

December News Brief 2009

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Donors Meet Boys & Girls Club Challenge

The VI Game Fishing Club issued the **challenge**—If the Association raised \$25,000 for the Boys & Girls Club, they would match it for a much needed total donation of \$50,000. After numerous phone calls, bake sales, and personal donations, the HTA raised a little more than \$25,000. The employees of the Ritz Carlton Hotel are to be applauded for their selfless efforts to make a difference for the youth of the Virgin Islands. We extend a huge debt of gratitude to the following businesses and individuals of supporting the Boys & Girls Club of St. Thomas: **VI Ecotours, Weddings the Island Way, West Indian Company Limited, Steven Hughes, Yacht Haven Grande, Bolongo Bay Beach Resort, Caneel Bay Resort, Frenchman's Reef and Morning Star Marriott, Windward Passage Hotel, Secret Harbour Beach Resort, Westin St. John Resort & Villas, Wyndham Sugar Bay Resort & Spa, Bellavista Properites, the Ritz Carlton, Nick Pourzal, First Bank VI, Calypso Realty, Island Meetings & Incentives, Islander Taxi, Mahogany Run, Media Marketing, Mim's Seaside Bistro, MASA, Art by Lucinda, Innovative Telephone, Host-U Services, At Home in the Tropics, Diamonds International, Wendy & Abe Tarapani, Mary Gleason, the Prior Foundation, Seven Seas Water, Susan Lysaght and Coach.** The Boys & Girls Club offers kids the opportunity to develop relationships with positive adult role models, participate in life enhancing programs and have fun. While you ponder these initiatives, remember **"it just takes one"** to impact a life and make dreams come true.

The 2009 Tommy Award Winners Are:

The night was filled with anticipation..who would take home the coveted Tommy Star Award . This year's winners are: Gertrudes Gillmore (the Ritz Carlton)-Hotel Associate of the Year; Jasmine Grant (the Ritz Carlton)- Hotel Supervisor of the Year; Kirstyn Nimmo (Diamonds International)-Retail Associate of the Year; Kenan Ottley (Coral World Ocean Park)-Attraction/Activity Associate of the Year; Newman Francis (Independent) -Taxi Operator of the Year; Jordan Rowles (Mim's Seaside Bistro)-Restaurant Associate of the Year; Tony Thompson (Cape Air)-Airline Associate of the Year; Mark Sabino (West Indian Company Limited)-Hospitality Support Associate of the Year; and Chantel Hoheb (Department of Tourism)-Public Service Representative of the Year. This year's festivities also included the first ever Green Award which was presented to Jennifer McQueen, PR Manager at the Ritz Carlton Hotel. The winner of our Tommy Goes to School Newsletter contest Akeiba Barnard was also recognized. Developer/owner of Maho Bay Campgrounds, Harmony Studios Estate Concordia and Concordia Eco-tents Stanley Selengut accepted this year's Star Award of Excellence. Congratulations to all the winners and nominees. Thanks you to all our sponsors for recognizing the importance of this event and supporting it with monetary donations and in-kind services.



Membership Corner

New Member Feature

*Kevin Chipman and Chirag Vyas of **St. John Brewers** landed on St. John 8 years ago. After enjoying the regular beers on the bar menu, they wanted to experience some different flavors and started experimenting with their concoctions. Five years later, St. John Brewers is producing 4 varieties of beer, a root beer and is distributed in 6 states. You can sample their bottle beers or get it on tap at their Brew Pub in Mongoose Junction on St. John. For additional information on St. John Brewers visit www.stjohnbrewers.com.

***Membership Card**—Just in time for the holidays, **Art by Lucinda** is offering a 15% discount on all original art by talented artist Lucinda O'Connell. To see all the exciting card offers visit www.usvihta.com. If you're interested in adding an offer to the program contact the Association office.

*Welcome to **Kashmie Ali**, the new General Manager of the Wyndham Sugar Bay Resort & Spa. Prior to this appointment, Ali was the Director of Operations for the Jade Mountain and Anse Chastanet boutique resorts in St. Lucia. He holds a certification in Hospitality and Destination Management from George Washington University; Applied Science in Business Management certification from Tech College in Trinidad, and his Certified Hotel Administrator designation.

***Membership Meeting Recap**—Windward Passage Hotel hosted the November Membership Meeting. Highlights of the meeting included recognition of St. Thomas and St. John Officers of the Month, an update on the Boy's & Girls Club Challenge, recognition of former Culinary Team Captain Chef Leslie Gumbs, and a recap of 2009 HTA initiatives.

*Thank you to the following **members** who joined in 2009: Running Billboard, Boschulte Landscaping, TRANE, Gallery St. Thomas, Hunter Foods, The Ritz Carlton Club, ISW Studios, BC Processing, Michael Evans Graphic Design, Bluebeard's Castle, VI Gamefishing Club, Sugar and Spice Artistry, En Vision/Avaya, First Bank VI, Innovative Telephone, Wave Power Media, Sand Castle on the Beach, Bluebeard's Beach Club, Elysian Beach Resort, Presentation Services, JB Telenet/Sunfone, XO Bistro, Atlantic Caribbean Consulting, COACH, Acacia Restaurant & Cereus Wine Bar, St. John Inn, East End Café, Sea Grape Spa & Fitness Center, St. John Brewers, In Style Weddings, Fat Turtle, Century Hill Estates, Art by Lucinda, Wikked, and Shoptalk.

Remembering Henry Kimelman



Philanthropist, former U.S. ambassador and businessman Henry Kimelman passed away recently at the age of 88. It was a blind date with his future wife Charlotte

Kessler, whose father Sidney owned a rum distillery on St. Thomas, that introduced him to the US Virgin Islands. Sidney decided to build the Virgin Island Hotel, the first major USVI resort, and enlisted the help of his son-in-law to help run the family business. Although he had no hospitality training, his marketing strategy was on point. He guaranteed any guest a free room on any night if the temperature dropped below 70 degrees. The hotel never gave away a free night. With his brother-in-law Elliott Fishman, he started Henry Elliott Ltd., an import business that supplied liquor and other products to retailers on Main Street. The partnership dissolved and Kimelman founded West Indies Corp. In 1960, Kimelman negotiated a contract to lease the Virgin Isle Hotel to the Hilton chain. During the ensuing years, Kimelman held positions with VI Governor Ralph Paiewonsky and Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall before being named Ambassador to Haiti. In their latter years, Henry and Charlotte Kimelman extended their philanthropic efforts to their "second home" forming the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands and the Charlotte Kimelman Cancer Institute. We extend our sympathies to the Kimelman family and thank them for their support and generosity to the people of the Virgin Islands.

Annual Holiday Party/Silent Auction/Toy Drive

The annual Holiday party, auction and toy drive is in a matter of weeks. The celebratory event will be held on December 16, 2009 at Caneel Bay Resort. Proceeds from the silent auction allow us to award scholarships to high school seniors with an interest in the hospitality industry. Donated toys are requested in lieu of a party entry fee. The toys will be presented to the Boys & Girls Club of St. Thomas by the Association's mascot Tommy Starfish. Contact the Association office to submit your silent auction items.

Ferry Schedule:

5:30 pm	Ferry departs NPS Dock
6:00 pm	Arrive at Caneel Bay
7:30 pm	Ferry departs Caneel Bay
8:00 pm	Arrive at NPS Dock

CMI Update

*Paradise Jam wrapped up another successful tournament this past weekend with one of the most exciting finishes to date. As a silver sponsor, the Association receive prominent mentions in all print/radio/TV advertising and signage at the venue.

*Our winter promotion, Island Escape Package, runs from December 1-April 1, 2010, for travel January 1-April 15, 2010. The package includes a 5th night free, resort credit and discounts at activities and attractions.

*Anyone interested in joining the CMI, the Association's "pay to play" marketing initiative, should contact President Lisa Hamilton at 774-6835, or email lisa@virgin-islands-hotels.com. Some of the benefits of CMI membership include: inclusion on the consumer driven web site, www.virgin-islands-hotels.com, representation at travel agent/tour operator trade shows and product launches, a database from the aforementioned shows, promotional opportunities, and receipt of media inquiries when available.

The Quest for Blue Flag Certification

The Association's Environmental Committee is researching the possibility of launching the Blue Flag Certification Program in the territory and need your help. The Blue Flag Certification is a voluntary eco-label program for beaches and marinas. Those beaches and marinas that meet a specified set of criteria--water quality, safety, services, education, environmental management--are labeled "blue flag" certified. It is recognized worldwide, especially by potential environmentally-friendly visitors and operators. Please feel free to visit www.blueflag.org for more information. The Association hopes to bring this award-winning certification to the USVI. As we continue to be more cognizant of our environmental footprint we feel it is a perfect time to explore this program. Once up and running, the goal is to include it in all Destination Marketing and Public Relations. The USVI would be one of only a few Caribbean Islands in the Blue Flag Program. The Committee is still interested in knowing whether or not your business recycles aluminum cans. Send information on your recycling initiatives to Canika John at canika@virgin-islands-hotels.com.

SAVE THE DATE

December 16

**Holiday Party/Silent Auction/Toy Drive
Caneel Bay Resort**

January 10-12

**CHTA Marketplace, San Juan, Puerto Rico
www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com**



Happy Holidays and a Prosperous New Year!

