

# VIRGIN ISLANDS Life & Style

OUR LIFE - OUR STYLE - OUR ISLANDS MAGAZINE

VOL. 28 August - October 2022

## A BREWERS BAY COURTSHIP

The house that  
**SUNNY  
CARIBBEE BUILT**

A day out on  
**ANEGADA**

## FARM TO TABLE

with Mr. & Mrs. Leando  
and Olita Scatliffe

THE LATENT  
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*Miss BVI  
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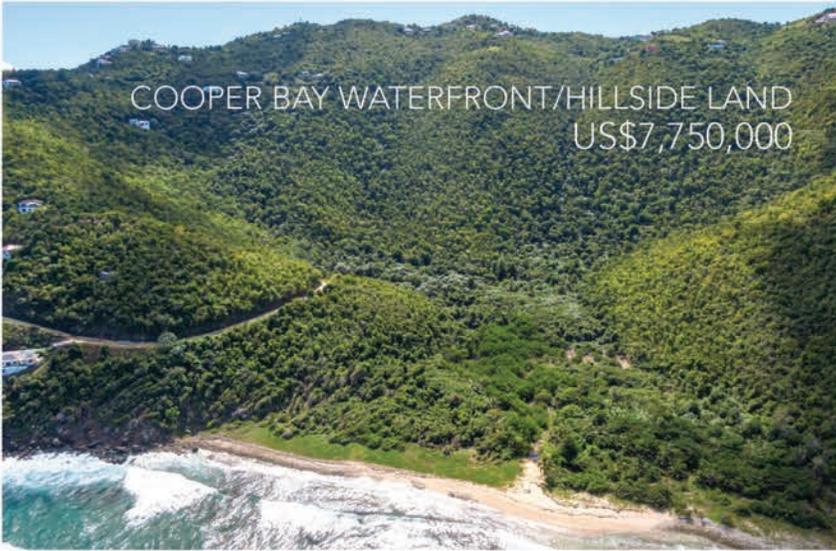


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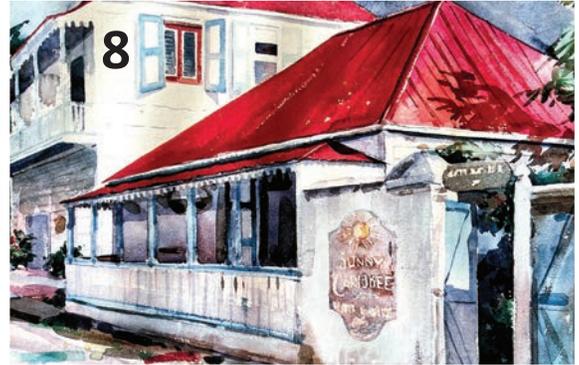


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Miss BVI 2022  
Ms. Jareena Penn

**PHOTOGRAPHER:**  
Jerome Morton



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# THE BIG PICTURE

## UTOPIA

Sailboats in the sunset  
over Jost Van Dyke  
creates the perfect  
canvas paradise

Photographer:  
**Cleave Farrington**





# A Brewers Bay Courtship

## *The Malones now celebrate* **51 years of marriage**

**By Claudia Hodge**

Bell-bottom jeans! Tie-dyed tee shirts! Polyester leisure suits! Peasant blouses! Hot Pants! Halter-tops! Platform Shoes! Patent Leather! Fashion of the 60s and 70s. It was a time before cell phones, WHATSAPP, Facebook, Instagram or any of the other social media platforms and apps that make connecting easier. Igniting the sparks in a relationship involved well thought out plans, dodging stern parents and parental figures and many times sneaking around.

“Will You Marry Me” were words of freedom to many young ladies during that era. Freedom from being under the thumb of their protective parents, freedom from being a mother figure to younger siblings and extended family members and freedom to finally live in their truth.

Small Island courtship in the 60s and 70s was quite different, intentional and simple. A date included events such as hand holding, moonlight strolls on the



beach, beach picnics or mingling at church, social and community events. Notes and messages were often passed along by friends, family members and classmates. Common during that time were notes with questions such as “Do you want to go out with me? Yes or No (circle one)”.

Courtship was often conducted in group-format, as many times one was only allowed to attend events if the other siblings or cousins went along. This meant that she brought her crew and he brought his.

A true power couple in the Virgin Islands, Honorable Vernon E Malone and Icis Malone displayed to the Territory, several years ago the true testament of their love story when they won the First Staged “Not So Newly Wed Game”. Mrs. Malone recalls their courtship to marriage journey.

She first laid eyes on tall, dark and handsome Vernon Malone when he

attended a camp event in Brewers Bay held by the Boys Brigade. Some of the boys from the group visited her mother’s snackette and did not pay for their items. Icis was sent to the camp ground by her dad to report the incident. Vernon assured her he would come by and settle the bill. A man true to his word, he did as he had promised. Icis recalls that when he gave her the outstanding money, he squeezed her hand. A range of emotions overtook her and sent shock waves through her body. Butterflies were flying deep in her stomach.

After several chance meetings and many rides to and from her job at Scotia Bank, it was safe to say the courtship had begun. Vernon made several trips a week from his home in East End to Brewers Bay to visit and spend time with Ms. Malone. On evenings when it rained and the roads were too bad for Vernon to drive back to East End, he slept in his vehicle in Brewers Bay. The courtship included lunch dates to Stone Haven, Beach Club and Scotia Bank Parties. They also attended other social events with her brother and his girlfriend.

One evening Mr. Rhymer, (Icis’ father) told his wife that he would like for her to attend church so that he can have some private time with Icis and Vernon, as he was certain he would visit that evening. Upon Vernon’s arrival, he was asked by Mr. Rhymer what his intentions were with his daughter as he had been coming around for quite some time. That evening he would insist that Vernon write a letter stating his intentions or he wouldn’t be able to continue seeing Icis.

Vernon was nervous, as he didn’t know what to pen in the letter. He asked Icis what he should write and she told him to ask his mother. Uncertain of what was expected of him, Vernon, before he left that night, announced that it would very well be the last night she ever saw him again as her boyfriend. He was a respectful Constable and felt insulted by Mr. Rhymer’s request. What else can Mr. Rhymer want?

Vernon kept true to his word for about a week. He did not make contact with Icis. There were no ride home, no visits,

no calls...nothing. She was hurt and devastated! Was it over? Did her dad drive Vernon away?

One Wednesday afternoon as she exited the bank on her way home, Vernon was waiting in his car and was eager to declare his feelings. He handed her the letter he had written. Anxious but excited, she read the letter.

“Dear Mr. Rhymer, I seek your permission to court your daughter Icis. I love her and one day I would like to make her my wedded wife.”

Icis heart smiled. She did not lose him. He loved her, as she loved him. Vernon nervously delivered the letter to Mr. Rhymer that evening and prayed that he would be pleased. It was his promise! His proposal! Mr. Rhymer took the letter and opened it in anticipation. As he read the letter, he beamed with pride and joy. His head shook in agreement. He had received the security he needed. His baby girl Icis would be married one day. After about two years of courting, on 3rd April 1971, Vernon Malone wedded Icis Rhymer.

The Malones have now celebrated 51 years of marriage. Over the years they have had many high, many lows and built successful businesses and illustrious careers in the Territory. Mr. Malone retired from the Public Service after over 50 years of service. He was a past member of the House of Assembly and the first local Commissioner of Police. A few years ago, Mrs. Malone retired from Scotia Bank, after 45 years of service.

The Malones have enjoyed each other’s company, travelled together and built a life filled with love, friendship, mutual respect for each other, laughter and peace in Brewers Bay, with their son Malcolm. Their love stood the test of time.

Mrs. Malone continues to live by these words

“Despite the many challenges of life, I smile. With the mercies of God, I have learned to love and respect my soulmate. I have forgiven the mistakes and hurt of the past. The past has no place in the present or the future.”



# THE HOUSE THAT Sunny Caribbee BUILT

There is a little house, a well-known house, in the British Virgin Islands. It is white with a red corrugated roof. The sun is always sitting on its shoulder, shining with a singular palm tree gazing in the background. The surrounding gardens are always green, and the blue shutter door is always open. Dancing through the air from the house is an aroma that is quintessentially Caribbean – spices, sauces, soaps and scents, roasted coffees, and fruity teas.

**By Annie McPhail**

**T**he house is known as Sunny Caribbee and although it is no longer in its original building on Main Street, the company itself has just seen a rebirth. The iconic BVI brand, the new factory and the age-old secret recipes are back on the shelves.

The tale began over three decades ago in the late 70s. Bill and Susan Gunter had first ditched the cold of the United States and headed southwards to the Caribbean for a holiday. The diverse islands' culture, food, music, arts and craft, and natural beauty enticed them to restyle their lives and engage life in the Tropics. In 1979, the couple carefully weighed the merits of various islands from Jamaica to Grenada, and after some soul-searching, they choose Tortola as their new home.

The pair was determined not to sit on the beach drinking rum every day. Instead, the couple stockpiled their thoughts to resolve what would fulfil their expectations and ideals of life on a tropical island. After settling in, the next year was a whirlwind of activity in the creation of a spice company. This involved mixing, blending, printing, designing, travelling, meeting, and working with hundreds of people learning and listening to create the brand and the line of products that were to become Sunny

Caribbee Herb and Spice Company.

Their home became the experimental station for several island-inspired concoctions and a production centre for Spickee Catsup, Rum Peppers, and Pure Vanilla. Naturally, there were some casualties along the way and burnt tongues were the dominant ones as they were constantly tasting a combination of spices. Not only was patience a virtue but it was a necessity.

After an exhausting yet fascinating year of preparation, they opened the doors to Sunny Caribbee in November 1983 in Raffie Stoutt's Building by the roundabout in Road Town with a staff of 3.5 (Bob, Susan, their son Greg, and a part-time help of their beloved housekeeper). The challenging first year of operation was a trial in living as well as working. In their mini-quarters, everything happened: mixing, packing, storing, buying, selling, and bookkeeping. A little success inspired them to continually add to the repertoire of products and to grow the staff.

Suddenly, they were bursting at the seams at Raffie. The search for a new location commenced and it was concluded with a move in 1986 to H.R Penn's 'Social Inn', the first guest house in Tortola. In an archetypal West Indian-styled building – the red corrugated hip roof, and the blue



shutter doors – they remained happily ensconced in their miniature ‘Spice Factory’ on Main Street. Until September 2017 when life in the BVI changed forever.

Hurricane Irma, the largest storm ever recorded to make landfall at the time, devastated these islands and affected every person and disrupted everything in its path. Lessons were learnt, lives were lost, and recovery was painstakingly slow. For many, it took years to get back on their feet, let alone back up on the horse and start riding.

Business was not business as usual, and many companies relocated and relocated again...and again...to wherever there was a dry roof overhead as the country rebuilt. Sunny Caribbee was one of the majority of businesses that were displaced with no business to speak of as the entire region was virtually closed to tourism for one full season and then into the next. And just when things were starting to gain speed, tourists were coming back, the clean-up was well on its way, and a second punch: COVID-19. And again, the effects on business and tourism in these islands.... well, need we say more?

But, in the words of Annie MacPhail, the new owner of the Sunny Caribbee, "You can't keep a good brand down."

And so, with the exceptional hard work and determination of the third generation of Gunters, Jocelyn has opened a new factory, recruited some of the former employees and is now operational in the Eastern End of Tortola. All Sunny Caribbee products are available at Nutmeg & Co. on Waterfront Drive, across from the ferry parking lot.





# Outdoor Adventure

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LET'S TAKE A TOUR OF OUR ISLANDS

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# A DAY OUT ON Anegada

By Patricia Hodge

The British Virgin Islands is quickly becoming the place to be for the average tourist. Since the passage of Hurricane Irma, the average BVIlander is also taking the time to visit the islands and enjoy what they have to offer. Nonetheless, there are several things that are understated on these islands. Whilst Anegada is known for its serenity and quiet solitude, if you have a mind to, there is a wide variety of activities for the outdoor adventurer.

You might have visited the island for the annual Lobster Fest, but if you are an avid naturalist, a trek around Anegada would be a treat. Make sure to take plenty of water - you won't be climbing much, but the flat sandy roads can be challenging! Load up on sunscreen and wear your adventure hat and favorite walking shoes when going ashore as the sun can be harsh and one needs to stay hydrated. Bring your binoculars and camera as well for the beauty you are about to behold.

Basically there are two ferries that offer regular ferry service between Road Town, Tortola and Setting Point, Anegada on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Tortola Fast Ferry (aka Smith's Ferry) leaves Road Town at 7:00 a.m. while Road Town Fast Ferry (aka Bobby Boat) leaves at 6:45 am. Each boat is scheduled to return to Tortola at 5:00 p.m. daily. Boat fare is \$50.00 round trip. Your outdoor adventure is give or take five miles from Setting Point to the Settlement. Remember there is nowhere to stop along the way for bathroom breaks until you get to the Settlement so prepare your bladder as well for the trek.

As you exit the Setting Point area, you travel east for 10mins until you arrive at the Flamingo Viewing Point. The telescope mounted on the observation deck offers a great spot to have a look from a distance at these beautiful shy birds. Interestingly, Flamingo Pond is the largest of the four salt ponds occupying approximately one quarter of Anegada's total land mass. Don't take the brackish water for granted, imagine that the life's blood of the conch and lobsters you enjoy rest on the health of this body of water and the other three ponds. Besides the flamingoes there are an array of other exotic birds, including sandpipers, ospreys, terns, kaloo birds, blue herons, and the frigate birds. See how many species you can recognize. From here you can also clearly see the islands of Virgin Gorda and Tortola in the distance.

If you decide to continue, you will meet Nutmeg Point. Here, you may also see a

Flamingos on anegada



growing flock of Roseate Pink Flamingos gathering. Continuing your walk going east, you should get to the S. Vanessa Faulkner Botanical Gardens, where the newly erected Anegada sign is. Get your camera out and pose. Be sure and get your pics, these are must haves for your Instagram and Facebook page.

Two options when you get to the gardens, You may either stay to the left which will take

you up towards the airport and Loblolly Bay Beach; but your trail continues on the main road. Going straight past the garden, you are going to pass another lookout on the right-hand side which is the conch shell mound look out. Pause for a moment, go upstairs, and view the mound through the telescope mounted there. History has it that these conch shell "graveyards" attest to the presence of

aboriginal people and their philosophy when sustaining the coveted food source. This practice lives on and conchs remain plentiful in Anegada. The "artificial" conch reefs also act as a nursery for stingrays, nurse sharks, and other sea life.

Descend the lookout and keep walking till you reach the Settlement, (main village of Anegada). You will pass the power station.

- 1, 2, & 3 S. FLAUKNER BOTANICAL GARDEN
- 4 ROCK IGUANA
- 5 THEODORE FLAUKNER HOUSE
- 6 FISHERMAN'S WHARF
- 7 CONCH SHELL ISLAND
- 8 GETTING AROUND
- 9 LOOK OUT FOR COWS AND GOATS

7



6



8



9

On the right-hand side of the road is a white building (the Theodore Faulkner Museum). The late Theodore Faulkner could be regarded as the 'Father of Modern Politics' in the V.I. In historical perspective, the Demonstration on 1949 and the Election which followed in 1950 were crucial to the history and the development of the Virgin Islands<sup>1</sup>. Many of the artifacts there were donated by his extended family. The museum is open in the mornings at 10:00 a.m. and closes at 2:00 pm daily. Stop by and browse if so inclined.

On the other side of the road is the Anegada Rock Iguana Restoration Facility. It was established in 1997 and comprise 0.38 acres. The NPT, with help from several partners, completed the construction of the Facility' which is a series of 6 enclosures,

in which there are currently 15 juvenile Iguanas. The island of Anegada supports the last remaining population of the critically endangered Anegada Rock Iguana, whose numbers have been reduced to approximately less than 200 individuals in the wild. Here juvenile iguanas are nurtured to give them a 'head start' before being released back in the wild when they are of a size where they are no longer vulnerable to feral cats. Therefore, it is important that they are handled as little as possible by humans. Outside the gate there is information posted about the Iguanas; so you can read up on the program. Alternatively Call Kelly Bradley or Lionel Smith and let them know when you are coming to Anegada so that they can answer any questions you may have and give you a tour.

Continue to the Fisherman's Wharf (also in the Settlement). This is where the fishermen come in, off-load, and clean their catch for the day. This is as real as island life gets, a chance to converse with the locals and learn about the nitty gritty of the island. There is also a little kiosk constructed by the BVI Tourist Board that contains pictures and information and decorated with local conch shells. Peruse these at your leisure. Take your time and enjoy the fresh sea breeze.

Remember to organize transportation to take you to one of the exquisite restaurants to refuel and one of our lovely beaches to recuperate after your long walk and then of course a taxi to take you back to the dock at the end of your day.

A nice start to getting to know the Anegada that the Anegadians know and love.



THE LATENT  
POWER OF THE  
*Miss BVI*  
*Crown*

Photo by Jerome Morton

Since the emancipation of slavery, the British Virgin Islands has shared significant moments in history during the first August Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of each year. For years, the fete on the field provided various entertainment for the populace. However, the coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in 1953 was one of the factors that influenced the beginning of Festival in the Virgin Islands.

**D**uring the first August Festival held in Road Town in 1954, the Festival Committee with all pomp and circumstance, decided to have a festival queen. The festival queen was selected and crowned based on selling the highest votes or tickets and Miss Ivy Chinnery of Jost Van Dyke became the first official queen of the BVI. 68 Years of Pageantry is now in our blood and during that time we have had a sleuth of pageants which are listed: Miss Valentine, Mother and Daughter, Miss Hal Jackson Talented Teen, Miss Teen BVI, Mr. G.Q, Ms. Earth BVI, Ms. Gorgeous, Mrs. BVI, Miss World BVI, Miss Universe BVI, Mr. and Miss Fifth Form, Mr. and Miss HLSCC, Mr. and Miss Junior BVI, Prince and Princess, Miss Easter Festival, Miss East End/Long Look and Miss BVI.

Of all of these pageants, the Miss BVI is the cream of the crop of pageants- the official ambassador, being under the auspices of the Virgin Islands Festivals and Fairs Committee, which is subsidized by the Government.

Leadership for the festival started with the Anglican and Methodist Churches who would take turns to orchestrate the events. Another set of volunteers, the Jaycees and the Festival Committee 1975 Limited also assisted before it was formally turned over to the Virgin Islands Festivals and Fairs Committee. Back in 1966, when the Jaycees were in charge, the criteria in which to select the festival queen was changed to include judging by 3 impartial judges. The categories included 1) beauty, charm and personality; 2) Demonstration of talent; and 3) simple quiz of three questions pertaining to history or geography of the BVI. This procedure is still in use today, with a few variations in the categories. As the years progressed and under the influence of other regional and international pageants, in 1975, the title of Festival Queen was changed to Miss BVI; with Miss Irene Penn winning the coveted title.

In 1998, under the guidance of Mrs. Eileene Parsons, the then Minister of Education and Culture, festival was brought under the Government proper and the name of the committee was changed to Virgin Islands Festivals and Fairs Committee, which is still in effect today.

As Pageantry evolved, we saw history being made. Bria Smith served



Photo by Jerome Morton

**Miss Jareena Penn, first runner up for the 2021 Miss BVI Pageant was coronated as the 2022 Miss BVI. Last year Ms. Penn started a foundation called YANA (You Are Not Alone) a foundation that will bring awareness to sexual assault. YANA main goal is make sure people are educated about sexual assault so that such intolerable behaviour doesn't continue to happen in our society.**

**During her reign as 1st runner up she partnered with different agencies to ensure these things are being looked at and new approaches are implemented to make sure that sexual assault do not happen in the BVI. As Miss. BVI 2022 Ms. Penn pledges her intentions to continue developing the goals of YANA.**

from 2019 to 2020; and 2020 to 2021 because of the several lockdown of the country due to COVID-19. For 2022, there were only coronations for the Miss BVI and Mr. and Miss Junior BVI due to time and financial constraints. Miss Jareena Penn, first runner up for the 2021 Miss BVI Pageant was coronated as the 2022 Miss BVI. This was not the first coronation of Miss BVI however; as in 2018, Ms. A'Yana K. Phillips, one of 2017's first runner-ups was the first coronated queen.

Brin, one of the former committee chairs has hailed the pageant as "the core of our Festival Celebration. The pageant is our pride, heritage and part of the fabric of BVI culture; one of our most prestigious events that must at all times be preserved as it is our legacy," She has explained that the pageant is one of the many avenues to instill this sense of pride



A parade of queens: former Miss BVIs from the 1950s to the 2000s

in our young women.<sup>1</sup> Hodge-Smith, Current Advisor of the Miss BVI Committee concurs and expressed that “the Miss BVI pageant is a significant part of our history and must be carried on for generations to come.

The Miss BVI Pageant has given significant status to women within our community and they are now seen in all facets of business at various levels in our society; not just our Queens, but every participant who ever vied for that coveted title.

The emancipation festival celebrations is hailed as a tourism product and is very meaningful. It is held during our slow tourism period as November to May is our regular tourism months. We are in fierce competition with other countries in the region that are having festival at the same time and we get a chance to share an extraordinary gift, the culture of these islands.

Other ambassadors include our well esteemed group of athletes who has put us on the world stage. When these athletes compete, persons around the world who didn’t know that the British Virgin Islands existed now speak with familiarity of our sport

heroes. These athletes are now getting well deserved press time for their commitment and discipline to their craft. There is an ongoing debate and a call out by former athletes and sports reporters on the Government as to how serious they are about our athletes. Shouldn’t there also be a call out to the Government and the Community at large, as to how serious we are about raising a Miss BVI from the ashes of the local Miss BVI Platform that can travel and represent the territory regionally and internationally? The Miss BVI is also an ambassador; just like we recognize our athletes for their ambassadorial roles. According to the Meriam Webster Dictionary, an ambassador is 1.) a diplomatic agent of the highest rank accredited to a foreign government or sovereign as the resident representative of his or her own government or sovereign or appointed for a special and often temporary diplomatic assignment; 2.) an authorized representative or messenger or 3.) Unofficial representative traveling abroad as ambassadors of goodwill. All eyes are clued to the television, when a young lady is chosen to represent the BVI in these pageants, here

she is standing amongst some of the most educated, talented women in the world. She must not only be able to speak about her goals and aspirations, she is expected to perform and paint a picture of the BVI that will open our borders to numerous visitors from around the world. Her knowledge of our culture and the dreams and aspirations of the people must be communicated eloquently.

So what is the Miss BVI brand? When our ladies are on the world stage, what does it say about the people of the BVI? Can we ponder exactly what our investment should be for this type of tourism to ensure that our participation is not just so that people realize there is actually a place called the BVI and it is located in the Caribbean, but that it has the potential to raise that caliber of women from amongst its small population?

The festival budget is one that is heavily scrutinized, as it is one pot that has to be shared between several activities, the Miss BVI show being one of them. The cost to organize a successful pageant is approximately \$50,000 to \$80,000.<sup>3</sup> Money, is a necessity in pageantry and even the employment of a coach and

wardrobe selection bears this out. Because of the extensive amount of hours of preparation required, these coaching fees quickly add up and one only need to take a look at the display of beautiful gowns in the evening wear segment to begin to realize it is an investment. Let's not forget that all the other segments are tied to wardrobe finance as well. The cultural costume carries 90 points; the BVI Promotion Segment also 90 points; Talent category 100 points; and the Personal Interview and Professional Attire 150 points. The Question and Answer Segment while not focusing on attire, carries 90 points, but of course you must be immaculate. The application packet for Miss BVI is very clear that the contestant must dress attractively at all times.

Thankfully a lot of ladies who actually reach the stage has had this aspiration from a young age and so throughout their teenage years would also have garnered some of the other attributes required. The mental acumen as contestants are put to the test through the committed practices required; even the task of learning to walk in back-breaking stilettos. It cannot be understated that this young lady's whole upbringing would need to include an exercise regime and diet plan. Those of us on the health trail, knows that the budget of a wholesome plate most families cannot afford, and we always figure that growing children just need to have their bellies full. Thankfully, the swimwear segment outside of the introduction carries the lowest marks; i.e. 50 points. It takes will power and motivation for our young contenders to remain focused.<sup>4</sup>

There has been visits to schools for the purpose of educating young women on the Miss BVI Committee's mission to evolve their sense of pride, beauty, and culture. Though these girls would not be of age, it was thought important to get them thinking about these types of opportunities that give them a chance to work on building their confidence, being empowered, and learning about social responsibilities.

Sacrifices become an everyday occurrence as Miss BVI contestants begin their preparation. We have mentioned membership in their chosen gym, but there are also etiquette classes and speech sessions with the Tortola Toastmasters Club. Their ambassadorial role is expounded on by the committee while working with each contestant to bring them closer to self-actualization. Preparations



also include keeping abreast of the news, mock interviews, and sometimes late nights especially if the contestant is from one of the sister islands.<sup>5</sup> How can we ensure continuity so that plans made the Virgin Islands Festivals and Fairs Committee can come to fruition? How do we ensure adequate funding and support for these ambassadors?

Marketing of any tourism product is key. The pages that advertise the Miss BVI show as part of our emancipation celebrations should be constant with information that brings people repeatedly to the page not just during the months before the show. The BVI is currently challenged with teenage pregnancies, female delinquencies, with the numbers on the rise of drug offenders and motor cycle victims. Pageantry is at its liveliest when festival is approaching. Even when the Queen is asked to come and cut a ribbon or draw a raffle ticket, the opportunity must be used to further her and the Miss BVI Committee's platforms so that the little girl eating her snow cone may pause and say "I want to be just like her when I grow up". The former queens and

other contestants will tell you how much the experience has changed their lives, but these conversations are few and in between. Most times, the platforms that are chosen even by the reigning queen does not get adequate support by the community. International reach with respect to that platform should be sought and there should be some tangible gain before that reign is over, or we are just playing lip service to this tourism product. With the increase in personal sacrifice that is required, as a country we should take good care of our title holders as we do our athletes. The educational scholarship and car should always be a part of the prize. The car should even carry the logo of the Miss BVI Committee so even as it passes a young girl on the street she sees the possibility of being an ambassador, of becoming a tourism product for her country. Social obligations locally and internationally should be welcomed and practiced so that persons understand we take this role seriously. There is a lot of power in this crown if it is truly marketed and invested in.

# *Island Life*

OUR LIFE, OUR STYLE, OUR ISLANDS

# WHALE STRANDING IN ANEGADA

Words and Photo by Rondel Smith Jr.

As most millennials typically do, I woke up on July 1, 2022, turned on my phone and got ready to catch up on the news via social media. My curiosity was peaked as I came across a video of what seemed to be a pod of Short-finned Pilot whales (*Globicephala Macrorhynchus*) navigating through the turquoise shallow waters off the coast of Anegada on their sojourn through the Puerto Rico Trench.

“An unusual scenario,” I pondered. I vaguely recalled these species of whales were supposedly strictly pelagic species. I scan through my brain for the remaining knowledge I had of these Pilot whales and consulted Google as this occurrence seemed strange. These species are known to grow 13-15 feet in length and have a thick round head; their flippers are short and slender, and the colour is somewhere between dark brown and gray black with light gray or white patches.

The whales are known to frequent the



tropical region, such as the BVI from December to May for their annual mating and breeding season. Pod sizes varies but usually contain 15-45 whales. As Google reliably informed me, these whales – unlike the bottle nose dolphins and other whales – are not very acrobatic and communicate through clicks (often loud enough to stun their prey).<sup>1</sup>

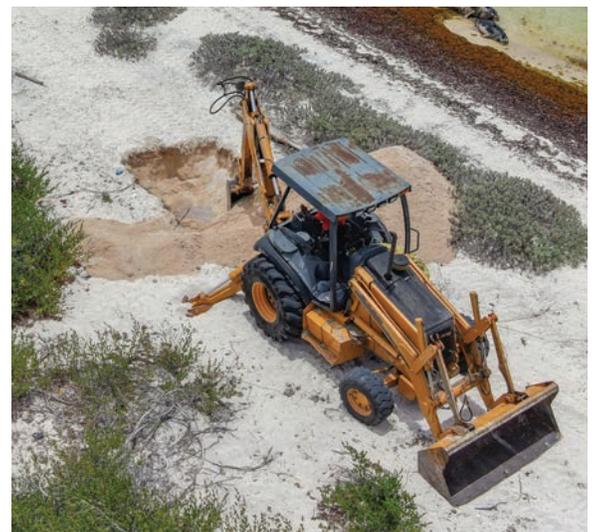
“Today was going to be an interesting day,” I whispered to myself.

Being a local fisher and having spent an envied amount of time at sea, I have never had the opportunity to encounter these majestic

marine mammals. So, understandably, I was eager to see them for myself.

On the morning of July 2 2022, my father, another adult, and I, departed the fisherman’s wharf on a small Boston whaler and made our way towards the eastern end of Anegada where, rumours had it, the whales were still located. Within five minutes of arriving, we noticed a large black mass against one of the smaller conch middens south of the island. As we got closer, the figure gradually began to take on a familiar appearance. Once we got even closer, the worst was confirmed.

Before arriving at the end of the island, we counted an additional six sparsely situated whales, all of whom had succumbed to a strange and unforgiving environment. I thought that we had passed the worst of it – that is until we finally reached the eastern end. The area unveiled the brunt of a massacre. A concentrated group of 23 dead whales along with several others were scattered along the east coast. All of them embellished with scrapes and scars which indicated a frantic struggle to navigate their way over the barrier reef.



With a heavy heart, I deployed my drone and then utilized my handheld camera to document what was my first time witnessing these beautiful creatures in person. It was a confusing feeling as my emotions were all over the place. However, my eyes gazed over to a sight that cemented my grief. There was a deceased mother whale alongside her premature calf that most likely had been dispelled because of the immense stress she had undergone. We counted 46 corpses that morning.

The days that followed consisted of news sites and social media pages advertising

blood-stained beaches and shark infested waters and hence the local fishermen and tour operators were advised to temporarily hold off on making their living until the corpses could be rid of to ensure everyone stayed safe. The entire weekend had passed before action could be taken as the officials and experts could only then make their way over to Anegada on the Monday morning ferry to assess and determine the best course of action in discarding the corpses.

Tour Guide operators, local fisherman and members of a local NGO "Beyond the Reef", all came together and agreed on a set course of

action that would be taken. Other volunteers and community minded group working closely with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour included the BVI Rotary family, BVI Gin and Nanny Cay Chandlery.

Afterwards, specialists from the Association of Reef Keepers (ARK) collected samples from the whales, we were given the green light to initiate the whale removal process. Several local fishermen came with their vessels and removed the whale corpses that were still in the water. The smaller vessels, that could maneuver through the shallow waters, dragged the corpses to the larger vessels.



I was tasked with tethering the animals by their tails, cutting a piece of rope to length, and then tying tailor-made nooses matching the whale's size ensuring each knot kept their embrace during their departure back to the open ocean. Being wary we were operating in shark-infested waters, we proceeded until daylight became scarce.

With the whales stranded in the shallow waters addressed, the next day it was time to do something about the bodies that washed up on the beach. They were far too decomposed and fragile to be dragged out to sea because the bodies were exposed for too long in the tropical heat. Consequently, the whales were buried. That morning, a backhoe had made its way along the coast to the scene and each whale was placed into a cavity in the earth and laid to rest. From my estimation, upwards of 50 out of a pod of approximately 100 whales faced their demise in a place many people call paradise. Although the whales were out of sight, they were not out of mind.

There have been several theories floating around regarding the cause of the stranding. Frequently, whales get stuck on the beach because of low tide. Others strand because of disorientation, parasitic infestation of the inner ear, or military sonar testing that cause the inner ear to bleed and or confusion of sonar signals in shallow waters.

Questions and assumptions ran rampant, "What caused it?", "Sonar?" "Climate Change?", but the answers remain untold. What we do know is that Pilot Whales reside in our waters and are occasionally spotted offshore. What we also know is that Anegada

has seen a Pilot Whale stranding before in the 1990's and strangely enough, on that same coast.

The latter half of 1999 the BVI authorities reported the stranding of at least five pilot whales there. A few weeks later, four whales were stranded in the US Virgin Islands. Usually when a whale cries out for help, they cry out to their pods; but if they are other whales in the area and they hear it, they would then come and try to provide assistance.<sup>2</sup>

As a community we must engage in assisting the National Parks Trust and the corresponding Ministry by making a conscious effort to report sightings. The whale watching guidelines is important information as the BVI is a breeding ground and the young calves and mothers are particularly sensitive to disturbance.

**Further, the BVI is considered the sailing capital of the world so it is crucial that sailing vessels observe the following restrictions:**

- 1.** Boats should not approach nearer than 100yds of a whale. This also applies to swimmers and divers who should not get into the water with whales. It is extremely important to avoid physical contact with them.
- 2.** If whales approach nearer than 100 yards of the vessel, the engine of the craft should be put in neutral until the whales are observed at the surface clear of the vessel, to avoid risk of injury or damage to the vessel.
- 3.** Avoid speeds of 10 knots or sudden changes in speed or direction within 1500ft of a whale; do not travel faster than the slowest whale when paralleling or following them to

avoid startling them or causing them to panic. The boat must never come between a mother and calf as this could reduce the calf's chance of survival.

**4.** In all cases, the normal behaviour and movement of all whales should not be jeopardised.

Meanwhile, Marine Biologist Argel Horton from the Ministry of Natural Resources explained that the samples taken by the Association of Reef Keepers will be utilized for necropsies which will hopefully give us some insight into what caused the tragedy. She mentioned that from the genetic samples collected, we would be able to learn more about the deep-water mammals that do not often venture into shallow waters. She added the Ministry will also be able to determine the gender, stomach content, age and so much more.

Moving forward, the Ministry will be organizing a local stranding network, working alongside our local NGO partners for clear and concise communication which will result in quicker mobilization of all members involved. Now, how do we report a stranding to possibly minimize this reoccurrence? Well, by keeping our eyes open and reporting when we see any unusual activities within these beautiful waters.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour continues to administer the natural resources of the Territory in a manner that ensures long term sustainability and can be contacted via telephone at 468-2147 during regular hours of operation or at 468-9678 outside of regular business hours. The Ministry can also be contacted via email at [nrl@gov.vg](mailto:nrl@gov.vg).<sup>4</sup>

It is important to state the exact location and direction to the strand site; description of the animals; number of animals involved; date and time of your observations; and condition of the animals, (alive, dead, or injured). Let us work together to keep our communities safe for humans and all the other animals that make up an important part of our daily environment. The public is once again urged to notify the Ministry of all marine mammals that passes through the area. Be vigilant and let's help the Ministry by being their eyes and ears.

**Credit**

- 1 Conservation and Fisheries, Government of the BVI.
- 2 <https://st.croixsource.com/2000/05/05are-misless-firings-whale-stranding-linked/>
- 3 [www.mygrenada.org/info.htm/whale\\_ukvirgin.htm](http://www.mygrenada.org/info.htm/whale_ukvirgin.htm)
- 4 <https://bvi.gov.vg/media-centre/stranded-whale-removal-process-anegada-ongoing>



By Patricia Hodge

# CAHSS

## SECRETARIAL SERVICES

The BVI has been fortunate and splitting at the seams with Young Entrepreneurs spreading their wings and making a mark in the BVI Economy. Today, we had a sit down with Chelsea Hodge, owner of CAHSS

**L&S: What does CAHSS stand for?**

**CH:** It's an acronym of my name - Chelsea Anneka Hodge's Secretarial Services and was founded in 2020.

**L&S: You have been operating a business from very young, what were the other businesses that you operated?**

**CH:** I would say vending. As a child I sold candies and had my mom make different stews which I sold to my classmates.

**L&S: Where did you begin your work experience and what gave you the drive to open your business?**

**CH:** I interned at Charlie's Restaurant, Tortola, Scrub Island Resort Tortola, and Disney World Florida before and after completion of my studies at Hotel PomMarine, Barbados, 2016. I joined the Guana Island Hotel team in January 2017 and in 2021, joined the Moorings Ltd. BVI Team. Throughout my career at The Guana Island Hotel as a Guest Coordinator I was heavily relied on for administrative assistance to the managers, compiling reports and editing spreadsheets. In my new role at The Moorings Ltd. as HR Advisor again I am heavily involved in the maintenance of employee files and undertake many administrative tasks, - typing letters, memos, and submitting paperwork to the different government offices. I love what I do so much that it has become second

nature to me. My bosses always make quirky comments like 'Sometimes Chels I think I would not have made it through this day without you'. These comments have always encouraged me to work hard and to maintain my work ethics and standards and I figured that I should truly pursue my business as I had not too long applied for the trade license.

**L&S: What are your current services?**

**CH:** My services include managing diaries and work calendars while organizing meetings and appointments for my clients, organizing events and conferences, preparing letter, reports, presentations, and correspondence for their business activities, mentoring/providing guidance, and advice on how best to conduct business and comply with government policies and much more.

I believe in business structure, effective communication, setting standards and creating connections that drive actions/success. I enjoy conducting secretarial work and have the desire to offer my level of expertise in this field to those small business owners who need assistance in this area.

**L&S: Where did your current clients originate?**

**CH:** Many of my clients are college students and persons who are usually transitioning from one job to the next. They found me through my Facebook and Instagram accounts @CAHSecServices or was recommended to



Chelsea Hodge

me by personal friends and family who knew of my business, and I am very grateful for those persons and my clients for trusting in me to deliver.

**L&S: You have a Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality with Johnson and Wales, USA is this a 360 degree turn in focus with regard to your future career goals with respect to Human Resources Management?**

**CH:** Hospitality and Tourism has my heart. Everyone works in hospitality but not everyone is hospitable and that is something that I believe comes very naturally to me. I have dipped my toe into the field of Human Resources Management due to my desire to understand all aspects of running the Bed and Breakfast I intend to own within the BVI one day. I believe that understanding how to keep my employees happy, through their professional and courteous interactions with the customers is the first step to doing so, which in turn keeps me happy. I have a very vibrant and infectious personality that make it very easy to work with

each of my clients regardless of where they are in their journey to self-enlightenment. They all have different needs which makes my job fun with every interaction. Understanding people through my development in HR and Hospitality Management makes it so easy to love what I do as a Virtual Assistant.

**L&S: Hospitality is all about people and so is Human Resources Management is there a particular demographic you are targeting?**

**CH:** I am hoping to work closely with professionals now entering the work force as well as those now exiting. Both need support transitioning as they step into unfamiliar territory. Processes have now become so technologically advanced that those leaving the work force are uncertain how to stay current and similarly new entrants are expected to use their college education to lead them which will be challenging, understanding the difference in dynamics of what was learnt in school versus the reality of a new job.

**L&S: What were some of the needs of the past and current clients and how do you think this interaction has helped them and you to grow simultaneously?**

**CH:** I find that many of my clients, (new entrants and retirees) request guidance on how they should present themselves on paper whether its applying for ID's, registering for status or licenses, or creating résumé and portfolios to be shared with others. I find myself conducting a lot of research which increases my knowledge base. Clients also find it easier to be walked through a task or have it simply done for them rather than them having to do it on their own.

**L&S: What makes your services unique?**

**CH:** Funnily enough, my unique personality is what makes my business genuine; for my services provide you with a product that you didn't have moments before

**L&S: where do you see yourself 5 years from now?**

**CH:** Five years from now I see myself still running CAHs with the help of a few additional employees, but I also intend to open my Bed

Breakfast within this timeframe as well.

**L&S: You are currently working with a major private company how do you balance the workload for these two entities which seem very time consuming?**

**CH:** Working a second job can be exhausting even when managed well. What I have decided to do is take things in strides so even as I gain more clients, my routine will become easier for me to ensure that I don't suffer burnt out by the end of my workday. I have a daily calendar board that I use to visualize my task list whether it entails working with clients or organizing details that helps me with proper managing or marketing of my business. I aim to list 4 general tasks under each day and take a day off naturally as I would from my full-time job.

**L&S: Understanding the challenges in dealing with people, what facet of your character would you say helps you to empathize with the client and get the best for them?**

**CH:** My level of flexibility, willing nature, poise, and generally pleasant disposition are many of the encouraging statements I have received from my clients along with the notion that I am very patient and understanding.

**L&S: What are the challenges encountered in running this type of business?**

**CH:** When I first started, it was a bit challenging to get persons comfortable with the idea of trusting me with their personal details for virtual assistance. Offering the services that I do would usually require me to correct or edit someone's work which is not always taken lightly. Also, persons were quite skeptical about paying for a service that they could do themselves or could get a friend to do. On July 29th I ran a free promotion to offer my services in revamping resumes, coaching in preparation for interviews and assisting with general job hunting and obtained 30 clients some of whom are repeat customers. When you build trust, it is easy to gain traction.

**L&S: Is your business just local**

**or do you have any other partners?**

**CH:** Majority of my business is conducted in the BVI but I have partnered with my good friend that I studied with at Hotel PomMarine, Barbados. Tammesha Griffith is the owner of Flawlessly Detailed a graphic design virtually operated business in Barbados WI which we have developed in 2021. Tammy does many of my graphic posters and I edit any notices or policies that she posts for her business. You can find her on Instagram @Flwlesslydetailed.

**L&S: What has been your greatest achievement thus far?**

**CH:** My greatest achievement I would say would be my ability to successfully run my first seminar entitled – Turning the page, which took place in October 28th, 2021, where I facilitated approximately 20 guest and had 5 guest speakers. My guest speakers included Patricia Hodge (Administrator), Cecil Hodge (Educator), Stacy Mather (Mentor), Rico Garcia (Mentor), and Mrs. Keshia Davis-Barnes (Professional Extraordinaire) who spoke on the importance of understanding your worth and what it means to be moral and ethically in touch with society.

**L&S: If anyone is interested in these services, how can you be contacted?**

**CH:** My business card shows all the means and ways of which you can contact me, you can also find me on Instagram and Facebook @CAHSec Services

**L&S: What would you say to the next entrepreneur wanting to enter this type of business as to the lessons learnt and to encourage them to not give up but to continue to strive to make an impact within the business sector of the British Virgin Islands?**

**CH:** I would say that Independence is best felt when experienced. No point in talking about the dreams that you have that will not become a reality without your ability to action it. Every big idea started small. As my cousin, the Owner of REMAX Best Properties Tortola BVI says in his new book 'Start Where You Are'!

# RESILIENCE IN FACE OF DISASTER

## BVI – A Hurricane Tested Territory

Many people have wondered how a place with approximately 33,000 people living in a total area of 153 km<sup>2</sup> (59 square miles) and the highest elevation being 1,709 ft., manage to face numerous natural disasters and not only survive but recover and thrive. Well, simply put, the answer is in the resolve of the people.

**F**or those who do not know, the British Virgin Islands – BVI for short – is made up of four main islands [Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Anegada and Jost Van Dyke] and about fifty outer smaller islands and cays. Over the years, the small territory – part of the Virgin Islands archipelago – has been in a fight for its life and survival by storms of every magnitude.

The British Virgin Islands is still on the road to recovery from the devastation that was caused by Hurricane Irma – the most intense hurricane ever recorded during the Atlantic Hurricane Season. When the residents would have thought that was all, along came Hurricane Maria some two weeks later, another Category Five Hurricane. However, rumor has it that some 93 years prior, another Hurricane had also left its devastating fingerprints on the entire Virgin Islands.

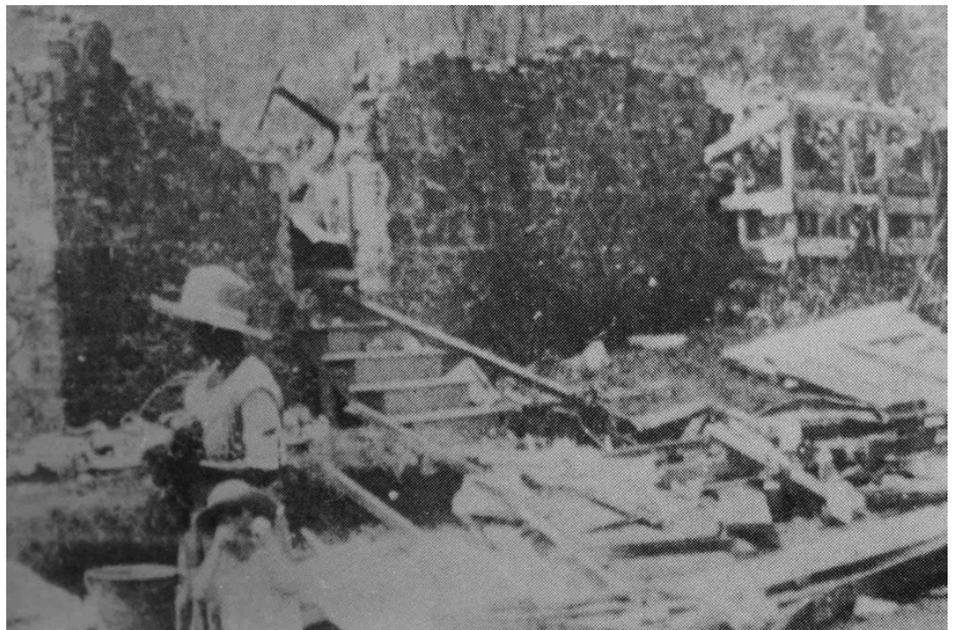
### THE 1924 HURRICANE

Based on historical reports, the 1924 hurricane was brewing in the wee hours of the morning. According to firsthand reporting by Agnes Hancock, (a worker at the Governor's

Residence at the time) around 2:00 a.m., the winds had picked up, but people were able to attend work later that morning.

However, around 3:00 p.m. that afternoon, the sea became boisterous and like a pot of soup on the fire, the waves were crashing against the reefs with resounding force. As

traditionally done, people began to bolt up their windows and doors with plywood and the boats/sloops/schooners were safely ensconced in the shelters behind the mangroves. Although there was not a Department of Disaster Management, the records showed a barometer was mounted





at Government's House and was monitored anxiously all throughout the passage of the hurricane.

Agnes recalled that between 6:30 p.m. and 8:35 p.m., the wind got so deafening that it drowned out the sound of thunder rolling. Quickly, the seams of the house were literally bursting, and the doors would fly open, and it had to be continually reinforced. Water began seeping through every conceivable space withing the walls and from the floors.

Close to midnight, the electricity failed in the electric light engine house, and it was not much longer before the structure of the house began to crumble. The roof followed shortly and then not long after the verandah was gone as well. Agnes recalled that during midnight to roughly 6:00 a.m. period, everyone everywhere was holding on for dear life to anything that was still bolted down. The devastation was inevitable, Agnes knew it would be stained in the minds of the people who lived through it forever. Even where some rooms remained, the scene was catastrophic. Things that once held significance to those who called those four corners home were no longer recognizable. Water had become the master of the home and whatever was in its kingdom had to bow to its master – human safety became significant and of the utmost importance

Once the monster had passed and the doors were opened, people ventured outside. Agnes

looked around and she spoke candidly about the devastation. The once fertile hills were bare. The green vegetation was now black and brown as the hillsides were stripped and trees uprooted. She recalled the devastation stretched for miles – more than her eyes could see and her mind could comprehend.

Agnes compared the scenes to pictures she recalled of the villages in France that had been bomb-shelled. She looked across and saw pieces of her house roof in the distant sea floating aimlessly – consumed by water. Many boats, sloops and schooners had been tossed violently from the safety of the mangroves onto the streets. Evidence of the sea's invasion of the islands could be seen as many houses had been removed from their wooden foundation and gone with a master so cruel and dangerous. Agnes noted there had been a 1916 hurricane and some structures were rebuilt during that period and they remained strong after the 1924 hurricane – this a ray of hope to indicate some lessons were learnt with constructing hurricane-resistant structures.

As typical with Caribbean people, good neighbours banded together, hitting the streets, trying to find survivors and give any needed assistance. The destruction was unfathomable. The death toll was approximately 29 people and around 70-80 were wounded. A significant portion of the population was homeless and destitute. Agnes spoke of being cut off from the other islands

and not being able to give a good account of the damages done there.

However, what stood out was the camaraderie and fellowship that united the islands during these troubled times. Long before the British landed, the islands had begun to resume some form of normalcy with the little they had. Food, medical aid, tents and a doctor and his assistant was sent by the neighbouring St. Thomas Government to assist. The sick and wounded were also taken to St. Thomas for treatment from Jost Van Dyke and Tortola.

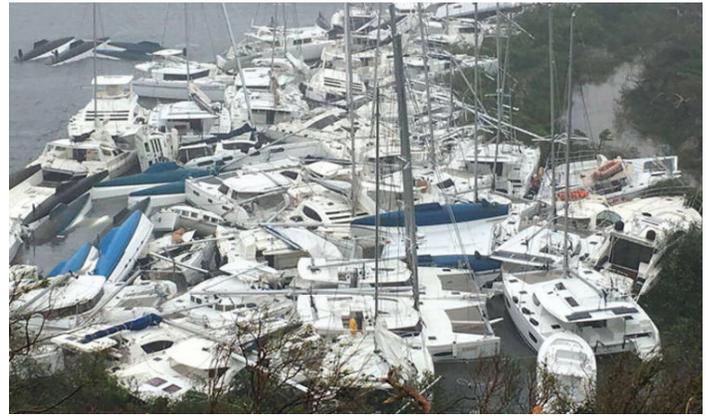
On September 9, 1924, H.M.S. (Her Majesty's Ship) Valerian visited and brought food and clothing for the populace. Other islands, for example Barbados contributed as well. Using the lists submitted of what each family needed, the women worked tirelessly to get these supplies out.

While £25,000 in damages might not seem astronomical to a government with a billion dollar budget in 2017, but in 1924, that figure symbolized years of rebuilding and reinvestment of a people into their home.

## HURRICANE IRMA

With modernization and strong network throughout the Caribbean, The BVI Department of Disaster Management (BVIDDM) was on the case for Hurricane Irma. The prediction was a maximum windspeed of 110 mph which would make Irma a Category 2 or Category 3 hurricane. While this was intense for a small territory like the BVI, it would have been manageable. However, a late and unexpected intensification of the storm happened a mere two days before it struck land. Irma had strengthened well beyond sustained windspeeds required for classification as a Category 5 hurricane and shot into the strongest hurricane ever recorded over the open Atlantic Ocean.

Initially, on September 5, Irma was expected to take a course directly over Anegada but



during the last 24 hours before the hurricane struck, it moved slightly southward, and the centre was predicted to travel directly through the middle of the islands. By this time, the Government had already issued a full evacuation of Anegada as it was a flat island, and the largest elevation was merely 25 feet. This was lower than the predicted surge and the hurricane was expected to pass directly over it. While the government provided evacuation ferries, not all residents left. Ironically, the storm's late southwards turn spared Anegada the worst of the weather.

This image would be passed on to the residents who lived through the unforeseen tragedy of 2017. There was something threatening menacingly across the Atlantic Ocean and every resident of the BVI knew it. The shops was busy as everyone tried to get their fair supply of hurricane lanterns, candles, water, first aid kits, medication, etc. before the weather got any worse. Fresh in the minds of the people was the August Monday floods which had already left the country limping trying to get back on its feet. The number of landslides had increased, the main roads were weakened, a lot of the coastal roads undermined, but no one could even begin to imagine what could occur. The Governor and his counterparts ensured that the people got ready. Several news releases were sent out

giving specific instructions. The hurricane shelter list was revised and heavily publicized.

At 4:30 a.m. on September 6, the public electricity was switched off as it was standard procedure for the Electricity Corporation to shut off power once the territory was experiencing tropical storm force winds. By 9:30 a.m., most of the territory was experiencing hurricane force winds and an hour later, the dawn of a cacophony of destruction ensued.

Hurricane Irma hit land at around 10:30 a.m., it had escalated to a point where the force was being detected on seismometers which are calibrated for earthquakes. The DDM sent out a series of public alert messages via SMS throughout the day. At 5:39 a.m. earlier a message was sent:

At 5:00 AM, the National Hurricane Centre has indicated that Hurricane Irma's maximum sustained winds remain near 185 miles per hour (mph) with higher gusts. Irma is the most powerful Atlantic hurricane in recorded history and will be the strongest system to ever make landfall in the Caribbean. ... Based on the latest forecasts, the approximate closest point of approach to Road Town from Hurricane Irma is 17 miles northeast.

The last message from the DDM before total communications malfunction occurred was sent at 11:34 a.m. and it read

We are in for a direct hit, a direct hit on

Road Town! Move, move to a safe room immediately! Move please to safe room immediately! Immediately! Move please!

The territory received a brief respite as the eye of the storm passed between midday and 2:30 p.m. By early evening, wind speeds had fallen significantly to below hurricane speeds; however, tropical storm force winds continued until the wee hours of the following day. The damage was yet to be seen as homes were ripped apart, vehicles and boats were tossed all over the place and natural vegetation was uprooted from the safety of the soil. The islanders on the coastal area even spoke of the distance inland that the water travelled with quite a few persons having to swim to safety. There is no doubt that the same fear that gripped Agnes and her family were again being experienced by the residents of the BVI as they were forced to find any shelter to protect themselves and their loved ones. Persons spoke about being picked up by tornadoes and being tossed about, watching 20ft containers flying in the wind like kites and watching homes crumble like the twin towers in 9/11.

In true BVI spirit, when September 7 dawned on the destruction, residents quickly tried to track down family members and friends while some decided to clear the roads of debris, fallen trees and electricity poles. The reunion was sweet, and believe it or not there



was laughter as each one recounted how they survived Irma. By late afternoon, most of the impassable roads were cleared. The community was shaken, this destruction was like no other this generation had ever seen and the daunting task of recovery started there and then. The air was filled with tension and uncertainty as reports of widespread looting started to circulate and parts of Her Majesty Prison in Balsum Ghut was destroyed and convicts escaped. It is almost unreported that a nonviolent prison break saw many prisoners walking and checking themselves back in of their own accord; we cannot say there weren't any scallywags amongst the bunch, unfortunately.

According to PAHO, the devastation was catastrophic. Over 4,000 homes were destroyed – 85% of housing, and electricity was only restored fully months after. PAHO's preliminary assessment indicated that the BVI was one of the most affected islands by Irma. Piped water became a scarce commodity

because of the lack of electricity and limited stock of potable water was available. The old scrub boards and basins became popular again and was put to use as the country struggled to get back on its feet. The stores became local heroes and persons got use to standing in long lines trying to get scarce supplies as it was weeks before the first shipment container of food reach the islands. Help came from everywhere around the world. Various Governments loaned the BVI their linesmen and in record time, electricity had been restored to most of the island. The festival ground was the site chosen to store and distribute different types of household items, building materials, food and clothes brought in to assist in the recovery.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) assessment estimated that the total cost of Hurricane Irma in the British Virgin Islands is US \$2.3 billion. This cost consists of three elements: damage, revenue and other income

losses, and additional costs— such as debris removal. Of this total, damages are estimated at US \$1.6 billion.

There were four deaths in the territory and about 125 related injuries after Hurricane Irma. However, in the months following, there were an abnormally high number of deaths in the territory which many people have attributed to the overwhelming sense of destitution that overcame many of the older members of the society.

While the territory was processing the damage of Irma, two weeks later – what many consider Irma's twin sister – another Category 5 hurricane, Maria, hit the territory.

If you look around the territory, you can still see the ravages that these two sisters inflicted. But what you will also see is the resilience and strong faith of a people who believes that the best is yet to come. While some sort of anguish are still lingering among the people, there are a lot that binds us as an undeniable force to be reckoned with.

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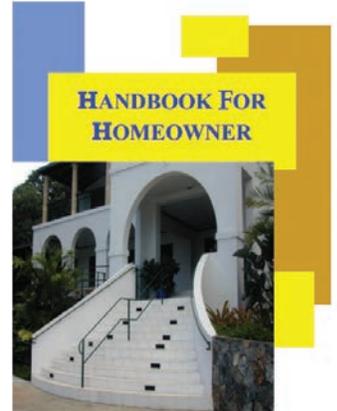
# Helping you BUILD BACK BETTER

It is said that a man's home is his castle. Between the seasonal threat of storms and global Climate Change looming with its rising sea levels and increase in severe weather events, these days, our castles could use a bit of reinforcement.

**E**ducating homeowners and prospective builders about how to incorporate resilience into their construction projects has been a priority in the Virgin Islands since at least 2004, when officers from the Ministry of Communications and Works, the Town

and County Planning Authority, and the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) collaborated to complete the first Handbook for Homeowners. The publication was revised 2012 and again in 2015, with a most recent edition incorporating additional lessons learned from Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017.

Safer building starts before the first nail hits wood, with the identification and preparation of the parcel. A formal Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (HVA) provides a full report on the range of risks present at the land parcel. Understanding the risks associated with flooding from the rain as well as storm surge, and landslide potential and other hazards can help protect your investment for years to come. In addition, an HVA is required for many new building projects in the Territory. Carried out by technical experts in the DDM, these assessments also recommend mitigation measures, or practical actions or building components to strengthen the property against those risks.



For example, if you are building a home near a steep slope, a mitigation measure that might be recommended against the risk of landslide is to construct a retaining wall, or two construct the building away from the steepest sloping portion of the parcel. On a property that may be near a flood zone, builders would be advised to build the structure at a certain elevation above ground. Finally, a mitigation measure recommended for all structures in the hurricane-prone Caribbean would be to have hurricane rated windows and/or hurricane shutters installed on all windows.

Other sites may require additional inspections, like an Environmental Impact Assessment, to ensure that a building

constructed at the location does not threaten any locally protected species, such as endemic flora and fauna. EIAs may also recommend mitigation measures to protect adjacent properties from construction debris, such as a silt curtain at a coastal development to protect nearby sea life.

The design process brings more opportunities to build safe, with builders encouraged to utilise strong building materials, wind resistant designs, and water and power saving considerations into the property from the ground up. These measures will often have savings associated with them for the life of the home. For example, a building that is constructed with a concrete roof and hurricane shutters is not only more resilient to high winds from storms and hurricanes, it also will cost less to insure because insurance providers have recognised a reduced risk associated with such structures.

When it comes time to lay the foundation and begin the actual building work, some property owners may be tempted to begin on their own, but the safest approach is to make use of qualified professionals. Architects, land surveyors, building

contractors, plumbing contractors and electrical contractors should be able to verify that they are licensed by the Trade Department to conduct that work, which provides the landowner with peace of mind that their home or investment property is in good hands.

Once completed, even the safest property must be properly maintained in order to remain so. Wear and tear of daily use alone can sometimes degrade a property, but sticking to a maintenance routine can prevent a small problem from developing into a major repair. Part of the maintenance routine should include seasonal preparedness measures like clearing any bulky debris from around the property, ensuring that gutters, downspouts and other drainage are kept clear and in good condition, and trimming back tree limbs that could become dislodged during high winds.

You can find more advice on how to build a safer and more disaster resilient property in the Handbook for Homeowners, available for download as a pdf at [www.bviddm.com](http://www.bviddm.com). Contact the department at (284) 468-4200 if you are interested in having a Hazard Vulnerability Assessment completed for your property.

# You & The Sea

The Virgin Islands observed World Drowning Prevention Day on July 25, 2022, when the public was encouraged to remain vigilant in activities on, in and around the Territory's waters. World Drowning Prevention Day, was declared on April 2021 by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/75/273 and is observed annually.



**T**he day highlights the tragic and profound impact of drowning on families and communities and offers life-saving solutions. This warning is amplified further during the Hurricane Season. We have heard countless stories of persons in our coastal villages such as Brewers Bay, Cane Garden Bay and Carrot Bay speak of the level of sea water in their homes and their adventure while making their way safely to high ground. These were, for sure, experiences they did not want to repeat.

There are several important factors to take into consideration when a hurricane warning is given, and impact is imminent. It is clearly understood that the impact on coastal areas brings several serious hazards. These hazards include heavy rains, high winds, storm surge, and even tornadoes. Storm surges push the sea water from several yards to several hundred feet on shore, and potentially up ghuts and streams. In turn, this can cause flooding to homes, and increase the risk of drowning of people and livestock.

People in low-lying and flood prone areas must be ready to evacuate ahead of the storm. They should know where shelters outside of the flood zones are, or plan to stay with family members and/or friends. Sadly, even when a call for evacuation to higher ground is given,

some people still do not see this displacement as a realistic option. Living through the experiences of Irma, it is strongly encouraged that people ride out the storms elsewhere, either in the designated hurricane shelters, or with family members or friends.

The BVI Government, understanding the degree to which storm surges are worsening, has taken on board this challenge by upgrading the infrastructure, as well as building natural barriers to try to mitigate the short-term impact of these surges. The Carrot Bay Revetment Project, for example, include gravity walls, turbidity barriers and rock armor revetment due to their vulnerability after Hurricane Irma and Maria.

**It is still important, however, that citizens heed the official warnings issued. The following steps are advised:**

- Monitor weather information via reliable sources such as the Department of Disaster Management, the Antigua & Barbuda Meteorological Service, or the National Hurricane Center
- Be prepared to evacuate low-lying, flood prone areas if the forecast calls for flooding or heavy storm surge
- Make provisions for pets and livestock

- Know where the local emergency shelters are
- Have a grab & go bag ready with cash, valuable documents and important small items

**Swimming in flooding and storm surge events often results in tragedy.**

For our sea faring friends, it is recommended that you get off the boat if a storm is on the way—never remain on a boat during a hurricane! Do not try to outrun the storm/hurricane. It is extremely dangerous as hurricane winds can exceed 100 mph and tornadoes are often associated with these storms. If you're onboard during a bad storm, you are risking your life. Don't wait until the last minute to prepare, take precautions, and keep yourself safe. Check mooring lines of boats in the water and dry dock if possible.

**FOR BOAT OWNERS**

- Stay tuned in to local broadcasts to hear the official bulletin once the storm has passed.
- After the hurricane, return to your vessel only when local authorities have cleared your area and say it is OK to return.
- Once cleared, check your boat for damage and equipment and be aware of potential hazards left in the waterway from the storm.

# Wedding

Photography  
& Videography

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Wedding & Reception  
1 Photographer  
1 Videographer  
1min. Highlight Video  
Professional Editing  
Online Gallery

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**\$1200**

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## ELITE Package

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2 Photographers  
1 Videographer  
1-3min. Highlight Video  
Professional Editing  
Online Gallery

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**\$1800**

# Beaches

## TORTOLA

- 1 Trellis Bay, Beef Island
- 2 Long Bay, Beef Island
- 3 Little Bay
- 4 Josiah's Bay
- 5 Lambert Bay
- 6 Trunk Bay
- 7 Rouges Bay
- 8 Brewers Bay
- 9 Cane Garden Bay
- 10 Apple Bay
- 11 Long Bay, West End
- 12 Smuggler's Cove
- 13 Brandywine Bay

## VIRGIN GORDA

- 14 St. Thomas Bay
- 15 The Baths, National Park
- 16 Devil's Bay, National Park
- 17 Spring Bay, National Park
- 18 Mahoe Bay
- 19 Trunk Bay
- 20 Little Dix Bay
- 21 Savannah Bay
- 22 Pond Bay

## JOST VAN DYKE

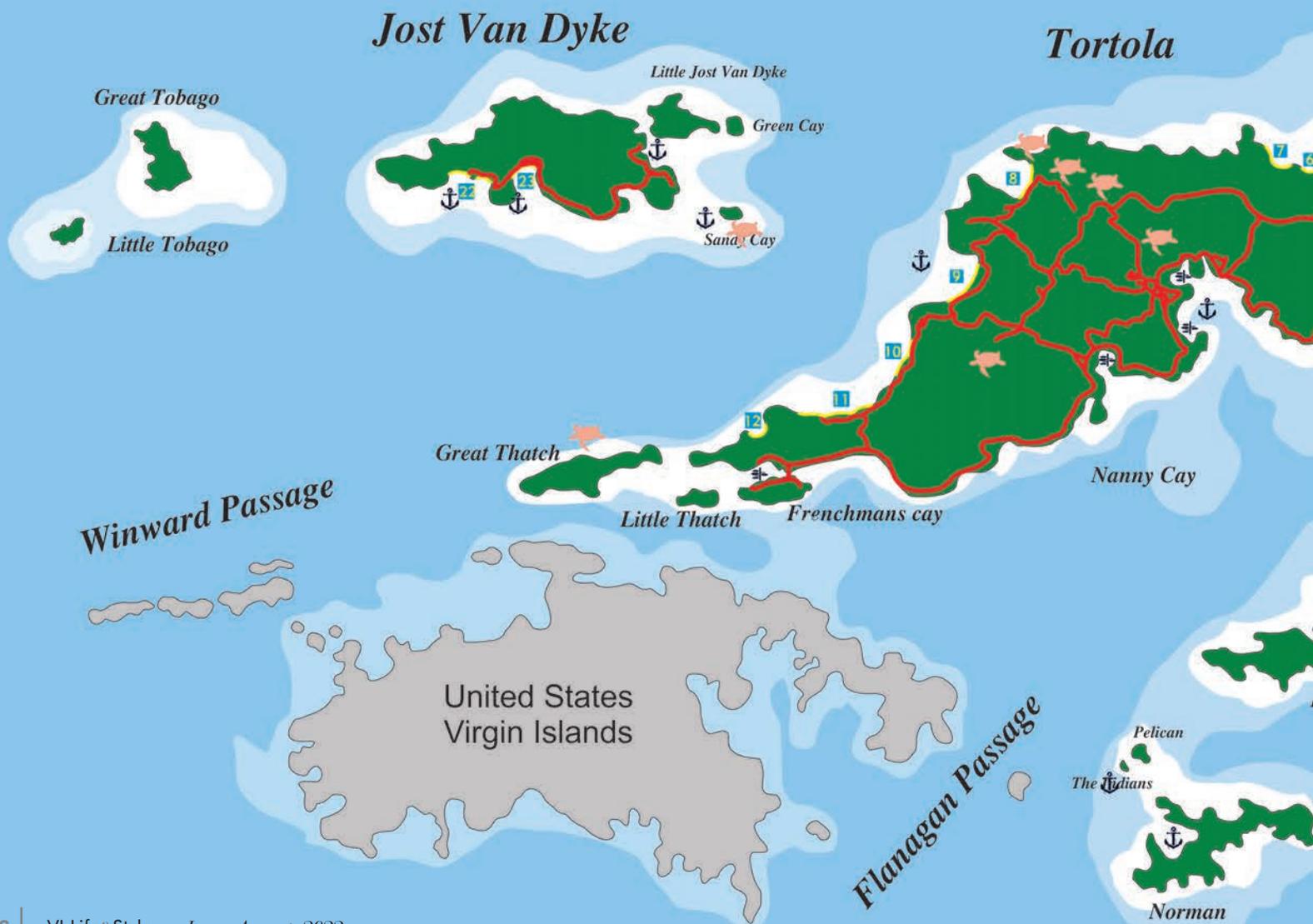
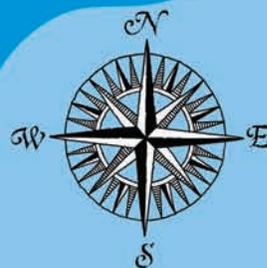
- 22 Write Bay
- 23 Great Harbour

## ANEGADA

- 24 Cow Wreck Beach
- 25 Loblolly Bay
- 26 Jack Bay

## SISTER ISLANDS

- Norman Island
- Peter Island
- Cooper Island
- Prickly Pear
- Sandy Cay
- Sandy Spit





*Atlantic Ocean*

*Anegada*

*Necker*

*Prickly Pear*

*Mosuito*

*The Dogs*

*Seal Dogs*

*Eustatia*

*Saba Rock*

*George Dog*

*West Dog*

*Great Dog*

*Guana*

*Great Camanoe*

*Scrub*

*Little Camanoe*

*Marina Cay*

*Beef*

*Buck*

*Sir Francis Drake Channel*

*Virgin Gorda*

*Fallen Jerusalem*

*Broken Jerusalem*

*Round Rock*

*Ginger*

*Cooper*

*Carval Rock*

*Dead Chest*

*Rhone Marine Pa*

*Salt*

*Peter*

*Carrot Rock*

- Anchorages
- Ship Wrecks
- National Parks
- Beaches
- Main Roads
- Marinas

*Caribbean Sea*



## BANKING SERVICES

There are several major banks in the British Virgin Islands: Banco Popular de Puerto Rico, FirstBank Puerto Rico, CIBC-First Caribbean International Bank (Cayman) Limited, National Bank of the Virgin Islands (formerly Development Bank), Republic Bank (British Virgin Islands) Limited and VP Bank (BVI) Limited. Hours vary, but most are open Monday through Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. They all have extended hours on Fridays. Banco Popular opens a teller drive-through window from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays. FirstBank is open Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon.

## BUSINESS HOURS

Most businesses open at 8:30 a.m. and close at 5 p.m. Many merchant stores, including pharmacies, are closed after 1 p.m. on Saturday and all day on Sunday; but a few open if cruise ships are in port. Supermarkets open earlier and close later, and most are open on weekends and holidays. Bobby's Supermarket in Road Town is open from 7 a.m. until midnight every day. Call a specific business for its hours of operation.

## CLIMATE

The islands benefit from the trade winds that keep humidity low, but temperatures rarely go above 95 F or below 75 F. The wettest months are between September and November, coinciding with the height of the hurricane season.

## CREDIT CARDS

Many BVI establishments accept credit cards, generally MasterCard or Visa; some, but not all, take American Express. There is an American Express office at Romney Associates in Road Town. There are several ATM machines on Tortola located in Road Town, Cane Garden Bay, West End and at the Terrance B. Lettsome

International Airport on Beef Island. There are no banks or ATM machines on Virgin Gorda, Anegada, Jost Van Dyke or Peter Island. Please note that there is a 10-cent stamp duty charged on all cheques, including traveller's cheques.

## CURRENCY

U.S. dollar is the only legal tender in the BVI. Major credit cards are accepted in many, but not all, establishments. It's advisable to travel with U.S. traveller's cheques.

## MONEY TRANSFERS

MoneyGram and Western Union provide services to receive and send money worldwide.

## VISITOR REQUIREMENT

Passports are required by all. Return tickets are required for visitors and those coming on work permits.

## DEPARTURE TAX

After you have checked in at the airport or at any sea-port, look for the departure tax window. Every air travel passenger must pay a \$20 departure tax in cash or by Visa or MasterCard (cheques are not accepted). For those leaving by sea, during the second half of 2013 departure tax from sea ports increased to \$20 for visitors and \$15 for residents. Cruise ship passengers pay \$7.

## DIVING AND SAILING

Many diving and yachting companies specialise in helping you take advantage of BVI's excellent diving sites and the fact that it's the Sailing Capital of the World.

## DRUGS

Recreational drugs are strictly forbidden. Their possession, sale, use or distribution is a criminal offence punishable by law. Conviction can lead

to heavy fines and jail sentences.

## ELECTRICITY

Electricity is supplied by the BVI Electricity Corporation. The standard electrical current is 110 volts on all the islands.

## FISHING

Non-British Virgin Islanders need a recreational fishing permit to remove any marine organism from BVI waters. There are closed seasons for harvesting certain species of fish and other seafood. Call the Conservation and Fisheries Division at 494-5681 for information. Recreational fishing permits will be issued at all ports of entry for \$45. A licence is required for every adult on board who will be fishing.

## 2022 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day - Jan 3rd in lieu Sun.	1st
H. Lavity Stoutt's Birthday	March 7
Good Friday	April 15
Easter Monday	April 18
Whit Monday	June 6
Sovereign's Birthday	June 10
Virgin Islands Day	July 4
Festival Monday	August 1
Festival Tuesday	August 2
Festival Wednesday	August 3
Heroes' & Forefathers Day	October 17
Commeration of 1949 March	November 28
Christmas Day - December 27th in lieu 25th	
Boxing Day	December 26

## PETS

Pets are allowed into the Territory only after an import permit is obtained from the Department of Agriculture. For regulations concerning animal importation, contact the Department of Agriculture, Paraquita Bay, Tortola; tel. 495-2532 and fax 495-1269.

## INTERNET

There are several places throughout the islands that offer Internet access. Most have free Wi-Fi and can be found at the following locations: Saba Rock, North Sound, Virgin Gorda; Trellis Bay Market, Beef Island; Lambert Beach Resort, Tortola; Nanny Cay Marina, Tortola; Village Cay Marina, Road Town; Myett's Garden Inn and Grille, Cane Garden Bay; Foxy's, Jost Van Dyke; The Watersports Centre, Jost Van Dyke; Anegada Reef Hotel, Anegada; Big Bamboo, Anegada.

## ISLAND INFORMATION ONLINE

The BVI Tourist Board's website (bvitourism.com) offers printable online information about each island, useful schedules and much more. The BVI Chamber of Commerce & Hotel Association (BVICCHA; bvihotels.orgy, BVI Government, VI Life&Style magazine, Property and Yacht magazine, two local newspapers also host helpful links to other web-sites belonging to various individual hotels and organisations. You may also want to visit [experiencethebvi.com](http://experiencethebvi.com) for useful information about the islands.

## MEDICAL

Dr. D. Orlando Hospital is the main general hospital in Road Town, Tortola; but health clinics are available at villages on Tortola, Virgin Gorda and other sister islands. There's also a government dental clinic in the hospital in Road Town. Dr. Adamson, Smile Dental, Premier Dental, Dr. Rhymer and B&F Medical Complex, VI Medical – Manual Reef, pro-vided experienced general dental services, whilst Vision Center offers advanced eye care.

## POST OFFICES

The main post office on Blackburne Highway also has a philatelic counter. There are sub post offices on Beef Island (Airport), East End and West End on Tortola, and on the larger sister islands. Most hotels and resorts offer daily mail pickups. Virgin Islands' stamps are worldwide collectors' items. The BVI Philatelic Society (494-7789) organises an annual stamp exhibition, usually held in the spring, that attracts a wide range of enthusiasts.

## RADIO AND TELEVISION

Local radio stations, most of which are available on-line, include ZBVI (780 AM), ZKING (100.9 FM), ZROD (103.7 FM), ZCCR (94.1 FM), 100.5 Tola Radio and ZVCR (106.9 FM). Local cable channels include 1, 51, 52 and 55. Public service channels include 12 (VVCJX, St. Thomas, USVI) and 25 (BBC World). A few channels broadcast in Spanish, including Channel 4 (Azteca). News and entertainment are also available on cable channels beamed from numerous U.S. cities and satellites.

## SMOKING

Smoking in public places such as restaurants, bars, shopping malls, recreational facilities,

offices, public transportation terminals, etc. is forbidden, in accordance with the Tobacco Products Control Act of the BVI. It's also forbidden to smoke within 50 feet of these public spaces. A person found smoking tobacco in a public place will be subject to a fine. In the BVI, it's illegal to sell cigarettes to persons who are under 18 years old.

## TIPPING

A 7 percent government tax is usually added to your hotel bill, as well as a 10 percent hotel service charge. Additional tipping is optional. It's customary to include a 15 percent tip when dining out. Most restaurants automatically include this on the bill as a service charge.

## TRANSPORTATION

**Air:** Regional airlines connect Beef Island with international hubs (e.g., San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Antigua) and other Carib-bean islands. Small planes fly between Beef Island and Virgin Gorda and St. Thomas, USVI. Charter planes are also available to the outer islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands from the airport on Beef Island.

**Land:** The British Virgin Islands have 150 roads, of which 118 are paved. The two main roads on Tortola are Blackburne Road, which runs along the seashore from the eastern to the western end of the is-land, and Ridge Road, which runs centrally over the hills. Both offer spectacular scenic views of the islands.

**Buses:** Mini and safari bus outings are usually arranged by the hotels and are also available for other extended group trips and scenic sightseeing.

**Car Rentals:** Renting a car is both economical and convenient. There are several agencies offering reasonable rates, unlimited mileage, emergency services and additional insurance. If visiting for more than a month, a temporary licence must be obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles in Pockwood Pond. The cost is \$10. Bring your passport and a valid driver's licence from country of origin. Driving is on the left-hand side of the road.

**Ferry Services:** The main ferry docks on Tortola are in Road Town and at West End. Inter-island boat services operate several times per day between Tortola and several other islands in the BVI (including Marina Cay, Scrub Island Virgin Gorda, Peter Island and Jost Van Dyke) and the USVI (St. Thomas and St. John). Ferry services to Anegada are available daily except on Saturday. Departure and arrival information can be obtained at the front desk of your hotel.

**Taxis:** Taxis are available at the air-port, hotels, taxi stands and other venues throughout the islands. Some hotels have a franchised taxi arrangement for guests or will quickly order a taxi from the front desk. Taxi drivers usually provide running commentaries on local history and other useful information. New government rates are now in effect. It's a good idea to check the fare with your driver in advance.

## TAXI CONTACTS

West End Taxi Association – 284-543-4241  
Nanny Cay Taxi Association – 284-394-2512  
Waterfront Taxi Association – 284-494-4959  
Road Town Taxi Association – 284-494-8755  
Quality Taxi Association – 284-422-0353  
BVI Taxi Association – 284-494-2322  
Moorings Taxi Association – 284-393-2331  
Beef Island Taxi Association – 284-495-1982  
Valley, Virgin Gorda Taxi Association – 284-540-6482

**Taxi Rates** Tortola: A fare for one person from the airport to Slaney is US\$30. A chartered taxi from Road Town to any of the villages can range from \$15 to \$27 for one person depending on the distance, and the regular fare around town is \$5. Farther out to the suburbs is \$6, and the fare from Road Town to West End is \$27. From the cruise ship dock to most beaches, the range is from \$24 to \$27 for one person, but for three or more people the fare ranges from \$8 to \$12 each. Virgin Gorda: From The Valley to The Baths is \$6, and from Gun Creek to the Yacht Harbour is \$30.

**Anegada:** From the airport to Loblolly Bay is \$7, whilst to Setting Point is \$14.

**Jost Van Dyke:** One person going from Great Harbour to White Bay pays \$10, and to Bubbly Pool, \$20. Three or more people going to Bubbly Pool pay \$10 each.

**Tours:** A one-hour tour for up to two people is \$55 (fixed rate), whilst for up to three people the cost rises to \$70. A group of five persons is \$100 (each ad-ditional person over the five pays \$15). A two-hour tour starts at \$110 for up to two people. Waiting charges: First 15 minutes are free, but every subsequent block of 15 minutes is \$10. Tour costs are the same for all islands.

Children three years or younger travel at no cost, children ages 4-10 pay half fare, and children 11 and over pay the full fare. Between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. there is a sur-charge of 30 percent on all fares. Always dis-cuss the rates with your driver in advance. There is limited bus service running from Road Town to East End. The fare is \$3.

## TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency Telephone Numbers  
Ambulance 311  
Fire or Police 311  
Hospital 494-3497  
VISAR 494-4357 (Virgin Island or 767 (SOS) Search & Rescue)  
Airlines  
Air Sunshine 495-8900 Cape Air, Ltd. 495-2100, Fly BVI 495-1747, Island Birds 495-2002  
Seaborne Airlines 340-773-6442

## Other Useful Telephone

BVICCHA - (284) 345-3513  
BVI Red Cross 494-6349  
BVI Tourist Board (284) 494-3134  
CADA (Drug Information)  
Family Support Network (FSN) (284) 540-2085  
Humane Society of Tortola (284) 494-2284  
BVI General Post Office (284) 468-5160  
Medical HOTLINE (284) 852-7650



# taste

A CULINARY SAMPLE OF THE  
VI'S BEST SIPS, SUPS & SNACKS

## The Conch

In the British Virgin Islands, one of the exotic dishes that people come to enjoy is The Strombus Gigas or the Queen Conch as it is commonly called. It has almost the same notoriety as lobsters and is a favourite amongst many islanders. If you have an allergy for sea food please avoid conchs at all cost. For those who find fish to be one of the healthier food choices unless you are vegan, the health benefits of conchs are well known.



**T**he Queen conch is a species of a large sea snail, usually placed in the mollusc family. They are herbivores and eat mostly algae and other tiny marine plants. Besides us humans, the conch's main predators include other crustaceans, other snail species, and nurse sharks to name a few.

They are a popular dish in restaurants, so the Queen conch is vulnerable to overfishing because they are relatively slow to grow, late to mature, and are easily harvested in shallow waters. With its popularity, at times it is necessary to harvest them from the deep. Hence the closed season in the British Virgin Islands is 15th August – 31st October every year.

Why are they so sought after? Conchs are considered an aphrodisiac<sup>1</sup>. On many videos and Instagram pages you can see persons consuming it in different dishes. It is also a good low-fat source of protein; high in vitamins E and B12, magnesium, selenium,

## COOKING CONCH FRITTERS

### INGREDIENTS

- FRITTERS
- 1 cup chopped conch
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup milk
- ground cayenne pepper, to taste
- red pepper flakes, to taste
- seasoning salt, to taste
- salt, to taste (optional)
- ground coarse black pepper, to taste
- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 1/4 green bell pepper, chopped fine
- 2 stalks celery and garlic cloves, chopped fine
- Baking powder 1 pinch

### DIRECTIONS

Heat the oil in large pot or deep fryer to 365F (185 degrees C).

Mix in the conch meat, onion, red & yellow & green pepper, celery and garlic. Season with cayenne pepper, seasoning salt, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes. Add the flour, baking powder, eggs and milk, stir thoroughly.

Drop the batter by rounded tablespoons into the hot oil and fry until golden brown. Remove from the oil with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Let them cool before consuming. BE CAREFUL!



Anegad Conch Island  
photo by Elton Callwood

and folate, but fair warning, it is also high in cholesterol; so if you are already on a cholesterol restricted diet please check with your physician on its consumption.

The conch mound in Anegada is a testimony to how much has been harvested for decades and most boys growing up in the fishing villages around the island knew how to use the conch shell to make a horn and how to blow it. Even today, the familiar sound of the conch shell being blown, herald persons to seek out the popular drop off points to buy fish.

It is time consuming to clean conchs and make them ready for consumption, but the dishes that come from it makes it worth the time and effort. How do you prepare it, you might ask? Well, extract the conch from its shell. To do this, you should create a hole right

below the second set of small horns from the top of the shell using a chipping hammer or regular hammer to crack the shell. Then use a butter knife and slide it under the meat of the conch to loosen it so it slides out. If not, you can turn the shell over and grab its operculum (commonly called its feet or horn) and gently pull the meat out. Once extracted, you are left with the meat and guts.

Conch meat has two parts - A white part that is ready to be used; A darker outer skin called the tail that hangs from it and a pouch that looks like a pocket attached to the muscle on it, with the conch eyes. The conch's operculum should be disposed of. Remove by using a sharp knife and cutting at the base of the conch's muscle. This part is very slimy and once detached, leaves behind the muscle

or meat of the conch and eyes. Cut the eyes off at the base at which they are attached. Remove the darker skin by trimming it away being careful not to cut yourself. Look carefully, after the skin is removed, there is a distinct cord that starts from the white part that is ready to use, straight up to where the eyes were detached. Once identified, a cut is made along this cord, to remove it from the conch's muscle. At this stage, the conch is ready to be tenderized using a meat tenderizer. You ever heard the term tough as an old shoe, it will be if it is not tenderized before fixing your favorite dish.

Pound the conch meat until it resembles a chicken cutlet using a rolling pin for this purpose. Another technique is to boil it in salted water for an hour—it will soften up as time passes; after this the meat can be pressured or boiled to the decided texture.

Remember conchs are fishy in nature and slimy so take care to wash it properly. Add a touch of vinegar and salt in the water. Rub rigorously with the lime to loosen the slime. Your meat is now ready to be used. We have provided a conch fritter recipe to try. It is recommended for true island flavor; the conch should be cooked outside on a three stone fire.

Now that you have made your conch shell horn and learn how to blow it, find your favorite bottle of wine or soft drink, grab a chair, and enjoy your freshly prepared conch fritters.



## MAKING AND BLOWING A CONCH HORN

If you were not fortunate growing up to have a conch shell horn as your very own, you might want to make one to tell your grandchildren about. Find a conch shell on the beach. Look for cracks or holes in the shell. A lot of shells have large holes in them; try to find one that has one or two small holes that can be easily covered.

Clean any dirt or debris off the shell. Find the third curl from the top of the shell and cut off the top of the shell's crown at this point. This creates a mouthpiece where you can put your lips to blow. The hole

should be between the diameter of a dime or a quarter depending on the size of the conch shell. To blow the conch shell, put your lips to the hole at the top of the conch shell and pucker them tightly. Breathe in deeply from your stomach and blow out forcefully through your lips causing them to vibrate. The pitch can be adjusted by loosening your lips or moving your tongue.

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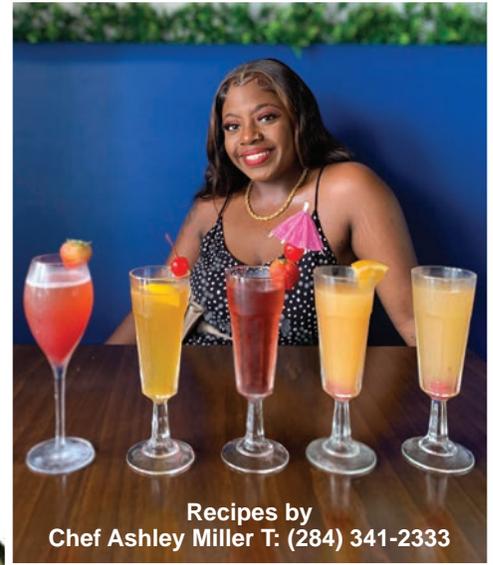
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# Taste of the VI!

By Chef Ashley Miller



Recipes by  
Chef Ashley Miller T: (284) 341-2333



## Green Detox Smoothie

### Ingredients

- 1 cup kale
- 1 cup spinach
- 1 cup mixed berries
- ½ cup tangerines
- 1 tsp garlic
- 1 tsp ginger
- 1 tbsp. lemon
- 1 tbsp. honey or agave syrup
- 1 cup water
- 1 tbsp. chia seeds

Blend and serve

\*\*\* extra honey may be added, taste as you go\*\*



# One Pot Red Wine Beef Stew

## Ingredients

- 8oz chuck steak
- 1 ½ cup of merlo red
- 2 tbsp. ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp. garlic powder
- 1 tbsp. onion powder
- 1 tbsp. paprika
- 1 tbsp. cayenne
- 2 cloves of minced garlic
- 1 medium size onion (cubed)

## Instructions

Cut your 8oz beef into cubed bite size pieces, wash meat in a bit of either lemon or vinegar water

Dry and place meat into a Ziploc bag or a tightly sealed container and add your red wine.

Let it marinate for 1-2 days (this step is important, it must be marinated).

Heat your sauce pan on a medium fire and add 1 tbsp. of butter and allow it to melt until its golden brown. Add your marinated beef with all the liquids.

Place the lid on the sauce pan and let it cook for 25 minutes on medium heat.

Remove the sauce pan from the fire and serve alongside steamed vegetables or any side of your choice.

I ate mine with steamed broccoli  
Bon Appetit



## Home-made Pesto

4 cups of basil,  
1 cup of macadamia nuts  
½ cup parmesan cheese  
1 tbsp. lemon or lime juice  
2 cloves garlic  
2 tbsp. salt  
1 cup of olive oil

### Instructions

Dump all ingredients into the blender, pulse while slowly pouring in the olive oil (as much as needed for a smooth consistency)

Blend for another 30 seconds or so, until everything is thoroughly combined.



# Beets and Pumpkin Soup

complimented with a blueberry feta cheese salad

## Ingredients

- ½ medium size pumpkin
- 3 whole beets
- 3 tbsp. salt
- 1 tbsp. black pepper
- ½ tsp. cayenne pepper
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup slice ginger
- 4 cups water or until the veggies are completely covered.

## Instructions

Wash and cube cut both pumpkin, beets and ginger. Boil until soft (half an hour)  
Pour into blender with the water and blend on medium speed until it becomes pureed and has a soup like texture  
Pour it back into the pot and put fire on lower heat and add all dry ingredients and let it simmer for 15 minutes.  
Taste as you go and add salt to your taste.  
Serve and enjoy.

\*\*Please note this is an immune booster soup, hence the amount of ginger \*\*\*.





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# Dr. Emmanuel Ogunde:

M.B.B.S.; M.R.C.P. (U.K.), M.R.C.P.C.H. (U.K.).

# Paediatric Care at Eureka Medical Clinic

By Nadine Edwards

For more than thirty-five years, our focus has been to serve the British Virgin Islands with the very best in healthcare. As a part of this mandate, Eureka Medical Clinic continues to expand its suite of services offered, all to meet and exceed your expectations.

**W**e are therefore pleased to introduce to the BVI, Dr. Emmanuel Ogunde as our fulltime Consultant

Paediatrician. Dr. Ogunde is a native of Nigeria. He received his Bachelor of Medicine-Bachelor of Surgery at the University of Lagos, Nigeria in 1990. He then made the transition to the United Kingdom where he obtained the membership of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP) and membership of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (MRCPC). Dr. Ogunde also received specialty training over the years in other areas of, but not limited to Paediatric critical care and neonatal critical care.

Dr. Ogunde, who is no stranger to the BVI community, as he has worked with the BVIHSA is very passionate about the care of our children and young adults. He has lectured at both the undergraduate and post graduate levels in the Department of Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Ogunde has a passion for working with children with special needs and those who need critical care. He has special interest in caring for children on the Autism spectrum, with cerebral palsy, and those with mobility issues. He loves children and is very happy to know that he is adding to the quality of Paediatric care our community is able to access.

As a result of his wealth of experience in Paediatric care working on the continent of Africa, the Caribbean and the United Kingdom, his perspective on healthcare from this vantage point can only impact our nation in a positive way.

He believes strongly that “With God with you, today is always better than yesterday and tomorrow will be better than today.”

Eureka Medical Clinic takes this opportunity to welcome back Dr. Emmanuel Ogunde to the British Virgin Islands. To make an appointment and continue to experience “Quality Service” from a “Trusted Name,” then call us at 444-2346 or visit our website at [www.eurekamedicalclinic.com](http://www.eurekamedicalclinic.com). We are only too happy to serve you.



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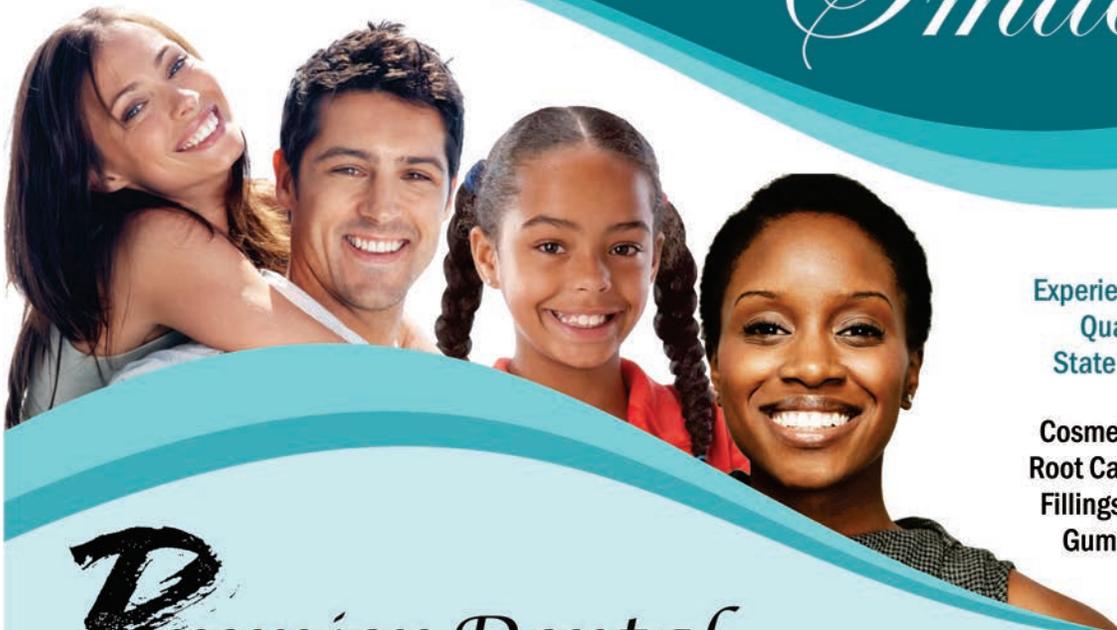
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# Benefits of ISOMETRIC EXERCISES

By **Ria Garcia-Frett**

With the rise of chronic diseases, some form of exercise is being advocated for everyone, even the very young and the elderly. Exercise becomes especially important as we age because of the physical condition sarcopenia, which is an age-related progressive loss of muscle mass and strength. While there is always a precaution to consult your doctor before starting a routine, exercising is considered a vital step to long life and good health.

**W**hat does this mean, you might ask? We know that the human skeleton works together with our muscles for movement. We know that with consistent efforts of strenuous movements, for example, doing construction or working in the garden, this leads to muscular gains. Though these everyday movements are beneficial, often, many of our muscles are underutilized - (muscles that contribute to greater strength output, balance, and flexibility).

Therefore, some form of regular resistance training exercise is important for improvement of overall physical health.

Women should engage in resistance training, as they are at greater risk of getting osteoporosis. A disease that weakens bones to the point that they become brittle. This increases the chances of fractures from falls.

There are three types of exercises that are normally discussed: isotonic, isokinetic, and isometric. Isotonic exercise is when a muscle goes through a full range of motion, by lengthening and shortening against some form of resistance. Isotonic exercise incorporates resistance of some kind whether that be machines, bands, or free weights; and Isokinetic exercise is the use of specialized equipment that provides varying resistance to a movement and allows muscle to contract at constant speeds.



**Ria Garcia-Frett is a Qualified Exercise Professional and can be reached at 284-441-3688 or by email at riagarcia1@gmail.com If interested in improving your health and body composition, follow her on IG at riakfrett and FB at 180fitnessvi.**

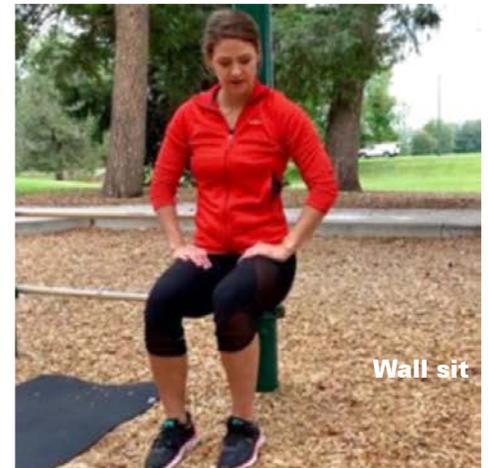
## **TODAY WE WILL BE FOCUSING ON ISOMETRIC TRAINING.**

Isometric exercise is when the muscle and tendons remain at a constant length and the affected joint does not move. The main reasons for engaging in muscular training is to increase strength, gain muscle mass and improve overall quality of life. The benefits of performing isometric exercises are that it improves tendon quality, increases bone density, increases muscular strength, and delays muscular fatigue.

Improving tendon quality leads to greater joint movement by alleviating and managing tendon pain. As with muscular training, specificity is most important which is why strength is gained in only the localized areas. As an example, holding a squat in the downward phase of the movement, will improve strength in the ligaments and tendons of the knee joint.

The increase of bone density is when your bones are more compact and contain the requisite minerals such as calcium and phosphorus, which makes them less likely to be fractured and experience greater force impact from jumps. Increases in muscular strength helps to improve quality of daily life, as we are better able to carry out daily task with less strain and free of pain. It is also

## EXAMPLES OF THE MOST COMMON ISOMETRIC EXERCISES THAT ARE PERFORMED:



a technique used among lifters and athletes as it can be used to break through strength plateaus by exposing weaknesses.

For example, if an individual struggles to get out of the bottom phase of the squat, isometric holds at the bottom of the squat can increase strength in the working muscles to better execute the lower phase of the movement.

It is important to note, that isometric training can be utilized by just about anyone due to utilizing one's own body weight. Though it can be more challenging by utilizing weights and resistance training bands.

Therefore, isometric exercise is great for those dealing with an injury, bone conditions, resistance training plateaus and for individuals that prefer low impact training.

Isometric training is especially helpful in improving core strength; which is vital for stabilizing the whole musculature (body), and for improving power transfer when executing movements. This form of training can develop one's ability to have better control of breathing patterns, balance, and overall stability.

Before beginning exercise, a warmup should be performed to reduce the risk of injury. Warmups should consist of dynamic stretches, specifically movements that are to mimic the exercises in your routine. It also consists of increasing body temperature, which can be done by performing jumping jacks or a brisk walk on the treadmill.

The main disadvantage of isometric training is measuring the difficulty of the task. Though there are a few ways of measuring improvements in this form of

training. For instance, the ability to hold a movement for a longer time shows increases in muscular endurance. Also, the ability to add weight to a movement that was once done only with bodyweight shows increases in muscular strength. Another disadvantage of isometric training is that it can increase blood pressure while performing the movement due to blood moving to the localized area, this can be an issue for those with high blood pressure and heart related conditions. Despite this, it helps to improve resting blood pressure. Isometric exercise is best paired with isotonic exercise, especially for muscle hypertrophy.

The goal of this article is to encourage others to move their bodies, as it truly determines the quality of one's life as you age. Before prescribing to exercise, it is important to get a clearance check from your doctor.

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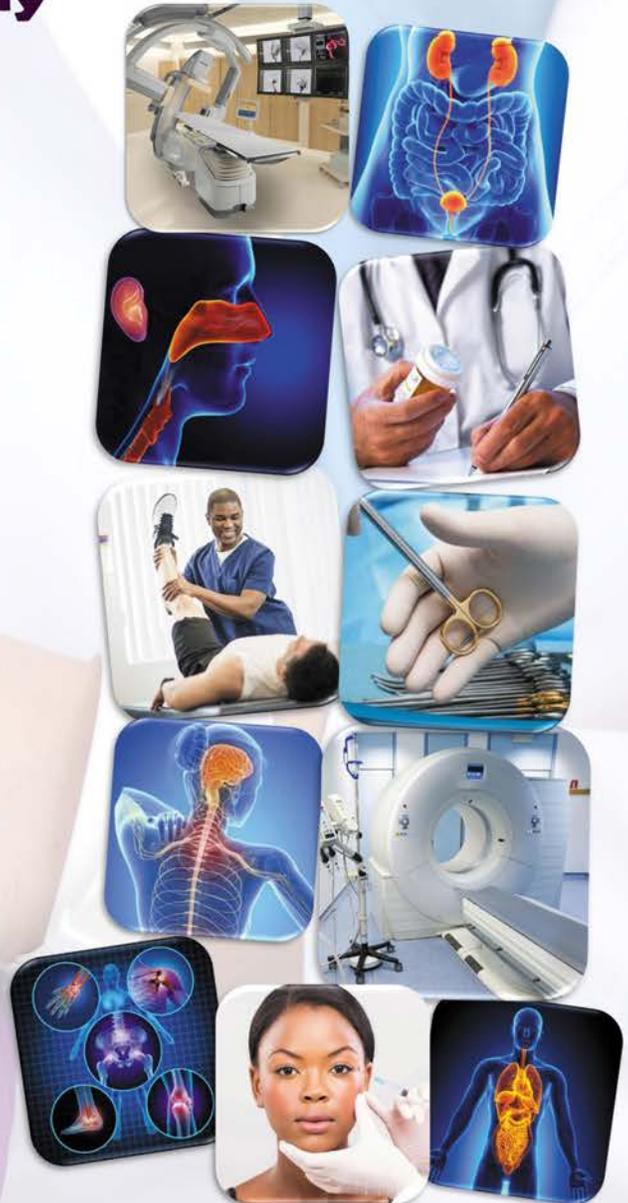
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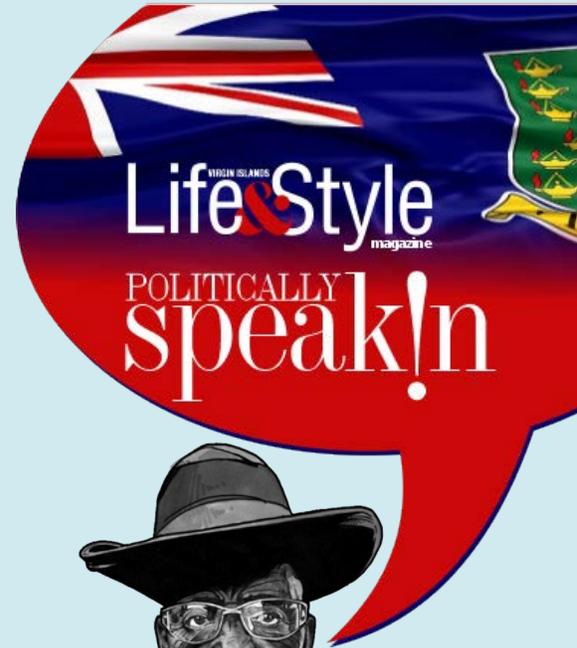
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# Meh-son, we still in SLAYRIE!



with **Pepe Bucky**

**A**noder festival an we ain no closer to being emancipated from mental slawary. But we had a good toime outside pos COWID. People was so happy to be outside wit nuh mask on dem to jump up for no odder reason dan to be allowed outside. Emagin when deh read out deh emancipashun proclamashun. It must have been deh same weh. As dem youn people doh sey, being bag up wasn't noice ah tall. Well imaging 400 hundred years of slawary. We mus celebrate and gowernment mus ensure it in deh budget too.

Oiy too ole to geh involwe in deh festiwal ting, plus oiy troiyng to mek it into deh Kingdom. But Oiy hear deh festival wuz noice despite deh crab-in-deh-barrel fussing. Deh pre-activity in deh willage wid somebody dem call Destra or somethin suh, caus a lil fallout becausin dem say priwate citizen doin committee wuk en mekin money.

Deh prayer warrior dem cum out in mass to mek sure God wuh in on de plan; dem pray up deh place and troiy en cower deh res ah ded activities. Dem shudda been out praying wen deh teeffin gowernment wuh tek deh millions from ole people loik me social security. Weh dem were den? Ah nuh – Ah hear dem wuh colleking dem stimulus check. Poor we meh bouy, deh prosperity gospel teking ower.

Back tuh wah ah wuh seyin? Dem sey dem gotto giwe Jack he jacket duh! All ded local ban dem geh a do this festiwal, en dem sing dem hart out. Oiy tink deh ah hear deh

neighbor say dem local rhythm king need to learn how to play real reggae and soca tunes if dem want to play feh dem evenins, after all tis reggae and soca de people dem come out to hear not rhythm box. My daughter keep talking bout BWEI genre, sounds loike we ain ewen sure wah direcshun we goin wid dah. Dem should learn funji music too.

Meh son deh thing tun up. Oiy hear de boot owner dem asking feh discount or dem goin to chargen rent feh use of dem roof because somebody dem bring from down deh island call some Killa, mek dem galvanis roof he stage. In imagine big ting when gowernment troiy to giwe sum rich bouy son status who got ah bad reputashun whey he cum from, bur yo inviting killers. Dem seh ewry adult dah nioght squeeze dem oiye shut till da bouy reach down safe. Headline internashunul artist mash up deh festiwal. Meh grandson seh, dem had de youn people on dem mine wen dem book he. Wid dah kin ah example, why we wex wen de youn people dem play stunt dewil in de traffic.

Deh parents wuh so happy feh de lil festival rides en ting to keep deh chilren dem quiet. Anegada and Jus Wan Dike goin soon want a do too. Ah hear deh gowernment seh dat dem wuking on it.

But from wah it look loike deh festiwal committee finally geh wah dem wanted feh years – to mek Town better den East End en Carrot Bay. Dem seh willage entertainment in Town wuh deh best it ewah had. Something fuh ewerybody. Dem wuh complaining dat

deh Hispanic people dem wud not spen money when dem come out, but I hear deh booth dem mek ah lot ah money dah noight.

As far as Carrot Bay who use to have 3 noights dah geh cut to one nioght, but ah hear deh boat race wuz well attended. Oiy see deh video dem on Facebook. Yes man, Oiy gah facebook on meh smartphone. LOL. Buh if I liwe come next year I hope dem sort out East End en Carrot Bay feh dem scarcely mek dem presence felt.

Bouy yo hear bout melle. My cuzin text me en she seh dem looking to change de jump-up root feh East End. “Weh deh hell dem goin wid dah? Dem ewah stop to think deh people dem fourfathers is who bild it so de willage people dem cud enjoy it? Why in deh worle dem went eastbound in deh fuss place?” But oiy hear a lot ah people want it, duh. We goin see. Ting to tauk.

My two cents is dat East End en Carrot Bay need to wuk on raising dem own money feh dem festiwal so Town people cud keep dem mouth off ah dem. Dem deh foighting loike crab in a barrel when tis we freedom we celebrating and dem want to limit deh celebration seying dem don't hawe money. Don't mek me laugh. We gah money feh foolishness but not enough feh freedom celebration. Den we still in slayrie meh son.

# Five Pitstops You Need to Make on the Road to SUCCESS

(after life has knocked you down)  
(and how to finally get it right)

By Marva Titley-Smith

This month I am celebrating my fourth anniversary of writing for Virgin Islands Life & Style. As I honour this milestone, I thought it would be fun to look back on the first article I wrote for the magazine and see if there is anything I would change. After all, a lot has happened since the summer of 2018 when I penned the words of my debut article.

While the BVI made tremendous strides in recovery after the 2017 hurricanes, by 2020 we were sidelined by the pandemic that swept across the globe with a wave of unpredictability, fear, and uncertainty. Add the recent political changes and possibly our own personal ups and downs, and it is safe to say we've been through a lot in recent times.

What has not changed though, is our resilience and our drive, both collectively as a Territory, and individually. Sure, we may have taken a few knocks, but we continue to rise – determined to stand stronger than ever.

So, in light of all we have been through in recent years, this article is dedicated to those who continue to rise after each fall with the desire to



keep moving forward. May it serve to inspire anyone who still has their eyes focused upward and those who are looking for inspiration to do the same.

In honour of my fourth anniversary, I present this updated version of my original article, Five Pitstops You Need to Make on the Road to Success (that will help you avoid burnout), which first appeared in the late summer/fall 2018 edition of this magazine. The article has been revised to add new insights, keeping in mind the many challenges we have faced in the last few years.

Has life knocked you down?

First, let me commend you for not giving up. It says a lot about a person who keeps moving forward in the face of many trials. When challenges come, it is easy to give up, but Dale Carnegie said it well...

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all." —Dale Carnegie

I doubt I am the first to tell you that life can be hard sometimes. You will face setbacks and encounter difficulties. People will treat you unfairly and unjustly. When you think all is well, something will happen that will shake your faith. Coming to terms with this reality will make you stronger and yes, more resilient.

So, the fact that you are still reading this says a lot about you. You want to succeed. You want to thrive and not just survive. The question is, how do you do that when life knocks you down time and time again?

I am a firm believer that despite life's difficulties, you can overcome. You can shine—yes, like a diamond. As a matter of fact, a diamond presents the perfect analogy of what we're talking about today.

Shine bright like a diamond

According to the Smithsonian magazine, it is understood that

diamonds were formed deep within the earth's upper mantle. They were formed through a combination of high temperature and high pressure. "The diamonds that we see...are... brought to the surface by a very deep-seated volcanic eruption. It's a very special kind of eruption, thought to be quite violent, that occurred a long time ago in the Earth's history.

Diamonds have been through the wringer, yet nothing shines as bright as they do. In the same way, even though you have experienced many hardships in your life, you can shine as well. We will use the S.H.I.N.E. acronym to remind you of the steps you can take to stay focused on your goals and keep moving forward when life is hard.

These five pitstops will help you S.H.I.N.E. even when life is hard

To keep you moving toward your goals in spite of difficulties, here are five pitstops you need to make. Just as a racecar driver must make pitstops or risk accidents, you too will need to have regular pitstops in life. Refer to these checkpoints occasionally to see how you're doing and to inspire you to keep going. Even when life is hard, you can **S.H.I.N.E.** on the journey.

## **S – CHECK YOUR SPIRITUALITY**

Spirituality is that sense that there is something greater than you. In our Caribbean society this is often associated with our Christian beliefs. Even before challenges arise, consider what you believe and how these beliefs shape your values, because ultimately this will be your north star. If you skip this pitstop, you risk being knocked down by every roadblock that gets in your way.

It's no mistake that this is the first checkpoint because it is the most important. Your spirituality will help you maintain a healthy perspective when life knocks you down. It will also empower and inspire you to get up again and get back in the race.

## **H – CHECK YOUR HEALTH**

Your health greatly affects your journey through life. Ask anyone who has faced a life-changing diagnosis. So, be sure to pay careful attention to your health. Women often try to take care of everyone else before themselves and this is the perfect way to crash and burn. Don't wait until illness stops you in your tracks. Heed the warning signs, pay attention to your body and practice regular maintenance, aka health checks.

If you have a concern, don't let it go too far before you schedule a visit with your health care provider or mental health professional. It's impractical for you to help, serve or take care of others if you are not taking care of yourself. Focus on healthy eating habits, proper hydration (especially in our Caribbean heat) and good old regular exercise. And don't forget to rest. Rest is as much a part of a healthy lifestyle as what you put into your body, so make sure you get your z's.

Determine to make your physical and mental wellbeing top priority.

## **I – CHECK YOUR INDIVIDUALITY**

This is the pitstop that many skip over. This is about having a strong



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Marva is a work and life strategist with a passion for helping women thrive in all areas of life. She's the BVI's first local female architect and former Chief Planner. In 2012, after 26 years in the Public Service, she successfully transitioned careers and founded the management consulting firm, MatrixSpark specializing in strategic management, training and coaching. Following her calling, she became certified as a life breakthrough coach to address the growing work-life balance challenges facing women.

Marva is the author of the best-selling book, *Time to Thrive: A Busy Woman's Devotional Journal*. You can find her writing about work-life synergy and intentional living on her website [www.MarvaSmith.com](http://www.MarvaSmith.com).

sense of identity apart from the roles you play in other people's lives. Do you remember who you were before you became Mrs. Smith, Tommy's mommy, the store clerk or the church's worship leader? There will always be expectations placed on you, but you have to remember who you are as an individual, so you don't lose yourself. To help with this, spend some time reflecting on what you like to do and what brings you joy—then go do them. Carving out time for a favourite hobby for example, is a great way to refresh yourself and do things you love. It also gives you something else to think about and some welcomed relief from life's challenges.

Make time for the things that fill you up by incorporating them into your schedule and routine.

## **N – CHECK YOUR NEAREST AND DEAREST**

A solo journey has its place, but everyone needs to experience community with others in order to thrive. While a network of business associates can help you move ahead in your career, you also need a network of supporters and loved ones will keep you encouraged and motivated throughout life. So, on your road to success be sure to make time for those you love and care for. During the tough times you'll be glad you did.

By the way, this is not a one-sided thing. Make it a priority to spend time with others giving, serving and encouraging. They will be blessed and so will you. Nurturing these key relationships is a win-win for everyone.

## **E – CHECK YOUR ENVIRONMENT**

Now, this is a big one. This is where you pay attention to who and what you allow into your space. Do you surround yourself with positive influences (people and things) or are you being dragged down by negativity? We have all heard the saying 'misery loves company', but you don't have to stay stuck in the mire. At this pitstop you'll have to make some decisions about what you will carry with you through life's journey. Deciding what to leave behind is just as important as what to take along, so choose wisely.

## **KEEP SHINING**

It is possible to pursue success in spite of life's challenges and S.H.I.N.E. along the way. If you intentionally check on your progress in all five areas, you will notice where there's room for improvement. Challenges will still come, but you will be better equipped to get unstuck, adjust and move forward. Your resiliency will improve, and you will be ready to face the next challenge.

Life can be hard, but you don't have to stay down. Get up, get moving, and let's cheer each other on. **Here's to your success!**

**Reference: Smithsonian Magazine article, Diamonds Unearthed accessed online 18, July 2022 <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/diamonds-unearthed-141629226/>**



**Rev. Michael U. Anthony**  
is the Eastern Caribbean District  
Superintendent of Apostolic Faith Churches  
Author and Business Owner



**By Ulric Anthony**

In a BVI devoid of effective leadership, a territory straying from our biblical teaching and struggling to understand who we are culturally and spiritually; and what we were born to do, the Bible give us guidance

**Isaiah 6:8 KJV**

[8] Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

It is the age old query of leaders from the earliest recorded history until now. Who is willing, who is qualified, who is committed to the cause above self? As we can see from the scripture text, as all powerful as he is, God had this challenge which continues

until today and will continue if there is a dependency on 'Free Will' humans to fill the void.

This void is common to all spheres of life, not uniquely limited to religion, although the argument holds true that the pool for religious assignments (or shall we simply say committed souls) is much more constricted than for the other areas of responsibility.

A firm commitment therefore, sets

one apart to their particular calling and ensures a high degree of dependability and sustainability to the one making the appointment.

**Luke 10:2 KJV**

[2] Therefore said he unto them, the harvests truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

Here we see that 700 years after Isaiah prophesied about him, Jesus is addressing the same issue of "who will go", and now 2000 years after Christ, we still have the same issue.

For governmental and political assignments, the democratic systems in

the West have largely replaced autocratic appointments. But, for religious assignments, the appointment still (thankfully) is governed by prayerful considerations. This is key because secular and political appointments address the temporary issues of life, while religious appointments address the eternal destiny of us all.

## **2 Corinthians 5:10 KJV**

For we all must appear at the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Life is a journey, from birth (out of eternity) to death (return to eternity). Once we are born, it is an automatic journey, no commitment is needed to complete it. Simply put, after you were born you will die without any additional effort or input.

Within this life journey there are many journeys which require a firm commitment in order to complete them. For example, our education, our various projects and assignments, our personal relationships and marriages, our career and financial goals, our purpose driven journey and especially, our Christian journey require a firm commitment to complete them successfully.

Within each of these various journeys there will be challenges, tests and obstacles, but a firm commitment guarantees a victorious completion. A firm commitment is priceless!

What about when you get so deep into your journey that you cannot see the beginning and cannot see the end, what will get you to completion? A firm commitment that says, "I Refuse to Lose!"

Sometimes commitment is to keep on trying until you get it right, sometimes it's refusing to hear anything except "I will make it!", sometimes it's simply waiting on the Lord with a heart of humility, committed not

to move until He says to move.

A major issue for Christians is not waiting for God's instructions, direction, revelation, advice, and wisdom. Simply put, we pray, get up and do our own thing and claim, "well I told God about it" BUT did you wait to hear God's opinion?

The hymn What a Friend We Have in Jesus says "Oh what peace we often forfeit, Oh what needless pain we bear, all because we Do Not carry everything to God in prayer".

When we initiate a conversation with God, we must be committed to Wait for His answer. The lost part of God's original intent for relationship with us was to commune daily as he did with Adam. We have become so concerned and occupied with benefits and blessings of the relationship that we have largely ignored the sweet peace of a constant communicative relationship with God. Such a relationship will avoid many pitfalls, mistakes, losses, and regrets. It is the crown jewel of all relationships and we have simply Ignored it!

### **When we are committed, forgiveness will be automatic! See Matthew 18:34-35**

God has actually put the ability for Him to forgive us into our hands. When we from our hearts forgive others (no matter what) then God forgives us. When we do not forgive others, God does not forgive us. That is Too Big a risk to take with our eternal destiny.

### **When we are committed we lay aside the weights. Hebrews 12:1-2 KJV**

[1] Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, [2] Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher

of our faith;...

### **When we are committed we will read, study the bible and our educational discipline in addition to prayer.**

#### **1 Peter 2:1-2 KJV**

[1] Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, [2] As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby:

### **When we are committed, we will say like Paul: Romans 8:35-39 KJV**

[35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? [36] As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. [37] Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. [38] For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, [39] Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **When we are committed we will say like Isaiah:**

[8] Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

When we are committed it will be apparent to all, because true commitment will outlast the period of pretense. We need committed souls in every area of society, especially in the ministry of our eternal destiny. Are you committed to making a serious commitment?



# *Home & Garden*

DEVELOPEMENT, STUFF WE LOVE, RESOURCEFUL LIVING

## Farm to Table with *Mr. and Mrs. Leando and Olita Scattiffe*

Words by Claudia Hodge



# Toloma

Toloma is a root crop. In many countries Toloma and Arrowroot are often referred as the same, however in the Virgin Islands Toloma and Arrowroot grows from two different species of the same plant family. Arrowroot is starchier.

Toloma is an old time staple that could be found in the garden of just about every yard. I visited Mr. Leando Scatliffe at his back yard farm. He grows both arrowroot (nickname here) and toloma along with black eye peas and other greens. He recalled bringing 10 toloma plants from his father's yard in St. Thomas many years ago and today he is still reaping the benefits.

## GROWING

Mr. Scatliffe grows the toloma plants in rows and grows about 30-50 plants per crop resulting on average 35-50 lbs of toloma flour (meal) per season. Unlike most root crop, toloma grows out and on top of the ground.

## HARVESTING AND PROCESSING

Toloma crops are harvested within 8-9

months. The root plant is peeled, dried in the sun and then grind down to flour consistency. While the processing is now much faster due to the recent purchase of a commercial grinder, Mr. Leando recalls utilising a mortar and pestle and a homemade sifter. He would pound and sift the toloma for hours into midnight. This process will take him many days to get his harvest crop ready for the consumer. Today, the process takes only minutes and the toloma is much finer.

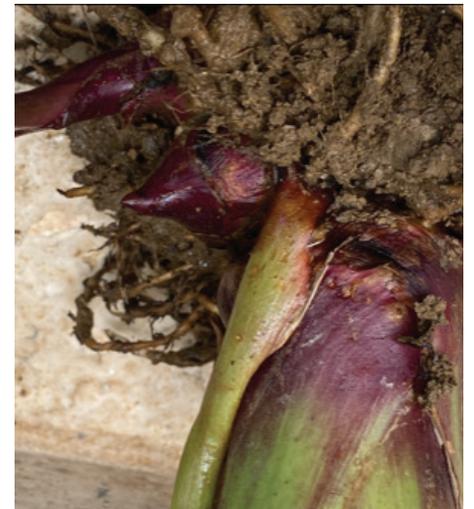
## BENEFITS OF TOLOMA

Toloma is a protein and is easily digested. In many Caribbean Islands it is often the go to porridge for babies and adults alike.

## Toloma porridge



- Soak meal in water
- In a medium sauce pan bring to boil
- 1 cup to 1 1/2 cup water
- Add a pinch of salt
- Once water begins to boil stir in soaked meal
- Add 1/2 cup of milk
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar (sweeten to taste)



- Cinnamon Stick and Nutmeg are optional
- Simmer on low heat for 10-15 minutes
- Add more milk/water to reach the desired consistency

Serve hot in a bowl, garnished with a dash of ground cinnamon (optional)

## Cooking with Toloma

- Toloma dumplings
- Toloma porridge
- Toloma bread
- Steam toloma

Toloma is also used as a thickening agent in stews and soup, as an alternative to flour. Be creative and use toloma meal in your pastry recipes. Create something new.

Interested in trying toloma, connect with us at Life & Style and we will put you in touch with Mr. Scatliffe.

# DISCOVERING YOUR Interior Style THROUGH FASHION

BY KEZIA ALLEN

Our clothes and fashion flairs have been known to be form of self-expression reflecting our personalities and style. Our homes are also an expression of ourselves, but let's be honest, committing to an outfit is by far easier than selecting a paint colour or investing in new furniture.

We are surrounded by visuals every second of every day. So before we start searching for external inspirations, and potentially overwhelming ourselves with ideas, we need to search for inspiration within ourselves.

Fashion trends don't just inspire the way we dress, they can also provide ideas and kick-start our creativity when decorating



## BOLD ELEGANCE



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spaces or planning an entire interior remodel. If you're struggling to decide on what style you like best or what pieces go together, start with your wardrobe for inspiration!

If you're completely obsessed with your red bomber jacket because it's bold and comfortable and you just had to have it, that's perfect! You probably paired this with a simple graphic print white tee and chic classic pumps or casual tennis shoes.

You love how the confident edgy feel of the jacket paired well with the relaxed lounge-like look of the tee but still keeping it chic with your classic pumps. You paired these items together in such manner because it best describes who you are; fun, edgy, and chic, yet still laid back and relaxed. This outfit personifies everything about you. Now carry this mentality over into your living spaces and use your most loved clothing items as a starting point. The ultimate goal is to narrow

your furnishing and décor options down to a style that reflects the pieces of clothing you love most. This is to be your main guide even if you switched things up for the seasonal holiday looks.

Instinct and psychology can play a significant role in the design process, In other words, you love that red bomber jacket for a reason, so optimize using your closet in such a way that you can design a bomb space that you love just as much.



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BUSINESS CASUAL





**The Reverend Esther Georges** is an Episcopal Priest and Retired Deputy Director of the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands

# Our Roots Run Deep Grow Local, Buy Local, Eat Local

**“...the reality is that those who import simply do not have direct control over a significant percentage of their food supply, and are increasingly vulnerable to every change or disruption in external production.”**

*Albert Ramdin Retired Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS)*

## Sustainability in 2022 and Beyond

As a small island state with a big appetite, almost 100 percent of our present consumption comes from external sources. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, our ancestors produced a large portion of the food they consumed. Fresh meat, ground provisions, fruits and vegetables were produced on fertile areas on these islands. While fresh fish, conch and lobster came from the surrounding waters.

**T**he calypsonian, King Austin, sang back in the 1970s, ‘The Price of Progress is High’. In these islands, the development of the tourism and financial sectors came at a cost. Large

tracts of arable land were utilized for residential development, resulting in a decline in agricultural production and an increase in soil erosion and pollution.

As the effects of climate change continue unabated, we see thousands of acres of

forest being lost to forest fires in Europe and North America. The delicate balance of biodiversity in these areas will take years to be restored.

In the global context, as world population increases, food production and agricultural development are the two major issues in the debate on farm sustainability. The exponential rate of a growing human population coupled with a finite supply of land, water and energy should push governments, policymakers, and agricultural scientists to work together to provide the food we need without irreparable damage to the planet we live on.

Here in the Virgin Islands, the local production of food must be made economically viable for small farmers with the potential to develop into the kind of commercial enterprises that their children may wish to inherit. The principles of enhancing environmental quality, reducing the use of pesticides and water, while



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maintaining economic viability will improve the quality of life for farmers and society. These are achievable goals, and well within our reach.

Food systems resilience has become a major factor in the aftermath of COVID-19. Furthermore the current war in Ukraine has reduced the movement of wheat and gas. These challenges should stimulate Governments to support increased local food production and reduce the dependence on imported food.

In the Virgin Islands, the Food Security and Sustainability Act was passed during the Second Sitting of the Fourth Session of the Fourth House of Assembly on Tuesday, 19th April 2022. This indicates that the government plans to support agricultural entrepreneurs and the agricultural industry. This support must include practical training opportunities for existing farmers at the HLSCC. Training in Agricultural Science should be on par with training in the other sciences. The theme for food production should be, 'Field to Fork'.

The main components of sustainable farming and conventional farming are exactly the same: soil management, crop management, water management, disease and pest management, and waste management. The only real difference lies in the methods used to grow the crops.

Sustainable agriculture is the name for a loose set of agricultural practices that conserve soil fertility, respect animal life, limit the use of potentially harmful chemicals, make efficient use of non-renewable resources and enhance the quality of life of farming communities and the larger society.

The trend towards mixed crop-livestock systems appear to be the way for environmental and economically sustainable agriculture in the future. The research has shown that mixed crop-livestock systems improve nutrient cycling including manure recycling, while reducing chemical inputs. The crop production and the livestock production provide benefits to each other.

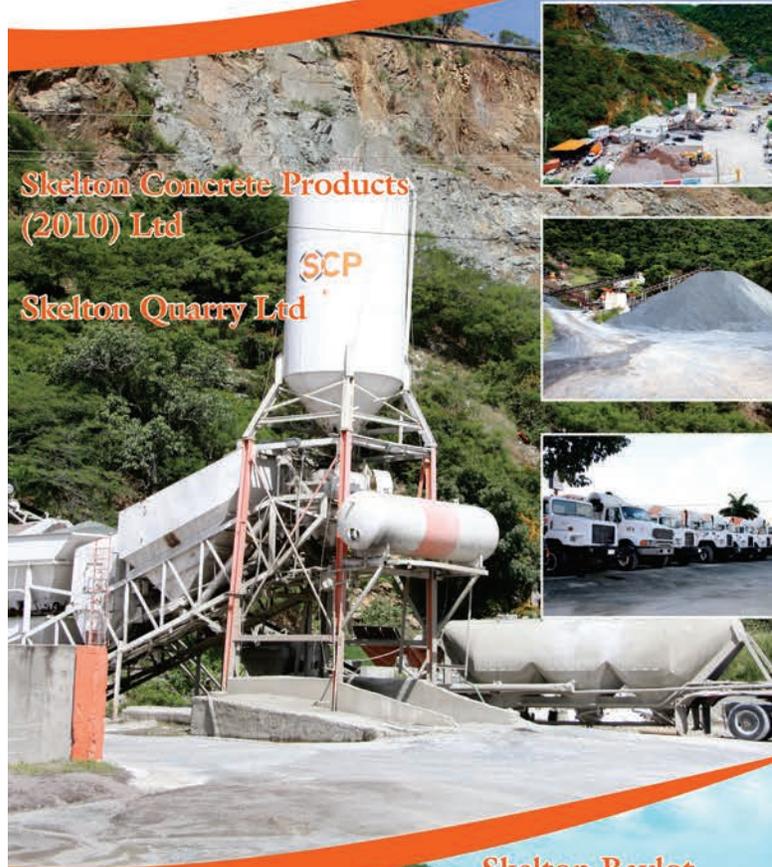
The population can be assured that sustainable agriculture is in our future, once the H. L. Stoutt Community College and the Ministry responsible for Agriculture play their roles to ensure that sustainable food security is an important aspect of the future development of these islands.

Furthermore, the adoption of a green economy as a part of the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for small islands must be taken seriously to protect our natural environment while increasing the local production of fresh fruits and vegetables. This is an achievable goal as history has shown that these islands previously produced adequate fresh fruits and vegetables to feed its population while exporting the surplus to the US Virgin Islands.

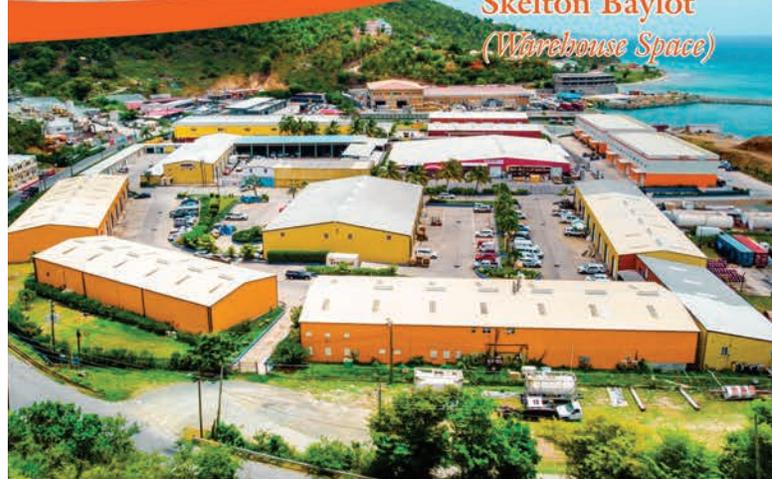
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