," said Disaster Management Director Shaheen DaBreo.

With the aftermath of Hurricane Irma still fresh, it is easy to understand the importance of keeping residents informed of threatening weather and hazardous conditions, said Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Communications and Works Jeremy Hodge.

"Information via smart devices is definitely heading in the right direction," Hodge said.

"The BVI DDM app is effectively a real-time push notification tool that will make it easier for users in the BVI and worldwide to receive critical information directly from the department," said Digicel BVI CEO Kevin Gordon.

While developed in collaboration with Digicel, the app can be used free of charge on any Android or iOS

device. The app, which will solely be managed by the Disaster Management Department, can be downloaded immediately for Android devices from the Google Play Store and will be available for Apple iOS devices on Aug. 10 on the Apple App Store.

The public is encouraged to share their views on the usability of the app via email at bviddm@surfbvi.com.

The BVI Disaster Management Department and Digicel have developed an app to alert residents of emergency situations.



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Daily News photo by ANDREA MILAM

Three helicopters carrying members of a congressional delegation fly over St. John on Saturday. The delegation landed at the Myrah Keating Smith Community Health Center.

Pelosi leads congressional delegation on V.I. visit

By BRIAN O'CONNOR
Daily News Staff

A Democratic congressional delegation toured St. Thomas and St. John on Saturday, part of a weeklong trip to examine U.S. territories stricken by the 2017 hurricane season.

VI. Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett was joined by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Representatives Dwight Evans (D-Pa.), Betty McCollum (D-Minn.), Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-N.M.), Val Demings (D-Fla.), Robin Kelly (D-Ill.), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas), Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.), Terri Sewell (D-Ala.), Nydia Velazquez (D-N.Y.), Adriano Espaillat (D-N.Y.), Nanette Barragán (D-Calif.), and Jim McGovern (D-Mass.).

The representatives are parts of committees related to funding — the Ways and Means and Appropriations Committees — or those overseeing elements of federal governance by the territory — the House Committee on Natural Resources, which oversees the U.S. Interior Department, and Transportation, of which Plaskett is a member.

Representatives toured Coral Bay and the Myrah Keating Smith Community Health Center, both of which sustained heavy damage from Hurricane Irma, and toured public housing and VI. Water and Power Authority facilities on St. Thomas.

The tour was designed to allow representatives to meet with groups and people affected by the 2017 hurricane season, Plaskett said.



Photo by VI. WATER AND POWER AUTHORITY

VI. Water and Power Authority Executive Director and CEO Lawrence Kupfer speaks to members of a congressional delegation, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, second from left, during a tour Saturday of the Randolph Harley Power Plant on St. Thomas. Pelosi spoke of the delegation's commitment to work to reduce the cost of electrical service in the territory. "It's stunning, the cost that hurts entrepreneurship, it hurts the family budget, and we want to reduce that cost," she said.

"We've had really great talks with community people, we've also learned and talked with people who are directly affected as well as the policymakers," she said.

The hands-on experience with the territory was invaluable, Pelosi said.

Representatives "don't come here to have a conversation," she said. "They come here to have a meeting so that we

can go back and make informed decisions springing from the voices of the people that we heard, from how they were personally affected."

While some representatives were critical to governance, others boasted of personal connections with the territory. Pelosi said she honeymooned at Caneel Bay. Lee and Meeks — of New York — have large contingents of

Virgin Islanders living in their districts. Meeks's wife, Simone-Marie, is from Frederiksted.

Representatives also wanted to see how appropriations had translated into on-the-ground spending, Pelosi said.

"Congress passes a bill with all of the aspirations and enthusiasm, and then the implementation goes to the executive branch, but there's some

risk aversion there about 'Maybe they didn't mean for us to go this far and this fast,'" she said, then, turning to Bill Vogel, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's federal coordinating officer. "Right, Big Bill?"

While the delegation had a distinctly partisan lean by the time it reached the Virgin Islands, Pelosi said Puerto Rico Resident Commissioner Jennifer Gonzalez-Colon, a Republican, had accompanied the representatives.

"Yes, we did, and they had good intentions," she said, when asked whether they had reached across the aisle. "This is, though, the start of the August break, and so some of them had to be with family."

Pelosi praised the leadership of Gov. Kenneth Mapp — who attended Saturday's press conference — and Plaskett.

"If it were up to me, she'd have a vote in Congress," Pelosi said of Plaskett.

Plaskett said elements of the federal response had made Irma and Maria worse for the territories.

"There were so many pre-existing circumstances, so many things, deficiencies, that the territories had before the storm, that made the devastation even greater than it would have been if it had been anywhere else in the United States," she said.

Republican majorities in the House and Senate didn't mean Democrats are powerless, Pelosi said.

Trump administration officials "would rather answer a phone call than be called into a hearing," she said.

— Contact Brian O'Connor at 340-714-9130 or email boconnor@daily-news.vi.

Company takes territory to court over \$5.6 million bill

Territory contends it successfully operates 6 wastewater facilities without outside help

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

The operator of two public wastewater treatment plants has filed documents in federal court warning that the VI. government's proven inability to manage wastewater treatment in the territory could have serious environmental and health risks.

The company, VWNA Caribbean,

a wholly owned subsidiary of Veolia Inc., has filed a complaint through its attorneys with the firm of Dudley, Topper and Feuerzeig in a 34-year-old consent decree between the VI. Waste Management Authority and the federal government, a result of the VI. government previously violating the Clean Water Act.

The complaint is seeking \$5.6 million in overdue payments from the VI.

government, plus interest and court fees, and charges the government with ignoring its contractual responsibilities and putting the territory's populace at risk.

In a press release about the dispute issued in June, the Waste Management Authority counters that it successfully operates six other wastewater facilities without outside help.

The authority stated that it is evaluating its "options for the successful operation of the St. Croix and St. Thomas contracted wastewater treatment facilities which will result in large cost sav-

ings to the authority."

The company has filed as an intervening party in the complaint, but lawyers for the local and federal governments have filed motions opposing that request, and a judge has yet to rule on whether the company can participate as an intervening plaintiff. The company has recently filed a motion seeking instead to participate as amicus curiae, or "friend of the court," which was also opposed by the local government.

Federal lawyers said they "take no position on whether the court should allow VWNA to participate as amicus curiae," but urged the court to limit the company's participation if the request is granted.

The local government's failure to pay is not only a breach of contract and the consent decree, "that breach has extremely serious environmental implications because VIWMA and the VI. government are not qualified to manage and operate the plants themselves so as to ensure compliance with pollutant discharge limits," according to the complaint. "By assuming those responsibilities, the VI. government and VIWMA will impair the health and safety of the residents of the Virgin Islands."

The federal government filed suit against the territory in 1984 following failures at sewage treatment plants "which caused untreated sewage to be discharged into territorial waters and soils," according to court documents. The decree was entered into in 1985.

In 2002, the territory agreed to provide funding for the design, construction and operation of new treatment plants for St. Thomas and St. Croix that would meet federal regulations.

"These requirements in the 2002 Amended Consent Decree were included because of a recognition that the VI. government did not have the ability to operate and manage the two WWTPs to ensure compliance with discharge limits, and thereby to ensure the health and safety of residents of the Virgin Islands," according to the complaint.

VWNA entered into a contract with the local government in 2004 to design and build the plants and operate them continually for 20 years.

Construction of the plants was completed in 2007.

The contract provided for the company to charge interest of no more

than 2 percent on payments overdue more than 30 days, and the territory has failed to fully pay the company for more than 18 months, according to the complaint.

In the press release, The authority counters that it made a significant payment to the contractor in March.

"As of the date of this filing, the VI. Government owes VWNA more than \$5.6 million (excluding interest) for management, operation, and maintenance services provided by VWNA," according to the complaint.

The complaint states that despite numerous attempts, it has been unable to engage the government in discussion about a payment schedule.

The company said that the Waste Management Authority wrote in a letter dated May 28 that "it intends to take over all services that VWNA is currently providing under the contracts" and has therefore "anticipatorily breached" its consent decree obligations."

The wastewater treatment plants are technologically complex and can only be managed by a qualified team of trained professionals.

VWNA contends the local government and Waste Management "do not have the personnel in their employ with the necessary qualifications to manage, operate and maintain the two plants," according to the complaint.

The complaint seeks declaratory judgment against the VI. government and Waste Management Authority, a finding of breach of both the company's contract and the amended consent decree, and unjust enrichment because the government "has refused and continues to refuse to pay for the services provided to it by VWNA without any legitimate justification and in violation of its obligations under the 2002 Amended Consent Decree."

The local government has filed a proposed remedy for violation of the consent decree, and "seeks to operate" the wastewater treatment plants itself, "on budget and within compliance," according to court documents. "WMA has reviewed the financial variables related to such operation that are presently available and believes that its goals can be met at a substantial cost savings to GVI."

The government has also requested that the court mediate a resolution and payment plan with Veolia.



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U.K. minister to visit BVI

Daily News Staff

U.K. Foreign Office Minister for the Overseas Territories Tariq Ahmad will be in the British Virgin Islands this week to meet with BVI officials and tour sites impacted by last year's storms.

Ahmad, who will be in the territory Tuesday and Wednesday, will be updated on the how the U.K.'s support is helping recovery efforts and will officially hand over a temporary court house to the government, according to a statement by the BVI government.

The temporary court house will allow the BVI Supreme Court and Magistrates' Court to function while a permanent building is built.

Ahmad will also visit the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship Mounts Bay, which will remain in the region throughout the hurricane season to provide rapid assistance.

Named for Mount's Bay in Cornwall, England, the ship is a Bay-class auxiliary landing ship and in addition to her regular compliment



Tariq Ahmad

carries a team from 24 Commando Royal Engineer Regiment and a Wildcat helicopter to aid in disaster relief, according to news reports.

"The U.K. has played a critical role in assisting the region to recover from last year's unprecedented and devastating hurricanes, providing aid and support to help British Overseas Territories," Ahmad said ahead

of his visit.

"However, I know there is still more to be done before the islands are fully recovered and the U.K. stands ready to help. We are already working with partners across the Caribbean to make sure plans are being put in place to prepare for future hurricanes so we do not see a repeat of last year's destruction," he said.

Ahmad will also seek to address concerns about the U.K.'s Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act when he meets with Premier Orlando Smith, according to the BVI government release. He will also meet with members of the financial services industry, business and tourism representatives.

A member of the Conservative Party, Ahmad has served in parliament since 2011 when he was named a life peer, taking the title Baron of Wimbledon.

Ahmad was appointed in 2017 as Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office responsible for the Commonwealth and United Nations.

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Thursday, Aug. 2 Freedom of the Seas (3,634)	8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.	Crown Bay
Friday, Aug. 3 to Sunday, Aug. 5 No ships		
Monday, Aug. 6 Carnival Fascination (2,634)	7 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Havensight
Tuesday, Aug. 7 Caribbean Princess (3,600) Carnival Magic (3,675) Celebrity Equinox (2,850)	Noon to 10 p.m. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Havensight Havensight Crown Bay



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Judge: Police cannot frisk people without reasonable suspicion

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

A Superior Court judge has ruled that V.I. Police violated the constitutional rights of a man found in possession of a firearm during an illegal search, calling into question whether further prosecution is possible.

V.I. Superior Court Judge Denise Francois issued the opinion Tuesday in response to a motion to suppress evidence by Ernest Stevens, 38, who was arrested on Dec. 29, 2016, and charged with possession of an unlicensed firearm.

The seizure of the weapon was the only evidence police gathered to support the criminal charge against Stevens, and without it, it's unclear whether prosecutors could successfully bring him to trial.

V.I. Justice Department spokeswoman Corliss Smithen said in an email Thursday that the Attorney General's Office "has not yet made a determination on whether or not to move forward with the case."

Stevens' arrest came during a police operation, "Make it Safe Part 2," in

Ras Valley in the Tutu Hi-Rise housing community on St. Thomas, according to the opinion filed by Francois.

Sgt. Denley Williams, who has been a V.I. police officer for 15 years, testified at a suppression hearing on June 22, 2017, that he and a team of other law enforcement officers had been conducting the initiative "to go in high crime areas, areas with a lot of gun violence, a lot of sales of narcotics, and conduct a saturated patrol, park, walk, and talk with the individual that resides in the area," according to the opinion.

Williams said if officers saw criminal activity they would make contact with the individuals during the operations.

On the night Stevens was arrested, Williams was in a convoy of officers patrolling Ras Valley, along with Officer Kyle Gabriel. They approached Building 18 and saw two men sitting in a stairwell, who stood up and hid behind the building's support columns as police approached.

At this point, Francois wrote that Williams and Stevens gave the court a different version of events.

Williams said officers instructed

Accordingly, the Court finds that the stop & frisk violated the Fourth Amendment and that the firearm seized must be suppressed.

—V.I. Superior Court Judge Denise Francois

Stevens and the other man, later identified as his cousin Elroy Cornelius to come out of the stairwell and submit to a brief pat-down search, which is when he discovered an illegal firearm in Stevens's waistband.

Stevens, meanwhile, said he and Cornelius were talking outside the building's archway when police ran into the area with machine guns pointed at them, and ordered them not to move before searching them.

Francois said she did not find Williams's testimony to be credible, according to the opinion.

"First, based on the court's observation of Williams demeanor, his testimony appeared to be by rote and almost mechanical. Williams' testimony did not appear to be coached, but rather a collection of legal buzz words designed to support an investigatory stop and frisk," Francois wrote.

The Fourth Amendment protects citizens from "governmental intrusion not authorized by warrant" and "whenever a police officer accosts an individual and restrains his freedom to walk away, he has seized that person and the Fourth Amendment requires that the seizure be 'reasonable,'" according to the opinion.

Investigatory stop and frisk is legal, but only when an officer has "a reasonable and articulable suspicion

of criminal activity," according to the opinion.

In this case, Francois found that Williams could not articulate any criminal activity that prompted officers to search Stevens and his cousin.

"Yet, he still decided to make contact with the two individuals. Officers conducting an operation to patrol neighborhoods with high levels of crime and drugs cannot subject individuals in those areas to a stop and frisk," Francois wrote.

In fact, Francois wrote that Williams and Gabriel had trouble remembering basic facts about the operation, including who they were working with and what weapons they were carrying.

Williams continually cited Stevens' "furtive movements" and "suspicious activity" but could not recall the date or time of the events leading up to the arrest, and "Gabriel's testimony contradicted both his own and that of Williams during the course of the suppression hearing," Francois wrote. "Gabriel's conflicting testimony does not support Williams' testimony nor aids the common sense evaluation of the record. Initially, Gabriel testified that he did not recall which marked unit he was in nor did he recall the officer that was within him in the unit. Yet, Gabriel testified that 'we got out

of the car' and mentioned Williams throughout his testimony."

Francois wrote that the prosecution's efforts to convince the court that the search was legal was an abject failure.

"Williams' testimony not only was unpersuasive and appeared pre-conceived, but it also conflicted at several points with his fellow officer. It is unclear why the People called Gabriel as a rebuttal witness because Gabriel could not recall which vehicle he was in or who was in the vehicle with him. Further, Gabriel could not recall whether he carried a Glock or a machine gun," Francois wrote. "On the other hand, Cornelius corroborated Stevens' testimony, and also Gabriel's testimony that officers usually carry machine guns made Stevens' version of events more probable."

Francois found that police did not have reasonable suspicion to warrant the investigatory stop and frisk that resulted in the firearm seizure.

"Accordingly, the court finds that the stop & frisk violated the Fourth Amendment and that the firearm seized must be suppressed," Francois wrote.

Francois said she analyzed the statements made by Williams and Stevens, and found the police officer's version of events not to be credible.

It's unclear how many people were arrested as a result of the police operation, but at least two other individuals were arrested and charged with possession of an illegal firearm on the same day Stevens was arrested.

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Police make arrest in St. Croix slaying

Daily News Staff

Virgin Islands police have made an arrest in the slaying of a man in March on St. Croix.

According to police, detectives from the Criminal Investigation Bureau's Major Crimes Unit were able to link the slaying to a man already detained at Golden Grove Adult Correctional Facility.

Alex Gonzalez, 24, was discovered lying in the parking lot of the Ruby M. Rouss housing community in



Manuel Davis

Christiansted with multiple gunshot wounds about 12:10 a.m. March 31, according to a VI. police press release. Residents called police to report multiple shots discharged in the area about that time, according to the release.

Emergency medical personnel attempted to revive Gonzalez, but he was pronounced dead at the scene.

Manuel Davis, 21, also known as "Matatan," of William's Delight, has been arrested on charges of murder in the first degree in the March slaying, according to police spokesman Glen Dratte.

According to Daily News archives, he had previously been arrested June 21 on charges of third-degree assault-domestic violence.

Bail on the murder charge has been set at \$1 million.

Detainee arrested in Estate Glynn robbery

Daily News Staff

VI. police have made an arrest in an armed robbery that occurred in May in Estate Glynn, St. Croix.

According to police, the victim was robbed at gunpoint while walking in the area.

An investigation led to the issuance of a warrant for Daquan J.J. Forde, 20, in the incident.

The warrant for robbery in the first degree was served Friday at Golden Grove Adult Correctional Facility where Forde was detained in an unrelated matter, according to police

spokesman Glen Dratte.

Forde was previously arrested in June after officers stopped a silver Honda Accord for a traffic violation.

According to police, the car's occupants, three men including Forde, were asked to exit the vehicle after the driver failed to produce either his driver's license or the vehicle's documents.



Dequan J.J. Forde

A search revealed a gun on 21-year-old Keshawn Kirby and a second weapon in the back seat of the car where Forde had been sitting, police said.

Neither Kirby nor Forde are authorized to possess a firearm in the Virgin Islands, according to police.

Kirby and Forde were charged with unauthorized possession of a firearm or ammunition in the incident and bail was set at \$25,000 in the incident.

Bail has been set at \$100,000 in the Estate Glynn robbery and Forde remains in custody at Golden Grove.

Missing St. Croix man found on St. John

Daily News Staff

A 57-year-old man suffering from dementia has been located.

According to police, St. Croix resident Timothy Howard was found Sat-

urday evening on St. John.

Howard had last been seen leaving his St. Croix home Tuesday morning.

He was taken to Schneider Hospital on St. Thomas for evaluation and

appeared to be physically doing well, police said.

Police Commissioner Delroy Richards Sr. thanked the community for its support and his officers for their concerted effort.

Governor's Agenda

Today

No appearances are scheduled.

Government House did not provide Gov. Kenneth Mapp's agenda.

New hours for cashiers at Tax Assessor's office on St. John

Daily News Staff

St. John property owners needing to pay tax bills will need to do so be-

tween 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Lt. Governor's Office has announced new hours for cashier services

at the Tax Assessor's office on St. John.

For more information, please call **340-776-8505** in St. Thomas and **340-776-6737** in St. John.



Notice to the Public

Notice is hereby given to the owners of trailers, carnival booths, vehicles and any other structures stored at 2C Estate Ross #8 New Quarter, St. Thomas, VI adjacent to the Charlotte Amalie High School.

These items are located on VIHFA property and can no longer be stored at this location and will be towed and impounded at the owner's expense if not removed within the next seven days. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Management of the Virgin Islands
Housing Finance Authority

July 27, 2018



PUBLIC NOTICE

The Forest Legacy Program of the US Virgin Islands is identifying potential projects to submit to the US Forest Service (USDA-FS) to secure funding. The selected projects will enter a process of regional evaluation followed by national evaluation to compete for acquisition funds. The US Virgin Islands Forest Legacy Program protects environmentally important forest areas that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses by purchasing development rights through fee title or conservation easements.

This process is highly competitive and funds are limited. For a property to be eligible to participate in this program, the following aspects will be considered:

The property must:

- Be within one of the six (6) Forest Legacy Priority Areas
- Have at least 75% forest cover
- Contain quality forest resources and wildlife habitat
- Have presence of protected, threatened or endangered species
- Contain resources of cultural, historical or scenic significance

Forest landowners interested in participating in the annual competition must complete the US Virgin Islands Forest Legacy Program Application.

For additional information or to obtain copy of the application, please contact the Forest Legacy Program Coordinator, Louis Hilgemann via email: louis.hilgemann@doa.vi.gov

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.
This publication was made possible through a grant from the USDA Forest Service.*



The Virgin Islands

DAILY NEWS



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Christmas in July?

Mapp doles out government pay hikes by decree; he's banking on economic growth to cover the cost Page 3



Mobile classrooms

Modular classrooms are transported by convoy through Charlotte Amalie on Monday. Their arrival in the territory comes nearly 11 months after hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated schools throughout the Virgin Islands. Daily News photo by SUZANNE CARLSON **Page 2**

BVI boosts medal haul in Colombia Back Page



BAQ 2018

V.I. Police look to bolster their ranks Page 5



Disaster ambassadors descend on Tortola Page 2

Inside

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ISSN 2159-3019



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Modular classrooms begin arriving in territory

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — The first set of modular classrooms has arrived in the territory and more are on the way, according to Education Department spokeswoman Keva Muller.

“They arrived in the territory yesterday, but they’re not all going to one school. Some went to St. John and some went to St. Croix,” Muller said.

Education Commissioner Sharon McCollum said via email she was traveling out of the territory and deferred to Muller.

Muller said there’s “four to five more ships coming with classrooms” that have yet to arrive.

A convoy of seven modular classroom units traveled along Veterans Drive in Charlotte Amalie on Monday.

A minimum of 240 temporary classrooms and administration buildings, along with 14 multipurpose sprung structures are expected to be erected across the territory by architectural and engineering firm AECOM, according to a press release from the Education Department.

McCollum told the Senate Finance Committee on July 16 that eight school campuses are slated for temporary structural repairs to support a transition back into full sessions.

In the St. Croix district, these include: Lew Muckle Elementary School; Pearle B. Larsen Elementary School; Eulalie Rivera Elementary School; Alexander Henderson Elementary School; Alfredo Andrews Elementary School; and John H. Woodson Junior High School.

In the St. Thomas-St. John district, these include: Joseph Gomez Elementary School; and Ulla F. Muller Elementary School.

A minimum of 240 temporary classrooms and administration buildings, along with 14 multipurpose sprung structures are expected to be erected across the territory by architectural and engineering firm AECOM, according to a press release from the Education Department.

Charlotte Amalie High School gymnasium will also receive temporary roof and floor repairs, while several classrooms at the school will receive asbestos abatement services.

McCollum said at the committee hearing that a memorandum of understanding is currently being devised between the Education Department and the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority for the use of a parcel of land adjacent to Charlotte Amalie High School for one year.

The provision allows for students to remain on campus during the school day, eliminating the need to transport them to and from the Lionel Roberts Stadium for sports activities, as was previously planned.

Installation of temporary modular units and school repairs is expected to be finished by Aug. 28, and classes begin Sept. 4.

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@dailynews.vi.



A convoy of modular classrooms navigates Weymouth Rhymer Highway on Monday afternoon on St. Thomas.

Daily News photo by SIÂN PERRY

St. Kitts and Nevis youth ambassadors in BVI to help



Photo by BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

Disaster Management Youth Ambassadors from St. Kitts and Nevis stand in front of the Coast Guard Cutter Stalwart that brought them to Tortola on Monday. The 24-member team is in the British Virgin Islands to assist in recovery and restoration efforts in the territory.

Daily News Staff

Youth ambassadors from St. Kitts and Nevis will spend the next week in the British Virgin Islands helping the territory recover from the 2017 hurricane season.

The 24 Comprehensive Disaster Management youth ambassadors, ranging in age from 18 to 30, arrived Monday at the Pier Park in Tortola aboard the St. Kitts and Nevis Coast Guard Cutter Stalwart after a 12-hour journey.

“In disaster management, we have to look out for each other,” said Deputy National Disaster Coordinator Claricia Langley-Stevens. “BVI needed our help.”

The ambassadors will spend the week on island assisting with repairs

to schools, clearing grounds at government buildings and working with the BVI’s Department of Disaster Management in preparing sites for the installation of early warning systems.

“Their support is very much needed at a time when we are rushing to prepare for the active portion of the hurricane season,” said Disaster Management Deputy Director Evangeline Inniss-Springer.

“They will be working on a number of important initiatives that support the territory’s Readiness Plan and we are certain that they will contribute meaningfully to the tasks that have been planned out for them,” Inniss-Springer said.

The youth ambassadors will be staying at the Seventh-day Adventist School in Sea Cows Bay and are be-

ing supported by the local St. Kitts-Nevis Association as well as the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

“The contribution by the youth is significant and is in keeping with the disaster risk reduction youth programme that is promoted by the DDM,” Inniss-Springer said. “We hope that this initiative will spark interest by other youth groups locally and regionally who may wish to offer assistance to the BVI.”

The Youth Ambassadors Programme brings together youth and adult mentors to promote mutual understanding, increase leadership skills and prepare youth to make a difference in their communities.

The group will leave the territory on Sunday.

State of emergency necessary for funding flexibility, Mapp says

By BRIAN O'CONNOR
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — An ongoing State of Emergency is necessary to assist the rapid deployment of federal funding, Gov. Kenneth Mapp said at Monday's press conference.

Mapp's comments on the subject are his first substantive public discussion of the state of emergency declared on Sept. 5, and subsequently renewed nine times, though elements of the state of emergency, like a price freeze, have been altered.

“It doesn't give the governor any superpowers. It allows for a truncated procurement process.”

— Gov. Kenneth Mapp

Croix — Mapp said he was still relying on the power to streamline the property and procurement procedure.

“If the feds have us under a state of emergency so they can help us, it seems innocuous that we should say, ‘Well, we're going back under our regular procurement process, and you rush aid to us, and we're simply going to take our time to spend it,’” he said.

The bottom line is that a shorter procurement process results in faster turnarounds for federal funding, Mapp said.

“It doesn't give the governor any superpowers,” he said. “It allows for a truncated procurement process.”

For example, modular school buildings could have been delayed by two or three months to the process, Mapp said.

Mapp's emergency powers have become the subject of Bill 32-0185, designed to involve the Legislature in the process.

Senators — including Sen. Tregenza Roach, the bill's sponsor — have said the bill is not intended as a direct political assault against the Mapp administration, but is instead designed to bolster the Legislature's ability to monitor executive power in times of emergency.

The bill, which passed the Government Affairs, Veterans, Energy and Environmental Protection Committee unanimously, has not yet gone before the Rules and Judiciary Committee.

Under the proposed bill, the governor could declare a state of emergency for up to 60 days without involving the Legislature, after which the Governor's Office would have to make the case to the Legislature every 30 days. If the Legislature failed to act, the state of emergency or disaster declaration would be automatically renewed.

By contrast, federal presidential disaster declarations don't come with a set end-date, though federal funding for recovery decreases as time goes by. The presidential disaster declarations may be amended by presidential decree.

The local declaration allows the administration to move contracts into place ahead of the funding decreases, Mapp said.

“All the recovery is on a time schedule,” he said. “We want to go the long route and run the clock out, it's just going to cost us.”

— Contact Brian O'Connor at 340-714-9130 or email boconnor@dailynews.vi.

Wagering on economic growth, Mapp hikes government salaries

By BRIAN O'CONNOR
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Starting next week, some government employees will have a happier trip to the bank.

Gov. Kenneth Mapp announced pay raises totaling millions of dollars at a press conference Monday at the West Indian Company's headquarters on St. Thomas.

The minimum wage for government workers will be \$13 per hour, or about \$27,000 annually, while select categories of employees will receive bigger boosts.

The raises, effective Wednesday, were made by executive order.

Mapp said he doesn't yet know the full price tag of the pay hikes.

“I don't have a completed price tag, because what I have to do and the Budget Office has been working with us on these numbers,” he said. “They have to pull out the numbers that are already contained in the budget that will be exercised and then what the actual numbers are.”

The raises will be funded in part by empty positions that the government currently funds but which go unfilled because of low salaries, Mapp said.

“The majority of that money is already sitting in the budget, but we just simply don't have the bodies in which to put the folks into,” he said. “We fund those positions annually, but we just don't fill them.”

A combination of previously funded but unfilled positions and economic development will cover the cost of the pay raises, Mapp said.

“We're going to sustain them through the growth of the economy,” he said. “For example, moving the base wage of the government workforce as a minimum wage affecting about 500, let's say 545 workers, costs the government \$3, \$3.5 million. Bringing up the teachers by 10K as a minimum wage and if we filled every vacant position, it would be \$6.6 million.”

The raises are centered on what Mapp termed primary need positions, ranging from police officers to teachers to emergency medical technicians. In some cases, as in pay for Head Start teachers employed by the VI. Human Services Department, the wage increases bring positions into line with similar positions already on offer.

“Why would I teach for \$27,000 if I can get a job for \$34,000, if I'm interested in taking the job at \$34,000?” he said.

The increases apply to prospective new employees, as well as those currently making less than the base pay salary, Mapp said.

“Any employee that is in the government now that are under these new minimum base wages, the director of the division of personnel will move them to the new minimum salary,” he said.

However, teachers already earning the adjusted base pay rate of \$44,000 per year or above won't see an additional nickel, Mapp said.

Some first responder pay raises are tied to obtaining and maintaining specific qualifica-



Daily News photo by BRIAN O'CONNOR

Gov. Kenneth Mapp, joined by Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter, announces pay raises for government employees at a press conference on St. Thomas on Monday.

New starting and base salaries

Employee Type	Starting Salary	Base Pay
Teachers	\$44,000	\$44,000
Firefighters	\$33,000	\$38,000
Corrections Officers	\$35,000	\$40,000
EMT-Basic	\$35,159	\$35,159
EMT-Intermediate	\$37,100	\$37,100
Paramedic	\$41,140	\$41,140
DPNR Officers	\$33,000	\$38,000
Licensing and Consumer Affairs	\$33,000	\$38,000
Police Officers	\$35,000	\$40,900
Social Worker I	\$45,130	\$45,130
Social Worker II	\$49,455	\$49,455
Social Worker III	\$54,180	\$54,180
Social Worker IV	\$57,395	\$57,395
Head Start Teachers	\$44,000	\$44,000
Preschool Teaching Assistants	\$35,000	\$35,000
All Government Employees	\$27,040	\$27,040

“We're going to sustain them through the growth of the economy.”

— Gov. Kenneth Mapp

tions. For example, police officers, firefighters, and corrections officers who earn and obtain a basic EMT certification are entitled to a \$4,500 per year increase and a \$500 annual stipend for additional equipment costs.

Not every police officer, firefighter, or prison guard will be eligible for these additional boosts, Mapp said.

“It is not open for all of the first responders

to simply become registered EMT basics,” he said. “Department heads will send me regulations and will set up a lotto system in terms of how many officers they need to be certified EMTs and the process by which they will fairly select officers to take that training.”

The government will offer training through the Jackson Memorial Hospital's Ryder Trauma Center in Miami, Mapp said.

Direct employees of the executive branch are not alone in getting raises. For example, the government-owned Schneider Hospital increased starting salaries for registered nurses by about \$12,000 per year in mid-July.

“I'm asking the heads of the judicial branch of government and the president of the Legislature, as well as the governing authorities of our instrumentalities, to adopt similar base minimum wages,” he said.

Mapp defends plans for refinery money

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Gov. Kenneth Mapp defended plans for refinery revenues at Monday's press conference on St. Thomas.

Mapp called legislators into a special session on Wednesday to approve two agreements relating to the Limetree Bay Terminals oil refinery plan on St. Croix, as well as a host of measures earmarking the resulting revenues.

Instead of approving the agreements and spending measures, senators approved the agreements, leaving the spending measures temporarily in limbo, though legislators have said they will take up the matters. These include such proposals as payments to the Government Employees' Retirement System, potentially worth \$395 million; a \$10 million loan to a hotel developer; and a \$25 million down payment for the West Indian Company to buy Havensight Mall from GERS.

The mall purchase did not emerge out of nothing, Mapp said.

"I did not pull that out of thin air and say that the Public Finance Authority should simply buy the Havensight Mall," he said.

The idea arose instead from the GERS, Mapp said, echoing an account offered by WICO Executive Director Clifford Graham before the Legislature during Wednesday's session.

"Mr. Graham approached me because he had received several letters and a bevy of emails from [GERS Administrator] Austin Nibbs informing him that the investment committee of the GERS had made a decision to

put the Havensight Mall and the Port of Sale lease on the market, and that it was going to go out to the private sector and they would provide the West Indian Company the right of first refusal to keep the mall in the public sector's hands," he said.

Mapp also criticized Nibbs for publicly saying the measure was premature.

"When Mr. Nibbs sent his letter to the Legislature last Wednesday saying they hadn't done any consulting work and it should be removed from the agenda, that's just playing games and that's just playing games with the lives of the people in the territory," he said.

Nibbs did not respond to calls for comment Monday afternoon.

The property should remain in possession of the Virgin Islands government, particularly WICO, which could improve the mall, Mapp said.

The Government Employees' Retirement System can no longer administer a pension program and become a landlord, he said. "It no longer has that luxury."

At the same time, Mapp said, both the Public Finance Authority and its subsidiaries should be exempt from disclosing how the transaction would affect WICO's finances, and said he had no power to provide financial records from WICO, the VI. Next Generation Network, or King's Alley Management, all of which are taxpayer-owned subsidiary entities of the Public Finance Authority, Mapp said.

"They were structured this way so they can conduct business in a business manner," he said.

Mapp is the chairman of the Public Finance Authority. However, making



Daily News file photo

The Limetree Bay Terminals facility on St. Croix, formerly HOVENSA, is set to begin refining oil under a new agreement with the V.I. government.

documents from the subsidiary companies public is outside his purview, he said.

"That's why they all have a board of directors," he said.

Mapp also rejected the notion that WICO is a public agency, despite a U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals ruling declaring it is concerning First Amendment issues — based in part on a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that found that Amtrak, which is ruled by a govern-

ment-appointed board, is a government agency.

"That ruling doesn't say all its books and all its papers are open to the public just like any government agency," he said. "That's just a consequence of the law."

Mapp also defended a loan for a hotel project at Yacht Haven Grande, which would provide interest to the government, put the government in a senior lien position (meaning the gov-

ernment would be paid back first in the event of a default) and provide the government with a 7.5 percent equity stake in the event that the hotel was sold.

"We cannot be bought out of the project for the first five years," he said. "Those dollars, too, are directed under this rubric to go to the Government Employees' Retirement System."

— Contact Brian O'Connor at 340-714-9130 or email boconnor@dailynews.vi.

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Daily News Publishing Co. Inc. owned by VIDN Holdings, LLC publishes The Virgin Islands Daily News daily, except Sunday, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, at 9155 Estate Thomas, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, VI 00802. First class postage paid at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. U.S.V.I.

USPS 144-180

POSTMASTER, send Form 3579, Notice of Address Change, to: Circulation Director, Daily News, 9155 Estate Thomas, St. Thomas, VI 00802.

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The Virgin Islands
DAILY NEWS

A Pulitzer Prize-Winning Newspaper
ST. CROIX ST. JOHN ST. THOMAS TORTOLA

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: One dollar daily. Other subscription rates available on request. The publisher reserves the right to change subscription rates during the term of a subscription with 30 days notice. The notice may be made by mail to the subscriber, by notice contained in the newspaper itself or otherwise. Subscription changes may be implemented by changing the duration of the subscription.

VIPD says 3 new cop classes could soon hit the streets

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — As many as 100 new police officers could hit the streets within the next year, officials said.

At a Monday press conference, during which Gov. Kenneth Mapp spent the lion's share talking about pay raises for government employees and plans for revenue from the St. Croix refinery, VI. Police Commissioner Delroy Richards Sr. said he is working on three classes of recruits.

"On Sunday, we will be transporting the recruits from St. Thomas to St. Croix at the National Guard facility," he said. "We will be hosting our joint recruit class beginning on a Monday."

VI. Police classes are designated by year, followed by a numerical order of graduation, Richards said. For example, the 25-trainee 18-1 class is already being trained on the streets, while the 23-trainee 18-2 class is



Delroy Richards Sr.

headed to St. Croix for academy training.

Police are working on getting enough qualified recruits for a third class, Richards said.

"What's going to follow that, we also have background investigations being conducted as we speak for almost 50 add-on candidates," he said. "We want to have an 18-3."

Police recruiting will in turn lead to an increased police presence, Richards said.

"The idea is to have as much police officers back on the street as possible, and we intend to commence 18-3 as soon as the numbers are ready," he said.

Class 18-2 also will receive intensive training from representatives from the International Association of Chiefs of Police, as well as other

off-island training regimes, Richards said.

The entire department will benefit from the training, Richards said.

"For some time now, we've been engaged in discussions with off-island trainers," he said. "We should have some of those trainers in the territory within the next coming weeks. They're going to train with the local police cadres or trainers. They're going to provide training to the recruits, provide training to my senior staff and my supervisors within the department."

Additional training and an infusion of personnel could bolster the department's fortunes, Richards said. The department has been dogged by a lingering federal consent decree over accusations of excessive force.

"The idea, obviously, is to provide a police department that's second to none in the nation," he said.

— Contact Brian O'Connor at 340-714-9130 or email boconnor@dailynews.vi.

Today, July 31		
Carnival Magic (3,675)	11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.	Havensight
Harmony of the Seas (6,780)	10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Crown Bay
Wednesday, Aug. 1		
Disney Fantasy (4,000)	6:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.	Havensight
Thursday, Aug. 2		
Freedom of the Seas (3,634)	8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.	Crown Bay
Friday, Aug. 3 to Sunday, Aug. 5		
No ships		
Monday, Aug. 6		
Carnival Fascination (2,634)	7 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Havensight
Tuesday, Aug. 7		
Caribbean Princess (3,600)	Noon to 10 p.m.	Havensight
Carnival Magic (3,675)	11 a.m. to 7 p.m.	Havensight
Celebrity Equinox (2,850)	8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Crown Bay

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July 27, 2018

Soaking up the sea and sun



Daily News photo by LINDA MORLAND

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Man arrested on Tennessee warrant for federal drug and firearms crimes

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — A man wanted on numerous drug and weapons charges in Tennessee was arrested by warrant on St. Thomas on Friday, according to documents filed in U.S. District Court.

Joshua Boyd, also known as Joshua Redmond, was indicted by a grand jury on one count each of possession with intent to distribute fentanyl, cocaine, crack cocaine, ecstasy, oxycodone, marijuana and Xanax, according to a warrant for his arrest.

In addition, Boyd was charged with possession of three firearms by a convicted felon, specifically an ISSC .22-caliber rifle, a Clerke Technicolor .32-caliber revolver, and a Jimenez Arms .380-caliber pistol, according to the warrant.

If convicted of the first five charges against him, Boyd faces a potential sentence of no more than 20 years in prison and a \$1 million fine — which would be increased to 30 years and \$2 million if he has a previous drug conviction, according to court documents.

The marijuana and Xanax charges each carry a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, and the firearms count carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Boyd appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Ruth Miller Friday, where she ordered him to be committed to the custody of officials in the Western District of Tennessee for further court proceedings.

It's unclear from court documents how long Boyd may have been living in the territory prior to his arrest.

Deaths

Henry Louis Magras

Relatives and friends are advised of the passing of Henry Louis Magras, also known as "Bucoo (Beaucoup)" and "Bad Ass Magras."

He was born on May 23, 1937, and died on July 18, 2018, at the age of 81.

Born and raised in St. Thomas, V.I., he was known for his good sense of humor, enjoying life, traveling, fishing, diving, camping and spending time with his family.

He also enjoyed good times with his special friends and their families. He was known in the dry cleaning industry for more than 65 years, from The One Hour Martinizing, to O'Henry's cleaners and now recently The Magras Cleaners.

He is survived by his wife, Angelina Magras (Brin); daughters Diane-Magras-Urena, Angela Marie Magras, and Jeanette Ann Magras (deceased); sons-in-Law Tony Urena, Ismeal "Malito" Rosado, and Marlon Hibbert; grandchildren Lia Ortiz Hibbert, Jerome Saldana, Chantel Backes, Antonio Urena, Briana Backes, Serene Saldana, and Alana Urena; great-grandchildren Jayden Stanley and Aria Saldana; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and nephews too many to name; and many special friends and their families.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend first viewing that will be held on Thursday at the Celestial Chapel of Hurley Funeral Home from 5 to 7 p.m. The second viewing will be held on Friday at the Celestial Chapel of Hurley Funeral Home from 8 to 9 a.m. Mass will begin at 9:30 a.m. at Ss. Peter & Paul Cathedral.

Interment will be in Western Cemetery No. 1.

Arrangements are under the care of Hurley Funeral Home and Cremation Center of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.

For online directions and condolences, please visit www.hurleydavisfuneralhome.com.



Henry Louis Magras

Roy Joseph Sasso

Relatives and friends are advised of the passing of Roy Joseph Sasso, affectionately known as "Sasso," who passed away on Saturday, July 21, 2018, at Schneider Regional Medical Center at the age of 74.

Mr. Sasso was a former mailman for the U.S. Postal Service and a former combat Vietnam veteran.

Roy Joseph Sasso is survived by his sons, Raun Sasso, and Shawn "Sean" Sasso; daughter Shenee Sasso; brother Liston Bailey Sr.; sisters: Marguerita Johnson and Ruby Gomez Wilson; grandchildren Se'Jahne Sean Sasso, C'Rawn Sasso, and Rhe'Mhya Thomas; special niece Marlene Cross Calvin and nieces Delsa Joseph, Dale Hill, Marguerita Cross, Neema Wilson, Brenda Dyer, Shawn Dyer, Rafaela Velasquez, Laura Velinor, Patrice Bailey, Luna Bailey, and Barbara Morrisette Zellner; nephews Liston Bailey Jr., Jeffery Morrisette, and Ridgley Wilson; cousins Chalea Zellner, Eva W. Georges Lewis, Evis A. Lake, Yvonne Ag Philip, and Bernice Bornett; special family members Dale Galiber Hill, Chemene Joseph, and Eva W. Lewis; godchild Elijah Freeman; and many other relatives and friends here and abroad too numerous to mention.



Roy Joseph Sasso

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend the first viewing that will be held on Friday at the Celestial Chapel of Hurley Funeral Home from 5 to 7 p.m. The second viewing will be held on Saturday at the Celestial Chapel of Hurley Funeral Home from 9 to 10 a.m., with service immediately following at 10 a.m.

The body will be cremated. Arrangements are under the care of Hurley Funeral Home and Cremation Center of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.

For online directions and condolences, please visit www.hurleydavisfuneralhome.com.

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Young basketball phenom comes home to meet her fans



Daily News photo by BILL KISER

Aliyah Boston, who was born on St. Thomas, receives flowers, balloons and other gifts from well-wishers at King Airport on Tuesday afternoon after her arrival in the territory. Boston returned to the territory after leading the United States' under-17 girls national team to the gold medal in the 2018 FIBA U-17 Women's Basketball World Cup in Minsk, Belarus, on Sunday.



St. Lucian chef draws on her Caribbean roots

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Averil George is nominated to run Labor Department

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BVI hurdler sets CAC record

Back Page



Page 3

Message about a bottle

Effort seeks to help V.I. businesses eliminate single-use plastic items

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Offer valid until July 30th, 2018, at McDonald's restaurants in St. Thomas, Lockhart, French Town, and Tutu Park; St. Croix: Golden Rock and Wile La Reine. Bacon Clubhouse prices: Individual \$5.60, medium combo \$7.60. Double Bacon Clubhouse prices: Individual \$6.99, medium combo \$9.00. © 2018 McDonald's Corporation

Temporary classrooms start coming together



Daily News photo by BILL KISER

Crews use a backhoe Tuesday to dig around concrete slabs laid to support mobile classroom units being erected on the athletic field at Charlotte Amalie High School on St. Thomas.



Daily News photo by BILL KISER

A construction worker installs positioning guides for other workers to pour concrete slabs to support pre-fabricated mobile classroom units being erected at Charlotte Amalie High School.



Photo by V.I. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

A modular classroom is unloaded at the Crown Bay dock on St. Thomas. According to the Education Department, more modular classrooms will arrive at the port each week until the start of the new school year.



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File photo by NOAA PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERIES SERVICE SCIENCE CENTER

Campaign seeks to rid V.I. of single-use plastics

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

Ocean plastic and its harmful effects on wildlife and public health has compelled a local campaign to wage war on single-use plastics, an all-out effort to encourage businesses to adopt greener, more environmentally sound practices and earn grants — and kudos — in the process.

The “V.I. Clean Coasts” campaign, which launches today, is the brainchild of the Virgin Islands Conservation Society and the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources Coastal Zone Management. The program aims to reach out to local businesses, provide free consultations and ultimately aid them in phasing out materials and practices that are environmentally harmful.

According society member Valerie Peters, single-use plastics were an easy target.

“Single-use plastics seem to be the lowest hanging fruit right now,” she said. “Plastic doesn’t biodegrade. It doesn’t get absorbed into the environment. It just breaks down into smaller pieces. Those pieces are being consumed by our food chain — so ultimately, we are consuming it as well and all of the carcinogens with it. Right now, it’s an environmental issue, but it’s quickly becoming a health issue. They go hand in hand.”

Kristina Edwards, education and outreach coordinator for CZM, echoed Peters, insisting plastics were a global issue that were very much felt in the Virgin Islands.

“I’m a diver and I cannot go out on a dive without coming back with a bag of trash,”



Photo by VIRGIN ISLANDS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Valerie Peters joins other Virgin Islands Conservation Society members in gathering plastic bottles from the East End on St. Thomas on Earth Day, April 22.

she said. “Even after the storms, we had shipments full of water bottles, which were for a very good cause, but now that’s trash we have to deal with — it’s not going to go away. So, anything that we can do to help curb that issue, I’m 100 percent behind.”

By registering for the free program by Sept.

28, businesses will be eligible to apply for seed grants from CZM to assist with necessary changes like purchasing paper straws or reusable bags, cups and utensils, according to a Conservation Society press release.

“Let’s say a restaurant wants to go ahead and just use glassware in their restaurant, but they need a dishwasher,” Peters said. “They can apply for a grant that will help cover the cost of that dishwasher. So, facilitating those changes is what this program is really about.”

Edwards said another incentive for businesses is the recognition they will receive on the Virgin Islands Conservation Society website once they are deemed certified by the program.

“I want the real incentive to be to celebrate what businesses are doing,” Edwards said. “We really hope this is a very vocal program where we will work with businesses and customers to see what they want,” Edwards said. “Right now, we’re focusing on single-use plastics and the website is the out-of-the-box incentive. But maybe next year, we find out the businesses are really interested in another environmental issue and we can expand to composting, chemicals or water and energy usage. Just as we are helping businesses make changes, they can help us find new incentives.”

Businesses are encouraged to register for this program at: www.dpnr.vi.gov/czm/programs-viczmp/vi-clean-coasts/.

For more information, please contact Peters at blueflagusvi@gmail.com or Edwards at kristina.edwards@dpnr.vi.gov.

— Contact A.J. Rao at 340-714-9104 or email ajrao@dailynews.vi.

George tapped to lead Labor

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

Gov. Kenneth Mapp has formally nominated Averil E. George as commissioner of the V.I. Labor Department. George has been serving as acting commissioner since her appointment on June 25.

In a Government House press release issued Tuesday, Mapp described George as a “great asset to his leadership team and praised her work and dedication as assistant director of the Division of Personnel.



Averil E. George

“It is my pleasure to ask the advice and consent of the 32nd Legislature on the nomination of Ms. George,” Mapp wrote in a nomination letter to Senate President Myron Jackson. “Your prompt and favorable confirmation will enhance the Department of Labor’s ability to meet its demanding mandates and continued service to the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands.”

George told The Daily News she was thankful for the nomination.

“I thank the governor for the confidence he has in me to appoint me to this position and I’m looking forward to working with the team at Labor and putting the necessary processes and procedures in place to make sure that we’ll be able to continue to serve the people of our community,” she said. “One of my priorities is to make sure our workforce and individuals in our community are trained so they can meet the mandate of filling all those positions we have coming on board and what is out there now.”

In addition to being assistant director of the Division of Personnel, George has also worked as an audit supervisor at Pinnacle Services on St. Croix between 2012 and 2015 and at Hovensa on St. Croix between 2000 and 2012.

George earned her MBA from the University of Phoenix in Phoenix, Ariz., and her bachelor of arts in accounting at the University of the Virgin Islands.

— Contact A.J. Rao at 340-714-9104 or email ajrao@dailynews.vi.

“
One of my priorities is to make sure our workforce and individuals in our community are trained so they can meet the mandate of filling all those positions we have coming on board and what is out there now.”

— Averil E. George, Labor commissioner nominee

More than 3,500 votes cast early

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

Early voters turned out by the thousands, but did not set a record, Elections System figures show.

Elections System officials put the final number of early ballots cast at 3,521. On St. Croix, 1,404 voters beat the election day rush, while on St. Thomas, 2,038 ballots were filed. On St. John, 79 voters cast early ballots.

That's down from the 2016 General Election, when voters on all three islands cast 5,054 early bal-



Daily News file photo

Early voters fill out ballots on St. Thomas.

lots, though it dwarfs the 2016 primary, when voters cast 831 early ballots, according to Elections System figures. The 2018 primary is the first gubernatorial election year — when local turnout is at its highest — with early voting totals.

General Election turnout usually surpasses primary election turnout, said Elections Supervisor Caroline Fawkes.

“A lot of people left the island,” she said.

So far, absentee ballots are down slightly, too, though Fawkes said she expects them to pick up for the General Election.

Early voting began during the 2014 election cycle.

However, early voting on St. Croix in 2014 was interrupted by a controversy involving the candidacy of Alicia Hansen, said Fawkes,

making for a difficult direct comparison.

St. Croix voters cast 294 early votes during early voting in the primary in 2016. St. Thomas voters cast 505 early voters during the same period. St. John voters cast 32 votes in the 2016 primary.

However, early voting totals for the 2016 General Election edge the most recent figures.

On St. Croix, 1,816 voters cast early ballots during the 2016 General Election. Almost as many St. Thomas early ballots were cast — 3,062 — during the General Election as have been cast so far. St. John voters cast 176 ballots.

The primary election is scheduled for Saturday.

— *Contact Brian O'Connor at 340-714-9130 or email boconnor@dailynews.vi.*



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2018 Elections Calendar

Saturday: PRIMARY ELECTION

Aug. 9: Registrars in the VI. Elections System commence registration.

Sept. 11: First day for receipt by the Elections supervisor of applications for absentee ballots for the General Election.

Sept. 20: All federal ballots to be mailed out to military and overseas personnel per the MOVE Act of 2009.

Oct. 7: Last day for registration.

Oct. 7: First day for examination of voting machines and instructions in use of electronic voting machines.

Oct. 7: Last day to investigate all questions relating to registration of electors.

Oct. 15: First day of early voting

Oct. 17: Last day for examination of voting machines and instruction in use of electronic voting machines.

Oct. 17: Deadline for qualified electors to petition the Board of Elections to cancel the registration of any registered elector for cause shown.

Oct. 17: Deadline for appeals to the Superior Court by persons whose claims for registration were denied or whose previous registration was canceled and who has exhausted all administrative remedies.

Oct. 29: Last day of early voting.

Nov. 6: GENERAL ELECTION

Nov. 20: Run-off election day.

Nov. 25: Registrars in the VI. Elections System commence registration.

For the candidates

Aug. 28: Casting of lots for General

Election ballot.

Aug. 31: In case of a tie vote in the primary election, the candidates receiving the tie votes shall cast lots before the Elections supervisor at noon.

Oct. 7: Deadline for receipt of removal notices and transfer of registration.

Oct. 7: Last day for change of enrollment of political party and cancellation of party enrollment.

Oct. 9: Official public notice of General Election due.

Oct. 12: Testing of electronic voting machines and tabulating equipment; certification by the Board.

Oct. 16: Deadline for receipt by the Elections supervisor of applications for absentee ballots for the General Election.

Oct. 17: Deadline for persons whose application to be registered has been denied to petition the Board of Elections for review of the matter.

Oct. 17: Appointment of election officers.

Oct. 31 to Nov. 1: Testing of electronic voting machines and tabulation equipment; certification by the Board.





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U.K. sailors in BVI to help



Photos by BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

Crewmen from aboard the RFA Mounts Bay are taking part in cleanup activities in the British Virgin Islands. Divers from the ship are clearing storm debris from the ocean floor and helping seed new corals.



Crew from the RFA Mounts Bay clear debris.

Daily News Staff

Crew members from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Vessel Mounts Bay are helping restart the tourism industry in the British Virgin Islands.

In addition to helping with cleanup activities on land, the crew has been assisting in a thorough scouring of the seabed, removing debris from Cane Garden Bay and Smuggler's Cove, according to a government press release.

The team is also clearing a mangrove swamp, planting coral nurseries and is working at Ivan Dawson Primary School to install a new rain garden to help prevent flooding, the statement said.

On Tuesday, the ship took part in a search and rescue training exercise alongside teams from Virgin Islands Search and Rescue, Customs and police.

The Mounts Bay is expected to be deployed to the Caribbean until at least 2020 to provide immediate support in the event of hurricanes.



Crewmen remove debris and brush.



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Probe of 2017 lineman death still active, court records show

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

A labor safety investigation into the death of a VI. Water and Power Authority lineman in the immediate wake of Hurricane Irma is still ongoing, court documents show.

The VI. Labor Department Division of Occupational Safety and Health has requested documents from WAPA as part of the investigation into the workplace conditions surrounding the death of lineman Jason Julius on Sept. 12.

Julius died as a result of electrocution while repairing a power line in the Sugar Estate area of St. Thomas.

As part of the investigation, Compliance Safety and Health Officer Andre Smith Sr. subpoenaed WAPA Director of Transmission and Distribution Neil Vanterpool and Director of Operations for Electrical Services Clinton Hedrington Jr., according to a memorandum opinion written by VI. Superior Court Judge Harold Willocks on Friday.

Hedrington's name is given as Hendrington in court documents. The Occupational Safety and Health Division is referred to by the acro-

nym VIDOSH.

Interviews with Vanterpool and Hedrington were originally scheduled for Jan. 30, according to the opinion.

"However, the January 30, 2018 interview was cancelled after Vanterpool and Hedrington allegedly declined a recorded interview," Willocks wrote. "Dean Andrews, Director of the VIDOSH, allegedly advised them that he would issue a subpoena ordering an interview recorded by a stenographer."

On Feb. 12, VI. Labor Department officials issued three subpoenas: a subpoena duces tecum, which is an instruction to attend court with documents, and two subpoenas ad testificandum, or instructions to testify, one each for Vanterpool and Hedrington. The subpoenas were served to WAPA Chief Administrative Officer Rupert Pelle, according to Willocks.

WAPA respond on Feb. 20 that "VIWAPA and its management employees are unable to respond in this matter as these subpoenas are deficient in authority, execution, and/or service," Willocks wrote.

On Feb. 27, the Labor Department filed a peti-

tion for an order to enforce the subpoenas, according to the court documents.

WAPA argued the petition should be denied because a Closing Conference, or end of a formal investigation, had been held, according to Willocks.

"The court notes that filing the instant Petition indicates that VIDOSH's investigation is still ongoing and that the issues pertaining to enforcement of the subpoena are not moot," he wrote. "Thus, this argument fails."

Willocks ultimately divided the question into three parts: whether VIDOSH could regulate WAPA; whether Andrews had subpoena authority; and whether the subpoenas followed the appropriate rules.

The VI. Code generally prohibits WAPA from outside regulation, though the sections of the Code also subject "WAPA only to laws that are specific to WAPA or that apply generally to independent instrumentalities," Willocks wrote.

One of those laws is the Virgin Islands Occupational Safety and Health Act, Willocks noted.

"It follows that WAPA's occupational safety and health practices can be regulated by the VI-DOSH," he wrote.

The act also provides for authorized and accredited representatives of the VI. Labor Commissioner — including Andrews — to issue subpoenas, Willocks wrote.

"Ergo, Andrews has the statutory authority to investigate WAPA, issue an administrative subpoena and petition the Superior Court for enforcement of the subpoena," he said.

However, the subpoenas incorrectly refer to federal laws, not local laws, and could not be enforced, Willocks wrote.

"Consequently, the subpoena was issued pursuant to the wrong governing authority," he wrote. "Ergo, the subpoena is unenforceable and will be quashed."

Andrews, Smith, and Acting Labor Commissioner Averil George — nominated Tuesday by Gov. Kenneth Mapp to serve in the position permanently — did not respond to calls seeking comment.

WAPA spokesman Jean Greaux Jr. said officials would not comment.

"This is an ongoing legal matter that we cannot comment on," he said.

Police Blotter

St. Thomas

Charged: Driving under the influence

Richard Hodge, also known as "Bird," 54, was arrested July 5 and charged with driving under the influence. Bail was set at \$500.

Charged: Disturbance of the peace

Christopher Rice, 66, of East Caret Bay, was arrested July 6 and charged with disturbance of the peace, cyber stalking, cyber harassment, harassment by telephone, and intimidation. Bail was set at \$20,000.

Charged: Assault

Karl Caesar, 45, of Anna's Retreat, was arrested July 7 and charged with third-degree assault and brandishing and exhibiting. Bail was set at \$25,000.

Charged: Assault

Kevin Porter, 40, of Estate Lovenlund, was arrested July 9 and charged with third-degree assault. Bail was set at \$25,000.

Charged: Rape

Glenroy Francis, 50, of Smith Bay, was arrested July 9 and charged with first-degree rape, domestic violence. No bail was set per the domestic violence statute.

Charged: Failure to register

Winston Jarvis, 41, of Pollyberg Garden, was arrested July 10 and charged with failure to update his sex offender registration. Bail was set at \$500.

Jarvis is a sex offender as a result of a second-degree rape conviction in 1999, according to the Justice Department's online sex offender database.

Charged: Assault

Raiston Stevens, 44, of Honduras, was arrested July 11 and charged with third-degree assault, domestic violence. No bail was set per the domestic violence statute.

Charged: Resisting arrest

Jumo Ziada, 28, of Strade Gade, was arrested July 13 and charged with resisting arrest, delaying and obstructing. Bail was set at \$1,000.

Charged: Grand larceny

Richard Pierre, 51, of Hospital Ground, was arrested July 13 and charged with grand larceny. Bail was set at \$35,000.

Charged: Driving under influence

Julio Cesar Cueva-Vizcaino, 57, of Contant, was arrested July 17 and charged with driving under the influence. Bail was set at \$500.

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V.I. Police concluding investigation of hotel shooting

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Police are concluding their investigation into a shooting by a V.I. Superior Court marshal in front of Windward Passage Hotel, according to V.I. Police spokesman Glen Dratte.

Dratte said Tuesday evening that the investigation “should be completed tomorrow and the file will be taken to the AG’s office for an opinion.”

Attorney General Claude Walker said last week his office has not yet received the investigation report and has made no determination whether to file criminal charges in the matter.

The incident occurred on July 9 when a group of people began fighting outside Windward Passage Hotel on the waterfront in Charlotte Amalie.

A cell phone video of the incident shows the fight progressing without apparent intervention from law enforcement, a single shot can be heard near the end of the video.

V.I. Police Commissioner Delroy Richards Sr. said police later determined that a V.I. Superior Court marshal approached the scene and fired his weapon into the air to disperse the crowd — a violation of department policy and peace officer training.

Richards has said the officer could face a criminal charge of reckless endangerment for his conduct.

To date, no one has been arrested in connection with the fight or shooting.

Pa. man pleads guilty in St. John cocaine case

Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — A Pennsylvania man pleaded guilty Tuesday in U.S. District Court to his involvement in a cocaine shipment to St. John and his efforts to conceal his actions to police, according to a press release from U.S. Attorney Gretchen Shappert.

Court documents show Michael Leonard, 21, traveled with Reynaldo Lerburds and others to a secluded area of St. John and was present when a shipment of cocaine was delivered in April.

The documents state that Leonard

took steps to help conceal the cocaine and did not make any effort to notify law enforcement.

According to an affidavit by Special Agent Evan Martinez of the Drug Enforcement Administration’s St. Thomas Division, Leonard’s arrest came after a confidential source told agents that Lerburds had received a load of cocaine and was storing it in his St. John home.

The source said Lerburds and his associates would be traveling by barge to St. Thomas the following morning and arriving in a “light green/blue Suzuki with a red hood,”

the affidavit continued.

The next morning, agents and V.I. police officers located the vehicle leaving the ferry terminal at Red Hook.

Lerburds and a passenger, identified as Leonard, were taken into custody after several large duffel bags inside the vehicle were found to contain 50 brick-like items that field-tested to be 55.46 kilograms — about 122 pounds — of cocaine, according to Martinez.

Lerburds and Leonard, accused of transporting the cocaine to distribute it on St. Thomas, were charged with possession with the intent to distribute cocaine, aiding and abetting.

On Tuesday, Leonard pleaded guilty to misprision of a felony, which, according to the federal definition of misprision, means Leonard committed a felony; had knowledge of the felony; failed to notify authorities of the crime; and took steps to conceal it.

Leonard is scheduled to be sentenced Nov. 29. He faces a maximum sentence of three years and a \$250,000 fine.

Lerburds is scheduled to appear before U.S. District Court Judge Curtis Gomez for a change of plea hearing on Thursday.

Ag secretary to meet with St. Thomas farmers today

Daily News Staff

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue is scheduled to visit St. Thomas today to meet with farmers and agriculture officials.

Perdue is set to meet with local farmers at the Bordeaux Farmers Market at 10 a.m. for a town hall discussion, according to a news release from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Perdue also will meet with the territory’s Agriculture Department staff members.



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Roystein Brown

A memorial service will be held Friday, Aug. 3, 2018, for Roystein Brown, better known as Iceberg or Spoggy, who died July 7, 2018.

The service will be held at 10 a.m. at Turnbull's Funeral Home.

He was preceded in death by his sisters, Barbra Smith and Beryl Brown.

He is survived by his daughter, Trescia Brown; son, Roystein Brown; grandchildren, Talisha, Rasean, Raj and Tahir Brown Kaylah, Kaylen and Jayden Allen; sisters, Deverelle Brown Donastorg, Editha "Edith" Borges, Jacqueline "Jackie" Wong Shing; brother, Allan "Soup" Brown; nieces, Mercedes Donastorg, Mika Donastorg, Shelby Jones, Monifa Brown, Anya Joseph, Verna Malone, Trina McFarlane and Kaisa Edwards; nephews, Miguel, Adlah, Rudolph Donastorg, Harold Evans Jr., Troy Evans, Jahbahri Brown, LaRon Smith, Leayle Jr. and Leando McFarlane; niece-in-law, Karen Donastorg; nephews-in-law, Kenny Jones,



Roystein Brown

Jerry Malone Sr.; aunts, Glantel Smitten, Glova Abindego, Edris Prentice, Elaine and Evelyn Braithwaite, Magret Hutton, Caroline Parsons and Dr. Arthurlyn Thomas; uncles, Enos, Ishmeal, Edric, Edward and Wesley Braithwaite and retired Police Lt. Alvin W. Brown; godsister, Irma George; special friends and family, Wayne Thomas, Chato Rivera, Leayle McFarlane Sr., Juliette Cuffy, Altona Hill family, Brown family, Brewley, Braithwaite, Tacking, Nesbitt and Simonds families.

Funeral arrangements are entrusted to Turnbull's Funeral Home and Crematory Services.

Henry Louis Magras

Relatives and friends are advised of the passing of Henry Louis Magras, also known as "Bucoo (Beaucoup)" and "Bad Ass Magras."

He was born on May 23, 1937, and died on July 18, 2018, at the age of 81.

Born and raised in St. Thomas, VI., he was known for his good sense of humor, enjoying life, traveling, fishing, diving, camping and spending time with his family.

He also enjoyed good times with his special friends and their families. He was known in the dry cleaning industry for more than 65 years, from The One Hour Martinizing, to O'Henry's cleaners and now recently The Magras Cleaners.

He is survived by his wife, Angelina Magras (Brin); daughters Diane-Magras-Urena, Angela Marie Magras, and Jeanette Ann Magras (deceased); sons-in-law, Tony Urena, Ismeal "Malito" Rosado, and Marlon Hibbert; grandchildren, Lia Ortiz Hibbert, Jerome Saldana, Chantel Backes, Antonio Urena, Briana Backes, Serene Saldana, and Alana

Urena; great-grandchildren, Jayden Stanley and Aria Saldana; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and nephews too many to name; and many special friends and their families.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend first viewing that will be held Thursday at Celestial Chapel of Hurley Funeral Home from 5 to 7 p.m. The second viewing will be held Friday at Celestial Chapel of Hurley Funeral Home from 8 to 9 a.m. Mass will begin at 9:30 a.m. at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral. Interment will be in Western Cemetery No. 1.

Arrangements are under the care of Hurley Funeral Home and Cremation Center of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.

For online directions and condolences, please visit www.hurleydavisfuneralhome.com.

Peter Albert Robles Sr.

It is with our deepest sympathies that we announce the passing of Peter Albert Robles Sr. Peter was given the gift of life on Sept. 21, 1956, and parted this world on Wednesday, July 18, 2018, at the age of 61.

Peter was born on the beautiful island of St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands. He is a member of the Charlotte Amalie High School graduating Class of 1975. After graduation, he attended the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for several years and enlisted into the U.S. Army in 1978. After his discharge from the military duty overseas he returned to his beloved homeland and worked for



Henry Louis Magras

the Virgin Islands and federal governments in various capacities.

He entered into the private sector and became a small business entrepreneur and distributor of water. His business associates were Chico Distributor, Le Bleu Water, and Sunny Mountain Water. He further pursued his business ambition and became the proud owner of Wanna Bee Enterprises. He was baptized, worshipped, and was an active member of the historic Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church in Charlotte Amalie.

Peter was preceded in death by his beloved mother, Ms. Thelma T. Robinson; godmother and grandmother, Mrs. Louise Solina Wheatley-Arnett; and his father, Mr. Donald L. Robles Sr.

He is survived by his siblings, Patrick Avery Robinson Sr., John Alexander Hodge, James Ashley Hodge, adopted brother, Senator Myron D. Jackson, Beatrice Robles, Lorne Robles, Laverne Robles, Larsen Robles, Diane Robles, Rita Robles and many other brothers and sisters too numerous to mention; his aunt, Lorraine Francis; his children, Renelda Rosalia Robles, Anthea Nicole Robles-Woodard, Ebony Gabrielle Robles, daughters of Peter Robles Sr. and Stephanie Christian-Robles; Peter Albert Robles Jr., son of Peter Robles Sr. and Bernitta Kennebrew, Daniel Dimitri Robles, son of Peter Robles Sr. and Berecia Scatliffe-Robles; step-children, Nasheba Hunte, Louis, Ebony Monique, Kenneth Jr. and Kimmel Mahoney Todman; son-in-law, Clay L. Woodard; sisters-in-



Peter Albert Robles Sr.

law, Monique Robinson, Monique Christian Creque, and Olivet Robinson; grandchildren, Allani C. Alfred, Maddox C. Robles-Maltie; and nieces and nephews, Tonya, Thelma, Nicole, Rochelle and Patrick Robinson Jr., Patricia Robinson Kennedy; nephew-in-law, Damon Kennedy; niece-in-law, Charnelle Robinson; great-nieces and nephews, Tyree Caruth, Eugene Bell III, Emayia Bell, Nicholas-Carter Stewart, Nia Joseph and Addison Kennedy; and extended family members of the Robles, Wheatley, Robinson and Jackson families.

Peter is also mourned cherished by colleagues and friends too numerous to mention.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to the first viewing on Thursday at Turnbull's Funeral Home from 5 to 7 p.m. The second viewing will be held on Friday at the Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church at 10 a.m. The service will follow thereafter at 10:45 a.m. Interment will be at Western Cemetery No. 1.

Funeral arrangements are entrusted to Turnbull's Funeral Home.

"Say not, in grief, that he has gone, but we give thanks that he was ours."

Hillary Constantine Hodge Sr.

We, the family, regrets to announce the passing of our dearly beloved father, brother and uncle, Hillary Constantine Hodge Sr.

He passed away on St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, at 74 years of age. His sunrise was Jan. 24, 1944, and sunset July 23, 2018.

He leaves to mourn two sons, Hillary Hodge Jr. and Aksel Hodge, and was preceded in death by Avery Hodge; one daughter, Alison Hodge; two grandchildren, Aksel Hodge Jr. and Nikai Hodge; four sisters, Phyllis Hodge, Bona Hodge-Powell, Grace Richardson, and Bernadette Richardson, and was preceded in death by Agnes Gumbs.

He also leaves to mourn two brothers, Barnebus and Douglas Hodge, and was preceded in death by Reginald "Son" Hodge; special cousins, Merle and Lucien Proctor, Cousin Dora and Nelson and Miriam Hazell; special friends, Doreen Hanley, Iris Webster, Bro McKay, George Mathew, and Reginald Christmas; and many other nieces and nephews, relatives and friends too numerous to mention.

He was the son of Violet and Rupert Hodge. He was formerly married to Honica Hodge and Goldine James-Hodge.

A funeral announcement will be forthcoming.



Hillary Constantine Hodge Sr.



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Love City Livin' Pages 20-23

Kenny Chesney talks hurricane relief and finding an island home Page 20



Gift Hill School works to reopen upper campus Page 20

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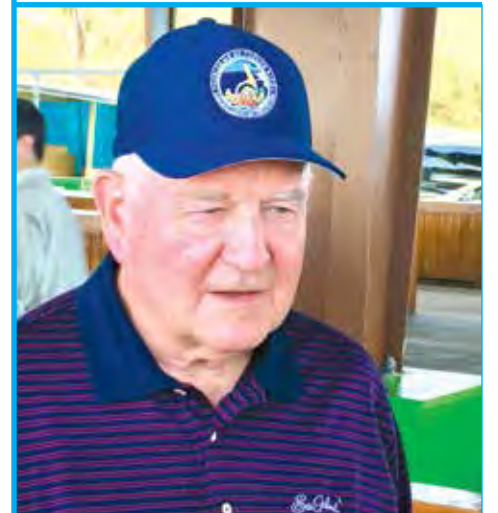


Daily News photo by LINDA MORLAND

Under a canopy, students from the Boys and Girls Club in Frederiksted excavate ruined dwellings in Estate Little Princess, St. Croix. The structures, built using coral blocks and other materials, could date back to the 18th century. This is the second year that this site has been explored. **Page 2**

Close game for USVI hoops team

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Students dig into history at St. Croix site

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

St. Croix members of a youth organization have received a hands-on experience with history, courtesy of a local archeological dig.

Members of the Caribbean Centers for Boys and Girls of the Virgin Islands got a look at an active dig in Estate Little Princess. The trip comes as part of an educational component of ongoing research at the site of a plantation dating to 1749.

The site's educational component is headed up by Alexandra Jones, the founder and CEO of Archeology in the Community, a group dedicated to taking the science of studying artifacts from history and prehistory and bringing it to the people.

Participation allows students a feel for the science behind archeology, though students also receive classroom introductions on subjects like understanding soil layers, Jones said.

Even so, nothing beats a hands-on approach, Jones said.

"We bring them out in the field so they can have real-world experience excavating and washing artifacts so that they can see the whole process that we follow," she said. "I like to quiz them."

Older students also have the opportunity to work as interns at the site, Jones said. The site has 15 spots for paid interns, and the Boys and Girls Club selects those eligible to participate, Jones said.

"If we have students interested in archeology, we're going to keep fostering that," she said.

The dig at the site originally started as part of the Slave Wrecks Project. The Little Princess site is on land owned by the Nature Conservancy.

The Slave Wrecks Project is a joint venture of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture, the National Park Service and George Washington University.

Researchers have also brought in additional funding from various academic institutions, like Alicia Odewale's University of Tulsa, or Ayana Flewellen or William White III's University of California-Berkeley, or Justin Dunnivant's University of California-Santa Cruz.

Odewale, Dunnivant, Flewellen, and White are core members of the Society of Black Archeologists, which aims to bolster diversity in archeology, and encourage appropriate conservation efforts for artifacts from the African Diaspora.

The plantation's habitation date ranges over 200 years, meaning the plantation's later years are within



Daily News photos by LINDA MORLAND

Excavating an archeological site is slow and painstaking using whisk brooms, small trowels and dust pans to carefully gather materials to be sifted for artifacts. Armani Doward, left, Nikel Guiste, Thylie Roebuck and Josime Serrano from the Boys and Girls Club in Frederiksted work steadily in the heat at a site in Estate Little Princess, St. Croix. Interns are paid and assist the principal investigators on the dig. All participating students are given classes in the many areas of investigation prior to going out to the dig.



Intern Armani Doward learns about a tool used to detect metal from Alicia Odewale, center, of the University of Tulsa. In the background, Josime Serrano sifts the excavated dirt, looking for artifacts.

living memory, Jones said.

"You still have people that remember the estate," she said. "This is ingrained in the community today."

Researchers working at the site are also interested in building a collection of oral histories of remembered experiences dating to the

tos, to be shared with researchers and the public.

For example, Odewale's research is focused on a comparative study of slavery in Virginia with slavery on St. Croix. For example, her research tackles how enslaved populations in either region addressed natural and social adversity.

"It's not that one side was better or worse than the other," she said. "It's different challenges that each community faced."

By contrast, Dunnivant is focused on how the presence of slavery altered St. Croix's ecology, and White's research is focused on how both the enslaved village area and other outbuildings on the site have changed over time, Odewale said.

In addition to looking for old stories, researchers are interested in new dollars, Flewellen said.

The project currently operates from an annual budget of about \$47,000, which covers housing for the researchers, graduate students, interns, a training program, food, lights, and other expenses. As a result, the five full-time staff members have had to volunteer their time.

"With \$90,000, you could pay the staff, you could possibly run this field school twice," she said. "That would also allow us to potentially offer paid internships to the university students coming down, and hire guest speakers to communicate more outreach to what we're doing."

The site workers — all professional archeologists or anthropologists — say local historic preservation efforts are inadequate for maintaining history, for example Danish colonial-era records listed on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage register.

Keeping local archeological treasures would require both a facility to store them, as well as personnel, Flewellen said.

"Having a robust anthropology program at the UVI that trains students in conservation would make it more possible to keep cultural resources that are on the island," she said.

Anyone wishing to share personal narratives of Estate Little Princess plantation may contact Odewale at alicia-odewale@utulsa.edu, Flewellen at aaflewellen@gmail.com, or Jones at alexandracj@gmail.com.

Contributions to the dig can be made through Archeology in the Community at www.archaeologyincommunity.com/donate/.

— Contact Brian O'Connor at 340-714-9130 or email boconnor@dailynews.vi

“
We bring them out in the field so they can have real-world experience excavating and washing artifacts so that they can see the whole process that we follow. I like to quiz them.”

— Alexandra Jones, founder and CEO of Archaeology in the Community

later years.

However, the hands-on experience relates to the recovery of earthenware, pearlware — a fine glazed earthenware pottery — ceramics, and other artifacts, and more importantly what those artifacts say about various epochs of the plantation's history.

The artifacts will be categorized over the next year and added to the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery, which allows details of artifacts, including pho-



Daily News photo by SUZANNE CARLSON

VI. Agriculture Commissioner Carlos Robles, left, and U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue hear farmers' concerns Wednesday during a meeting at the Bordeaux Farmers Market on St. Thomas.

Farmers press U.S. Ag Secretary on support

By SUZANNE CARLSON
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Despite ideal year-round growing conditions and a healthy appetite for local produce, farmers throughout the territory said Wednesday there are myriad obstacles preventing them from expanding agriculture in the Virgin Islands.

The comments came during a visit from U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue — the first time anyone holding that Cabinet position has come to the territory, according to VI. Agriculture Commissioner Carlos Robles.

Perdue met with farmers at the Bordeaux Farmers Market and said his department is working to help rebuild local agriculture after the September hurricanes.

“You’ve got a lot of good demand here, you know that the mood about people wanting to buy local, you’ve got many citizens here on the island that would love to buy the products that you grow,” Perdue said. “I think the customers would love to have the food produced here, rather than brought over, it’s a matter of freshness, it’s a matter of knowing the island culture, and the taste and the kinds of things people like, so we think there’s a lot of opportunity in the future of growing right

here to meet the demand on the island. And then we also talked about when we get really good, there’s probably people in other Caribbean areas that would love to have the things that you grow on island.”

Perdue said that while his department is familiar with the needs of mainland farms that typically encompass 20,000 acres or more, Virgin Islands farmers work plots of between a half-acre and 20 acres, often perched on steep, arid hillsides with challenging terrain, “so it’s a whole different way of thinking that we have to learn.”

Failure to communicate

The disconnect between the federal Agriculture Department and the local farming community became apparent when farmers asked why they were not given immediate support following the hurricanes and have been without substantial federal aid in the 11 months since the storms passed.

Without explanation, Perdue began discussing the “WHIP program” as a source of funding.

Farmers were unaware such a program existed.

Robles said the program has not yet been announced in the territory, and a formal announcement will be coming in approximately two weeks.

The U.S. Agriculture Department announced the Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program in April, according to a news release available online, but that information has yet to trickle down to the territory. The news release said the program will provide up to \$2.36 billion in disaster payments to farmers and ranchers who suffered crop and livestock loss in the 2017 hurricanes and wildfires, and “sign-up for the new program, authorized by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, will begin no later than July 16.”

Later during the question-and-answer session, Jacquell Dawson, better known as the “Bush Tea Lady,” asked Perdue why farmers were not given a “life raft” after the storms, similar to the emergency food, repair, and other assistance programs that were deployed months ago.

Perdue again referred to the WHIP program, which has yet to be rolled out.

Problems run deep

Another frequently cited federal program was “EQIP,” the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, administered by the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service, which “provides agricultural producers with financial resources and one-on-one help to plan and implement improvements, or



Julie Dempsey

what NRCS calls conservation practices,” according to the USDA website. “Using these practices can lead to cleaner water and air, healthier soil and better wildlife habitat, all while improving agricultural operations. Through EQIP, you can voluntarily implement conservation practices, and NRCS co-invests in these practices with you.”

Several farmers said the EQIP program was insufficient to meet the needs of hurricane-devastated growers because it requires an up-front investment by the farmer that is reimbursed by the federal government — money that farmers simply didn’t have after the storms.

Perdue said the way the law currently stands, there’s no way to get around the reimbursement requirement and give farmers payment for projects in advance.

Dale Browne of Sejah Farms on St. Croix said he’s struggled to get timely reimbursement and said the department needs to establish an on-site location in the territory so farmers aren’t forced to communicate with officials in Puerto

Rico for information and processing of program applications.

“Most of the information that farmers get is partial information,” Browne said.

“It sounds like we need to do a better job communicating on an ongoing basis,” Perdue said.

Perdue emphasized that he believes the issue is not a lack of money and programs available through the federal department, but “it’s a lack of education and understanding” locally.

Julie Dempsey of Victory Farm in Bordeaux agreed that there is a lack of communication by the government with farmers and said she’s confident there are many farmers who were unaware that Perdue was visiting the territory and would have attended if they’d known.

Dempsey said she filed her contact information with the Agriculture Department but received no notice of Wednesday’s event, and only became aware of it after getting a call from an associate currently on the mainland who heard about it through the grapevine.

She emphasized that she is grateful to local and federal officials for their efforts and wants to be an active participant in discussions on local agriculture

See **FARMERS**, page 4

FARMERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

— but said communication between stakeholders needs to improve.

“This here shows that they’re trying to work it out,” Dempsey said.

She suggested local Agriculture officials continue holding similar town-hall meetings to inform farmers of the latest recovery updates and available funding and resources.

“We want to be farmers,” Dempsey said. “Don’t leave people out.”

Future possibilities, concerns

Barbara LaRonde, an educator and president of USVI NORML, which works to reform marijuana laws and destigmatize cannabis use, said she would like to see more ecological education and youth outreach, and asked Perdue about whether federal marijuana legalization could eventually become a reality.

While Attorney General Jeffrey Sessions has made it clear he believes cannabis use is morally reprehensible and marijuana laws should be aggressively enforced, Perdue said President Donald Trump is more ambivalent and has taken a laissez-faire approach to cannabis regulation at the state level.

But Perdue said he doesn’t see marijuana legalization coming any time soon.

LaRonde said cannabis could be a major cash crop for Virgin Islands farmers — and the plant is already being widely grown, sold, and smoked throughout the territory.

Legalization, regulation and taxation of cannabis could provide a substantial source of funding for the territory’s empty coffers, would enable nonviolent street corner dealers to legitimize their businesses, and should be more seriously considered by lawmakers, she added.



Daily News photo by SUZANNE CARLSON

Elridge Thomas, president of We Grow Food Inc., asks a question during a meeting Wednesday at the Bordeaux Farmers Market on St. Thomas with U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue.

“It’s here, why are we not using it to its fullest potential?” LaRonde said.

Hugo Roller II of Coral Bay Organic Gardens on St. John is a 28-year-old second-generation Virgin Islands farmer who said he worries about the future of agriculture in the territory.

As one of the youngest faces present at Wednesday’s event, Roller encouraged officials to include the territory’s youth in discussions and programs about farming and spur the next generation of local farmers to step up and start working the soil.

“I look around at the audience, and I

hope I’m not the only one here 40 years from now, because we need some more young farmers,” Roller said.

Cash needed now

Farmers said they need support with a number of issues, including drought mitigation assistance, seeds, equipment, population control programs for deer and other invasive species, support for tasks like grant-writing and navigating complex federal funding mechanisms, and most of all, money.

“We just need some good, solid funds to get we back on our feet,” said

Elridge Thomas, president of We Grow Food Inc., a nonprofit that uses corporate and local donations to support Virgin Islands farmers.

Thomas said it was clear that “our local government couldn’t respond” to the needs of farmers after the hurricanes, and “I feel bad asking the federal government” for support that’s been slow to arrive.

Thomas said after the discussion with Perdue that Wednesday’s meeting didn’t inspire much confidence in him that government officials will step up and do more to preserve and expand

Farmers said they need support with a number of issues, including drought mitigation assistance, seeds, equipment, population control programs for deer and other invasive species, support for tasks like grant-writing and navigating complex federal funding mechanisms, and most of all, money.

agricultural activities in the territory.

We Grow Food has funded and provided labor to repair and rebuild the infrastructure at the Bordeaux market, but portions were destroyed and there is still work to be done, Thomas said.

The market will be open every third Sunday of the month — the next food sale is scheduled for Aug. 19 — to raise money for fencing to keep deer from eating farmers’ crops.

One farmer said Wednesday they were quoted a price of \$9,275 to fence a single acre — excluding labor.

Rather than waiting for government support, Thomas said Virgin Islands farmers will continue taking it upon themselves to help each other out and keep growing fresh, nutritious food for the local community.

“I know from tomorrow, we back at it again,” Thomas said.

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@dailynews.vi



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USPS 144-180

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Mapp extends state of emergency as Irma anniversary nears



Kenneth Mapp

Daily News Staff

The state of emergency will continue territorywide for another month.

Gov. Kenneth Mapp published an order and proclamation on Wednesday extending the state of emergency until Sept. 1.

That means the territory will have passed almost a full year under a local state of emergency, which started with a proclamation issued Sept. 5.

The order was signed Tuesday, according to the proclamation.

A territorywide price freeze has been

lifted since the last such declaration.

The VI. Legislature is considering amending the manner in which emergency disaster declarations are declared.

Mapp has said elements of the emergency powers allow him to more rapidly transition federal funding into local improvements.

According to a Government House announcement, Mapp is currently out of the territory and is scheduled to return on Friday.

— Contact Brian O'Connor at 340-714-9130 or email boconnor@daily-news.vi.

Unused mulch piles still source of frustration for farmers

By SUZANNE CARLSON
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Farmers from throughout the territory said Wednesday they're still frustrated by the government's unwillingness to provide mulch in the areas where it's needed most.

Hurricanes Irma and Maria provided a potential windfall to local farmers in the form of more than 700,000 cubic yards of vegetative debris left in the wake of the storms. That material has been chipped into mulch that could enrich topsoil and boost farmers' growing potential for years to come.



Sonny Perdue

But at a meeting with U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue on St. Thomas on Wednesday, farmers said that the local government has continually obstructed access to that valuable material for no apparent reason.

Hugo Roller II, of Coral Bay Organic Gardens, said his 18-acre farm — the only commercial farm on St. John — is in desperate need of mulch, and could accommodate the entirety of the mulch collected and processed on St. John following the hurricanes.

That vegetative material was initially stored and chipped at the ballfield in Coral Bay, a two-minute drive from Roller's farm. But Roller said rather than transporting the material to his farm, the government expended additional money to bring hundreds of truckloads of mulch across the island for storage in the Cruz Bay area, a 30-minute drive from Coral Bay, where it's still sitting unused.

Roller said the move was not only a baffling misuse of funds and resources, but a clear signal from local officials that farmers' needs are being ignored.

"It's just like a slap in the face to us," Roller said.

Perdue himself extolled the benefits mulch could provide to local farms.

"The mulch is really important with the organic matter in these soils, will help with water holding and growing better," Perdue said.

Gov. Kenneth Mapp has been consistently opposed to distributing mulch to local farmers and said after the hurricanes that he would order 100 percent of organic hurricane debris to be burned.

That plan was met with fierce backlash from environmentalists and public health experts, who objected to the debris burning "air curtain incineration" method used by the U.S. Army Corps

The mulch is really important with the organic matter in these soils, will help with water holding and growing better.

— U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue

of Engineers.

Senators blocked Mapp's plan and passed legislation banning such burning — which Mapp vetoed and senators overrode, forcing the measure into law.

For months, farmers and home gardeners throughout the territory had been seeking access to the piles of mulch. But rather than distribute the material locally, Mapp said he would order 100 percent of the mulch to be shipped to a still-undetermined location somewhere off-island.

In the meantime, Commissioner Carlos Robles and others in the Agriculture Department have been working to allow farmers access to the nutrient-rich mulch.

However, farmers can only collect mulch from debris piles at certain times and must provide their own means of transporting the mulch back to their farms.

That poses a challenge for the many farmers in the Bordeaux area of St. Thomas, for example, who must make

the approximately 12-mile round trip to the debris site at Addelita Cancryn Junior High to pick up each load of mulch.

Farmers at Wednesday's meeting with Perdue asked whether it would be possible for federal officials to help bring more heavy equipment to the territory, including backhoes and dump trucks that could be used to distribute the mulch more efficiently.

Perdue said his department has grant programs in place that could fund such purchases and told farmers to research those opportunities themselves.

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@daily-news.vi.



PUBLIC NOTICE

The Forest Legacy Program of the US Virgin Islands is identifying potential projects to submit to the US Forest Service (USDA-FS) to secure funding. The selected projects will enter a process of regional evaluation followed by national evaluation to compete for acquisition funds. The US Virgin Islands Forest Legacy Program protects environmentally important forest areas that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses by purchasing development rights through fee title or conservation easements.

This process is highly competitive and funds are limited. For a property to be eligible to participate in this program, the following aspects will be considered:

The property must:

- Be within one of the six (6) Forest Legacy Priority Areas
- Have at least 75% forest cover
- Contain quality forest resources and wildlife habitat
- Have presence of protected, threatened or endangered species
- Contain resources of cultural, historical or scenic significance

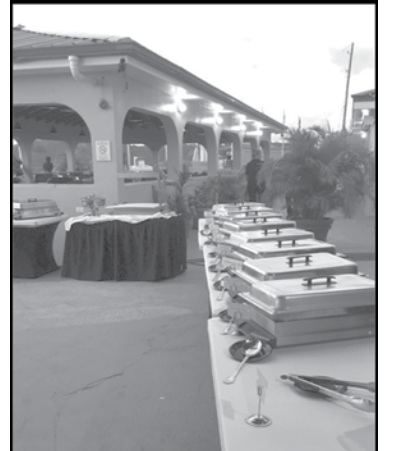
Forest landowners interested in participating in the annual competition must complete the *US Virgin Islands Forest Legacy Program Application*.

For additional information or to obtain copy of the application, please contact the Forest Legacy Program Coordinator, Louis Hilgemann via email: louis.hilgemann@doa.vi.gov

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Building blocks of education at Sprauve School



Daily News photo by ANDREA MILAM

Modular classrooms are installed at Julius Sprauve School in Cruz Bay, St. John. The V.I. Legislature is calling for Education Department officials to take part in a hearing next week about preparations for the new school year in September. **Page 2**

V.I., BVI wrap up at CAC Games

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Education officials expected to give school update

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

Education Department officials are expected to testify at a Senate committee hearing Wednesday on St. Thomas about efforts to install modular classrooms and prepare for the opening of schools on Sept. 4.

Education Committee Chairman Sen. Jean Forde said he's calling the hearing to get an update on the status of rebuilding efforts and installation of temporary school buildings.

Work has begun on the athletic field at Charlotte Amalie High School to install modular units for students from Addelita Cancryn Junior High School, despite an outcry from students and community members who said the field should be preserved for recreational activities, and Cancryn students housed elsewhere.

Education Commissioner Sharon McCollum and others have said repeatedly that Federal Emergency Management Agency officials overseeing the project shot down several sites because they're located in flood plains, and the only way to ensure students will return to full-day education is to utilize the field for modular classrooms.

"The modular units are being placed as we speak. I was there up to yesterday, modular units are in place, the place has already been dug up to put whatever foundation that was necessary, and the modular are going to be placed on the field," Forde said Thursday.

Forde opposed the plan and said he believes FEMA's floodplain map is flawed and overly restrictive — and the high school's athletic field floods every time there's a strong downpour.

"You're either on a hill or you're in a valley — every place in St. Thomas is a flood zone," Forde said.

He said Education officials should have done more to obtain a waiver from FEMA, but at this point it's too late.

"The field has already been de-



Modular classrooms await installation at the Julius Sprauve School in Cruz Bay, St. John. The modular units will be the topic of a Senate hearing set for Wednesday on St. Thomas.

Daily News photo by ANDREA MILAM

stroyed, we can only hope that we don't stay there for too long, I'm happy for those who are going to get a decent place to have school, you know, they're going to bring new units and so forth, and I'm most concerned however, about the lack of maintenance that is not taking place, rather at the older schools," Forde said.

It's also unclear where Charlotte Amalie High School students will be able to play sports.

Forde said it's his understanding that students will be bused to Lionel Roberts Stadium for recreational activities.

On July 16, McCollum told senators in the Finance Committee a memorandum of understanding is being devised between the Education Department and the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority for the use of a parcel of land adjacent to the west of CAHS for one year.

The provision would allow for

students to remain on campus during the school day, eliminating the need to transport them to and from the Lionel Roberts Stadium for sports activities, as was previously arranged.

It's unclear whether a memorandum of understanding has been signed.

Education spokeswoman Keva Muller did not respond to an email Thursday asking for clarification, and instead sent out a press release

“

The field has already been destroyed, we can only hope that we don't stay there for too long, I'm happy for those who are going to get a decent place to have school, you know, they're going to bring new units and so forth, and I'm most concerned however, about the lack of maintenance that is not taking place, rather at the older schools.

— Sen. Jean Forde, Education Committee chairman

urging drivers to be cautious as convoys of oversized modular units make their way through the territory.

The next shipment of classrooms is expected to arrive in the territory Saturday, according to the press release.

"What I have been told is they intend to do quite a bit of busing from the school to Lionel Roberts Stadium. Things change so often and we here in the Legislature seem to be the last to find out about things despite the many questions, and despite the tireless efforts that we make," Forde said.

Forde encouraged all community members with questions or concerns about schools to contact his office at **340-693-3600**.

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@dailynews.vi.

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Hurricane season started early but may be quiet

Colorado State forecasters predict only three more hurricanes this year

By **BRIAN K. SULLIVAN**
Bloomberg

The Atlantic hurricane season may have gotten off to an early start this year, but it'll probably end with a whimper — at least when it comes to the total number of storms.

Twelve named storms are likely to form in 2018, fewer than last year's 17 and below the 1981-2010 average, according to a forecast Thursday from Colorado State University. That reduces the chance of the Virgin Islands being hit by a major hurricane this year. But the outlook is a slight increase from July's 11 and comes as the Atlantic Basin is about to enter its most active period.

While the forecast predicts the number of storms, it can't tell where individual ones will strike. Even a season with few tropical storms can cause major damage, such as in 1992 when Hurricane Andrew devastated Florida and was one of only six named that year. A storm gets a name when its sustained winds reach tropical-storm strength of 39 mph.

"With all of our seasonal forecasts, we can still have a nasty hurricane," Phil Klotzbach, who co-authored the Colorado State report with Michael Bell, said in an interview. "People still need to prepare for every hurricane season regardless of our seasonal forecasts."

Three storms have formed in the

Atlantic so far this year. Two — Beryl and Chris — became hurricanes. Typically, the third named storm doesn't form until Aug. 13, and the second hurricane doesn't appear until Aug. 28, according to 1966-2009 averages compiled by the National Hurricane Center in Miami. So only nine more are likely to appear before the season ends Nov. 30, with three becoming hurricanes and one a major system with winds of 111 mph or more.

Despite the early burst of activity — Subtropical Storm Alberto formed before the official June 1 start to the season — the Atlantic waters have been cooler than normal, robbing potential storms of the fuel they need to develop. Tropical storms and hurricanes depend on warm water. In addition, there have been several large swirls of dry African air that have kept the atmosphere across the

“

With all of our seasonal forecasts, we can still have a nasty hurricane. People still need to prepare for every hurricane season regardless of our seasonal forecasts.

— Phil Klotzbach, co-author of the Colorado State report

Atlantic stable and can prevent thunderstorms from building.

The cold water shows no sign of abating, Klotzbach said. And if El Nino forms in the Pacific, that

could increase wind shear across the Atlantic, making it even harder for storms to form. Shear can rip storms apart.

"The tropical Atlantic remains cooler than normal, and there is a relatively high potential that a weak El Nino develops in the next several months," according to the report. "The probability for major hurricanes making landfall along the U.S. coastline and in the Caribbean is below normal due to the forecast for a below-normal season."

But the most active time in the Atlantic season is around the corner. It starts Aug. 20 and peaks around Sept. 10. During this time, storms typically form in the ocean between the Caribbean and Cabo Verde off the coast of Africa — an area called the main development region, where the bulk of history's most ferocious hurricanes were born.

WAPA: Installation of composite poles will take until end of 2019



A composite pole installed in the Adrian area of St. John.

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Composite power pole installation — a touted component of infrastructure hardening in the wake of the disastrous 2017 hurricane season — likely won't be completed until the end of 2019, a V.I. Water and Power Authority spokesman said Tuesday.

St. John composite power pole installation leads all islands, said WAPA spokesman Jean Greaux Jr. Installation is just beginning on St. Croix, and also on Water Island, he said.

"There's still work to be done," he said, of St. John. "But most of the main circuit is completed."

Project worksheets — the document the Federal Emergency Management Agency approves for funding — have been approved, but funds have not yet been furnished for work to begin, Greaux said.

"The projects have already been approved but they haven't been obligated," he said. "We're awaiting obligation of funds to begin the installation."

Assuming a completion date of December 2019 could potentially mean two full hurricane seasons with at least some portion of the above-ground electrical distribution system on wooden poles.

"We'll continue to add as fast as we can," he said.

Power poles fell by the scores during hurricanes Irma and Maria. At one point, about 90 percent of the territory's power grid was in ruins.

In the wake of the storms, WAPA officials have attacked the issue on two general fronts: the installation of composite poles, which can withstand higher wind speeds than tradi-



Daily News photos by ANDREA MILAM

A pile of composite poles await installation in the Catherineberg area of St. John.

St. John composite power pole installation leads all islands, said WAPA spokesman Jean Greaux Jr. Installation is just beginning on St. Croix, and also on Water Island, he said. St. Thomas will likely to be the last island to receive composite poles.

tional wooden power poles, and burying electrical lines underground.

The portion of the utility's grid that was underground survived the storms without damage. However, some homes fed power by the above-ground systems were darkened for months.

FEMA is the party responsible for

providing funding, Greaux said.

However, St. Thomas is likely to be the last island to receive composite poles, Greaux said.

"It is starting on St. Croix and Water Island first," he said.

— Contact Brian O'Connor at 340-714-9130 or email boconnor@dailynews.vi.

Heads of FEMA, Homeland Security to jointly visit St. Croix

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

Two prominent federal officials will visit St. Croix today, though they won't be doing any public appearances.

Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator William B. "Brock" Long and Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen will fly into St. Croix for the span of a few hours today, said FEMA spokeswoman Lauren Lefebvre. They intend to take briefings from local FEMA officials, visit a school on St. Croix, and speak with Acting Gov. Osbert Potter, Lefebvre said.

Gov. Kenneth Mapp is out of the territory, according to a Government House press release.



William B.
"Brock" Long



Kirstjen
Nielsen

"It should be a pretty low-key visit," Lefebvre said.

Long is the top-ranking official at FEMA, one of a grouping of organizations within the Department of Homeland Security, on par with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services,

the Coast Guard, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Secret Service, and the Transportation Safety Administration.

Long's agency has a \$4.4 billion budget for fiscal year 2018, in addition to stewardship of the \$20.8 billion Disaster Relief Fund, which is used to reimburse eligible costs associated with declared presidential disasters.

Simply put, Nielsen is Long's boss. As the Homeland Security secretary, she oversees the department's \$55.6 billion budget, all of the agencies at FEMA's level, 13 offices, ranging from the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties to the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office, as well as

three directorates.

Nielsen is also a member of President Donald Trump's Cabinet, along with Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, who visited the territory on Monday, and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, whose office serves as the primary federal interface with Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and other U.S. territories.

Nielsen has in the past been tasked with publicly explaining the administration's now-suspended policy of

separating migrant children from their parents at the border.

The Secret Service will provide security for the unusual visit of a Cabinet-level official to the territory, though Lefebvre said local residents shouldn't expect to see interference to daily routines.

"There's nothing that people have to watch out for," she said.

— *Contact Brian O'Connor at 340-714-9130 or email boconnor@dailynews.vi.*

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Monday, Aug. 6

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Havensight

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8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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Carnival Glory (2,980)

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Senators look to delay, eliminate property tax increases

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

Senators are expected to meet later this month in a special session to revise a law requiring a minimum property tax payment for the elderly, veterans and disabled individuals who receive tax breaks.

Act No. 7984, which was approved by the Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Kenneth Mapp on March 8, 2017, sets a minimum tax on real property of \$360 for those who qualify for property tax exemptions including the elderly, veterans, and the disabled.

The law went into effect on Jan. 1 and would affect tax bills going out on Aug. 31.

Senate Majority Leader Neville James said Thursday he wants to amend the law prior to that date to delay the implementation, but Sen. Dwayne DeGraff, who is in the minority caucus, said he's been trying to essentially undo the law ever since it was approved by senators.

Those affected by the law are some of the most vulnerable Virgin Islanders who can least afford to pay any additional property tax, and they should be afforded the tax breaks provided by law — even if it means they pay no property tax at all, DeGraff said.

"I'm of the belief that these individuals — seniors, veterans and persons with disabilities — have paid their due, and they should be exempt," DeGraff said. "I'm going to stick to whatever they were paying. If it came to \$200 after the exemptions, then that would be fine. But if it came to zero, then that would be what they



Dwayne DeGraff



Neville James

have to pay."

James said senators enacted the legislation after learning from the Tax Assessor that approximately 4,000 individuals pay no tax on their property as a result of the exemptions, and the measure was an effort to have everyone pay at least \$360 annually in property tax.

But the hurricanes changed the economic landscape of the territory so drastically, the tax increases should be delayed until life is more stable for those who would be affected, James said.

"We have people whose homes have been affected, and it's just fundamentally wrong for them to have to pay property tax increases," James said. "This is more about dealing with the realities of the impact of the storm and the impact also of those who are living on fixed incomes and can't really take this kind of hit."

James said senators are planning a special session later in the month to address the issue, which could include a switch from the baseline flat fee of \$360, to a variable percentage rate model to make the increases more equitable.

"Folks are living on fixed incomes, and we have to be sensitive to that,"

James said.

James said senators in the majority spoke with DeGraff because he introduced a bill with a similar subject matter, and Senate pre-emption rules dictate that he possesses ownership of any relevant legislation. For majority senators to amend the bill as desired, DeGraff would have to give up a bill he introduced in February 2017, before Mapp had even signed the matter into law.

Bills typically go through a committee hearing process to be thoroughly discussed and vetted before approval, but James suggested the bill could be special-ordered to the floor prior to the Aug. 31 deadline.

"Right now, we don't have the luxury of waiting for a date in the Finance Committee," James said.

DeGraff, meanwhile, said he's been waiting for his bill to be introduced in the Finance Committee since June 2017 — more than a year.

"I have proof to show my bill was stamped in from February of 2017, we are now in August of 2018, that's how long this bill has been in," DeGraff said, adding that he opposes special orders "unless I have no choice" because it circumvents the committee process, blocking debate.

Gov. Kenneth Mapp's recent announcements of public employee pay increases also proves the government has money to spend, so increasing taxes on the most disadvantaged property owners is unnecessary, DeGraff said.

"To add insult to injury to me, I mean this year, the governor is giving raises across the board. We haven't collected that much money in one

year to do this, so you can turn it how you want it, but my math isn't that bad," DeGraff said.

He said if majority senators were concerned about the economic impact of the property tax increases, they could have taken it up months ago.

"They're rushing because now it's

an election year and that's not my intent, to use it as a political football to get votes," DeGraff said.

James said a date for the special session has not yet been set.

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@dailynews.vi.


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British minister makes official visit to BVI

Daily News Staff

Tariq Ahmad, the United Kingdom's Foreign Office minister for the overseas territories, has presented the British Virgin Islands government with the keys to a temporary court house.

Upon arriving Tuesday at Lettsome International Airport, Ahmad was greeted by Gov. Augustus Jaspert and Premier D. Orlando Smith, according to a BVI government statement.

Ahmad attended the official hand-over ceremony for the Magistrate's Court Modular Building, a gift to the BVI from the United Kingdom government and presented the keys to the building to Jaspert and Smith. He was also given a tour of the building.

In his remarks, Ahmad spoke of the unity between the Virgin Islands and the U.K. and the U.K.'s commitment to help the territory rebuild stronger.

"You will never be alone, you are part of our family," Ahmad said. "We are proud of that fact and it is an immense pleasure and a humble honor to be with you today."



Photo by BVI GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE

Gov. Augustus Jaspert, left, and Premier D. Orlando Smith met with Tariq Ahmad, the United Kingdom's Foreign Office minister for the overseas territories, this week on Tortola.

Ahmad also met with disaster management and security officials aboard the RFA Mounts Bay, which will remain in the region throughout the hurricane season.

He also visited the East End Long

Community Centre, Elmore Stoutt High School and the Road Town Police Station and met with the Cabinet of the British Virgin Islands and the Board of the Recovery and Development Agency, according to the gov-

ernment statement.

Before leaving the territory Wednesday, he met with the Leader of the Opposition Andrew Fahie, young entrepreneurs and tourism and business representatives.

Tortola man pleads guilty to smuggling

By BRIAN O'CONNOR
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — A Tortola man has pleaded guilty to attempting to bring cocaine into the U.S. Virgin Islands, court documents show.

Ashley Warner, 54, pleaded guilty to conspiracy and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute, according to a press release issued by the U.S. Attorney's office.

Warner was arrested along with a co-defendant, Jason Frett, 36, on May 23 after each presented a cooler containing an unidentifiable mass to customs and border protection agents at King Airport on St. Thomas. Warner is Frett's stepfather, according to a complaint written by Homeland Security Department Special Agent Michael Fogle.

At the time, Frett and Warner were bound for Puerto Rico, according to court documents.

Warner and Frett arrived at St. Thomas via the ferry from Tortola on May 22, according to court documents. Frett was carrying only a black duffel bag on arrival on St. Thomas, Fogle wrote.

Inside hidden compartments in each cooler, officers discovered five plastic-wrapped kilograms of a substance which later field tested positive for cocaine.

The total weight of the cocaine was 11 kilograms or about 24.3 pounds, according to court documents. According to a price of \$30 per gram provided by Havocscope.com, which tracks black market prices, the cocaine has a street value of at least \$330,000.

Warner faces a sentencing range of 10 years to life, as well as a fine of up to \$10,000, according to the press release. His sentencing is set for Dec. 6.

Frett's trial is tentatively scheduled for Aug. 20, according to the case docket.

Warner was released from federal custody on July 27, according to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons. Frett remains in Metropolitan Detention Center Guaynabo in Puerto Rico, according to the Bureau of Prisons.

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Photo by BVI GOVERNMENT

The British Virgin Islands government has won a judgement related to the M/V Vagabond, which ran aground off Round Rock Island in 2016 while carrying 20,000 gallons of diesel fuel.

BVI wins judgement in fuel spill

Daily News Staff

The British Virgin Islands government has won a judgement for more than \$200,000 for cleanup costs as a result of a freighter that ran aground off Round Rock Island in October 2016.

According to a government statement about the order, the High Court of Justice awarded the government \$221,935.86, the lion's share of the \$251,329.76 it had been seeking as compensation for labor and salvage assessment costs as a result of the accident on Oct. 15, 2016.

Senior Crown Council Giselle Jackman-Lumy and Crown Counsel Sarah Potter-Washington appeared on behalf of the BVI attorney general. The defendant was represented by Richard Rowe of the law firm DenJen.

Jackman-Lumy said she was satisfied with the outcome of the proceedings.

Director of the Department of Disas-

ter Management Sharleen DaBreo said that the accident occurred just before midnight while the M/V Vagabond, which was owned by Caribbean Transport Ltd., was en route to Anguilla. The ship ran aground off Round Rock Island at the southwest end of Virgin Gorda. The impact caused significant damage to the vessel, and the captain and crew had to be rescued.

"This required a national response under the direction of the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force and subsequently the activation of the National Emergency Operations Centre. The operations went on for days and involved a number of local and international agencies including those from the United States government," DaBreo said.

According to DaBreo, in the wake of the Vagabond's grounding, the BVI government has worked to raise awareness about spills.

"We have seen the success of the public awareness and education cam-

paigns as the number of spills have decreased significantly," DaBreo said. "We continue to inform and educate the public about the effects that can be caused by oil spill on land and at sea. We offer training to build response capacity among our responders and enforcement agencies."

According to a U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration notice about the incident, the vessel was carrying 20,000 gallons of diesel fuel, which was leaking into the ocean.

"The Attorney General's Chambers worked extremely hard to prepare a solid case for presentation to the High Court judge and they were successful in their delivery," DaBreo said.

The Ministry of Communication and Works has developed a draft Oil Spill Prevention and Pollution Bill that is expected to be finalized and taken to the House of Assembly for approval, according to the government statement.

Education warns motorists of convoys

Daily News Staff

The VI. Education Department urges motorists to be mindful and accommodating of the transportation of modular classrooms in the territory.

The wide-load convoys will be on the roadways transporting classrooms to their respective

school sites during the coming weeks. The Virgin Islands Police Department will assist with traffic control while units are in transit; however, motorists are asked to drive carefully around the motorcade to avoid any accidents.

The next shipment of classrooms is scheduled to arrive in the territory on Saturday.

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Deaths

Carolyn Southwell

Services will be held Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2018, for Carolyn Southwell, who passed away July 5, 2018, in Georgia at the age of 61.

The viewing will begin at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2018, at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church with services immediately following at 10 a.m. The family requests that festive colors be worn.

Interment is in Antigua.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Francis Erskine; father, David Joseph; and husband, Ishmael Southwell; grandchild, Ann Mary (Babes) Batchelor; and brother, Ru-

pert (Ricky) Daley; nieces and nephews, Clint Williams, Otis Joseph and Alicia Joseph; and uncles, Jeremiah Erskine, Rufus Erskine, Fraco Joseph, Rupert Joseph, and Jonny Joseph.

She is survived by her sons, Damon Browne, Kurt Browne, Sonnel Browne, Sean Bailey; adopted sons, Valmon Gillon, Sylvester Thomas, Shaun



Carolyn Southwell

Testamark, James Southwell; adopted daughters, Lauraine Batchelor, Nurse Edwards, Desire Southwell, Carolyn Southwell-Thomas, Margaret Southwell; grandchildren, Jace Browne, Jacara Browne, Ariel Browne, Mya Benjamin; sisters, Albertine (Tenie) Joseph, Milentine (Jimpie) Coates, Claudine Joseph-Defoe, Ann Mary (Babes); brothers, Egbert (Tata) Tonge, Wilfred (Willy) Tonge, Withfield (Picket) Joseph; adopted brothers, Worrel Richards, Nanthan Richards, Pat Richards, Erral Richards, Denfield Richards; nieces and nephews, Coreen Williams-Ross, Vonetta Batchelor, Cleone Dabrio, Ciara Joseph, Rosie Stevens, Chantel Joseph, Francella Tonge, Sharvern Joseph, Charles Batchelor, Nemiah Batchelor, Everton Coates Jr., Ashly Williams Jr., Leon Tonge, Leroy Watts, Oma Joseph; grandnieces and grand-nephews, Charles Batchelor Jr., Nehemiah Batchelor Jr., Chalia, Tashawn, Hana, Jalisia and Noah Batchelor, Devonte Isaac, Raheem Horsford, Sean Bailey Jr., Antayln (Cookie) Tonge, Brie Ross, Brandon Ross; daughter-in-law, Roshanna Browne, Chekema Hec-

tor-Browne; sister-in-law, Federica Tonge, Charity Francis, Bridget Southwell, Keren Stevens; brother-in-law, Luis Batchelor, Everton Coates Sr., Johnson Southwell, Samuel Southwell, Simeon Southwell; aunts, Elaine Henry, Christopher Francis, Elaine Holbrough, Rose Francis; great-aunt-in-law, Deloris Erskine; godmother, Addie, Jermine, Shavon (Peggy Sauce); special friends, Mr. and Mrs. Lenroy Cabey, Patsy Joseph, Inita Peters, Esworth Martin, John Thomas, Tammy, Cherise Benjamin, Webber, Donna McKay, Lavern, Nalda, Bramble, Annetta, Eula, Cheata, Sonnia, Lorna Mac, Cordella, Mike, Rose Clare, Iola Henry, Dorothy, Debra, Vern and the entire Williams family, Mertle and Avonelle, Labon Nicholas, Deloris Pinney, Keithly Daniel, Gweneth Joshua, Dean (Taxi Driver), the folks at the Caribbean Kidney Center, the folks at Able Transportations, and the staff of COG Companies; and cousins, Pie and Beatrice, Landa and family, Adelaide Richards and family, Adrian Joseph and family, Nelderine and family, John Thomas and family, Anges Sebastian and family; and

special cousins, Zepheniah, Archie, Milicent, Janet, Esselyn, Lilian, Hubert, Nancilyn, Kenroy, Garfield, Alvin, Cavelle, Vernice, Linette, John Boy, Mehe, Christopher, Edna, Ciciley, Edson, Randalf, Francine, Leona, Christine, Kim, Keithly, Youla, Goldean, Emerson and the entire Knight family.

She is also related to the Joseph, Tonge, Erskine, and Thomas families of Johnson Point, Bolans, Crabs Hills, Urlings, and Old Road, Antigua.

The pallbearers are Damon Browne, Sean Bailey Sr., Leon Tonge, Sonnel Browne, Charles Batchelor, Nehemiah Sr. Batchelor, Jace Browne, Sean Bailey Jr., Devonte Isaac, Ashly Williams Jr. and Valmon Gillon; and the honorary pallbearers, Egbert Tonge, Wilfred Tonge, Withfield Joseph, Ashly Williams Jr., Everton Coates Sr., Lambert Defoe, and Luis Batchelor.

Arrangements are under the care of Hurley Funeral Home and Cremation Center of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.

For online directions and condolences please visit us at www.hurley-davisfuneralhome.com.

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Deaths

Brian Alan Emerich

Brian Alan Emerich, 67, of St. Thomas, USVI, passed away peacefully on May 1, 2018, after an extended illness.

He is survived by his wife, Nicola Barthen Emerich; daughter, Maxine Emerich-Jaquish; son, Alex Emerich; and Maxine's husband, Paul Jaquish.

He is also survived by his brother, Scott Emerich; sister, Chris Emerich Penniman; and nephews, Eric Penniman, Scott Emerich Jr. and Nathan Emerich.

He leaves many close and treasured friends including those of Rotary Club of St. Thomas.

Brian was born on Jan. 19, 1951, in Milwaukee, Wisc., to loving parents Charles and Virginia Emerich. He was raised in Greenwich, Conn.

After receiving a bachelor of science degree in architecture from the University of Colorado, Brian became a successful architect in Seattle, Wash. He was subsequently asked by the University of Alaska, Juneau, to establish their Department of Architecture. Brian's firm, Emerich Associates Architects, was very busy in Juneau; his work included a restoration of the historic downtown. After

a highly successful nine years he met his wife in Juneau. They soon married in Spain, where Brian continued as an architect for a few years, then returned stateside to continue his career in New York.

His first child was born. The family subsequently moved to St. Thomas in 1988. Brian practiced architecture and Nicola became the founder and producer of Pistarckle Theater, Inc. In 1993-95, he was the director of facilities for the campuses at the University of the Virgin Islands. Most recently, he designed the new facility at Coral World.

Brian was especially proud of his children, Maxine and Alexander (Alex was born in St. Thomas). Both are engineers in South Carolina.

A creative and resourceful architect, Brian designed and built many successful and acclaimed projects including Pistarckle Theater, his family home, which after his family, was his pride and joy. He was generous with his time to friends and the community and always had a warm smile and a great sense of humor. A charmer, he loved nothing more than spending time at home, raft-ups at Christmas Cove, and sailing the open seas with family and friends. Leaving too soon, he will be greatly missed.

There will be a scattering of his ashes in May 2019. Date to be determined. In lieu of flowers, send donations to Pistarckle Theater, Inc., 4126 Anna's Retreat, St. Thomas, VI. 00802.



Brian Alan Emerich

Governor's Agenda

Today

No public appearances are scheduled today.

uled today.

Government House did not provide Gov. Kenneth Mapp's agenda.

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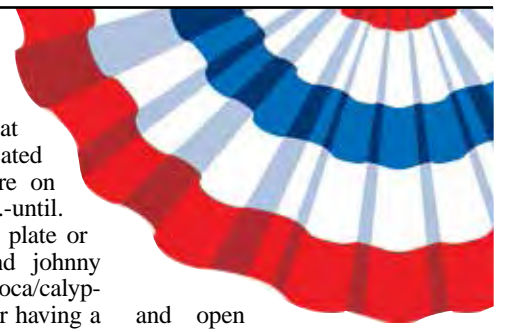
Campaign events

The Committee to Re-Elect **Janelle K. Sarauw** presents Fried Fridays, with food, music and conversation today at 6 p.m. at the Fort Christian parking lot on St. Thomas. The menu includes johnny cake for \$1, chicken wings for \$2 and fish starting at \$12, priced per size.

The Committee to Re-Elect **Jean Forde** to the Senate will host Forde

Fridays every Friday at Forde headquarters located across from Market Square on St. Thomas from 6 p.m.-until. Enjoy a barbecue pigtail plate or fried chicken wings and johnny cake, while dancing to soca/calypso, slamming dominos, or having a cold drink at the bar. Meet and greet with Forde to discuss the important issues facing our home in a friendly

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Emancipation Festival fun begins



Sisters Tasha, left, and Tonya Bertie serve up home-cooked food for patrons in Jenny's Kitchen as the BVI Emancipation Festival began on Friday with the traditional food fair in Road Town, Tortola. Events continue this weekend. **Pages 2-3**

Daily News photo by DEAN GREENAWAY

Primary election day is here



Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. today

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Nelson ends bid for governor after judge's ruling



Page 4

Relief in sight for Bellevue Village residents?

St. John apartment owner commits to hurricane fixes **Page 6**

Is it safe to swim? 3 St. Thomas beaches flagged

Page 7

St. Thomas golfer medals at tourney

Page 22



Alexandra Swayne

USVI girls soccer team bound for Florida

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Daily News photos by DEAN GREENAWAY

Members of the Heritage Dancers were among the entertainers during the BVI Emancipation Festival Food Fair on Friday in Road Town, Tortola.



Reigning Miss BVI Khephra Sylvester cuts the ribbon to signal the opening of the BVI Emancipation Festival during Friday's food fair as Culture Minister Myron Walwyn, left, 2017 Prince and Princess, Jabari Pemberton and Lyric Rhymer Jr., Mister BVI Yohance Smith and Acting Premier Dr. Kedrick Pickering look on.



Akeisha Smith is recognized by Culture Minister Myron Walwyn on Friday for creating the BVI Emancipation Festival slogan and theme, "Revisiting and Revitalizing Our Culture," with the slogan, "Restore and Revive Our Cultural Scene, BVI Strong for Festival 2018."

BVI Emancipation Festival kicks off with food fair

By **DEAN GREENAWAY**
Special to The Daily News

TORTOLA — For the first time in its 64-year history, the British Virgin Islands Emancipation Festival started with the traditional food fair and not Friday night's opening of the Festival Village.

Friday's Food Fair, held behind the government's Central Administration Complex, had a smaller than usual number of vendors, reflecting the myriad changes after Hurricane Irma's destruction last year.

The festival is being held under the theme, "Revisiting and Revitalizing Our Culture," with the slogan, "Restore and Revive Our Cultural Scene, BVI Strong for Festival 2018."

"This year, more than any other year, the festival theme serves as a focal point, which informs and guides how our festival activities will be celebrated," Culture Minister Myron Walwyn said during his opening remarks. "In the aftermath of all that has transpired, while we were in the throes of redevelopment, this is the perfect opportunity to restore our culture and demonstrate what emancipation really means to us. In the midst of adversity, we have taken the opportunity to revisit and revitalize those cultural practices and norms, that helped to strengthen our Virgin Islands."

Walwyn said recognizing the times they're in, the Emancipation Festival activities have been shortened and restructured. He said everyone must be reminded that the forefathers, even when they were enslaved, were a strong and defiant people. He noted that in the midst of slavery, they rebelled, and strove to overcome the dire and challenging circumstances in which they found themselves.

"Today, we find ourselves in a similar circumstance, reeling from the ravages of the recent hurricanes. Today more than ever, we must follow the footsteps of our ancestors and rise up to face these challenges," Walwyn said. "The celebration of our emancipation from slavery, in the form of our emancipation festivals, is even more essential to our resilience. In the midst of adversity, we find ourselves in a place of reflection. We have scaled back our festival celebrations and this is an opportunity for the celebrations to grow into celebrations that best reflects our emancipation. This was an opportunity that we could not allow to be wasted. This was the perfect opportunity to reset and get it right."

Residents turned out in search of traditional local foods, ground provisions, a variety of pastries, jams, pepper sauces and sugar cane, among other offerings.

Retired educator Olive Vanterpool was kept busy turning out cassava bread on the spot for patrons. Vanterpool told The Daily News that she has been making them steadily for the last 15 years. She learned to make them assisting her mother as a child, she said.

"I do this on Fahie Hill by my house every Friday," said Vanterpool, who also makes coconut bread, dumb bread and a variety of tarts. "People seem to like it. Cassava bread is something that seems to be dying out, but I feel inspired to keep it up. I'm not all that young,



Daily News photos by DEAN GREENAWAY

Track coach Ralston Henry collects his packet of tarts from James Lettsome III.



Crabs sit ready to be prepared for a dish of crab and rice.



Vistaria Donovan pours the last bit of peas soup for a customer.



Olive Vanterpool checks her cassava bread to make sure it's not being burned.

so now that I'm retired, I think it's something good to do to keep the culture alive."

Carol Hyman told The Daily News that it has been a long time since she had cassava bread, though she'd get it occasionally at Crandall's.

"I think that Mrs. Vanterpool has the real

deal, so I was willing to try it and see what it's like as I'm getting it hot off the press," she said. "I haven't seen it being made in ages. The last time was when I was in high school and had a presentation and that was it. A very long, long time ago. That's how long. But I can't wait to taste it."

Festival schedule

Festival activities continue tonight in the BVI Cultural Festiville, with NJAR, Showtime, Sanchez, Rock City and Triple Kay

Sunday: Power Boat Races, Romney Park, West End, 1 p.m.

- Freedom March, 3 p.m., followed by Emancipation Service at Sunday Morning Well.

- Village Entertainment: Coronation of Miss BVI 2018, Extreme, Conta, BDJ and Poizon

Monday: Rise and Shine Tramp, August Monday Parade

- Village Entertainment: Evolution Band, Drama Time, and Big Band/Monea

Tuesday: BVI Horse Racing Association Fun Day, Ellis Thomas Downs

- Village Entertainment: A.B.M, Destra, Farmer Nappy and VIBE

Wednesday: East End-Long Look Rise and Shine Tramp, 4 a.m.

Friday: Carrot Bay Cultural Fiesta

- Village Entertainment/Festival Last Lap, Road Town. V.I. Groove Project, Patrice Roberts and the A-Team Band, Bounty Killer, and 2018 Road March Champs

Polls open at 7 a.m. for primary election today

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

Voters territorywide will decide the Democratic nominee for governor today, as well as the slate of Democratic candidates for the Legislature and party officials starting at 7 a.m. today.

The marquee three-way contest among gubernatorial tickets Angel E. Dawson Jr./Marise James, Albert Bryan/Tregenza Roach, and Allison "Allie" Petrus/Sammuel Sanes could be decided shortly after polls close at 7 p.m.



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In the wake of September's hurricanes, the primary has consolidated polling locations, meaning voters may find their old polling place has been relocated.

Locations are as follows:

St. Thomas and St. John

- Charles W. Turnbull Library
- Lockhart Elementary School
- University of the Virgin Islands
- Julius Sprauve School

St. Croix

- Canegata Recreation Center
- Juanita Gardine Elementary School
- Ricardo Richards Elementary School
- St. Croix Educational Complex
- Claude O. Markoe Elementary School

Today's vote is only the begin-

ning. The primary election will be followed by the General Election on Nov. 6, and a potential runoff election on Nov. 20, said Board of Elections Chairman Arturo Watlington Jr.

This year, officials intend to use express voting machines as a means of reducing the workload for Elections System officials, Watlington said.

"If we remake a ballot, we're going to be doing it via the express vote machines," he said.

The machines offer voters a touch screen, which generates a paper ballot based on the voter's choices, Watlington said. The ballot is then reviewed by the voter and fed into an automated vote counting machine, Watlington said. That creates a paper trail in the event of a recount, while eliminating the need for buying hun-

dreds of blank ballots that then can't be reused, Watlington said.

Elections officials also shift into high gear as voters go home. That process will be different this year, because the 2018 primary is the first election under the single Elections Board. That requires additional coordination between board members on St. Thomas and St. Croix.

"We're going to certify the election on Aug. 18," Watlington said. "This will be done simultaneously in both districts. Since we're now a single board, it's now that we've got to figure out a way how we get signatures from both jurisdictions."

Other significant post-election dates include:

- Monday, when officials will begin counting absentee ballots. While

absentee ballot counts seldom reorder all election results, they can be determinative among candidates in sixth, seventh and eighth place.

- Wednesday, when officials plan to count provisional ballots. A provisional ballot is cast for voters who may have an issue with their registration — a recent relocation or name change, for example — but who are allowed to vote on the condition that their credentials can be more closely inspected later.

- Aug. 14, when the last absentee votes will be counted. This marks the end of the 10-day window for absentee ballots postmarked by the election day to arrive in the territory.

— Contact Brian O'Connor at 340-714-9130 or email boconnor@dailynews.vi.

Willocks dismisses Nelson's gubernatorial bid

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

The field of candidates for the Nov. 8 General Election became a little less crowded Friday.

St. Croix Superior Court Judge Harold Willocks dismissed with prejudice a lawsuit filed by gubernatorial candidate and St. Croix Sen. Positive Nelson and his running mate, St. Thomas restaurateur Gary Udhwani, officials involved with the case said.

A dismissal with prejudice means a new complaint can't be filed on the matter following the dismissal, even if new evidence emerges in the case.

Nelson confirmed the dismissal via phone Friday and said he had no plans to appeal, primarily for economic reasons, and did not plan to mount a formal write-in campaign.

"All this legal wrangling, I feel, has drawn on," he said. "I don't want to put my family, my committee, my supporters through the process."

Nevertheless, Nelson said he still felt confident about the merits of his case.

"It became evident in the court that the election law is ambiguous,"

“
It became evident in the court that the election law is ambiguous. I'm not prepared to bear the legal expense to be the example.

— Sen. Positive Nelson



he said. "I'm not prepared to bear the legal expense to be the example."

Nelson's campaign was among the first to be informally announced. However, Nelson suspended his bid on May 7, saying he was unable to find a running mate. The following day — the deadline for candidates to file in the territory — Nelson announced Udhwani as his running mate. Social media videos showed

Nelson walking in to file his papers with "five stones from the river," an allusion to the stones the biblical David used to slay Goliath, in his pocket.

However, Elections Supervisor Caroline Fawkes disqualified the candidacy two weeks later. In a letter to the campaign announcing the dismissal, Fawkes cited the fact that numerous signatures on Nelson and Udhwani's nominating papers were collected before Udhwani was announced as the running mate.

Nelson brought the matter to the federal courts, which abstained from issuing an order in the case. Nelson subsequently filed in the Superior Court, and Willocks ordered the Board of Elections to consider the issue by Aug. 3. Board members met on July 23, and voted to back Fawkes's decision.

Board Chairman Arturo Watlington Jr. said Friday he was aware of the dismissal, but would wait to receive a copy of the order before offering comment.

Disqualifying all signatures collected before the May 8 deadline would have left the campaign without enough valid signatures to meet

requirements established by Virgin Islands law.

Fawkes also cited the fact that at the time the papers were handed in, Udhwani was not a registered voter. Nelson and Udhwani have each said Udhwani was eliminated from the voter rolls under a since-repealed section of the V.I. Code requiring voters to be removed if they did not participate in two successive elections.

The requirement has led in some cases to the practice of casting ballots without a selected candidate in order to keep a voter registration active.

Community work yet remains, Nelson said.

"I am in office until December," he said of his Senate position. "I do plan to work hard to the end of the 32nd Legislature, including trying to get legalization of cannabis, both medically and for adult use."

Nelson also declined to formally endorse any of the other candidates in the race.

"The only candidate I endorse is Positive T.A. Nelson," he said.

"Sometimes you got to know when to just step away, and that's what I'm doing here," Nelson added.

ISSN 2159-3019

Daily News Publishing Co. Inc. owned by VIDN Holdings, LLC publishes The Virgin Islands Daily News daily, except Sunday, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, at 9155 Estate Thomas, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, VI 00802. First class postage paid at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

USPS 144-180

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Two members of King Airport cocaine ring get hefty terms

Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Two St. Thomas men have each been sentenced to more than 13 years in prison for their part in a conspiracy to ship drugs from the Virgin Islands to the U.S. mainland with help from one of Gov. Kenneth Mapp's bodyguards.

On Thursday, District Court Judge Curtis Gomez sentenced Craig Richardson, 43, to 14 years in prison and five years of supervised release. Richardson's conspirator, Germaine Hall, 41, was sentenced to 13 years and four months in prison and five years of supervised release. Both men will have to serve 350 hours of community service and pay a \$100 special assessment, according to a press release from the office of U.S. Attorney Gretchen Shappert.

According to the testimony at Hall's trial, between 2014 and 2016, both Richardson and Hall were members of a large-scale cocaine smuggling organization that operated out of King Airport.

Neal Chesterfield, a bodyguard for Gov. Kenneth Mapp, would use his law enforcement credentials to bypass security screening at the airport to smuggle large quantities of cocaine from St. Thomas to Miami and Fort Lauderdale.

According to the U.S. Attorney's Office, Richardson was the leader of the conspiracy and would arrange for the shipments of cocaine and tell Hall, and other members of the conspiracy, where to collect and then sell the drugs.

During Chesterfield's trial, it was revealed that the conspiracy came apart after a former Department of Planning and Natural Resources peace officer,

and childhood friend of Chesterfield's, Gerald Mercer, was squeezed out of the operation and subsequently tipped off federal authorities. According to testimony, Mercer recruited Chesterfield into the conspiracy.

Chesterfield was sentenced to 70 months in prison in June. Also pleading guilty in the conspiracy was Makimba Barry, 39, of Atlanta and Jamal Haynes, 39, of Tallahassee, Fla.

Mercer was found guilty of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute between 50 and 150 kilograms of cocaine on May 31.

The case was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations, the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Delia Smith.

Man who was caught at Red Hook dock with 122 pounds of cocaine pleads guilty

Daily News Staff

A man could face life in prison and a \$10 million fine after pleading guilty Thursday to his part in a cocaine smuggling conspiracy.

According to a statement from U.S. Attorney Gretchen Shappert, Reynaldo Lerburds, 41, who was living on St. John, was apprehended by the Drug Enforcement Administration as he departed the Red Hook car barge.

According to an affidavit by Special Agent Evan Martinez of the DEA's St. Thomas Division, Lerburds and Michael Leonard were arrested after a confidential source told

agents that Lerburds had received a load of cocaine and was storing it in his St. John home. The source said Lerburds would be traveling by barge to St. Thomas the following morning in a "light green/blue Suzuki with a red hood," the affidavit continued.

The next morning, DEA agents and V.I. police officers located the vehicle leaving the ferry terminal in Red Hook.

Lerburds and his passenger, Leonard, were taken into custody after several duffel bags inside the vehicle were found to contain 50 brick-like items, weighing about 122 pounds, that field-tested as cocaine, according to Martinez.

On Tuesday, Leonard pleaded guilty to misprision of a felony, which, according to the federal definition of misprision, means Leonard committed a felony; had knowledge of the felony; failed to notify authorities of the crime; and took steps to conceal it.

On Thursday, Lerburds pleaded guilty to conspiracy to possess cocaine with the intent to distribute, which carries a sentence of not less than 10 years, or more than life in prison and a fine of \$10 million, according to Shappert.

The case was investigated by the DEA and the Virgin Islands Police Department and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sigrid Tejo-Sprotte.

Authorities seeking public's help in finding La Grande Princesse man

Daily News Staff

V.I. Police are asking for the public's help in locating 26-year-old Jarib C. Ramos-Vega of St. Croix.

Ramos-Vega was last seen Tuesday at his La Grande Princesse home.

He is described as 5 feet 9 inches tall, weighing about 130 pounds, with black hair, brown eyes and a light complexion. He has tattoos reading "KING" in red, blue and purple ink on his left wrist, "STINGRAY" on his chest, "JESUS FISH" on his back and a tribal tattoo on his left arm.

Ramos-Vega wears glasses and was



Jarib C. Ramos-Vega

340-778-2211 or 911.

Police were unable to provide more information as to why they are looking for Ramos-Vega at presstime Friday.

last seen in a white tank top and black basketball pants.

Police ask anyone who sees Ramos-Vega, or knows of his location, to call the Ancilmo Marshall Command at 340-773-2530, or the Criminal Investigation Bureau at

League of Women Voters to meet today

The League of Women Voters St. Thomas Unit will meet from 10 a.m. to noon today at E's Garden Tea House on Garden Street in Charlotte Amalie.

Members will discuss upcoming candidate forums ahead of the General Election.

Questions may be emailed to lwwvvi@gmail.com.

Visit www.lwwvi.org to learn more.

Cruise Ships

Today, Aug. 4 to Sunday, Aug. 5

No ships

Monday, Aug. 6

Carnival Fascination (2,634) 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Havensight

Tuesday, Aug. 7

Caribbean Princess (3,600) Noon to 10 p.m. Havensight
Carnival Magic (3,675) 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Havensight
Celebrity Equinox (2,850) 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Crown Bay

Wednesday, Aug. 8

Carnival Glory (2,980) 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Havensight
Oasis of the Seas (6,296) 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Crown Bay

Thursday, Aug. 9 to Saturday, Aug. 11

No ships

Sunday, Aug. 12

Freedom of the Seas (3,634) 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Crown Bay

Monday, Aug. 13

Carnival Fascination (2,634) 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Havensight

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Bellevue Village owner agrees to months-long repair plan, homeownership program

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

Owners of the Bellevue Village apartment complex on St. John have begun a six- to eight-month rehabilitation plan to restore units damaged by hurricanes Irma and Maria, according to V.I. Attorney General Claude Walker.

On Thursday, Walker met with Bellevue owners — American Insurance Group and its president, Thomas Musante — and took a tour of Bellevue Village with AIG contractors and Bellevue residents. Walker said he was pleased that AIG was now addressing the damages at the affordable housing community.

“It was a very good meeting,” Walker said. “We discussed the rehabilitation plan and it is on track as AIG has hired a construction firm from New

York with boots on the ground. From what I can see, the work has started and is on its way. The contractors have confirmed that they are committed to getting this job done.”

Walker said he is convinced repairs will be done in a “relatively short time.”

David Gembala, AIG’s general contractor, said work to refurbish the property should be completed within six to eight months, according to a press release issued Thursday from Walker’s office.

Thursday’s tour comes more than a month after Walker penned a letter to AIG insisting he was “gravely concerned” that little to no repairs had taken place at Bellevue since last year’s back-to-back hurricanes.

Bellevue residents frequently tried reaching out to AIG for months — even forming a tenant’s association — to address a bevy of hurricane-related problems, including missing ceilings and cabinets, mold, blown-out windows, cracked tiles, and infestations.

Musante addressed the delay in repairs in Walker’s press release.

“I think there was a lot of logistical challenges on the island after the hurricanes,” Musante said. “After we got our initial assessment, we tried to locate contractors on the island — unfortunately, we weren’t able to locate any. So, we managed to contact some folks stateside to find contractors with significant resources to mobilize here on the island to bring materials and labor and get the work done. I understand the frustration, but all of that takes time. The folks on the ground here have been working really hard.”

In June, AIG agreed to let tenants forego rent for the rest of the year.

Walker said AIG also acknowledged Bellevue’s Home Ownership Incentive Program, which allows residents to purchase their apartments after 15 years.

AIG had previously claimed it knew

nothing about the program.

“We ended our meeting with AIG in agreement on this matter and we are committed to establishing a viable plan, which will include V.I. Housing Finance Authority to start the process of turning those units over to the tenants after 2020,” Walker said. “This would result in an opportunity for the Bellevue tenants in the tight St. John housing market becoming homeowners overnight.”

The homeownership program takes 10 percent of each resident’s monthly rent and credits it as a down payment toward home purchase.

Bellevue resident Kenisha Small, who serves as president of the Bellevue tenant association, said she was happy with the results of the tour.

“I am extremely happy that AIG agreed to be better when it comes to communication,” she said. “The contractors will be doing more scheduling with me rather than with management so that I can get the community in order and have people set up if they have to move. So, it sounds like we’re going to be working together a lot more — if that happens, I’m completely happy because communication is everything.”

Small said the tenant association will continue to meet in the event that plans “fall through.”

“A lot depends on how much of this information is credible and how well it moves forward,” Small said. “We’re not going to stop meeting. If this falls through, our efforts are going to continue and we’re going to stay active in the community.”

In terms of AIG’s acknowledgment of the homeownership program, Small remained wary, insisting “it means nothing if it’s not in writing.”

Bellevue Village is an affordable housing complex that consists of 36 duplex homes and 72 living units.

Work underway on the Lumberyard



Daily News photo by ANDREA MILAM

Demolition started this week at the Lumberyard complex in Cruz Bay, St. John, which has sat in ruins since Hurricane Irma in September. The heavily damaged complex is one of the first sights that visitors arriving on cruise ship tours are greeted with.

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Three St. Thomas beaches fail water quality test for bacteria

Daily News Staff

Three St. Thomas beaches have failed water quality tests.

According to the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources, water from Coki Point, Lindquist and Water Bay on the East End of St. Thomas has exceeded thresholds for enterococci bacteria and is not considered safe for swimming or fishing.

According to the U.S. National Institutes of Health, enterococci is a family of common bacteria found in the gut of humans, other mam-

mals and birds. While generally benign, the bacteria can cause many types of infections, diverticulitis and meningitis

High levels of enterococci bacteria may be caused by runoff due to heavy rains, heavy marine vessel traffic, high wave activity near the shoreline and irresponsible recreational use, according to a DPNR statement.

Runoff can consist of sediment, pesticides, animal feces and oil and grease, all of which are harmful to the waters of the territory.

The department also warns that

samples were not taken in the last week at Columbus Landing, Stony Ground, Princess Condo Row and Grapetree Bay beaches on St. Croix; Frenchman's Bay on St. Thomas; or any beach on St. John and the quality of the water is unknown.

DPNR warns beachgoers and fishermen that if the waters appear muddy, murky or have a foul odor, do not swim or fish.

For additional information regarding water quality, call the Division of Environmental Protection at **340-773-1082**.

U.S. Customs begins operation at Red Hook starting today

Daily News Staff

U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents will begin clearing foreign arrival passenger ferries at the new checkpoint inside the Urman Fredericks Terminal in Red Hook, St. Thomas, this weekend.

The temporary operation begins just in time for the Emancipation Festival events in the British Virgin Islands.

CBP agents will operate on a temporary schedule beginning to-

day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and from Sunday through Tuesday they will operate from 4 to 9 p.m. Normal daily operations will start Aug. 13 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Charter and private pleasure boats will continue to clear Customs at the Victor Sewer Marine Facility ("The Creek") on St. John. The V.I. Port Authority continues to work with CBP to facilitate travel and commerce for the territory.

For more information about CBP operations, call **340-774-2510**.

BVI lifts customs duties as residents rebuild

Daily News Staff

The government of the British Virgin Islands has extended two tax exemptions on reconstruction goods.

Importers who purchased goods overseas before March 31, but have been unable to have them delivered, will continue to be eligible for a 100 percent duty-free tax exemption until Aug. 31, according to a government statement.

The administration is also giving consideration to persons who, because of late insurance settlements, or for other reasons have not been able to have their reconstruction goods imported.

The customs duty exemptions are designed to allow individuals who sustained damages to import a number of items duty free as part of the relief and recovery efforts.

Importers who purchased goods after March 31 must submit an application requesting a remission of

the relevant customs duties, together with supporting documentation.

Those importers that can demonstrate they suffered a loss or damage as a result of the 2017 hurricanes will be eligible for the tax exemption, according to the statement.

The customs duty exemptions are designed to allow individuals who sustained damages to import a number of items duty free as part of the relief and recovery efforts.

The new list of items classified as exempted are building materials, electrical fixtures and materials, plumbing fixtures and materials, household furniture, furnishings and appliances and marine engines, according to the statement.



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Deaths

Carolyn Southwell

Services will be held Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2018, for Carolyn Southwell, who passed away July 5, 2018, in Georgia at the age of 61.

The first viewing will be from 5 to 7 p.m. Monday, Aug. 6, 2018, at Celestial Chapel Hurley Funeral Home. The second viewing will be from 9 to 10 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2018, at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, with the service immediately following at 10 a.m.

The family requests that festive colors to be worn.

Interment is in Antigua.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Francis Erskine; father, David Joseph; husband, Ishmael Southwell; sister, Ann Mary (Babes) Batchelor; brother, Rupert (Ricky) Daley; nieces and nephews, Alicia Joseph, Clint Williams, Otis Joseph; and uncles, Jeremiah Erskine, Rufus Erskine, Fraco Joseph, Rupert Joseph, Jonny Joseph.

She is survived by her sons, Damon Browne, Kurt Browne, Sonnel Browne, Sean Bailey; adopted son, Valmon Gillon, Sylvester Thomas, Shaun Testamark, James Southwell; adopted daughters, Lauraine Batchelor, Nurse Edwards, Desire Southwell, Car-



Carolyn Southwell

lyn Southwell-Thomas, Margaret Southwell; grandchildren, Jace Browne, Jacara Browne, Ariel Browne, Mya Benjamin; sisters, Albertine (Tennie) Joseph, Milentine (Jimpie) Coates, Claudine Joseph-Defoe; brothers, Egbert (Tata) Tonge, Wilfred (Willy) Tonge, Withfield (Picket) Joseph; adopted brothers, Worrel Richards, Nanthan Richards, Pat Richards, Erral Richards, Denfield Richards; nieces and nephews, Coreen Williams-Ross, Vonetta Batchelor, Cleone Dabrio, Ciara Joseph, Rosie Stevens, Chantel Joseph, Francella Tonge, Sharvern Joseph, Charles Batchelor, Nemiah Batchelor, Everton Coates Jr., Ashly Williams Jr., Leon Tonge, Leroy Watts, Oma Joseph; grand-nieces and grand-nephews, Charles Batchelor Jr., Nehemiah Batchelor Jr., Chalia, Tashawn, Hana, Jalisia and Noah Batchelor, Devonte Isaac, Raheem Horsford, Sean Bailey Jr., Aytayln (Cookie) Tonge, Brie Ross, Brandon Ross; daughters-in-law, Roshanna

Browne, Chekema Hector-Browne; sister-in-law, Federica Tonge, Charity Francis, Bridget Southwell, Keren Stevens; brother-in-law, Luis Batchelor, Everton Coates Sr., Johnson Southwell, Samuel Southwell, Simeon Southwell; aunts, Elaine Henry, Christopher Francis, Elaine Holbrough, Rose Francis; great-aunt-in-law, Deloris Erskine; godmother, Addie, Jermine, Shavon (Peggy Sauce); special friends, Mr. and Mrs. Lenroy Cabey, Patsy Joseph, Inita Peters, Esworth Martin, John Thomas, Tammy, Cherise Benjamin, Webber, Donna Mckay, Lavern, Nalda, Bramble, Annetta, Eula, Cheata, Sonia, Lorna Mac, Cordella, Mike, Rose Clare, Iola Henry, Dorothy, Debra, Vern and the entire Williams family, Mertle and Avonelle, Labon Nicholas, Deloris Pinney, Keithly Daniel, Gweneth Joshua, Dean (Taxi Driver), the folks at the Caribbean Kidney Center, the folks at Able Transportations, and the staff of COG Companies; cousins, Pie and Beatrice, Landa and family, Adelaide Richards and family, Adrian Joseph and family, Nelderine and family, John Thomas and family, Anges Sebastian and family; she is also related to the Joseph, Tonge, Erskine, and Thomas families of Johnson Point, Bolans, Crabs Hills, Urlings, and Old Road, Antigua; pallbearers, Damon Browne, Sean Bailey Sr., Leon Tonge, Sonnel Browne, Charles Batchelor, Nehemiah Sr. Batchelor, Jace Browne, Sean Bailey Jr., Devonte Isaac, Ashly Williams Jr., Valmon Gillon; honorary pallbearers, Egbert Tonge, Wilfred Tonge, Whitfield Joseph, Ashley Williams Jr., Everton Coates Sr., Lambert Defoe, Luis Batchelor; special cousins, Zepheniah, Archie, Milicent, Janet, Es-selyn, Lilian, Hubert, Nancilyn, Kenroy, Garfield, Alvin, Cavelle, Vernice,

Linette, John Boy, Mehe, Christopher, Edna, Ciciley, Edson, Randalf, Francine, Leona, Christine, Kim, Keithly, Youla, Goldean, Emerson and the entire Knight family.

Arrangements are under the care of Hurley Funeral Home and Cremation Center of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix. For online directions and condolences visit us at www.hurleydavisfuneralhome.com.

Joseph Medard

Services will be held Friday, Aug. 10, 2018, for Joseph Medard.

The viewing is from 10 to 11 a.m. at Holy Family Church, St. Thomas, with services to follow at 11 a.m. Interment is at Eastern Cemetery.

He is survived by his wife, Rona Ma Rona Medard; children, Mary (Linda) Alexander, Christina (Teatin) Charles, Paul (Hermit) Medard, Simeon Medard, Adrian Joseph of St. Lucia, Camilla (Carcam) Medard, Joanna Herald, Joanna (Jojo) Talbert; grandchildren, Cindy Descartes, Dorita Lattany, Zain Medard, Joseph (Jt) Talbert Jr., Jade Medard, Kenney Madard, Celine Medard, Joshua Madard, Omery Alexander, William Alaxender, Robert (Niah) Paul, Alaxendria Paul, Clement Paul, Keon Paul; great-grandchildren, Annalah, Destinee, Zoey, Sky, Geselle and Melvin Jr. 3rd, Keke, Nika, Quincy and Shermar; daughters-in-law, Paula (Glenda) Medard, Rita Medard; sons-in-law, Augustine (Morgan) Charles,



Joseph Medard

and Joseph (Joejo) Talbert; special caretaker, Sharon Talbert, the Medard family of Montet Chozel and Anse La Raye, St. Lucia; and many other relatives and friends.

Funeral arrangements are entrusted to Turnbull's Funeral Home and Crematory Services.

Ann Eliza Gordon

Services will be held Monday, Aug. 6, 2018, for Ann Eliza Gordon, who passed away July 25, 2018, in Tampa, Fla., at the age of 85.

The first viewing will be from 4 to 6 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 5, 2018, at Celestial Chapel of Hurley Funeral Home. The second viewing will be from 9 to 10 a.m. Monday, Aug. 6, 2018, at Frederick Lutheran Church with the service immediately following at 10 a.m.

Interment is at Western Cemetery No. 3.

Ann Eliza Gordon is survived by her sons, Rudolph Petrus and Lional Bess; daughter, Lavern Bess; daughters-in-law, Merla Bess and Marilyn Peters; sister, Delores Walters; grandchildren, Whitney Bess, La'Rita Petrus-Cosby, Netanya Petrus, Zinnia Bess, Kevin Potter Jr.; four great-grandchildren, five nieces and one nephew.

Arrangements are under the care of Hurley Funeral Home and Cremation Center of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix. For online direction and condolences visit us at www.hurleydavisfuneralhome.com.



Ann Eliza Gordon

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Democratic unity



Photo by LAUREN MARSH

Gubernatorial candidates Allison "Allie" Petrus, Albert Bryan and Angel E. Dawson Jr. show Democratic unity Saturday outside the Urman Victor Fredericks Marine Terminal on St. Thomas after they shared a ferry from St. John. Each of the candidates has pledged to support the winner of Saturday's primary.



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Democratic primary voters: We want change

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

Voter dissatisfaction with the current administration was palpable at polling places throughout the territory during Saturday's primary election for gubernatorial and Senate Democrats.

"You've got to watch these damn crooks. Crooks and liars," said Elroy Leonard, 76, who voted at Turnbull Library on St. Thomas.

Leonard said he spent years living in New York, and when he returned home to the Virgin Islands "I looking for better, but it's not better."

While decidedly cynical about the territory's current political climate — "You vote for seven senators and you hope maybe one turns out good." — Leonard said he still takes his vote seriously.

"What you going to do, just stay home?" Leonard said. "You just hope it gets better."

Cicely Joseph, 58, shared similar sentiments, and said many friends and associates have given up on the election and sworn off voting altogether.

Candidates promise to advocate for "the people," but when they go in, we find out they're not really for the people," Joseph said. "It's just talk, talk, talk, and no action."

While she also considered staying home Saturday, Joseph said she decided to cast a ballot after all.

"Not voting, it's not going to serve anything," Joseph said. If you don't vote "sit down, you have nothing to say. We have to take part."

As a government retiree, Joseph said she's still waiting on annuity checks and like many, is struggling to recoup a fair insurance payout for damage to her home caused by the hurricanes. Those are just some of the many issues driving Virgin Islanders to despair, she said.

"My concern is about change. Change in the way things are being operated," Joseph said. "We have a lot of angry people," but despite the strug-



Sherrika Industrious fills out her ballot at the polling station at Lockhart Elementary School on St. Thomas during Saturday's Democratic primary elections.

Daily News photo by BILL KISER

gles, "I have hope."

She voted to return Marvin Blyden to the Senate, but otherwise, "I'm voting for newcomers," Joseph added.

Turnbull Library polling place judge Elise Frazer said voting went smoothly Saturday except for one snag — a malfunctioning air conditioner that left the library humid and hot.

"It makes you more tired than anything," Frazer said, but "it's OK otherwise."

Election judges at other polling places on St. Thomas said voting had been steady.

Donna M. Phillip, a judge at the University of the Virgin Islands, said volunteers were helping voters with the new electronic voting machines without accidentally seeing how voters

were voting.

"I stand to the side, most of the time, and they ask me the questions," she said.

Voting functioned smoothly at Lockhart Elementary School, said judge Gaylin Vogel, even if the building's air conditioning was not.

"The voters have been good humored about it," she said of the temperature controls. "But they're in and out."

Voters at Lockhart mostly said their experience was problem free, though one voter said she'd had some difficulty with the machine. For voters, the focus was largely on the gubernatorial race.

Candice Chase said she voted for Albert Bryan and Tregenza Roach, and was drawn to the polls because Bryan appeared willing to integrate the

concerns of voters into his economic platform.

"I just like his platform right now," she said. "He just wants to put the interests of every person ahead of the business. Although we need to work together, but if the ordinary person doesn't have a say, then it's just a business economy, and we can't live like that."

Donald Charles and Kellie Charles said they voted for Angel E. Dawson Jr.

"I know that he has a strong financial background, and that is something that we need," Donald Charles said. "I think he's going to be a cautious and not reckless governor if he's elected, so I'm pretty comfortable with him."

Angel Matos said he voted for the

Allison "Allie" Petrus-Sammuel Sanes ticket. Matos said he remembers when then-governor Cyril E. King would walk through the local housing communities and sees a kindred spirit in Petrus. Matos said he wants to see a reduced Senate and supports reducing the size of the Senate to seven senators.

"He'd play basketball with them guys, lime with them, he'd go into his pocket and give them money to go buy nets for the basketball courts out his pocket," he said. "Which governor in here going to do something like that? This is the kind of thing I'd like to see. A change."

Others were more traditional, if a little more ambivalent about the outcome. Ronald Olivacce declined to say who he voted for but said he didn't submit a full slate of candidates. For Olivacce, the key was authenticity.

"Sometimes they give you a nice picture, you vote for them, and when they get in they're something else," he said.

Still, voting was essential, Olivacce said.

"That is something that is compulsory," he said. "You have to do your civic duty, so you go there and do it and hope for the best."

On St. Croix, voters said they're craving change.

With raucous supporters lining the streets and campaign posters raiding every neighborhood bend, Crucians made it crystal clear their desire for fresh blood in government and a stronger, more hopeful vision for St. Croix.

"We want responsible people with new ideas," said George Jeffers, a supporter of Democratic Senate candidate Alicia Barnes. "We want to see this community move forward — not the same old story repeated over and over again. It's not doing us any good."

Jeffers, who voted at the Ricardo Richards Elementary School, said a bevy of issues from mental health to

See **CHANGE**, next page

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Democrats pick Bryan to challenge Mapp

By SUZANNE CARLSON
and A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

Democrats have chosen Albert Bryan and Sen. Tregenza Roach as their ticket for the governor's race this November.

The primary election held Saturday ended with Bryan in a commanding lead over Allison "Allie" Petrus, with Bryan garnering 39.29 percent of counted ballots, and Petrus winning 33.33 percent.

Angel E. Dawson Jr. won 26.96 percent of the overall counted votes.

Shortly after 10 p.m. Saturday night, Bryan and Roach returned from St. Thomas to St. Croix and joined a jubilant crowd of supporters at their campaign headquarters in La Reine.

Both men thanked the St. Croix community and reaffirmed their commitment to changing the course of the Virgin Islands, while still maintaining a level of integrity, empathy and hope.

"You have to believe in a better tomorrow," said Bryan, to the crowd. "I've listened to people say 'You're too naive and you're not cynical enough to be governor of the Virgin Islands.' Well, I'm telling you we were the 'little team that could' because all of the money in the world doesn't substitute for a heart of gold and God on high."

Bryan said his campaign had humble roots and grew out of families who just wanted to see "the island do good," where children could grow up to see quality schools, health care, broadband service and a retirement system without an unfunded liability.

"That's all we started with — a belief that we could truly be an island of superlatives, a people that can do much better than they think



Photo by BRYAN/ROACH CAMPAIGN

Democratic Party nominees Albert Bryan and Sen. Tregenza Roach hold up a sign that combines the slogans of all three Democratic tickets as they celebrate their win at their St. Croix campaign headquarters Saturday night.

they are," Bryan said. "Not only can we survive two Category 5 hurricanes, but we can excel beyond our own belief, greater than any city or state in the United States of America."

Bryan emphasized the grueling campaign work in the months ahead of the General Election and motivated his supporters to press forward.

"It's not enough to believe, you have to go all in," he said. "The Democratic Party will be the new renaissance of the Virgin Islands. It is not enough for us to just elect people year after year with empty promises — I want to give you an agenda that you can hold on to."

Roach, also addressing the crowd,

Governor's race primary results

Candidate	Votes	Percentage
Albert Bryan/Tregenza Roach	3,093	39.29%
Allison "Allie" Petrus/Sammuel Sanes	2,624	33.33%
Angel E. Dawson Jr./Marise James	2,122	26.96%
Write-in	33	0.42%

Note: All results are unofficial and do not include absentee and provisional ballots.

acknowledged the contentious campaigning that may soon arise.

"In the days to come, there's going to be a lot of ugliness," Roach said. "But we're not going to sink to that level. We're going to maintain the kind of integrity that brought people

like you to come out in support of this ticket because that is eventually what is going to triumph."

Roach, who was born on St. Kitts, said he first moved to St. Thomas as a child in 1968. While his mother and grandmother were born on St. Kitts,

Roach said his great-grandmother left for the Virgin Islands in 1915.

"She is buried in this soil," Roach said. "So please don't ever let anybody try to convince you that I could — in any form — do anything to desecrate this island where my great-grandmother is in the soil."

Roach concluded by thanking Bryan for choosing him as a running mate.

"I was reluctant in the beginning because this was not where my sights were set," Roach said. "But I realized that because of where we are, I could not just go back to a comfortable Senate seat."

He continued, "I could not have imagined that 50 years ago when I came to St. Thomas as a little boy that the people of the Virgin Islands would eventually choose me to be a part of the helm of their government."

Dawson and Petrus could not be reached for comment, but Petrus's running mate Sen. Sammuel Sanes said all Democrats in the primary have agreed to support the winning ticket in the General Election.

"I wish him the best. All three teams did a pretty good job and I'm extremely proud of the Democratic Party," Sanes said.

Sanes said he worked with Bryan while he served as commissioner for the Labor Department, and he has the intellect and integrity to serve the community well.

"I just want to thank all of the people that voted, I want to thank my supporters, especially I want to thank my wife, my kids, my family, but I want to thank everyone who came out and voted," Sanes said. "I thought it was very important for us to exercise our right, so I do want to thank everyone who came out to vote."

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@dailynews.vi

CHANGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

the Government Employees' Retirement System remain in crisis and unresolved by the current administration and legislature.

"The top issues are not being addressed — like the schools, the hospitals and the infrastructure," Jeffers said. "And now, the government is giving raises? Where are they getting the money? It's just a show of politics. Misleading the people is not good."

St. Croix voter Rosemond Creighton said neglected schools and mental health played largely in her vote.

Insisting the need for change, she voted for the Dawson and Marise James gubernatorial ticket, highlighting Dawson's banking background.

"With all this money that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is throwing, we need people who know how to manage money," she said. "Dawson has a financial background and can handle that."

St. Croix voter Jose Acevedo similarly took aim at the administration.

"In four years, Gov. Kenneth Mapp promised the Virgin Islands a lot of things and didn't fulfill any of those promises," Acevedo said. "Now he's trying to patch the roads here and there — it's too late for him."

Acevedo equated Mapp to a king, who appointed his relatives to a number of high-level government positions despite them being "ineligible and not physically or mentally ready for those kinds of positions."

"We the community have decided that somebody else should go in that chair be-

cause Mapp thinks he's a king — we're going to kick him off the throne," Acevedo said. "We gave Mapp a chance to change the islands and he simply didn't do it. Change has got to come."

Acevedo said he voted for the Petrus and Sanes ticket.

While incumbents like Sens. Kurt Vialat and Neville James remained fixtures for roadside supporters, voters exiting the polls couldn't escape the temptation of change.

"I just want to see change," said Hernandez Hippolyte. "We've been hearing a lot of stuff about finances in the Virgin Islands but I would like to see a different approach — not something just short term but long term."

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@dailynews.vi

2018 primary election voter turnout

Territorywide

Precincts counted: 26 of 30
Registered Democrat voters: 32,330
Ballots cast (Democrat): 9,209
Ballots cast (blank): 18
Voter turnout: 28.48%
Voter turnout (blank): 0.06%

St. Croix

St. Croix registered Democrat voters: 15,723
St. Croix ballots cast: 4,275
St. Croix ballots cast (blank): 13
St. Croix turnout: 27.19%

St. Thomas-St. John

St. Thomas-St. John registered Democrat voters: 16,000
St. Thomas-St. John ballots cast: 4,934
St. Thomas-St. John ballots cast (blank): 5
St. Thomas-St. John turnout: 29.71%

Note: All results are unofficial and do not include absentee and provisional ballots.

Senate incumbents finish mid-field on St. Thomas

By **BRIAN O'CONNOR**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Democrats put a legislative newcomer at the top of the polls on St. Thomas on Saturday, but also pushed three incumbents into the top seven vote-getters who will potentially move forward to the General Election.

Donna Frett-Gregory, the former VI. Education commissioner in the deJongh administration, finished in first place with 2,704 votes. She edged incumbent Marvin A. Blyden, who garnered 2,289 votes. Blyden led Carnival

organizer and legislative staffer Athneil "Bobby" Thomas, who garnered 2,075 votes, and incumbent Myron D. Jackson rounded out the top four with 1,972 votes. Stedmann Hodge Jr. finished fifth with 1,883 votes. Former Elections Board member Carla Joseph — who resigned her seat to seek senatorial office — finished sixth with 1,644 votes ahead of incumbent Sen. Jean A. Forde, who picked up 1,512 votes.

Vote totals do not include a reported 83 outstanding provisional ballots — which Elections officials will have to decide on — and an as-yet undetermined number of absentee votes.

Frett-Gregory said she was grateful for the win.

"I am overwhelmed with the fact that my community sees that I'm someone who is worthy of getting their vote," she said.

The results demonstrated a desire for change among Democrats, Frett-Gregory said.

"It's time that we look at the way we're doing business here in the territory, particularly in the Legislature," she said. "What happens right now in our Senate is once senators are elected, everyone submits their bills, and everyone is moving in a different direction. I believe that the people we elect, they're all intelligent people. But we can't be moving in different directions if we're going to really serve our people."

Frett-Gregory's approach was ideal, second-place finisher Blyden said.

"She ran an excellent campaign," he said. "She did really all the things she needed to do."

Incumbents carried the additional burden of their own records, Blyden said.

"It has been a tough road in terms



Daily News photo by BRIAN O'CONNOR

Candidates and campaign representatives, led by Albert F. Richardson and Randolph Thomas, line up to check printed receipts from voting machines against printed election results provided by elections officials Saturday evening at the V.I. Elections System offices on St. Thomas.

of a lot of controversial legislation," he said. "It has been a sentiment in terms of anti-incumbents, really 'Let's vote them all out.'"

Blyden said listening to territorial residents had helped him sort out tough legislation.

"Many basic issues for the community, I actually took them head on and worked with my committee, and that's why I believe people voted for me."

Thomas, who has sought office before, said he didn't take his relatively high finish for granted, and pointed to

Blyden as an example of a candidate who finished low in previous primaries to become the top vote-getter for the General Election. Blyden extended his reach between the two elections, Thomas said.

"That is my charge, from this day forward," he said. "Right now, the campaign really starts."

Jackson's optimism was more cautious, because the results were subject to change.

"I've seen many elections, and that's to be seen," he said.

Incumbents performed as expected, and despite a few aspirants performing below expectations, the primary lacked major upsets.

"I would have to say to you that we don't have any big surprises here," he said.

Jackson also said campaigning by incumbents had been minimal to non-existent because of the legislative schedule, and said he favored a recess for campaigning, which would enhance the credibility of legislative sessions and create more of a separation between campaign staffs and legislative staffs.

"I would really like a period of recess for campaigns," he said. "I think it would be good for every senator."

Hodge answered questions via phone, in between thanking well-wishers at his campaign headquarters.

"I'm actually satisfied," he said. "I pretty much predicted that I would find myself in the fifth or sixth spot."

A number of factors influenced his prediction, Hodge said.

"Pretty much it comes down to your campaign contributions, networking, what you may have done before running for office," he said. "That is the determining factor."

The message from voters is clear, Hodge said.

"Voters want a drastic change," he said.

Hodge's single biggest issue is health and human services, particularly since two of his children suffer from serious long-term health issues. Access to health care was key, Hodge said.

"It has been high priority for me," he said. "If you look at the historic district, many of the downtown stores

See **ST. THOMAS**, next page



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ST. THOMAS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

are not accessible to a person with disabilities. In some way, government should make an attempt to subsidize or assist the landlords or make those buildings accessible.”

Joseph thanked voters, and said her campaign had beat expectations.

“We have a very small campaign committee,” she said.

Joseph was one of a few candidates who struggled to identify a single top issue. Pressed to chose one among a handful, territorial finances top the list, Joseph said.

“I think to generate revenue,” she said. “Because I can’t deal with the other items that I need to deal with, because I’m a social scientist, and that needs to happen. I can’t fix the other things without money.”

Forde — who faced heavy criticism on social media over public remarks about his salary — said incumbents like him usually face difficult times.

“It’s always difficult in some cases for a senator, an incumbent senator, because you’re forever in the spotlight,” he said.

The salary issue had been warped in public opinion, Forde said.

St. Thomas-St. John Senate results

TERRITORYWIDE	Votes	Percentage
Donna Frett-Gregory	2,704	12.57%
Marvin A. Blyden	2,289	10.64%
Athneil “Bobby” Thomas	2,075	9.65%
Myron D. Jackson	1,972	9.17%
Stedmann Hodge Jr.	1,883	8.76%
Carla Joseph	1,644	7.64%
Jean A. Forde	1,512	7.03%
Kent Bernier Sr.	1,459	6.78%
Sean “Skooly” Georges	1,292	6.01%
Albert F. Richardson	1,175	5.46%
Jonathan P. Tucker Jr.	1,064	4.95%
Randolph Thomas	845	3.93%
Randolph N. Bennett	797	3.71%
Beatrice Gumbs	670	3.12%
Write-in	125	0.58%

Note: All results are unofficial and do not include absentee and provisional ballots.

“I do think that may have angered some individuals because they may not have understood the point that I was trying to make,” he said. “A specific question was asked. I’m not going to make any excuses, but I don’t think that individuals understood. I do think my answer was distorted.”

Asked if he would consider reducing his salary in a time of economic need, Forde said he wasn’t able to do that for

himself without affecting all senators, for whom law ties senatorial salaries to the lowest-paid commissioner.

“I think that it’s not the necessity at this particular time,” he said. “If that is what has to be done to help our situation in any form or fashion, then that’s what we’ll do.”

— Contact Brian O’Connor at 340-714-9130 or email boconnor@daily-news.vi.

Cruise Ships

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Caribbean Princess (3,600) Noon to 10 p.m. Havensight
 Carnival Magic (3,675) 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Havensight
 Celebrity Equinox (2,850) 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Crown Bay

Wednesday, Aug. 8

Carnival Glory (2,980) 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Havensight
 Oasis of the Seas (6,296) 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Crown Bay

Thursday, Aug. 9 to Saturday, Aug. 11

No ships

Sunday, Aug. 12

Freedom of the Seas (3,634) 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Crown Bay

Monday, Aug. 13

Carnival Fascination (2,634) 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Havensight

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Senate hopefuls Barnes, DeGazon score big on St. Croix



By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

ST. CROIX — Alicia Barnes and Allison DeGazon topped the winner's list Saturday in St. Croix's Democratic primary for the Senate.

Barnes, a former commissioner of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, received 2,579 votes or 12.5 percent of the total vote.

DeGazon, an entrepreneur and public servant, received 2,282 votes or 11.07 percent of the total vote.

Other preliminary winners were incumbent Sens. Kurt Vialet and Novelle E. Francis Jr., receiving 1,787 and 1,785 votes, respectively.

Javan James, a 31-year-old Air Force veteran and certified process operator and water treatment operator, received 1,609 votes. Rounding out the winners were Kenneth Gittens and Oakland Benta, receiving 1,521 and 1,428 votes, respectively.

Benta edged out incumbent and ranking Democrat Sen. Neville James,



Alicia Barnes

St. Croix Senate results

Candidate	Votes	Percentage
Alicia Barnes	2,579	12.51%
Allison DeGazon	2,282	11.07%
Kurt Vialet	1,787	8.67%
Novelle E. Francis Jr.	1,785	8.66%
Javan James	1,609	7.81%
Kenneth Kenny Gittens	1,521	7.38%
Oakland Benta	1,428	6.93%
Neville James	1,410	6.84%
Nemmy Williams-Jackson	1,342	6.51%
Terrence D. Joseph	1,193	5.79%
Karen Chancellor	958	4.65%
Douglas Canton	880	4.27%
Dean R. Andrews	688	3.34%
Juan Figueroa-Serville	614	2.98%
Annette L. S. Scott	323	1.57%
R.J. Hammer	141	0.68%
Write-in	70	0.34%

Note: All results are unofficial and do not include absentee and provisional ballots.

who failed to reach the top seven with 1,410 votes.

Numbers could still fluctuate, however.

According to Supervisor of Elections Caroline Fawkes, Saturday's primary election results for the legislature only represent 13 out of 15 precincts, with the other two representing absentee and provisional ballots.

Election officials plan to count provisional ballots Wednesday and finish counting absentee votes on Aug. 14.

On Saturday night, a large crowd gathered outside St. Croix's Election System office at the Sunny Isle Annex, where many huddled around two large monitors, one that showed election

See **ST. CROIX**, next page

Daily News photo by A.J. Rao
Allison DeGazon speaks with a crowd outside the Sunny Isle Annex, St. Croix, on Saturday following her victory in the Democratic primary for Senate.



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ST. CROIX

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

board members counting votes in real time and the other a list of results.

Results started coming in shortly after 8 p.m.

By 9:30 p.m., the counting was finished.

Winning candidates present at Sunny Isle thanked their supporters.

"I'm truly grateful to St. Croix for supporting me and for receiving the message that the Barnes for Senate team communicated," said Barnes, to The Daily News. "I am totally grateful and overwhelmed and a bit emotional."

Barnes said she had a number of priorities in mind should she take office next January, including reaffirming the Legislature as "the first branch of government," focusing on mental health, youth-specific issues and banking reform.

DeGazon, who was also at Sunny Isle, thanked her supporters.

"I've always had confidence that people were connecting with my message because all of my events were well attended and the support was evident," DeGazon said. "This means we're going to continue pushing and continue with our message."

DeGazon said a focus of her cam-



Daily News photo by A.J. RAO

Democratic primary voters cast their ballots Saturday at Claude O. Markoe Elementary School on St. Croix.

paign and a priority for her legislative efforts is agriculture and economic development.

"I tell everyone that I am the one they are going to think about when they think about revenue generation and strategies for reaching outside of government," she added. "Public — private partnerships are what I want to be known for."

Javan James, the youngest winner

Saturday at 31, emphasized that age is merely a state of mind and can actually prove a valuable asset.

"Some people feel that legislators are out of touch and most of the people who say these things are in my age group," he said. "I'll be able to fill that void. I'll be able to say 'Hey, these are what children are going through right now.' Or 'These are the ideas we should be pushing when it comes to technol-

ogy.' We should stop having this 'one-size-fits-all' approach to education. I want people to be inventors of apps and I want to be the senator who implements these things so we can have young millionaires in the Virgin Islands."

Gittens, who served as a freshman senator in the 30th Legislature from 2013-15, congratulated his fellow winners and said he was grateful to the people of St. Croix for their vote of

confidence. He added, however, that the low turnout concerned him.

"The voter turnout was a bit disappointing because this was supposed to be a big election," he said. "I'm hoping we'll be able to get people more engaged for the upcoming General Election. I know there's a lot of work to be done and I'm able and willing."

Sen. Neville James, who is currently serving his sixth term as senator, acknowledged how changing political winds and frustrations impacted the results.

"This was one of those years where change was in the air," he said. "The public is frustrated about a lot of things and these things fueled a sentiment for change. I thought my candidacy might overcome that."

James acknowledged the tightness of votes between himself and other candidates but didn't make any hard predictions about provisional and absentee ballots, insisting "we'll see what happens."

"I would like to thank the people of St. Croix and congratulate all the winners," James said. "I've served in the Senate for many terms so I'm the last person who should be complaining."

— Contact A.J. Rao at 340-714-9104 or email ajrao@dailynews.vi



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ST. THOMAS - Dr. Bernard A. Wheatley, Chief Executive Officer of Schneider Regional Medical Center (SRMC), announces the implementation of salary increases for all Registered Nurses (RNs) employed by SRMC. Wheatley said "these long awaited salary increases represents a competitive opportunity to attract, recruit and retain registered nurses both locally and nationally".

With this salary adjustment, the average earnings of a Registered Nurse has increased by approximately \$12,000 per year. SRMC thanks Governor Kenneth Mapp, the Governing Boards and the Nurses' Unions for their support in implementing better wages for our Nurses.

SRMC have lost a number of nurses in recent years to better-paying opportunities. "The new salaries take us closer to closing the gap between local and stateside nurses' salaries. We hope this will help us to keep our well-trained, experienced nurses on staff and encourage new nurses to stay and make their careers here at SRMC", said Wheatley.

Dr. Wheatley says he "thanks all the hardworking and dedicated employees of SRMC who continue to provide quality patient care at our healthcare facilities on St. Thomas and St. John. We look forward to continuing to serve our community while providing an enjoyable workplace for our employees".

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Deaths

Indra Chugani

Funeral services will take place Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2018, for Indra Chugani, 76, of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, who passed away peacefully on Aug. 3, 2018, after an extended illness with multiple sclerosis for 30 years.

The viewing and service will be from 8 to 9 a.m. at Turnbull's Funeral Home.

Indra was born in Karachi, India (pre-partition), on Dec. 8, 1941. After partition, she grew up and studied in Bombay, India, where she earned her bachelor of arts degree. In 1964, she married her loving husband, Victor, in Pune, India. After traveling the country, Indra subsequently moved to St. Thomas in the summer of 1973 with her husband and two young children, Gobind and Sharmila. She raised her children here and helped in the family business, House of Rajah.

She was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1988. She was blessed with tremendous love, strength and support from her husband, children, family and friends to maintain a comfortable quality of life. All who were surrounded by Indra were impacted by her empathy, hope and spirituality. Despite her many hardships, she encouraged those around her to have a positive attitude, love all and seek inner peace. During intermittent treatments in the States, her wish was to always come back home to St. Thomas.

She is survived by her husband, Vishnu (Victor) Chugani; children, Gobind (George) and Kusum Chugani, Sharmila (Nikki) and Manoj Aswani; grandchildren, Alisha and Ashwin Chugani and Shaina Aswani; sisters and brothers-in-law, Bimla and Prakash (Peter) Mohanani and Shami and Ramesh (Ricky) Mohanani; and extended family and friends.

Carole H. Summer

A service will be held Wednesday, Aug. 8, 2018, for Carole H. Summer, who was born on July 8, 1934, and passed away in Tampa, Fla., on the 21st of June, surrounded by loved ones.

The memorial service will be at 10 a.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. Dressing in colorful attire is optional.

Carole came to St. Thomas 48 years ago with her husband on their honeymoon and ended up settling down where they had their three children. For 30-plus years she was a teacher and stay-at-home mum. She taught as a reading specialist at Edith Williams School, and taught violin at Antilles, Montessori, Ss. Peter and Paul and privately at home.

She earned her bachelor of arts degree from SUNY and her masters from Cornell University. She taught reading in public schools in California, Texas, Massachusetts, and at Edith Williams school here in the Virgin Islands. She gave private violin lessons at various schools and at her home.

Carole accompanied V.I. parishioners on pilgrimages to Europe, South America, Croatia and Mexico. She volunteered during the summers among the Native Americans in Arizona, Alaska, and the orphans in the International God Parenting Program in Medugorje.

She loved watching the sunrise with her coffee, her morning prayers with her husband, Bill, and swims at Magens Bay. She was a keen gardener at home, growing arugula, basil, spinach, tomatoes, and other to nourish both body and soul.

She is survived by her husband, Bill Summer; her three children, Simone, William, and Stephen; her daughters-in-law, Celeste and Carrie; and four grandchildren, Sebastian, Peyton, Brady, and Zoe. Her positive attitude, gratitude and humble way about her will be forever with us.

Carolyn Southwell

Services will be held Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2018, for Carolyn Southwell, who passed away July 5, 2018, in Georgia at the age of 61.

The first viewing will be from 5 to 7 p.m. today at Celestial Chapel



Carole H. Summer

Hurley Funeral Home. The second viewing will be from 9 to 10 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2018, at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church with the service immediately following at 10 a.m.

The family requests that festive colors to be worn. Interment is in Antigua.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Francis Erskine; father, David Joseph; husband, Ishmael Southwell; sister, Ann Mary (Babes) Batchelor; brother, Rupert (Ricky) Daley; nieces and nephews, Alicia Joseph, Clint Williams, Otis Joseph; and uncles, Jeremiah Erskine, Rufus Erskine, Fraco Joseph, Rupert Joseph, Jonny Joseph.

She is survived by her sons, Damon Browne, Kurt Browne, Sonnel Browne, Sean Bailey; adopted son, Valmon Gillon, Sylvester Thomas, Shaun Testamark, James Southwell; adopted daughters, Lauraine Batchelor, Nurse Edwards, Desire Southwell, Carolyn Southwell-Thomas, Margret Southwell; grandchildren, Jace Browne, Jacara Browne, Ariel Browne, Mya Benjamin; sisters, Albertine (Tenie) Joseph, Millentine (Jimpie) Coates, Claudine Joseph-Defoe; brothers, Egbert (Tata) Tonge, Wilfred (Willy) Tonge, Withfield (Picket) Joseph; adopted brothers, Worrel Richards, Nanthan Richards, Pat Richards, Erral Richards, Denfield Richards; nieces and nephews, Coreen Williams-Ross, Vonetta Batchelor, Cleone Dabrio, Ciara Joseph, Rosie Stevens, Chantel Joseph, Francella Tonge, Shavern Joseph, Charles Batchelor, Nemiah Batchelor, Everton Coates Jr., Ashly Williams Jr., Leon Tonge, Leroy Watts, Oma Joseph; grandnieces and grand-nephews, Charles Batchelor Jr., Nehemiah Batchelor Jr., Chalia, Tashawn, Hana, Jalisia and Noah Batchelor, Devonte Isaac, Raheem Horsford, Sean Bailey Jr., Antayln (Cookie) Tonge, Brie Ross, Brandon Ross; daughters-in-law, Roshanna Browne, Chekema Hector-Browne; sister-in-law, Federica



Carolyn Southwell

Tonge, Charity Francis, Bridget Southwell, Keren Stevens; brother-in-law, Luis Batchelor, Everton Coates Sr., Johnson Southwell, Samuel Southwell, Simeon Southwell; aunts, Elaine Henry, Christopher Francis, Elaine Holbrough, Rose Francis; great-aunt-in-law, Deloris Erskine; godmother, Addie, Jermine, Shavon (Peggy Sauce); special friends, Mr. and Mrs. Lenroy Cabey, Patsy Joseph, Inita Peters, Esworth Martin, John Thomas, Tammy, Cherise Benjamin, Webber, Donna Mckay, Lavern, Nalda, Bramble, Annetta, Eula, Cheata, Sonnia, Lorna Mac, Cordella, Mike, Rose Clare, Iola Henry, Dorothy, Debra, Vern and the entire Williams family, Mertle and Avonelle, Labon Nicholas, Deloris Pinney, Keithly Daniel, Gweneth Joshua, Dean (Taxi Driver), the folks at the Caribbean Kidney Center, the folks at Able Transportations, and the staff of COG Companies; cousins, Pie and Beatrice, Landa and family, Adelaide Richards and family, Adrian Joseph and family, Nelderine and family, John Thomas and family, Anges Sebastian and family; she is also related to the Joseph, Tonge, Erskine, and Thomas families of Johnson Point, Bolans, Crabs Hills, Urlings, and Old Road, Antigua; pallbearers, Damon Browne, Sean Bailey Sr., Leon Tonge, Sonnel Browne, Charles Batchelor, Nehemiah Sr. Batchelor, Jace Browne, Sean Bailey Jr., Devonte Isaac, Ashly Williams Jr., Valmon Gillon; honorary pallbearers, Egbert Tonge, Wilfred Tonge, Whitfield Joseph, Ashley Williams Jr., Everton Coates Sr., Lambert Defoe, Luis Batchelor; special cousins, Zepheniah, Archie, Milicent, Janet, Esseylyn, Lilian, Hubert, Nancilyn, Kenroy, Garfield, Alvin, Cavelle, Vernice, Linette, John Boy, Mehe, Christopher, Edna, Ciciley, Edson, Randolph, Francine, Leona, Christine, Kim, Keithly, Youla, Goldean, Emerson and the entire Knight family.

Arrangements are under the care of Hurley Funeral Home and Cremation Center of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.

For online directions and condolences visit us at www.hurleydavis-funeralhome.com.

Man charged in alleged choking

Daily News Staff

A man is in jail on St. Croix on charges of assault after a woman told police a man choked her.

At 4:03 a.m. Saturday, officers from the Ancilmo Marshall Command responded to a reported domestic disturbance at Long Reef Condos in Christiansted, according to police.

The victim told the responding officers that a male acquaintance struck her several times and choked her to the point she could not breathe.

About 6:30 a.m., detectives from the Criminal Investigations Bureau's Domestic Violence Unit located 34-year-old Jorge M. Borque and arrested him on charges of second-degree assault, domestic violence.

He was transported to the Golden Grove Adult Correctional Facility where he was remanded pending an advice-of-rights hearing. No bail was set as per the territory's domestic violence law.



Jorge M. Borque

Police Blotter St. Thomas

Charged: Possession of a controlled substance

Lester Maddox, 51, of no fixed address, was arrested July 25 and charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute. Bail was set at \$25,000.

Charged: Unauthorized possession of a firearm

Valmond Glasford Jr., 20, of Kirwan Terrace housing community, was arrested July 25 and charged with third-degree assault, unauthorized possession of a firearm, and using a dangerous weapon in the commission of a crime of violence. Bail was set at \$100,000.



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BVI Emancipation Festival Parade

Tyria Lewis of the BVI Dance School demonstrates one of her routines at the BVI Emancipation Festival Parade on Monday in Road Town, Tortola. The troupe paid tribute to the BVI Electricity Corporation for their work after last year's hurricanes. **Pages 2-4**

Daily News photo by DEAN GREENAWAY

Tim Duncan ready to play ball for USVI

NBA champ coming home for charity game **Back Page**



Mapp goes to Washington

Governor appeals for storm funding in meeting with Pence **Page 7**



Mike Pence

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Inside

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DAILY NEWS

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Grenada chases down BVI team for title **Back Page**

ELECTION 2018



Absentee ballot count gets underway **Page 6**

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Emancipation Festival royalty



BVI Emancipation Festival Parade Grand Marshal Ernest "Popeye" Scatliffe.



Miss BVI 2017 Khephera Sylvester, left, and Miss Jr. BVI 2017 Anondah Hodge finally get their parade after last year's event was cancelled because of heavy rains that led to flooding.



Mr. Jr. BVI 2017 Yohance Smith enjoys the parade.



2017 Princess Lyriq Rhymer and Prince Jahbari Pemerton.



Ayana Phillips, who was crowned as Miss BVI 2018 on Sunday night, enjoys the BVI Emancipation Festival Parade in Road Town, Tortola, on Monday.



Daily News photos by DEAN GREENAWAY

Senior members of the BVI Dance School perform for the judges at the BVI Emancipation Festival Parade on Monday in Road Town, Tortola.

Emancipation Festival Parade boasts small but energetic field

By DEAN GREENAWAY
Special to The Daily News

TORTOLA — A year after being crowned Miss British Virgin Islands 2017, Khephera Sylvester finally got to participate in the territory's annual Emancipation Festival Parade.

Sylvester enjoyed Monday's celebration along with Miss BVI 2018 Ayana Phillips, whose coronation was on Sunday night, after last year's event was wiped out by heavy rains that led to eventual flooding and the cancellation of the festival's remaining activities.

Monday's parade — which finally rolled off just after 2 p.m., although scheduled to start at noon — attracted 13 entries. These included the Miss BVI winners from this year and last year, Parade Marshal Ernest "Popeye" Scatliffe, Miss Jr. BVI 2017 Anondah Hodge, Mr. Jr. BVI 2017 Yohance Smith, a Rotary Club of Tortola float marking their 50th anniversary, another with the BVI Heritage Dancers marking their 28th year in the parade, and a smaller turnout of spectators as well.

"I think the parade is going pretty good," said Sylvester, who didn't get the opportunity to participate in any festival activities after being crowned last year. "At least it's not raining. My year was quite different and the hurricane ruined it, but, I'm here nevertheless and I'm enjoying it."

Phillips, who was tied for first runner up during the 2017 pageant along with Helena Hewlette, said becoming Miss BVI feels like a blessing in disguise.

"I didn't capture the crown last year and this year we didn't have a show but for me, it's a blessing that the (BVI Festival) Committee allow me to have this opportunity this year," she said.

Kazak Jeffers, who designs his own displays, used steel to create the words "BVI," then incorporated the territory's flag and the United Kingdom's flag, trimmed with the words "strong" and "pride" for his parade contribution.

"I had something last year along with the One Mart Fruits and Vegetables Troupe, but the floods came and wiped it out so I wasn't able to

display that," he said. "But today, I'm here to represent the whole territory. I wish I could have brought the people with me and you would have seen something even more spectacular."

BVI Dance School instructor Sylvanna Charles, said it was the third entry for her school.

"Last year, our girls weren't able to perform due to the weather, but we have 60 girls today, wearing orange and gold and we chose these colors because we wanted to pay tribute to the hard-working linesmen of the BVI Electricity Corporation and those that came from Canada, Belize and various Caribbean countries, to assist following the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria," Charles said.

"These men worked tirelessly, day and night to get our country up and running with power, and I only saw it fit that someone recognize them for all their hard work. Today we want to say thank you to all those linesmen; thank you to all those staff at the BVI Electricity Corporation."

When they approached Electricity Corporation officials with the idea,



Members of the Rotary Club of Tortola, which is marking its 50th anniversary in the territory, inspire with their parade float.

they immediately came on board, indicating that they would donate coolers, a truck, ice and beverages along with a driver. "We made BVIEC logos and got hard hats for the little ones," said Charles.

"They went above and beyond our needs to accommodate us to get this troupe ready for the parade," Charles noted. "And for that, we are

very, very grateful and from everybody at the BVI Dance School, I say thank you, thank you to the hard-working men and women at the BVI Electricity Corporation."

Charles said she hopes the public enjoyed their stunts, tricks and acrobatics. "Based on the crowd's reaction, I'm a very proud, proud teacher right now," she said.



Three members of the Exotic 2 dancers take time out for a picture.



Kazak Jeffers marches in Monday's Emancipation Festival Parade with his original "BVI Strong" creation.

Daily News photos by DEAN GREENAWAY



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BVI Dance School members perform their routine.



The BVI Dance School's 60 members saluted the BVI Electricity Corporation workers who restored power to the islands after Hurricane Irma.



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ISSN 2159-3019

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Two of three Davis brothers' shooting convictions upheld

V.I. Supreme Court reverses reckless endangerment convictions

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — The V.I. Supreme Court has reversed reckless endangerment convictions for brothers convicted in a 2014 shooting, but upheld the remainder of the lower court's convictions and orders in the case — with one justice dissenting in part.

The case stems from an incident that occurred on June 27, 2014, when Khiry Crooke was sitting on a wall outside his home near the Ezra Fredericks Ballpark in Estate Frydenhoj on St. Thomas and a green Suzuki SUV pulled up near him.

Crooke recognized the driver of the vehicle as Akeam Davis, 41, and the passenger as his brother, Michael Davis, 45.

The men had known each other for much of their lives and had long had disputes, according to court records. Crooke testified that the brothers believed he had assaulted their mother — the motive for the shooting.

Akeam got out of the car and waited, gun in hand, while Michael walked past Crooke before turning and asking him why he didn't run. Crooke ran to a nearby tree and collected rocks to defend himself, and when he turned to stand up, Michael approached and shot him once in the chest.

Crooke survived the shooting.

Those facts are the basis for the Davis brothers' arrests, and they were initially charged with attempted murder, first-degree assault, brandishing or using a deadly weapon, and reckless endangerment.

Prosecutors later amended the charges against the brothers, and they faced a joint three-day jury trial in

August 2015.

Michael Davis was convicted of third-degree assault, unauthorized possession of a firearm during a crime of violence, and reckless endangerment.

Akeam Davis was convicted of aiding and abetting each of those three crimes.

During the course of the trial, Crooke testified that Michael Davis had approached him on the street on June 11, 2015, wanting to talk about the case. When Crooke said he would speak about it in court, Davis replied, "see if you make it to court," according to court records.

Crooke testified that he eventually left the island prior to the trial for his own safety.

Akeam Davis moved for an acquittal based on the sufficiency of prosecutors' evidence, which was denied, and he moved for a mistrial after the close of evidence, arguing that Crooke's testimony concerning his brother's threat was prejudicial. The court did not order a new trial, but instead instructed the jury to disregard Crooke's testimony regarding the threat, with respect to both defendants.

The Supreme Court found that the Superior Court did not err in making those orders and upheld two of the brothers' convictions.

But two Supreme Court justices, Rhys Hodge and Maria Cabret, reversed Michael Davis's conviction of reckless endangerment, and Akeam Davis's conviction of aiding and abetting reckless endangerment.

Those justices found that under the V.I. Code, a charge of reckless endangerment can only be brought when a crime of violence occurs in a place sufficiently public to endanger

the safety of others.

Writing for the majority, Justice Cabret found that "the people failed to demonstrate that the area of the shooting was used by the public in general rather than only the residences next to the area," because "the shooting occurred near a tree, which appears to be located on privately owned property on or adjacent to a privately owned gut and/or a privately owned dirt road."

One of the three Supreme Court Justices, Ive Arlington Swan, dissented in a separate opinion, concluding "that the evidence was sufficient to establish that the shooting occurred in a place to which the public generally has access," and the crime fit the parameters necessary to convict the brothers of reckless endangerment.

The wall Crooke was sitting on when the Davis brothers approached "is across from a marina and bar. There is also an alternator repair shop near his aunt's shop/home," and Lucia Henley, who testified at trial that she heard a single gunshot and then saw the brothers drive off in the green SUV, "stated that she regularly sells her products under the tree where the shooting took place," according to Swan's opinion.

Other individuals, including children, were outside in the area at the time of the shooting, and a police officer testified that Brookman Road is busy with car and pedestrian traffic at the time of day the shooting occurred — around 11:30 a.m.

"I respectfully dissent in the reversal of the convictions relating to reckless endangerment and would affirm all the convictions," Swan wrote.

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@daily-news.vi.

Police Blotter

St. Thomas Charged: Destruction of property

Isaih Santoli, 30, of Frydenhoj was arrested at 4:10 p.m. Saturday and charged with destruction of property, domestic violence, and disturbance of the peace, domestic violence. No bail was set per the domestic violence statute.

Charged: Driving under the influence

Gerald Christian, 68, of Estate Brookman was arrested at 12:15 p.m. Sunday and charged with driving

under the influence. Bail was set at \$500.

Charged: Driving under the influence

Timothy Williams, 34, of Tampa, Florida, was arrested at 2:19 a.m. Monday and charged with driving under the influence. Bail was set at \$500.

Charged: Fugitive from justice

Cleophus Simeina, 33, who is homeless, was arrested at 3:30 p.m. Monday and charged with being a fugitive from justice. Simeina was detained on a warrant issued by Har-

ris County, Texas. Bail was set at \$888,888.

St. John

Charged: Assault

Akil Gumbs, 34, of Calabash Boom was arrested July 9 and charged with third-degree assault. Bail was set at \$35,000.

Charged: Assault

Bolaves Malco, 34, of Chocolate Hole was arrested July 17 and charged with third-degree assault. Bail was set at \$25,000.

Cruise ships

Today, Aug. 7

Caribbean Princess (3,600)	Noon to 10 p.m.	Havensight
Carnival Magic (3,675)	11 a.m. to 7 p.m.	Havensight
Celebrity Equinox (2,850)	8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Crown Bay

Wednesday, Aug. 8

Carnival Glory (2,980)	7 a.m. to 3 p.m.	Havensight
Oasis of the Seas (6,296)	10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.	Crown Bay

Thursday, Aug. 9 to Saturday, Aug. 11

No ships

Sunday, Aug. 12

Freedom of the Seas (3,634)	7 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Crown Bay
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Monday, Aug. 13

Carnival Fascination (2,634)	7 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Havensight
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Tuesday, Aug. 14

No ships

Wednesday, Aug. 15

Disney Fantasy (4,000)	6:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.	Havensight
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Initial absentee votes do not alter election results

V.I. Election Board member Lisa Harris Moorehead reads out a ballot as board member Raymond Williams enters the votes on an express vote machine Monday at the V.I. Election System office in Sunny Isle on St. Croix.

Daily news photo by FIONA STOKES



By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

Democratic primary results remained unchanged Monday night after the first batch of absentee ballots were counted and cast for both the St. Thomas-St. John and St. Croix districts.

On St. Thomas, Election Board members counted 237 absentee ballots, all of which were matched to the voter rolls before Election Board Chairman Arturo Watlington cast them into the DS200 voting machine for a final tally.

The latest numbers show gubernatorial front-runner Albert Bryan at 3,131 votes, while Allison "Allie" Petrus and Angel Dawson are at 2,639 and 2,147 votes, respectively.

In the Senate primary for St. Thomas-St. John, the leading seven candidates held on to their positions.

Donna Frett-Gregory remains in first place with 2,850 votes, followed by Sen. Marvin A. Blyden at 2,402 votes; Athneil "Bobby" Thomas at 2,163 votes; Sen. Myron D. Jackson at 2,078 votes; Stedmann Hodge Jr. at 1,986 votes; Carla Joseph at 1,715 votes; and Sen. Jean A. Forde at 1,598 votes.

St. Croix reported 105 absentee ballots. Again, the top seven Senate candidates remained in the same place.

Alicia Barnes and Allison DeGazon stayed in the top two positions, with 2,645 and 2,322 votes, respectively.

They are followed by Sen. Kurt Vi-alet at 1,839 votes; Sen. Novelle Francis Jr. at 1,836 votes; Javan James at 1,638 votes; Kenneth Gittens at 1,557 votes; and Oakland Benta at 1,465 votes.

Benta continues to edge out incumbent Sen. Neville James by the smallest of margins — just 12 votes.

Watlington said the statute only allows for a recount in the event of a fraud allegation and would not be warranted in this case.

The remaining absentee ballots will be counted on Aug. 14

Provisional ballots will be counted Wednesday. Watlington said the St. Thomas-St. John district has approximately 77 provisional ballots, while St. Croix only has one.

— Contact A.J. Rao at 340-714-9104 or email ajrao@dailynews.vi

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Daily News photo by A.J. RAO

Election Board members Robert Schanfarber, Lydia Hendricks and Harriet Mercer count absentee ballots Monday at the V.I. Election System office on St. Thomas.

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Mapp meets with vice president

Daily News Staff

Gov. Kenneth Mapp met Monday with Vice President Mike Pence at the White House in Washington to discuss the status of the territory's recovery from the 2017 hurricanes and preparations for the current hurricane season.

Mapp thanked Pence and the Trump administration for its support in recovering from the devastation of hurricanes Irma and Maria, according to a Government House statement.

Mapp was accompanied by Finance Commissioner Valdamier Collens, who also serves as the governor's authorized representative in all Federal Emergency Management Agency matters, the statement said.

Mapp discussed with Pence ways in which the administration could facilitate a faster and stronger recovery in the territory. He raised the need to waive certain rules on FEMA's Sheltering and Temporary Emergency Power program and allow FEMA to fund permanent roofing on storm-damaged homes, according to the release.

The cost of replacing 4,000 storm-damaged roofs is estimated to exceed \$250 million.

"Permanent roofs are clearly the best solution," Mapp said, noting that we are in a new hurricane season and the territory's shelters suffered significant damage in the storms.

"We simply do not have time to rebuild our public shelters. If the alternatives are using cruise ships and airplanes for mass evacuations every time a storm approaches, or leaving Virgin Islanders exposed to extreme danger, constructing new roofs built to withstand the harsh winds and excessive



Photo by OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Mike Pence, left, meets with Gov. Kenneth Mapp and V.I. Finance Commissioner Valdamier Collens on Monday at the White House in Washington.

rain is really the only solution."

Mapp also discussed getting a larger share of the \$2 billion that Congress has set aside for the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico for rebuilding power systems, the release stated.

"Congress specifically recognized the Virgin Islands in the Budget Act, calling upon us for this special funding," Mapp said. "So we believe that our share should be substantial."

In addition, Mapp and Collens raised concerns over what they see as unnecessary obstacles the Treasury Department has imposed on the Community Disaster Loan program, which provides federal funds to cover disaster-related revenue losses and with projected cash outlays not previ-

ously budgeted.

While the Treasury has approved more than \$200 million in Community Disaster Loans, the territory still awaits official guidance on what expenditures can be paid for with the loans.

Mapp also secured Pence's help in arranging a follow-up meeting with Energy Secretary Rick Perry to facilitate a liquefied natural gas terminal at Lime-tree Bay Terminals on St. Croix. The facility would provide natural gas to the eastern Caribbean, the release said.

Earlier Monday, Mapp sent a letter to President Donald Trump requesting his support for an expedited federal permitting review for the dredging of St. Thomas Harbor and Schooner Bay on St. Croix.

Senate Agenda

Today

No meetings

Wednesday

The Committee on Education, Youth and Recreation will meet at 10 a.m. in Ottley Legislative Hall on St. Thomas to take testimony from

education officials concerning the status of school facilities, temporary structures, and the education system's readiness to commence the 2018-19 academic school year.

It will also consider bills relating to school attendance and the permanent closure of public schools.

Caribbean Lottery

Pick 3 (Aug. 7)

Morning

1st prize 8 9 5

MIDDAY

1st prize 0 7 4

SUNSET

1st prize 1 0 3

EVENING

1st prize 3 2 2

Pick 4 (Aug. 7)

Morning

1st prize 8 9 6 4

MIDDAY

1st prize 9 7 4 1

SUNSET

1st prize 1 7 2 1

EVENING

1st prize 0 9 7 1

Mega Millions

(Aug. 3) Next draw: Tonight

9 28 30 54 60

Mega Ball: 2

Powerball

(Aug. 4) Next draw: Wednesday

3 11 38 44 58

Powerball: 2

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Deaths

Indra V. Chugani

(December 8, 1941 – August 3, 2018)

Viewing services will take place Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2018, for Indra Chugani, 76, of St. Thomas who passed away peacefully on Aug. 3, 2018, after an extended illness with multiple sclerosis for 30 years.

The viewing will be held from 8 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.

Tuesday at Turnbull's Funeral Home.

Indra was born in Karachi, India (pre-partition), on Dec. 8, 1941. After partition, she grew up and studied in Bombay, India, where she earned her bachelor of arts degree. In 1964, she married her loving husband, Vishnu (Victor), in Pune, India. After traveling the country, Indra subsequently moved to St. Thomas in the summer of 1973 with her husband and two young children, Gobind and Sharmila. She raised her children here and helped in the family business, House of Rajah. She was diagnosed with multiple scler-



Indra V. Chugani

osis in 1988. She was blessed with tremendous love, strength and support from her husband, children, family and friends to maintain a comfortable quality of life.

All who were surrounded by Indra were impacted by her empathy, hope and spirituality. Despite her many hardships, she encouraged those around her to have a positive attitude, love all and seek inner peace. During intermittent treatments in the States, her wish was to always come back home to St. Thomas.

She is survived by her husband, Vishnu (Victor) Chugani; children, Gobind (George) and Kusum Chugani, Sharmila (Nikki) and Manoj Aswani; grandchildren, Alisha and Ashwin Chugani and Shaina Aswani; sisters and brothers-in-law, Bimla and Prakash (Peter) Mohanani and Sharmila (Shammi) and Ramesh (Ricky) Mohanani; and extended family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested to kindly donate to The Brahma Kumari Mission, please make checks out to India Association of the Virgin Islands and in the "memo" section please write BK-Indra Chugani.

Condolence emails can be sent to chugani13@gmail.com.

Former contractor pleads guilty in kickback case with V.I. ties

Work at courthouses on St. Thomas and St. Croix was part of scheme

By **WILSON RING**
The Associated Press

RUTLAND, Vt. — A Florida man who worked as a project manager for a company that has done more than \$200 million in energy efficiency work for the U.S. government, including projects on St. Croix and St. Thomas, pleaded guilty Monday to charges he took more than \$2.5 million in kickbacks and bribes over a five-year period from subcontractors he was overseeing.

Bhaskar Patel of Windermere, Florida, entered the plea during a hearing in federal court in Rutland.

He is facing up to 10 years in prison for violating a law against taking kickbacks and bribes involving federal programs. The plea agreement

also calls for the 67-year-old Patel to make cash restitution and liquidate some of his assets.

Sentencing is tentatively scheduled for December.

"Patel's crime involved a sweeping fraud that harmed many federal agencies and the American citizens and government employees who depend upon them," Vermont's United States Attorney Christina Nolan said in a statement issued after the court appearance.

During the hearing, Patel, who was released pending sentencing, answered a series of questions from U.S. District Court Judge Geoffrey Crawford, most by saying "yes, your honor."

Patel's attorney, David Haas, declined to comment on the case on Monday, but said he may have some-

thing to say at sentencing.

Patel was a contract manager for Schneider Electric Buildings America Inc., which according to prosecutors "has enormous federal contracts." Patel negotiated subcontracts for energy efficiency projects at the U.S. government facilities.

Schneider describes itself as "leading the digital transformation of energy management and automation." On Monday, Schneider spokesman David Smith said the company was aware of Patel's guilty plea and would continue to cooperate fully with prosecutors.

Prosecutors said Patel accepted the illegal kickbacks and bribes in connection with a \$12.6 million project for the United States General Services Administration at the Almeric L. Christian Federal Building on St. Croix; a \$21.8 million project for GSA in San Juan and at the Ron de Lugo Federal Building on St. Thomas; a \$70 million project for the United States Coast Guard in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico; a \$24.7 million project for the United States Department of Agriculture in Albany, Calif.; and a proposed project for work at the Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers in Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Maine.

The illegal activity was uncovered after investigators became aware that Patel had falsified a bid document submitted to Schneider by a Vermont subcontractor who was bidding for work at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in White River Junction.

"Patel directed the subcontractors to pay him by check, often diverting funds through his adult son and daughter, and insisting on a bogus reference notation," said a press release.

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National AARP leader is from V.I.

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Luis Hospital backs private surgical center

CEO says facility is crucial to St. Croix

Page 4

Zika study in V.I. finds birth defects, neurological problems

1 in 7 children exposed in womb have significant, ongoing health problems

Experts warn of future outbreaks

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Marriott asks for tax relief as it rebuilds

Portion of St. Thomas resort to be 'upbranded'

Page 3



Trees cut, trimmed at Legislature

Page 2

Tastes of Puerto Rico and the South fuse in new cookbook

Page 20



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Damaged trees removed from Legislature grounds

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Two century-old mahogany trees on the grounds of the V.I. Legislature were recently removed due to hurricane damage, disease and the looming threat they posed to the historic building next to them.

The trees, which, according to a Legislature press release, stood witness to the 1917 Transfer ceremony, framed Charlotte Amalie High School graduations and accommodated government operations, were removed during the last two months, with a final stump taken out Saturday.

According to Legislature Executive Director Toya Malone, the decision to remove the trees was made in consultation with Clay Jones, certified arborist with the International Society of Arborists and Heritage Tree Care, and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

“I know these trees are of great historical significance, but Hurricane Irma did a lot of damage to them,” Malone said. “One was sick and had bugs infesting it that were actually getting into legislative offices. The arborist told us the tree was so traumatized it would not grow back to its original form. Another one was leaning toward the building and its roots had created a rise in the cement. Unfortunately, if we wanted to ride out another storm, we had to remove the tree otherwise we’d sustain additional damage.”

Jones agreed, insisting he didn’t like how two “permanently damaged” trees were so close to the entrance of the Legislature building. He recommends planting four to six *lignum vitae* trees

in their place, which are small, multi-stemmed evergreen trees native to the Virgin Islands.

“If we take a tree out, we should replant — that’s our big mantra,” Jones said. “I think people know our reputation as being the kind of people that try to keep as many trees as possible and only remove as a last resort when there’s no chance for recovery. These damaged trees were never going to develop a canopy again with properly formed branches.”

Jones said there are four mahogany trees remaining on Legislature grounds. All were pruned and deemed healthy. He added that branches and wood from the damaged trees will be given to woodworkers and craftsmen.

Earlier this year, a third mahogany tree, which was uprooted

during Hurricane Irma, was removed by the Public Works Department shortly after the storm.

Senate President Myron Jackson acknowledged the loss of trees in a press release issued Monday.

“It is heartbreaking to see these ancient mahogany trees go to save our building,” he said. “We honor the long role they have played in anchoring this historic site, providing us with their shade and beauty.”

He continued, “We also look forward to sharing the lumber with our skilled Virgin Islands woodworkers who can convert one of the highest quality woods in the world into fine works of art and craftsmanship. As we finalize details and protocols for distribution, the wood remains the property of the Legislature and its removal from the site is currently prohibited.”

— Contact A.J. Rao at 340-714-9104 or email ajrao@dailynews.vi.

“
I know these trees are of great historical significance, but Hurricane Irma did a lot of damage to them.

— Legislature Executive Director Toya Malone



Photo by CLAY JONES

A pruned and healthy mahogany tree stands on the grounds of the V.I. Legislature on St. Thomas. Two mahogany trees were recently removed from the area as a result of hurricane damage, disease and the threat they posed to the historic building next to them.



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Daily News file photo

Storm clouds hang over St. Thomas and above the storm-damaged Marriott's Frenchman's Reef Beach Resort a day after the passage of Hurricane Irma.

Marriott seeking greater tax benefits

By SUZANNE CARLSON
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Frenchman's Reef and Morning Star Marriott Beach Resort's parent company is seeking additional tax benefits from the Economic Development Commission, in light of the estimated \$170 million it will cost to rebuild the St. Thomas resort complex's hurricane damage, according to testimony given during a public hearing Tuesday.

DiamondRock, the resort complex's owner, is already a beneficiary of the EDC program, with an existing 90 percent tax break. The company testified to the commission Tuesday that they are seeking an extension of that current agreement for an additional 10 years, through 2040, with the full 100 percent tax exemption allowed by law.

William Tennis, executive vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary for DiamondRock, said the resort is expected to reopen in December 2019 at the earliest, and the extension and expansion of EDC benefits is necessary to ensure the company's investment will bear fruit.

Other elements of the company's existing benefits agreement, including a minimum annual charitable donation or in-kind contribution of \$90,000, would remain unchanged, according to Marjorie Rawls Roberts, attorney for DiamondRock.

Tennis said the resort has been the territory's largest private employer since the closure of the Hovensa oil refinery on St. Croix, and will remain under the Marriott brand.

The resort contributed more than \$500 million in economic contributions to the territory in the five years preceding the hurricanes, and guests shelled out more than \$350 million



Daily News photo by SUZANNE CARLSON

Representatives from DiamondRock, Frenchman's Reef and Morning Star Marriott Beach Resort's parent company, testify Tuesday before the Economic Development Commission on St. Thomas.

in "ancillary spend" at local businesses, Tennis said.

As of the end of June, the company had spent more than \$14 million clearing debris, doing preliminary cleanup work and stabilizing enough guest rooms for repair workers to stay on-site, he added.

The resort consists of Frenchman's Reef, a cliffside complex of three buildings, including Harbor Tower, a 60-room building that suffered the most damage in the hurricanes; Ocean Tower, which contains 234 guest rooms and 30,000 square feet of meeting and office space; and Seacliff, an 80-room building that suffered the least damage.

The Morning Star section of the resort, located down the hill from Frenchman's Reef, consists of five buildings, including 96 guest rooms, a lobby with restaurant, and Coco Joe's beach bar. Storm surge during Hurricane Maria caused significant damage to the Morning Star facility, but 40 rooms have been made habitable for work crews, Tennis said.

The Morning Star portion of the

resort will also likely be "upbranded" to attract wealthier clientele, he added.

The \$170 million estimated rebuild cost includes major upgrades to the resort's infrastructure, including construction of a new power plant utilizing energy efficient turbines rather than diesel generators, a new reverse osmosis plant, and new waste management system, Tennis said.

Demolition is ongoing and was significantly delayed by insurance companies that "we believe needed an excessive amount of time to assess the damage," but reconstructed rooms will be upgraded with a more modern feel, Tennis said.

He said the goal of opening at the end of 2019 "is ambitious, but we are pulling out all stops to get there."

The commission heard testimony at Tuesday's hearing and will vote on benefit applications at a subsequent meeting.

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@dailynews.vi.

1 in 7 babies exposed to Zika in V.I., P.R. have developmental problems

By ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA
The Washington Post

The first look at how children exposed to Zika virus in the womb are faring at age 1 and older is out, and the report is sobering.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study out Tuesday found that about one in seven babies exposed to Zika during pregnancy appear to have significant, ongoing health issues.

The data analyzed come from a registry of 1,450 children in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands whose mothers were confirmed through lab tests to have been exposed to Zika while pregnant. Six percent of the children suffered from birth defects such as small head size and brain and eye damage. Nine percent had at least one neurodevelopmental issue such as seizures or difficulty swallowing. And 1 percent had both.

Margaret Honein, director of the CDC's Division of Congenital and Developmental Disorders, said in an interview that there appeared to be a wide range of outcomes, with some children more affected than others. She said that some of the children born with severe microcephaly — or a smaller-than-normal head size — do in fact have major impairments, as doctors had feared.

"We are still early in the Zika story, and we still have lot to learn about how these children will grow and develop," she said.

The mosquito-borne virus made headlines in fall 2015 when researchers identified it as the cause of an outbreak in Brazil that resulted in a sudden increase in babies being born with abnormally small heads. Researchers were alarmed that the illness — which was previously believed to mostly produce mild symptoms such as a rash and fever — had resulted in such serious problems, and a worldwide effort was launched to investigate the disease and try to prevent further infection.

While Zika continued to spread in 2016, the number of cases of microcephaly was lower than predicted, deepening the mystery. In the *New England Journal of Medicine*, some researchers speculated about "the presence of some other unknown cofactor" that, combined with Zika infection, led to the more severe birth defects.

In Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, recent hurricanes have added significant challenges to the care and monitoring of children exposed to Zika. However, it does not seem to have resulted in a surge in Zika cases, and public health officials say they are seeing relatively low levels of transmission in that region. In 2018, in the U.S.

“

We are still early in the Zika story, and we still have lot to learn about how these children will grow and develop.

— Margaret Honein, director of the CDC's Division of Congenital and Developmental Disorder

territories, there have been a little more than 70 cases.

However, Honein said that given the historical patterns of how viruses move over time, "we expect there will be multiple outbreaks in the future" around the world.

"I think the bottom line is that the Zika story is not over," she added. "People may feel like it's behind us. For these children, it's not over, and we need to know as much as possible so that we can be prepared" in case something similar happens again.

Indeed, researchers reported this year the first confirmed case of a Zika-exposed baby born with microcephaly from continental Africa and the possibility of two older children, ages 7 and 8, in Cambodia from an earlier outbreak.

Honein said the report published Tuesday shows that there are still "opportunities for improvement" in the screening of children who may have been exposed to Zika in utero.

"We really urge parents to get recommended care — brain images after birth, having measurements taken, getting a developmental screening and having an eye evaluation," Honein said.

The National Institutes of Health is leading an effort to develop vaccines for Zika, but researchers are still in the testing phase.

The CDC is encouraging pregnant women to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites and to avoid travel to areas where Zika is spreading. The first trimester is possibly the most critical; studies have shown that many of the babies with the most severe birth defects were exposed during those months.

The CDC further recommends that a man who has traveled to a Zika-endemic area or is known to have been exposed to the virus should wait at least three months before trying to conceive with his partner. This is a change from previous guidelines that recommended waiting six months. New data appears to suggest that risk of infectious Zika virus in semen declines during the three months after symptoms begin.

Plessen Healthcare gets full support of Luis CEO

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

The CEO of Luis Hospital told the Economic Development Commission on Tuesday it's crucial for St. Croix-based Plessen Healthcare to receive tax benefits and continue operating a private surgical facility because the hospital's operating rooms are not functionally reliable.

The company has twice before applied for tax benefits and received favorable recommendations from the EDC. Those applications were vetoed by Gov. Kenneth Mapp.

Now, the company is applying for a third time, and Luis Hospital CEO Wanda Ruben made it clear that the public hospital is fully in support of the private company's application.

Ruben testified during a public

hearing Tuesday that the hospital's damage from hurricanes Irma and Maria was so devastating they've been unable to reopen the entire third floor, leaving two operating rooms that are only being used for emergency and urgent care.

"The JFL leadership team believe it is most important to support the Plessen Healthcare in obtaining the EDC benefits since Plessen has been the facility that supported JFL after the hurricane and during our time of emergency. About three weeks ago, we suffered the closure of our OR due to more issues that came about, and it is Plessen who we could count on to very rapidly assess these patients and work with our physicians to continue care," Ruben said.

She said Plessen's facility has been "instrumental" in ensuring Virgin Islanders have access to emergency

medical care, and "most importantly, the Plessen healthcare was selected by the previous administration as the facility to collaborate with the Juan Luis Hospital as the alternate surgery center, in the event that our OR suffers shut-downs, which they have."

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service, or CMS, which provides federal oversight for hospitals, has included Plessen in part of a "plan of correction" for Luis, Ruben said, and the hospital is working to obtain a memorandum of understanding with the company in accordance with that plan.

Ruben urged EDC members to support the company's benefit application at a subsequent meeting, and said Plessen is working in "collaboration and partnership with JFL" to care for all Virgin Islanders.

Plessen Healthcare founder and president Dr. Jan Tawakol testified that he and his wife have yet to pay themselves a salary, and they're working to expand the company's capabilities and provide additional services for the community.

The benefit application is not seeking tax breaks on physician income, and only seeks benefits on income from facility fees, Tawakol said.

He also emphasized that the company was founded under the name Plessen Healthcare, a reference to Estate Plessen on St. Croix, and another company was subsequently founded with the name Plessen Ophthalmology — but that business has no connection to Plessen Healthcare.

The application was opposed in testimony submitted by representatives from Sterling Optical and St. Croix Vi-

sion Center Inc., and both companies argued the benefits would be an unfair advantage not enjoyed by all medical facilities providing various forms of patient care.

Trudy Fenster, attorney for Sterling Optical, said Plessen should be denied benefits as they're in direct competition with Luis Hospital, and scoffed at suggestions that the company's benefits would enable them to build an infrastructure for medical tourism, in which individuals travel to areas where medical procedures are cheaper but of similar quality to mainland care facilities.

Tawakol said the benefits would be specific to the surgical center, the company is already engaging in medical tourism, and physicians bring their patients to the facility for surgery.

"We are open to all," Tawakol said.



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Wahilli James sentenced in jewelry store robbery

By **SUZANNE CARLSON**
Daily News Staff

A St. Croix man has been sentenced to serve more than seven years in prison for his role in the 2013 armed robbery of Gems and Gold Corner jewelry store on St. Thomas.

Wahilli James, 23, pleaded guilty in January to possession of a firearm during the commission of a crime of violence. On Tuesday, U.S. District Court Judge Curtis Gomez sentenced James to serve 87 months in prison and five years of supervised release.

Gomez also ordered James to pay a \$100 special assessment and perform 400 hours of community service, in addition to paying restitution in the amount of \$31,027.81 to Gems and Gold Corner and \$130,322.12 to Dorchester Insurance, according to a news release from the U.S. Justice Department.

"The flagrant actions of gun-toting robbers will not be tolerated in the ter-

ritory," U.S. Attorney Gretchen Shapert said in a statement. "In the United States Attorney's Office, our primary focus is public safety. We intend to target violent criminals for federal prosecution. Today's sentence is the result of constructive relationships between law-abiding citizens, hard-working law enforcement officers, and dedicated federal prosecutors."

James was one of seven men convicted in the conspiracy, including four others sentenced to prison for their role in the crime: Jarmaine Ayala, 37, who received a 67-month sentence; Ron Delano Kuntz, 44, who received 78 months; Shawn McIntosh, 25, who received 67 months; and Keon Wilson, 23, who received a total term of imprisonment of 135 months for conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery and brandishing a firearm during a crime of violence.

Two others involved in the crime, Devon Davis and Shaquille Correa,

are still awaiting sentencing, according to court records.

Kuntz, McIntosh, and Wilson, who took their case to a jury trial rather than plead guilty, have also filed appeals of their sentences.

According to the evidence presented at the trial, the men were members of a group that conspired to rob Gems and Gold Corner on Sept. 16, 2013.

Wilson, Correa, and McIntosh entered the store and Wilson brandished a firearm before fleeing with merchandise. The evidence presented at trial also showed that Kuntz purchased large hats to disguise those who went into the jewelry store, and Kuntz acted as a lookout during the robbery while in communication with other members of the conspiracy. Davis drove the getaway vehicle, according to court records.

The case is a result of an investigation conducted by the FBI and the Virgin Islands Police Department.

Campaign Events

Restaurant on St. Thomas.

The event will be aired live on WSTA 1340AM, WLDV 107.9FM and on facebook.com/BryanForGovernor.

ISSN 2159-3019

Daily News Publishing Co. Inc. owned by VIDN Holdings, LLC publishes The Virgin Islands Daily News daily, except Sunday, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, at 9155 Estate Thomas, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, VI 00802. First class postage paid at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. U.S.V.I.

USPS 144-180

POSTMASTER, send Form 3579, Notice of Address Change, to: Circulation Director, Daily News, 9155 Estate Thomas, St. Thomas, VI 00802.

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Surfing the wind



Daily News photo by FIONA STOKES

A kite surfer rides the winds and waves off the northeastern shores of St. Croix.

Cruise Ships

Today, Aug. 8

Carnival Glory (2,980)	7 a.m. to 3 p.m.	Havensight
Oasis of the Seas (6,296)	10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.	Crown Bay

Thursday, Aug. 9 to Saturday, Aug. 11

No ships

Sunday, Aug. 12

Freedom of the Seas (3,634)	7 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Crown Bay
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Monday, Aug. 13

Carnival Fascination (2,634)	7 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Havensight
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Tuesday, Aug. 14

No ships

Wednesday, Aug. 15

Disney Fantasy (4,000)	6:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.	Havensight
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Thursday, Aug. 16 to Saturday, Aug. 18

No ships

Numbers in parentheses indicate passenger capacity



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Deaths

Joseph Medard

Services will be held Friday, Aug. 10, 2018, for Joseph Medard.

The viewing is from 10 to 11 a.m. at Holy Family Church, St. Thomas, with services to follow at 11 a.m. Interment is at Eastern Cemetery.

He is survived by his wife, Rona Ma Rona Me-



Joseph Medard

dard; children, Mary (Linda) Alexander, Christina (Teatin) Charles, Paul (Hermit) Medard, Simeon Medard, Adrian Joseph of St. Lucia, Camilla (Carcam) Medard, Joanna Herald, Joanna (Jojo) Talbert; grandchildren, Cindy Descartes, Dorita Lattany, Zain Medard, Joseph (Jt) Talbert Jr., Jade Medard, Kenney Madard, Celine Medard, Joshua Madard, Omery Alexander, William Alaxender, Robert (Niah) Paul, Alaxendria Paul, Clement Paul, Keon Paul; great-grandchildren, Annalah, Destinee, Zoey, Sky, Geselle and Melvin Jr. 3rd, Keke,

Nika, Quincy and Shermar; daughters-in-law, Paula (Glenda) Medard, Rita Medard; sons-in-law, Augustine (Morgan) Charles, and Joseph (Joejo) Talbert; special caretaker, Sharon Talbert, the Medard family of Montet Chozel and Anse La Raye, St. Lucia; and many other relatives and friends.

Funeral arrangements are entrusted to Turnbull's Funeral Home and Crematory Services.

Lynda Young Long

The family and friends of Lynda Young Long are saddened to an-

nounce her unexpected and sudden passing on July 13, 2018.

Lynda was a well-known and much-loved recovery room nurse at Schneider Medical Center for the last 19 years. She and her husband, Craig Long, moved to St. Thomas about 40 years ago, Craig to start a successful automobile air conditioning business, and Lynda to work for Frostco Accounting Services and then for Dr. Benjamin Spock, transcribing his many successful baby-rearing books back in the 1990's.

Eventually, feeling the urge to help the community of which she had become a part, Lynda enrolled in the University of the Virgin Islands' nursing program where she obtained her RN degree and went on to work at Schneider Hospital, first as a fourth floor nurse and then as a recovery room nurse.

Lynda will be much missed by her patients, who always said, "I woke up from surgery to Lynda's smiling face, what could be better?" In 2010, Lynda was also voted by her nursing peers to be "Nurse of the Year," an honor she earned and richly deserved.



Lynda Young Long

Lynda is survived by her loving husband, Craig Long; her sister, Barbara Y. Hardee; her brothers, Richard and William Young; many nieces, nephews, friends, co-workers, and doctors too numerous to name.

She was predeceased by her loving mother and father, Louise and Richard Young, long-time residents of St. Thomas.

May she rest in peace.

The following is a tribute that was recently posted in the hospital by Lynda's fellow Recovery Room Nurses:

On Friday, July 13, 2018, our Lynda Y. Long transitioned to eternal life. Lynda gave of herself tirelessly as a recovery room nurse, nursing union representative, colleague, and patient advocate for 19 years. She will be missed dearly!

In honor of her memory and as a tribute to her hard work and dedication, we have decided to accept donations toward a nursing scholarship in her name at the University of the Virgin Islands. This scholarship would be given to a student deemed worthy by the university.

Donations may be dropped off to Pamela Thomas, RN in the Recovery Room, (3rd floor, O.R.).

Thanks to all for your support, encouragement, and kind words of comfort.

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Hillary Constantine Hodge Sr.

Services will be held Thursday, Aug. 16, 2018, for Hillary Constantine Hodge Sr., who passed away July 23, 2018, on St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands at 74 years.

He was the son of Violet and Rupert Hodge and was formally married to Honica Hodge and Goldine James-Hodge.

The first viewing for our dearly beloved father, brother and uncle will be 5 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 15, at Turnbull's Funeral Home. The second viewing will be 9 to 10 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 16, at Shiloh Seventh-day Adventist Church, with the service at 10 a.m. at the same location. Interment is at Eastern Cemetery.

He leaves to mourn two sons, Hillary Hodge Jr., Aksel Hodge, and was preceded in death by Avery Hodge; one daughter, Alison Hodge; two grandchildren, Aksel Hodge Jr. and Nikai Hodge; four sisters, Phyllis Hodge, Bona Hodge-Powell, Grace Richardson, Bernadette Richardson, and was preceded in death by Agnes Gumbs.

He also leaves to mourn two brothers, Barnebus and Douglas Hodge, and was preceded in death by Reginald "Son" Hodge; special cousins, Merle and Lucien Proctor, Cousin Dora and Nelson and Miriam Hazell; special friends, Doreen Hanley, Iris Webster, Bro Mc Kay, George Mathew, and Reginald Christmas; and many other nieces and nephews, relatives and friends too numerous to mention.

Arrangements are by Turnbull's Funeral Home and Crematory Services.



Hillary Constantine Hodge Sr.

Lee Vanterpool

A celebration of life ceremony will be held Sunday, Aug. 12, 2018, for Lee Vanterpool, who passed away June 23 in Conyers, Ga.

"Lee Vee," as he was affectionately known, was the distinguished voice and prominent face of media in the Virgin Islands. A consummate media and performing arts professional, Lee began his long career first as a dancer and studied with world-renowned choreographer George Balanchine, followed by performances with the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater.

When told by a casting director in New York that he had a "golden voice," Lee leaped at the chance to turn it into a career opportunity and became a commercial spot and voice-over artist.

After studies at New York University, Lee gravitated to broadcast journalism and accepted the invitation to return home to St. Thomas as the WB-NB-TV news anchor and continued in that role in the station's new identity as Channel 10.

With several years as a fixture on local television and as a well sought after master of ceremonies, Lee then relocated to Hollywood, Calif., where he worked in actor-producer Brock Peters' production company as an executive manager for 15 years.

For Lee, returning to St. Thomas meant returning to the airwaves again; this time it was radio where both he and brother Mel Vanterpool were the dominant on-air personalities.

Lee's next media career move was when he accepted the position of director of media services for the VI. Legislature, a position from which he retired in the mid 1990s. However, retirement was



Lee Vanterpool

short-lived as Lee then went to work in the executive branch of government as a spokesman for the Charles Turnbull administration.

Never far from the airwaves, following his second retirement "Lee Vee" was back in front of the microphone at Radio One, hosting both the morning show and his ever-popular Sunday Jazz Show. For most people that would have been a full plate, but not Lee, with his committed passion to dance and the performing arts, he still found time to be a cast member in several productions of the UVI Community Playhouse, teach at St. Thomas School of Dance, and take on the role of principal dancer in the annual production of the Nutcracker.

In the mid 2000's Lee signed off the local airwaves permanently and moved to the mainland. His love for his island home never waned as he always welcomed calls and visitors with "word from home."

A celebration of life ceremony honoring Lee's memory will be held at Shed 4, Magens Bay beach, on Sunday, Aug. 12, beginning at 1 p.m.

Lee is survived by his loved ones: brother, Mel D. Vanterpool; sisters, Lillian "Sadie" Moolenaar, Linda Vanterpool, Charleann Matthias, Donna Phillip, Denice Hicks, AnnMarie Vanterpool-Brown, Emilia Vanterpool;

nieces, Barbara Canton-Jackson, Tammy Isom, Melissa Vanterpool-Isom, Pamela Moolenaar-Wirsiy, Alison M. Foy, Michelle Moolenaar-Battle, Winnika Phillip-DeGout, DuanJae Phillip Croke, Mylika Hill, Atiya Robertson, Isla Rose Vera; nephews, Gideon Wirsiy, Troy A. Dowdy, Christopher D. Isom, David Vanterpool, Charles Vanterpool, Che (Vanterpool) Forgeron, George E. Moolenaar III, Hahlkay Matthias, Kahmall Matthias, Jahlanie E. Brown, LaZon W. Phillip, Anthony A. Hicks, Asim J.

Hicks, A'Xavier Hicks; numerous great-nieces and great-nephews; the Raimer and Vanterpool families; brothers-in-law, George E. Moolenaar II, Donald Matthias, Ronney Brown; sister-in-law, Gilda Stafford; special cousins, Doris W. Todman, Alfred Raimer, Laverne S. McCurdy; godmother, Ena Knight; and many friends and colleagues.

Sincere gratitude to caregivers, the Buddhist community of the Virgin Islands, and all friends and family for their loving support and assistance.

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Virgin Islander is AARP's national volunteer president

By LORI ABBOTTS
Daily News Staff

Virgin Islanders have a compelling voice on the national stage with the AARP Foundation's National Volunteer President, Catherine Alicia Georges.

As the new voice of the charitable non-profit arm of AARP, Georges advocates for aging Americans throughout the country, including the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Born and raised on St. Thomas, Georges has strong ties to the island. The Frenchtown post office is named after her father, Arturo Watlington Sr., and she is a graduate of St. Peter and Paul High School.

Georges went on to have an impressive career in nursing, with numerous professional credits to her name.

She earned her undergraduate degree from Seton Hall University College of Nursing, her masters in nursing from New York University and a doctoral degree in educational leadership and policy studies from the University of Vermont.

In addition to her work with AARP, she is a professor and chair of the Department of Nursing at Lehman College of the City University of New York, and volunteer president of the

“
I would like the people of the Virgin Islands to understand how great an organization AARP is and talk to them about what membership means. There is a voice for them not only in the U.S. Virgin Islands but in the halls of Congress.

— Catherine Alicia Georges, AARP Foundation national volunteer president

National Black Nurses Foundation.

When the call for nominations for the AARP Foundation's board was sent out, Georges applied at the urging of her friend, St. Croix's Dr. Cora Christian, herself a former board member.

Her nomination was accepted and she became a board member in 2010. Since then, Georges has been rotated to work on every committee the AARP Foundation has and in June, she became the national volunteer president, a role she will hold until 2020.

“AARP does an excellent job for its members. As a board member, you are really immersed in what's going on, so you really have a sense of all its facets. It's a very large organization.”

As the national volunteer president, Georges is the principal volunteer spokesperson for the foundation and a liaison between the board and those it serves.

She speaks all over the country, addressing organizations and state groups that have a relationship with AARP, as well as those who want to learn about AARP's signature programs and pillars of health, wealth and self.

“AARP has really been in the forefront of making sure we develop a culture of health as we age in this country. We've got a lot of good years left and we shouldn't sit home in a rocking chair. We need to try to be as healthy and as active as we can and try to keep our brain going,” Georges said.

“AARP is in all different venues, talking with policymakers and consumers. Our volunteers are one of the most remarkable groups of people I have ever met across this country. They are committed, passionate and very learned. They know what the issues are and can really talk to those legislative bodies and articulate what the needs are of folks who are getting older.”

When hurricanes Irma and Maria hit the Virgin Islands, the AARP Foundation was there to help. Leadership members visited St. Croix to meet with non-profit organizations that received approximately \$600,000 in hurricane relief grants from AARP and the AARP Foundation.

“I would like the people of the Virgin Islands to understand how great an organization AARP is and talk to them about what membership means,” Georges said. “There is a voice for them not only in the U.S. Virgin Islands but in the halls of Congress. That's because they are citizens of the United States. Having this voice, and to be part of this large cadre of people who are so important to ensure that national policies are implemented that are important for folks who live on the islands that are aging, it's important to be part of it.”

Catherine Alicia Georges



Photo by AARP

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The Virgin Islands

DAILY NEWS



A Pulitzer Prize-Winning Newspaper

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TORTOLA

CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE, CULTURES AND HISTORY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Arts for all ages at Annaberg



Daily News photo by ANDREA MILAM

Allegra Christopher, center, teaches cultural dance to children from a Sports, Parks and Recreation Department summer camp during Arts of the Ages on Wednesday at the Annaberg Sugar Mill ruins in Virgin Islands National Park on St. John. Also featured at the event, hosted by the National Park, were drumming and singing performances, and fresh local produce and other food and drinks for sale. Several summer camps and visitors stopped by to check out the fun.

Judge: P.R. can't dodge oversight

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Last-place Smith wants recount

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Summer crews spruce up V.I. National Park

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UVI delves deep into hurricanes

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UVI launches gliders to study oceans, forecast hurricanes

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Five so-called “ocean gliders” designed to study underwater conditions and help forecast hurricane activity were recently launched into the waters off the Virgin Islands.

The launch was part of a joint pilot project coordinated by nonprofit Ocean and Coastal Observing — Virgin Islands, or OCOVI, along with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Navy.

According to OCOVI program director Roy Watlington, the unmanned gliders will remain deployed for three months, collecting and transmitting underwater data — all in an effort to monitor ocean conditions that affect hurricane intensity.

“The main focus of this project is hurricanes,” Watlington said. “Hurricanes derive a lot of their energy from the ocean’s heat — but the heat has to be down to a certain depth and it has to be replenishable. In the case of two Category 5 hurricanes back-to-back, the reservoir of heat energy in this area must have been very great. That’s the sort of thing these gliders will help clarify.”

Watlington said the first glider was deployed in the water 15 miles south of St. Thomas and St. John on July 17, followed the next day by two deployments north of St. Croix and a third west of St. Croix. On July 19, the fifth glider was released at a station northwest of St. Thomas.

The University of the Virgin Islands through its Center for Marine and Environmental Studies provided the boats for the launch, along with six student interns to assist in preparing and launching the gliders.

“This is a unique experience for undergraduate students at the University of the Virgin Islands to participate in such an exciting initiative in the territory,” said Marc Boumedine, Summer Undergraduate Research Experience mentor, in a UVI press release. “The

“
The main focus of this project is hurricanes. Hurricanes derive a lot of their energy from the ocean’s heat — but the heat has to be down to a certain depth and it has to be replenishable. In the case of two Category 5 hurricanes back-to-back, the reservoir of heat energy in this area must have been very great. That’s the sort of thing these gliders will help clarify.”

— Roy Watlington,
Ocean and Coastal
Observing — Virgin Islands
program director



Photo by UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Ocean gliders are inspected outside the University of the Virgin Islands Sports and Fitness Center on St. Thomas ahead of being deployed in the ocean. Six students — Belize Saunders, Samuel Gittens Jr., Jair Smith, Kenique Liburd, Kaleb Liburd and Elisha Brunant — participating in the National Science Foundation-Historically Black Colleges and Universities Summer Undergraduate Experience program had the opportunity to be part of a pilot program that will add to knowledge about ocean conditions and hurricane intensity.



Photo by OCEAN AND COASTAL OBSERVING-VIRGIN ISLANDS

An ocean glider designed to study conditions underwater and help forecast hurricane activity is launched into waters off the Virgin Islands.

students are learning about advanced technologies and how to turn data into practical

knowledge that will impact our understanding of oceans and the earth.”

Watlington further emphasized the project’s impact on the students.

“We’re really trying to build future brain power and that’s the short-range benefit to the Virgin Islands,” he said. “We will have advanced a number of young people in their interests in the science, technology, engineering and math disciplines and hopefully in careers that they can practice in the Virgin Islands.”

Students involved included Belize Saunders, Samuel Gittens Jr., Jair Smith, Kenique Liburd, Kaleb Liburd and Elisha Brunant.

According to a UVI press release, OCOVI via its parent organization, Caribbean Coastal Ocean Observing System, assured participation of the Virgin Islands in the project by securing a portion of the funding and providing scientific and technical services.

The gliders are owned and operated remotely by the U.S. Navy, with technical assistance provided by researchers from Rutgers University’s Coastal Ocean Observing Lab.

While gliders will mostly remain submerged, they will rise to the surface every few hours to transmit data via satellite to U.S. Navy ground control stations and receive further instructions, Watlington said.

Mariners and fishermen are urged not to interfere with glider activity if they encounter them on the water. Individuals who encounter a glider that appears to be fouled or in other distress are asked to contact Watlington at **340-643-8183** or via email at rawatlington@gmail.com.

— Contact A.J. Rao at 340-714-9104 or email ajrao@dailynews.vi

McCollum promises schools will be ready

Modular classrooms not leaving field

By SUZANNE CARLSON
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — The plan to place modular classrooms for Addelita Cancryn Junior High School students on the field at Charlotte Amalie High School is still generating controversy, but Education Commissioner Sharon McCollum said again Wednesday there are no alternatives that would enable a return to full-day classes.

Cancryn students have been without a school since hurricanes Irma and Maria caused severe damage to the campus, and plans to place modular classrooms at Charlotte Amalie High School have been met with protests from students and educators.

A dozen former administrators at Charlotte Amalie High School and Addelita Cancryn Junior High School distributed an open letter to the Education Department on July 23, saying that “without community input and despite community opposition, a decision has been made to take away the athletic field and even the tennis court at Charlotte Amalie High School to erect 56 modular classrooms for Addelita Cancryn Junior High School, which has an enrollment of less than 450 students.”

The letter disputed the department’s plan to prepare a temporary athletic field on a site adjacent to the high school, questioned how long the modular classrooms would remain in place, and asked where and when a new Addelita Cancryn school would be built.

Work is underway at the high school’s athletic field, and Education Committee Chairman Sen. Jean Forde has said it appears to be too late to reverse the current plan.

Forde held a committee hearing Wednesday to address the issue and school readiness in general.

Testifiers included Carmen Howell, former assistant principal at both Cancryn and Charlotte Amalie High School, and principal of the high school from 2008 to 2014 and former Education Commissioner Ruby Simmonds Esannason, who sharply criticized the department’s plan.

“We appeal to you as decision makers, as representatives of the people, and as persons of conscience to use your positions to stop this travesty from going any further,” Esannason said. “Yes, work has already begun, but it is not too late to stop the process and move to a plan that is more practical, safe, and sensible as decisions are made regarding the educational futures of students at these two schools.”

Education Commissioner Sharon McCollum responded at the Senate committee hearing, and in a written public response to the former administrators’ open letter.

The land adjacent to the west of Charlotte Amalie High School is owned by the V.I. Housing Finance Authority and will be used to create a practice field for recreational use until December, McCollum said. The site is too small to hold the required modular units



Daily News photo by BILL KISER

Construction workers dig around concrete slabs laid to support mobile classroom units being constructed on the athletic field at Charlotte Amalie High School on St. Thomas.

“
If it takes us 10 years to get a new place for Addelita Cancryn, they’ll stay there for 10 years.”

— Anthony Thomas, Education Department chief of staff

and housing construction is set to begin on the site in January, so the department is working with the Sports, Parks, and Recreation Department to devise alternative plans for facilities that can be used for recreation.

“The timeline will allow the District and school to work through reasonable options once school is back in session,” McCollum wrote.

In terms of how long modular units will remain in place, Education Department Chief of Staff Anthony Thomas testified that there’s no current timeline in place, and everything is dependent on the speed of reconstruction.

“If it takes us 10 years to get a new place for Addelita Cancryn, they’ll stay there for 10 years,” Thomas said. “A three- to five-year plan is in place for permanent repairs throughout the entire territory, so in three years we would likely be moving Addelita Cancryn to a permanent place.”

That new location has yet to be determined.

“You’re going to continue to hear fluctuations in the process,” Thomas said. “We just don’t know at this juncture, we have to go through the process.”

Official assessments must be made of “the

entire 3 million square feet of the Department of Education” and “you give us nine months from here, and then we can begin to have a discussion about what schools are going to go where, and what can be rebuilt,” Thomas said.

The former educators’ open letter also questioned the department’s evacuation plan, and McCollum said safe rallying areas have been identified in the event of an emergency, but that evacuation plans are being revised as school locations and plans are updated.

In terms of the letter’s final concern — why alternative options weren’t selected, such as merging students from Cancryn into other schools or repairing Gladys Abraham Elementary School — McCollum said there are no other options available. Transporting students across the island to Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School isn’t feasible, and Abraham will be repaired next year.

“Once the school is properly repaired, additional options can be considered. VIDE plans to have a public forum to discuss alternative options once the school is operational,” McCollum wrote. “The Department understands the choice to place the temporary facilities on the highly trafficked field was not popular, however, it was the only viable option and last resort and in a grave effort to return students to the full day instructional sessions they deserve. Once the temporary repairs to facilities and schools are completed, recovery efforts will shift to permanent repairs. Addelita Cancryn Junior High is slated for a complete rebuild and the community will have the opportunity to be a part of the design of the new school.”

— Contact Suzanne Carlson at 340-714-9122 or email scarlson@dailynews.vi.

By SUZANNE CARLSON
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Senators in a committee hearing Wednesday questioned Education Department officials about their preparations for the upcoming school year, and whether there will be enough classrooms and teachers to go around.

Education Commissioner Sharon McCollum said the hurricanes dealt a serious blow to the department, but assured senators that students will be returning to a full-day class schedule in structurally sound, mold-free classrooms.

“Our first priority has always been and continues to be to provide a safe environment for our students, a safe working environment for all of our employees, and to provide an environment conducive to learning,” McCollum said.

However, McCollum said, the department faces years of rebuilding and obstacles ahead, and “the most significant challenges facing the department at this juncture in our recovery efforts are time, scarcity of manpower-materials, and misinformation.”

McCollum said the total enrollment for the 2017-18 school year was 10,868 students, including 5,301 in the St. Croix District and 5,567 in the St. Thomas-St. John District. The official 2016-17 enrollment of 13,194 declined by 2,356 students after hurricanes Irma and Maria.

McCollum and other administrators said many students are returning to the territory, and they’re trying to plan ahead for that influx by ordering adequate temporary modular classrooms and ensuring there’s sufficient space if additional students do return.

To date, \$117,941,204 in federal funding has been obligated for temporary school facilities in the territory, McCollum said.

Six school campuses will receive temporary facilities on St. Croix, including Arthur Richards Junior High School, John Woodson Junior High School, Eulalie Rivera Elementary School, Lew Muckle Elementary School, Pearle B. Larsen Elementary School and St. Croix Central High School, and seven campuses will receive temporary facilities on St. Thomas and St. John, including Julius Sprauve School, Charlotte Amalie High School, Addelita Cancryn Junior High School, Lockhart Elementary School, Joseph Gomez Elementary School, Wheatley Skill Center and Ivanna Eudora Kean High School.

Two-hundred and three temporary school units have been delivered to the territory to date, and the department is waiting on six additional shelters for the Curriculum Center, McCollum said.

In terms of staff, there were a total of 2,195 employees in the 2017-18 school year, including 96 exempt positions and 2,099 classified positions. Since April, 18 teachers have left the department, and as of June 29, the department has a 101 teaching vacancies, including 60 in the St. Thomas-St. John District and 41 in St. Croix, McCollum said.

The department utilizes foreign teachers on J-1 visas, and those credentials have been extended for all except a group of Liberian teachers, and work is ongoing to ensure those teachers can remain in the territory.

While recruitment efforts are ongoing, McCollum said applicants’ interest “quickly disintegrates” when they learn of the job’s low pay and benefits.

McCollum also said that administrators are doing their best to plan under constantly-shifting circumstances, and warned that many of the plans and announcements being made lately could change in the future.

Sen. Kurt Viallet acknowledged that the school system is facing an uphill battle, and encouraged administrators to work with senators and others to ensure students and teachers get the support they need.

“Everything might not be perfect on Labor Day, but we need to make sure that we have a plan,” Viallet said.



Sharon McCollum

Primary results unchanged after provisional ballot count

By A.J. RAO
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — A total of 57 provisional ballots from the St. Thomas-St. John district were counted and cast Wednesday as part of the Democratic primary election.

The final tally did not impact last week's results.

As of Wednesday night, the gubernatorial vote count has Albert Bryan at 5,029 votes; Allison "Allie" Petrus at 4,491 votes; and Angel E. Dawson Jr. at 3,199 votes.

These numbers include one provisional ballot from the St. Croix district. They also include 237 absentee ballots from the St. Thomas-St. John district and 105 absentee ballots from the St. Croix district, which were counted and cast Monday.

The last absentee ballots will be counted on Aug. 14.

In the Senate primary for St. Thomas-St. John, the leading seven candidates held on to their positions.

Donna Frett-Gregory remains in first place with 2,877 votes, followed by Sen. Marvin A. Blyden at 2,429 votes; Athneil "Bobby" Thomas at 2,187 votes; Sen. Myron D. Jackson at 2,106 votes; Stedmann Hodge Jr. at 1,999 votes; Carla Joseph at 1,736 votes; and Sen. Jean A. Forde at 1,613 votes.

The sole provisional ballot from the St. Croix district was counted and cast Monday.

Alicia Barnes and Allison DeGazon remain in the top two positions, with 2,645 and 2,322 votes, respectively. They are followed by



Daily News photo by A.J. RAO

Elections Board member Robert Schanfarber casts a provisional ballot on an MS 200 voting machine Wednesday at the V.I. Election System office on St. Thomas. A total of 57 provisional ballots were counted and cast.

Sen. Kurt Vialet at 1,839 votes; Sen. Novelle E. Francis Jr. at 1,836 votes; Javan James at 1,638 votes; Kenneth Gittens at 1,557 votes; and Oakland Benta at 1,465 votes.

A provisional ballot is cast for voters who may have an issue with their registration — a recent relocation or name change, for example — but who are allowed to vote on the condition that their credentials

can be more closely inspected later.

Elections Board member Lydia Hendricks said a total of 83 provisional ballots were collected, but 26 were discarded in the vetting process for various reasons, including voters being registered Republicans, voters with no party affiliation or voters who had moved out of the territory.

— Contact A.J. Rao at 340-714-9104 or email ajrao@dailynews.vi.

Brian Smith calls for recount

By SUZANNE CARLSON
Daily News Staff

Incumbent Sen. Brian A. Smith is calling for a recount of Saturday's Democratic primary election after coming in third place in the final vote totals for senator at-large.

Smith sent a letter Tuesday to Elections Supervisor Caroline Fawkes, asking for a manual recount of the votes in the senator at-large race.

Fawkes said Wednesday that under the V.I.

Code, a request for recount must be directed to the Board of Elections and she communicated that to Smith. While some jurisdictions have laws dictating circumstances under which recounts would be ordered, Fawkes said the territory's statute leaves that decision up to board members.

Fawkes said she has not received a request for a recount from any other primary candidates.

In his letter, Smith said that "there appears to be a lot of irregularities" in the Senate at-large race because "the margin of victory was extremely great," "the winner of the race also gained more votes than the Democratic gubernatorial candidates," and "the percentages of the votes received by all candidates were almost identical territorywide



Brian Smith

and in both districts."

The winner of Saturday's race for senator at-large was Steven D. Payne Sr., who collected more votes in the primary than the Democrats' gubernatorial ticket of Albert Bryan and Tregenza Roach, with 3,265. Stacie January recorded her second straight second-place finish with 1,923 votes. Smith finished third with 1,237 votes.

Smith concluded the letter by saying that "it is worth noting that this situation is an irregular statistical probability, as such a thorough investigation is warranted. Accordingly, we must seek for transparency and justice for the voting public."

According to Title 18 of the V.I. Code, "a petition for a recount may be filed by any candidate in a primary or election who believes that there has been fraud or error committed in the canvassing or return of the votes cast at such primary or election."

The Board of Elections has three days from the filing of such a request to decide whether a recount should take place, and a recount would be held within 10 days after the filing of the petition, according to the law.

In addition, "if the Board of Elections decides not to approve the petition and grant the recount, it shall record the reasons for such decision. The aggrieved candidate may, within five days after the decision of the board has been made, appeal his case to the district court. The district court shall review the appeal promptly and render a decision!"

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USPS 144-180

POSTMASTER, send Form 3579, Notice of Address Change, to: Circulation Director, Daily News, 9155 Estate Thomas, St. Thomas, VI 00802.

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EPA proposes to boost cleanup at Tutu Wellfield Superfund site

Daily News Staff

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is proposing to enhance its cleanup operations at the Tutu Wellfield Superfund Site on St. Thomas.

According to an EPA press release, the new cleanup plan involves additional wells to extract more sources of contaminated groundwater and the re-injection of treated, clean groundwater to create an underground barrier downgradient of the source area.

The proposal also calls for long-term monitoring and restrictions on the use of groundwater in the vicinity of the site, according to the release.

"EPA is moving forward to address contamination at this site against the backdrop of the continuing recovery of the U.S. Virgin Islands from hurricanes Irma and Maria," said EPA Regional Administrator Pete Lopez, in the release.

"Our proposal would expand the reach of and enhance the effectiveness of the existing groundwater pump and treat system to better cap-

The Tutu Wellfield site, which consists of a plume of contaminated groundwater covering 108 acres in Anna's Retreat, became contaminated by decades-worth of nearby business activities.

ture and reach more sources of contamination in the groundwater, which ultimately means we are better protecting people's health."

The Tutu Wellfield site, which consists of a plume of contaminated groundwater covering 108 acres in Anna's Retreat, became contaminated by decades-worth of nearby business activities, including from O'Henry's Dry Cleaners, a Texaco service station, an Esso service station, and earlier operations, according to information from the EPA.

After contamination was detected in the Tillet Well, a public water supply well for the area, an investigation showed that volatile organic compounds were contaminating several public, institutional, com-

mercial and private wells, according to the EPA.

The contamination plume was identified in 1995 and is believed to extend about 1,600 feet south in the direction of groundwater flow, and estimated at 500 feet wide, according to the EPA.

The EPA implemented groundwater extraction and treatment systems to remove the contamination, and those efforts have been ongoing since 2004.

EPA will hold a public meeting on Aug. 23 to explain its proposed cleanup operations. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at the Grace Gospel Chapel in Anna's Retreat.

Comments will be accepted until Sept. 7.

UVI to welcome new class next week

Daily News Staff

New students will move into residence halls on the St. Croix and St. Thomas campuses of the University of the Virgin Islands beginning Monday.

On the St. Thomas campus, new students will move in from noon to 5 p.m. Monday and on the St. Croix campus new students will be able to

move in from 4 to 7 p.m. Monday.

Convocation ceremonies for the new students will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday in the Great Hall of the St. Croix campus and from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Aug. 16 at the Sports and Fitness Center on St. Thomas.

Convocation is regarded as the official welcome to the university where faculty members dress in

their academic regalia and the president presents the new students with a medallion, according to a release from the university.

Returning students will be able to move in to dorms on the St. Thomas campus from noon to 5 p.m. Aug. 17, while students on the St. Croix campus will move 4 to 7 p.m. Aug. 18.

The fall semester begins Aug. 20 and ends on Dec. 8.

Cruise ships

Today, Aug. 9 to Saturday, Aug. 11

No ships

Sunday, Aug. 12

Freedom of the Seas (3,634) 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Crown Bay

Monday, Aug. 13

Carnival Fascination (2,634) 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Havensight

Tuesday, Aug. 14

No ships

Wednesday, Aug. 15

Disney Fantasy (4,000) 6:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Havensight

Thursday, Aug. 16 to Saturday, Aug. 18

No ships

Sunday, Aug. 19

Freedom of the Seas (3,634) 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Crown Bay

Monday, Aug. 20

Carnival Fascination (2,634) 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Havensight

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COMPASSION
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Pointers offered on insurance coverage on damaged properties

Daily News Staff

Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter is encouraging VI. residents to obtain homeowners insurance before the brunt of the 2018 hurricane season arrives.

"When hurricanes Irma and Maria hit the U.S. Virgin Islands in 2017, not every residential property owner had insurance," said Potter, in a press release issued by his office. "Although we are now in the 2018 hurricane season, I encourage all residential property owners who did not have insurance to now obtain home-



Osbert Potter

owners insurance."

Potter, who also serves as commissioner of insurance, is also advising residential property owners who received a settlement check from hurricanes Irma and Maria but are still waiting for repairs to their home by a licensed contractor, to consider renewal options.

According to the release, Potter advises homeowners to:

- Contact your insurance agent or insurance company to discuss available options for the renewal of your insurance policy.

- At the time of renewal, your insurance agent or insurance company is responsible for providing you a "Notice of Conditions of Underinsurance" for the sole purpose of educating you on the conditions that may cause you to be underinsured.

Make sure you understand this notice by speaking with your insurance agent or insurance company, or the Division of Banking, Insurance and Financial Regulation, then sign the notice and return it with your renewal application.

- Builders risk insurance might be an option. If you qualify for builders risk insurance, you must buy it, too, at replacement cost value. But, you cannot live in your residential property if you buy builders risk insurance. Builders risk insurance does not cover contents or loss of use.

- Your insurance company has a record of what damages were covered and paid for under your 2017 hurricane-related insurance claim, in the event there is a hurricane in 2018 and you receive new damages. As a poli-

cyholder, you are to take reasonable steps to protect your property from further damage and to make necessary repairs. Your insurance company will not pay for the same damages twice.

- Take photos of the current condition of your damaged home in the event we are impacted by a hurricane during the 2018 hurricane season. This will avoid confusion and will be able to separate damages to your home caused by the 2017 hurricanes. Also take photos of the repairs you have been able to make to your damaged home. Evidence of the level of progress in repairs is important.

- Save all receipts for materials and other items you or your contractor purchased for the repairs for damages to your home caused by hurricanes

Irma or Maria.

- After you complete all of your repairs, get an appraisal for insurance purposes only, one that provides replacement cost value.

"Always discuss your homeowners insurance needs in detail with your insurance agent or insurance company," said Potter, in the release. "If you still have questions afterward, please contact our office in either district."

The Division of Banking, Insurance and Financial Regulation can be reached on St. Croix at 1131 King Street, 3rd Floor in Christiansted, at **340-773-6459**; or on St. Thomas at Nisky Center, 2nd Floor, at **340-774-7166**.

The public is also encouraged to visit the division's website at <http://ltg.gov.vi/> to obtain copies of the division's educational brochures.

Alphonso Roy Spencer

Services will be held Saturday, Aug. 18, 2018, for former Public Works Department employee Alphonso Roy Spencer, who was also known as Fat Roy and Uncle Fat Roy.

The first viewing is from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, Aug. 17, 2018, at Turnbull's Funeral Home. The second viewing is from 9 to 10 a.m. the next day at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. The service is at 10 a.m.

Interment is at Eastern Cemetery, Smith Bay.

He is survived by his wife, Coreen Spencer; son, Elrik Spencer, also known as D.J. Fruit bag; sisters, Clarice Henry, the late Jean Joseph, Mary-Ann Peters, Sheena Spencer in England, Kathleen Francis in St. Martin and Fernella



Alphonso Roy Spencer

Limerick of Swetes, Antigua; brothers, George Wilson, Joshua (Tojo) Joseph, Charlesworth Joseph, Jeremiah Spencer in St. Croix, Walter and Westerby Spencer in England; nieces and nephews, Jessica, Vaughn, Eulanda, Patricia Janet, Iola, Pamela, Arlene, Sharon, Elroy, Casmore Jarvis, Nattie, Calvert, Handu, Chery-Ann J. Fontenelle, Karen, Kevin and Marcia D. Spencer, Clarence, Denise, Gail, Joseann and Junior Joseph; and other nieces and nephews too many to mention; good friends, Leroy Lewis, Pat Richards and Sheba Bailey of Antigua, Christina Edward, Charles and Janet Edwards; stepchildren, Loeann Thompson, Uhaderi and Melroy Burgan, Debbie Francis, Roma Charles, Lesroy Baptiste, Anthony and George Wilkins Janet Baptiste; grandchildren,

M'khai Burgan, Derika Burgan, Aerika Burgan, Ameera Burgan, Jahneedyo Burgan, Shana Thompson and Mia Burgan.

Esther Regina Breedy

A celebration of life will take place Wednesday, Aug. 15, 2018, for Esther Regina Breedy, who passed July 26, 2018.

The viewing is from 9 to 10 a.m. at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, followed immediately by a service. The interment will be at

Eastern Cemetery, Smith Bay.

Mrs. Breedy is survived by her beloved husband, Mr. Glen Allan Breedy; four loving children, Adrienne Todman, Akeel Breedy, Aaron Breedy, and Andrea Breedy; and her grandchildren, Maya Wesby, Arissa Breedy, Kaylee Breedy, and Aajay Breedy.

She also leaves to mourn her four brothers and sisters, Cedric Farrell, Clementine M. Hendrickson, Eileen A. Lewis, and James E. "Smalls" Farrell, and Mrs. Rose Martin, her aunt. She is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and family members throughout the U.S. and British Virgin Islands, the United States, Canada, and England.

Arrangements are by Turnbull's Funeral Home and Crematory Service.



Esther Regina Breedy

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