

March News Brief 2010

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CMI Corner

*The Association is now offering **advertising space** on our newly re-designed web site, virgin-islands-hotels.com. Our successful "PayPerClick" campaign with Google's Search Engine strategically places the site on the first page in top ranking position. Based on our growing audience and top ranking, we are confident that advertising would be a great addition to your marketing plan. A 160 X 160 ad is \$175 a month (with a 1-yr. commitment), or \$225 a month (with a 6-month commitment). For more information call Canika John at 774-6835 or email canika@virgin-islands-hotels.com.

*CMI members joined the Department of Tourism to "show off" at the **2010 Winter Olympics** in Vancouver, Canada. Screens, 12 ft wide X 17 feet tall, were strategically placed at Blue Mountain (Ontario), Mont Tremblant, (Quebec), and Lake Louise (Alberta), and aired 2 X 15 second spots per hour, 12 hours per day, for 17 days, for a total of 1224 spots. Additionally, banner ads appeared online. Thank you to those hotel members who donated stays for a contest.

*Welcome to our **newest CMI member**, Best Western Emerald Beach.

Blue Flag Initiative



On the invitation of the HTA's Environmental Committee, Finn Bolding Thomsen, Director of the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), recently visited to discuss the quest to become a Blue Flag destination. 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. Mr. Thomsen visited a number of beaches on St. Thomas and St. John including Bolongo Bay Beach, Magens Bay, Coki Point, Secret Harbour, the Ritz Carlton, and Maho Bay. Very high environmental and facility standards were noted which would naturally facilitate the implementation of the Blue Flag Programme. With the exception of Coki Point, all sites were well organized and clean. To upgrade beaches to Blue Flag standards, the following suggestions were offered: beach information boards, ensure public access and public use of bathrooms, ensure proper lifesaving equipment and emergency phone, ensure proper zoning between swimmers and other activities on the beach, ensure proper presence of 3 types of recyclable waste bins, and ensure handrails for handicap individuals. After the beach visits, Thomsen would recommend all the beaches listed above, with the exception of Coki Point and Maho Bay, to be included in the pilot phase of the programme. Maho Bay would be subject to clarification of the use of public access and use of the bathroom facilities. Coki Point, on the other hand, was less organized than the others and would be considered during a later stage. Next steps would include application for affiliate FEE membership, submission of a feasibility study and suggestion for pilot beaches to the International Blue Flag Jury, launching the Blue Flag pilot phase at select beaches, with the ultimate goal to raise the Blue Flag on the first USVI beach in 2011. To learn more about the Blue Flag Programme visit www.blueflag.org.

Membership Corner

New Member

*Ashley Allen and his team are doing cool things at his graphic design company **Smooth Kreationz**. One exciting thing they offer are vehicle wraps—taking your company branding and creating a mobile billboard. The wraps can be placed on boats, airplanes, any surface. Additional services offered include logo development, brochures, web site design, signage, menu concepts, etc. Their relationship with US trucking companies can offer businesses more national exposure. For a minimum of \$10K, semi-trucks are wrapped with your company information and viewed by thousands of motorists and potential customers. They are able to provide details on the truck route and schedule of stops. The company has been in business for 6 years and is located in the Industrial Park. For additional information on the company call 776-4505 or visit www.smoothkreationz.com.

*The Honorable Governor John P. deJongh will address attendees at the **HTA's Annual Membership Meeting** on Wednesday, March 24 at The Ritz Carlton beginning promptly at 12:00 noon. The Governor will discuss the economic outlook for 2010 and beyond. The meeting is free to members and \$25 for non-members. RSVP's are appreciated to ensure an accurate count for the hotel.

*Welcome to the **Westin's new GM Mike Ryan**. Mike has been with the Starwood family since 1987. Most recently, he held the position of Senior Director of Operations for the Franchise Division. Ryan's management positions have been at the distinguished Starwood properties of the Tremont/Raphael Hotels in Chicago, the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers, Walt Disney World Dolphin, Sheraton New Orleans and the Members Club in Palm Beach Gardens, FL. We look forward to working with him.

*The Association has organized another training with the **Department of Planning & Natural Resources**. This new session will be held on Wednesday, March 10 at The Ritz Carlton from 9:00-12:00 pm. Participants will learn more about building permits, environmental protection, fish & wildlife, legal, earth change permits, and the public water system. General managers, hotel and finance directors, compliance officers and engineering directors are encouraged to attend. Please RSVP by March 3 to Canika John at canika@virgin-islands-hotels.com.

*The Association has stepped into the social media arena and now has a **Facebook** page. Become a fan of US Virgin Islands Hotel & Tourism Association at www.facebook.com/usvi-hotel-and-tourism-association. The page was created by interns Blair Lampert and Kyle Coker.

*The **February Meet the Members Reception** was held at Best Western Emerald Beach and sponsored by Sunfone. Close to 20 people were in attendance. Three new members were signed during the reception.

*There's still time to participate in this year's **Travel Agent Month** promotion which is held annually in September. Contact Nicole at the Association office for additional details or to sign up. Her email address is Nicole@virgin-islands-hotels.com.



Advertising Opportunities Available at Ports

Both the Havensight Kiosk and the Airport Reservation Booth have received new photos/graphics, paint and lighting. Now is your opportunity to put your product in front of cruise ship passengers and overnight guests arriving at the Cyril E. King Airport. Space at the Havensight Kiosk is available at \$450 for hotels and attractions; displays at the Airport start at \$125 per month and includes a picture and brochures. Contact Canika by phone at 774-6835 or email canika@virgin-islands-hotels.com to reserve your space today.

Nevin Phillips Receives PGA Award



Mahogany Run's Director of Golf, Nevin Phillips, recently received the PGA's Merchandiser of the Year Award. One of only 12 PGA professionals

to receive this honor, St. Thomas born Phillips has worked at MR since 1980 when he started as a golf cart attendance. Prior to his current position, he was golf shop manager, tournament coordinator, cart fleet manager and instructor. He was elected to the PGA in 2006. He is the co-founder of the Beacon School Celebrity Golf Tournament and the founder of the St. Thomas Humane Society Tournament. Congratulations to Nevin and Mahogany Run.

Disabilities Training

All managers are invited to a training session on the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) on Tuesday, March 30, 2010, from 9:00-1:00 pm in the Hotel & Tourism Association Conference Room. The training will provide an overview of best practices in interacting with people with disabilities in respectful and meaningful ways. Specifically, it will address how the ADA is important, compliance, benefits, and misconceptions. The training, led by Sabrina Leonce and Eucil Worrell, HR managers at the Westin St. John, is free to members and \$25 for non-members. To register, contact Canika John at 774-6835, or canika@virgin-islands-hotels.com.

Introducing Intern Blair Lampert



Blair joined the Association as an intern in January 2010. He's currently a senior at the University of the Virgin Islands majoring in marketing. His love for travel and adventure, coupled with his education, makes him perfect for this industry. He's spent time in Mexico working for Dream Works, and in Oregon as a Spanish translator. For fun, Blair enjoys extreme outdoor activities, volleyball, and spending time in Latin America where he likes to immerse himself in the language and culture. "My goal is to utilize my education, language skills, and experience to work in the tourism industry while continuing to enjoy and take advantage of everything the USVI has to offer."

SAVE THE DATE

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| March 13 | Steel Pulse, Reichhold Center for the Arts www.reichholdcenter.com |
| March 24 | Annual Meeting-Guest Speaker: Governor John deJongh
The Ritz Carlton, 12:00 Noon |
| March 26-28 | International Rolex Regatta, St. Thomas Yacht Club, www.styc.net |
| March 27 | Black Violin, Reichhold Center for the Arts, www.reichholdcenter.com |
| April 14-15 | Marine Trade Show, Yacht Haven Grande |
| May 10 | Industry Career Fair, CAHS Gymnasium |
| June 14-18 | Destination Symposium |