

## August News Brief 2009

### *In this issue.....*

- *Small Hotels Retreat*
- *Culinary Team Fundraiser*
- *Tommy Star Nominations*
- *Membership Corner*
- *Meet the Staff*
- *Save the Date*
- *Fall Trade Show Schedule*
- *Recycling Your Aluminum*
- *HTA Scholarship Recipient*

### Culinary Team Hosting Fundraiser

The Culinary Team is getting a head start fundraising and perfecting their skills by hosting their first event this month. On **Tuesday, August 25**, the team will prepare the delicacies that won them a Silver Medal for Most Innovative Menu. In addition to this menu, bartender Joshua King (Ritz Carlton) will serve up his awarding vodka drink, and the Marriott will offer their buffet. Tickets are \$45 and can be purchased from the Association office. King's other team members include: Manager Chef Leslie Gumbs (Theo's Personal Catering), Chef Dennis Vanterpool (Frenchman's Reef Marriott), Chef Ashley Allen, Sr. (Ken's Food Mobile), Chef Dennis Gribbin (Starfish Patisserie), Chef Josh Vilain (Bacchus), Chef Brian Wisbauer (Salud Bistro), and student chef Afiyah Augustus (St. Croix Career and Technical Education Center). Your taste buds will be tantalized and your support invaluable.

### CHTA Small Hotels Retreat

St. Thomas will play host the annual Small Hotels Retreat, sponsored by the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, September 30-October 1. The conference focuses on marketing skills, technology and human resource development for small hoteliers. To ensure that all USVI small hotels can take advantage of this invaluable session, the Department of Tourism has decided to cover registration costs for USVI properties with 50 or less rooms. Frenchman's Reef Marriot, the host hotel, is offering a discounted rate of \$135 (single or double occupancy), excluding taxes. Accommodations must be booked by September 4, 2009. To download a registration form visit <http://www.caribbeanhotelassociation.com/smallhotelsretreat.html>. Forms are also available in the HTA office and on the membership web site, [www.usvihta.com](http://www.usvihta.com). Contact Andrea Hamilton in the HTA office for additional information.

### Nominations Now Open for 2009 Tommy Awards



Do you have an outstanding employee that deserves to be recognized? Then nominate them for a **Tommy Star Award**. For the past 8 years, the Hotel & Tourism Association has hosted this appreciation event to allow outstanding employees to shine even brighter.

**Award categories include:** Hotel Associate of the Year, Hotel Supervisor of the Year, Retail Associate of the Year, Attraction/Activity Associate of the Year, Taxi Operator of the Year, Restaurant Associate of the Year, Airline Associate of the Year, Hospitality Support Associate of the Year, and Public Service Representative of the Year. Nomination forms, sponsorship information and advertising opportunities are available through the Association office. The 2009 Tommy Awards Gala will be held on November 21 at Estate St. Peter's Great House. **Don't let exemplary employees go unrecognized!**

## **Membership Corner**

### **New Member Feature**

One of our newest members is Indianapolis-based freelance graphic designer **Michael Evans**. Born in Tortola but raised on St. Thomas, Evans always had an interest in creative design even while in distribution management. He dabbled in the design and fine art industry in his free time while earning a degree in graphic/digital design at the Art Institute of Indianapolis. In 2008, Evans took that leap and launched his business. His specialties include illustration, logo/identity, print and web design, as well as fine art. A fine example of his work was this year's Destination Symposium identity and booklet which Evans designed. He has a 5-step approach to creating effective design--listen to the core message, research trends, brainstorm, gather, and assemble. "My specialty is taking clients' messages and translating them into creative designs that attract customers." Evans is in the process of designing his new website which will showcase recent works and will be launched by the middle of August. To view samples of his stylized work visit his web site, [www.mevansvcd.com](http://www.mevansvcd.com). If you need a creative and artistic boost for your business email him at [mevans@mevansvcd.com](mailto:mevans@mevansvcd.com).

**\*Membership Card**– Escape to the **Westin St. John** with this enticing card offer. Cardholders receive the Starwood Hotels Family & Friends rate. Blackout periods may apply. Must present your membership card on check-in. To see all the exciting card offers visit [www.usvihta.com](http://www.usvihta.com).

**\*July Membership Meeting Recap**-Sonia Nelthrop and her team from the Waste Management Authority was the guest speaker at the July Membership meeting. She spoke about the environmental initiatives being taken by the agency and urged everyone to assist in keeping the island green. The meeting also re-launched the "Officer of the Month" program recognizing our men and women from the VI Police Department who serve the community every day. Those recognized for their accomplishments include: from St. John, Detective Cassandra Vincent and Officer Richard Dominquez; from St. Thomas, Detective Dwight Griffith and Officer Gigi Alexander. These veterans are to be commended for the efforts to tackle the criminal activities in the community. There is no meeting scheduled for August. The next meeting is scheduled for September 16 at the Ritz Carlton.



### **Employee Profile— Leona Hodge**

Her passion is meeting and interacting with people. This makes Leona Hodge a perfect person for the hospitality industry. After retiring from 30 years in Government service, Mrs. Hodge joined the Hotel & Tourism Association in 2000. She spends her work days assisting visitors at the Welcome Center. Born in NY City, she met, fell in love and married a Virgin Islander and has been here ever since. Leona is the proud mother of 5 daughters, 10 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren. She says her grandchildren keep her young. In addition to spending time with her family, she enjoys music and dancing especially salsa. Next time you're out you might see Mrs. Hodge tearing up the dance floor.

### **SAVE THE DATE**

**August 25**

**Culinary Team Fundraiser, Frenchman's Reef**

**September 16**

**Membership Meeting, The Ritz Carlton**

**September**

**Travel Agent Month**

**Sept. 29-Oct. 2**

**Small Hotels Retreat—St. Thomas,  
Frenchman's Reef Marriott, [www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com](http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com)**

**November 21**

**Tommy Star Awards & Gala—Estate St. Peter's Great House**



## **Fall Travel Shows**

We continue to partner with the Department of Tourism to promote the destination at trade shows. Below is a schedule of upcoming shows. If you have any information such as packages or new property developments, send the information to Luana Wheatley and she will make sure that it's presented to the attendees. She can be reached at 518-334-0061, or email lwheatleyvi@aol.com.

### **Funjet**

August 19—Minneapolis

August 20—Chicago

### **CMITS**

August 25 & 28—Toronto

### **MLT Vacations**

October 5-7—St. Paul

### **Apple Vacations**

September 15—Chicago

September 16—Detroit

### **The Motivation Show (IT&ME)**

September 29-October 1—Chicago

---

### **Environmental Committee Encourages Recycling Cans**

You CAN be a part of saving the environment by recycling. Here's how:

- 1) Place receptacles throughout your business property, clearly marked for aluminum cans only. Receptacles can be made or purchased, (tall or tote size)**
  
- 2) Collect in 55 gallon clear plastic bags (currently available for \$16.00 for 60 bags at Home Depot)**
  
- 3) Designate a place to store the cans until ready to take to STS in the Subbase**
  
- 4) When you have a truck full, deliver the bags of cans to STS and collect .20 per pound**

### **HTA Scholarship Recipient Announced**

Ashana Merlissa Lawrence, a 2009 graduate of the Charlotte Amalie High School, has been awarded this year's Hotel & Tourism Association Scholarship. Ashana will be attending the University of the Virgin Islands in the fall majoring in Business Administration with a concentration in Hospitality Management. She is a member of Future Business Leaders of America and was the PR officer for the Amalian National Honor Society. Ashana is currently a Front Desk Trainee at Best Western Emerald Beach.



**4002 Raphune Hill, Suite 304, St. Thomas, VI 00802  
340 774-6835 email: admin@virgin-islands-hotels.com**