



Island Lights

— STORIES THAT SHINE

Across the Sister Islands, there are stories that quietly illuminate our communities—acts of kindness, courage, creativity, and perseverance. These are the stories that light the way forward, reminding us of the strength and beauty that live among us every day. Whether it's the enduring cultural impact of Ms. Anne Lennard, the steady service of community champions, or the passion of our youth stepping boldly into their futures—each story in this edition is a beacon.

We also shine a light on grassroots efforts such as ARC and the JVD Advancement Team, whose dedication to animals, environment, and public health reflects the quiet heroism that shapes our islands' soul.

And through our youth and small business features, we witness how talent, innovation, and faith continue to guide the next generation.

In every corner of Anegada, Virgin Gorda, and Jost Van Dyke, there are bright lights—individuals and groups who make a difference not for applause, but because it's who they are. This newsletter captures just a few of their sparks, and we hope it encourages you to notice and nurture the light around you, and within you.

Because when we shine together, our islands glow even brighter.





Island Lights

**STORIES THAT
SHINE**

CLICK ON THE LINKS BELOW TO VIEW

Features of this Quarter's Edition

Sister Islander of the Quarter	3
Gratitude Corner	5
Green Tip of the Quarter	5
Health Tip of the Quarter	7
Youth Feature	8
Small Business Feature	10
Recipe Corner	11
Kids Corner: What is a Hurricane?	12
Be Prepared!	13

Island Lights

STORIES THAT SHINE

SISTER ISLANDER OF THE QUARTER

Ms. Anne Lennard

Virgin Gorda



I am both thrilled and deeply honoured to be selected as this quarter's featured Sister Islander. In preparation for this piece, I could not help but reflect on a beloved saying here in the Virgin Islands. Once you have read this, you will know "who ah for".

Someone once told me, "You're a Virgin Gordian, born and bred"—and that is exactly who I am. However, being a Virgin Gordian means more than birthplace. It is about loving your community, wishing it well, and doing your part to help it thrive.

I was born in Handsome Bay, Virgin Gorda, in the home of my great-grandmother, Mrs. Alecia White-George. I entered this world on a cool November evening, welcomed by the capable hands of the late Nurse Iris O'Neal. I am the eldest child of the late Melody "Mello" Lennard and the late Chef Alain Boutin. I am also proud to be a Salt Island descendant.

Today, my passion for preserving Virgin Islands culture is stronger than ever, especially as our Territory continues to grow and now includes people from more than 115 nationalities. I currently serve as the Deputy Director of

Culture within the Virgin Islands Department of Culture. Of all the roles I've held in my professional life, my most impactful was during my time at the BVI Tourist Board and Film Commission. As the first woman to serve as Director of Tourism and Film Commission, I had the privilege of representing these beautiful islands around the globe—from Los Angeles to London, Italy to Central America. I promoted the Virgin Islands not just as a tourist destination but also as a location for film and photography, all while gaining deeper respect for both our homeland and the cultures I encountered abroad.

One of the highlights of my year is always our Emancipation Festival—our largest and most vibrant cultural celebration. I have worked in various capacities, from organizing sponsorships and coordinating contests like the long-standing Uncle Ben's Rice and Peas Contest to promoting the festivities through the BVI Tourist Board. In 2005, when the VI Festivals and Fairs Committee became a statutory body, I was proud to be appointed its first Chairperson. More recently, I've taken the lead in organizing the Traditional Torch Light Procession and Parade, which continues to grow in both participation and spirit.



Island Lights

STORIES THAT SHINE

I am also one of nearly seventy women whose names are etched in our history as titleholders of Miss British Virgin Islands. I had the honour of representing the Territory in the Miss Universe Pageant, as well as representing Virgin Gorda in the Miss Jaycees Caribbean Queen Show in Antigua and the Miss Caribbean Sunrise Pageant in St. Croix.

Earlier this year, in March, I was humbled to be one of 27 individuals to receive the first National Commendation Award—presented by Premier, Honourable Dr. Natalio Wheatley, on behalf of the Government of the Virgin Islands. It was given in recognition of my contributions to the Hamilton Lavity Stoutt Memorial events and for my efforts in preserving his legacy.

As I grow older, my faith in the Almighty deepens. Life's journey—with its many hills and valleys—has tested me, particularly through the loss of loved ones and, more recently, a devastating fire that severely damaged my home. Today, my primary focus is on supporting and guiding my daughter, Mia, as she begins her own path into adulthood. I firmly believe in the power of daily prayer—especially over our children.

While some may see me as a community activist, I simply view myself as someone who speaks up when it matters. My time as District Officer for Virgin Gorda and as Red Cross Coordinator following the disasters of 2017 opened my eyes to the growing number of vulnerable people in our community. I hope we, as a society, continue to support all those—young and old—affected by domestic violence, a cause close to my heart.

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported and prayed for me through the years. I truly appreciate each and every one of you. Special thanks to the team at the Sister Islands Programme Unit for your continued dedication to our communities.

In honor of my ancestors, I proudly say: I am Anne Lennard—Boutin, Stevens, White, George, Vanterpool, Jennings.

God bless you all.



Island Lights

STORIES THAT SHINE

GRATITUDE Corner



There are gems hidden throughout the Virgin Islands communities. Not just the beaches, boulders, or views, but rather, the people. They do not ask to be recognized and their efforts are not for gain. They contribute to their communities in a positive way out of love. Their collective efforts and acts of service help to preserve the fibre of Virgin Islands culture. The Sister Islands Programme Unit extends sincere gratitude to all who help to maintain the beautiful Territory in which we call "home".



Rondel Smith

Rondel Smith is a well-known local fisherman, and businessman who owns a popular shop called SNR Varieties on the island of Anegada. He worked with the National Parks Trust for approximately 25 years. Mr. Smith is an instrumental part of the Anegada community in that he provides assistance with island improvements and cleanup initiatives. He has a wealth of knowledge as it pertains to the flora and fauna on the island, and he serves on several committees that provide essential and voluntary services to the public. Mr. Smith is an active

member of the Community Emergency Response team (CERT), Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), and the Anegada Resilience Team. He is currently serving as the President of the Anegada Fisheries Co-op and is often engaged in helping anyone in need of assistance. His commitment and dedication is commendable and worthy of acknowledgement.

green TIP OF THE QUARTER

Choose Digital Over Paper

Whenever possible, go paperless by opting for digital documents, e-tickets, and online subscriptions to reduce paper waste.



Island Lights

STORIES THAT SHINE



ARC – Animal Rescue Virgin Gorda

“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”— Mahatma Gandhi

On the island of Virgin Gorda, a compassionate group of volunteers - affectionately known by many as “the animal ladies,” including Ramona, Tina, Elaine, and others—has dedicated decades to the welfare of animals. Formally known as ARC (Animal Rescue Virgin Gorda), this non-profit volunteer organization has been a vital force for over 50 years, working tirelessly to improve the lives of animals across the island.

ARC's core mission is to promote responsible pet ownership through education and advocacy, with a strong emphasis on the importance of spaying and neutering. The organization provides free spay and neuter services, along with essential wellness care, helping to reduce stray populations and improve overall animal health.

With continued support from the community, ARC hopes to one day establish a full-service animal shelter on Virgin Gorda. Such a facility would provide a safe haven for abandoned or homeless animals until they can be placed in loving, permanent homes.

For over half a century, ARC has been a beacon of kindness and commitment. Through the dedication of its volunteers and the generosity of the community, it continues to be a vital lifeline for animals in need.



JVD Advancement Team – Committed to the Progress of Jost Van Dyke

The **JVD Advancement Team** is a passionate group of volunteers working to improve the quality of life on Jost Van Dyke. Their mission is to unify the island community and collaborate with local agencies, businesses, and government to enhance key areas such as healthcare, infrastructure, the environment, and youth development.

Their approach involves listening to residents, identifying daily challenges, and partnering with relevant entities—including their District Representative—to develop practical, community-driven solutions to address the island's needs.

Island Lights

STORIES THAT SHINE



Recent initiatives include:

- Organising a successful Great Harbour Clean-up Day
- Removing derelict boats from the beachfront
- Collaborating with the Health Services Authority on healthcare needs through a community survey
- Resolving water issues by partnering with the Water & Sewerage Department
- Supporting local students through work with the Jost Van Dyke Primary School

Follow their work and get involved via their Facebook page:
JVD Advancement Team

HEALTH TIP OF THE QUARTER

Nourish your Body with a Healthy Diet

Choose whole grains, opt for wheat bread, brown rice, oats and other whole grains over refined grains.



Island Lights

STORIES THAT SHINE

YOUTH Feature



Israel George

Meet Israel George, a dynamic and purpose-driven young man from the Bregado Flax Educational Centre -Secondary Division who continues to inspire those around him through his discipline, faith and diverse talents.

At just 16 years old, Israel has attained his Black Belt in the Purple Dragon Don Jitsu Ryu, a journey he began at age 11 under the mentorship of then Sensei, now Shihan, Bevon Baptiste. This achievement crowns years of dedication, focus, perseverance, and hard work, qualities that shine through every area of his life.



Achieving his black belt is just the beginning - Israel continues to excel in many other areas. He is a certified SDI Junior Open Water Scuba Diver since 2022, blending his adventurous spirit with discipline and safety. He also has a keen interest in cybersecurity and aviation, already showing promise in a field that demands precision, critical thinking and innovation. He has also completed several entry-level online cybersecurity certifications.

Israel is also a talented musician, playing the alto saxophone as a member of the BFEC Secondary's School Band, adding creativity and expression to his growing list of skills. On the academic front, he has represented his high school twice in the Inter-Secondary Impromptu Speech Competitions, earning 2nd place in his first appearance.

Israel's journey so far reflects the heart of a young man committed to growth, excellence and faith. Whether he is diving beneath the sea, speaking from a podium, playing in the band or training in the dojo, he does it all with quiet strength and determination. As he continues to explore his passions in cybersecurity, aviation and sports, there is no doubt that God is preparing him for a future of impact and influence. We are excited to witness the unfolding of God's purpose in his life.

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans."
Proverbs 16:3



Island Lights

STORIES THAT SHINE



Glenford Palmer

Glenford Palmer, is a bright and talented 16-year-old with a passion for music and a heart for service. As a dedicated member of the Elmore Stoutt High School Senior Concert Band, Glenford brings his talent to life through his favorite instrument—the flute.

Outside of music, Glenford enjoys staying active through regular exercise and cherishes spending quality time with close friends. His commitment to personal growth is matched by his dedication to his community, where he actively participates in both volunteer work and church activities.

Looking ahead, Glenford aspires to become a professional musician, with dreams of traveling the world and using his music to inspire others. With his talent, determination, and positive spirit, Glenford is well on his way to making a meaningful impact—both at home and beyond.



Rayonah Vanterpool

Rayonah Vanterpool, a proud June 2024 graduate of the Claudia Creque Educational Centre on the picturesque island of Anegada, continues to shine brightly on her academic journey. Graduating as Salutatorian, she carried her passion for learning and excellence to Clark Atlanta University, where she is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, with a concentration in Management.

Rayonah's dedication has already begun to yield success—earning her a place on the Dean's List in her very first semester. Inspired by her parents, both entrepreneurs, she developed an early interest in business and is now determined to leave her mark in the corporate world.

Grateful for God's guidance and strength, Rayonah credits her achievements to faith and the unwavering support of her parents, whose encouragement has been instrumental every step of the way.

Rayonah plans to attend law school to pursue a career in corporate law, where she can merge her business knowledge with legal expertise. Outside the classroom, she enjoys expressing her creativity through graphic design and video editing, activities she finds both fun and fulfilling. She also enjoys reading, baking, and has recently developed a growing interest in mathematics, appreciating the way it sharpens her problem-solving and critical thinking skills—tools she knows will serve her well in her future endeavors.

With her strong sense of purpose, academic excellence, and creative spirit, Rayonah Vanterpool is well on her way to building a future defined by success and impact.



Island Lights

STORIES THAT SHINE

SMALL BUSINESS Feature

By Atena Frett



Basket & Things

"Filled with Surprises and Smiles for All Occasions"

Founded in 2023, Basket & Things is a heartfelt venture dedicated to creating beautifully curated gift baskets that help people celebrate life's most meaningful moments. Whether it's Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day, birthdays, or any special occasion, we offer a wide selection of thoughtfully designed baskets that bring joy, love, and appreciation to every recipient.

As the owner, I am passionate about the art of gift-giving. Each basket is hand-assembled with care, using high-quality products ranging from gourmet treats to luxurious personal care items. Our goal is to make every gift more than just a present—it's an experience filled with warmth and surprise.

At **Basket & Things**, we take pride in our:

- Attention to detail
- Commitment to quality
- Exceptional customer service
- Personalized customization options

We believe that the best gifts come from the heart, and that's exactly what we put into every basket we create. Let us help you make someone's day unforgettable.



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 **Virgin Islands**



Island Lights

STORIES THAT SHINE

RECIPE CORNER

Banana Bread



What is this recipe good for? Combatting inflammation, fighting colds and improving digestion.

What you'll need:

- 3 very ripe bananas
- 1 cup of melted butter or oil
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 egg
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 cups of all-purpose or gluten free flour
- 2 tablespoons of molasses

Directions

Mash the bananas. Add all ingredients and bake at 350 degrees

Note: You can add anything to your banana bread before baking like nuts, chocolate chips, coconut, pineapple or cinnamon.





KIDS CORNER

What Is A Hurricane?



Hurricanes are the most violent and powerful storms that form over the ocean. They bring high winds that can blow up to 200 mph (miles per hour). Hurricanes also bring heavy rain, floods and a storm surge from the ocean.

These storm surges can cause major damage and devastation. Hurricanes often last for many hours, even days and can be up to 600 miles wide! The name for a hurricane can vary depending on where it forms. We call these storms hurricanes when they form over the Atlantic Ocean, cyclones in the Indian Ocean and typhoons in the Pacific.



Directions: Read each statement. Mark the correct box and underline where you found your answer in the text.

STATEMENT	TRUE	FALSE
1. Hurricanes are storms that form over land.		
2. Hurricanes can last for many hours and even days.		
3. Cyclones and typhoons are other names for hurricanes.		



Island Lights

STORIES THAT SHINE

BE Prepared!

The Atlantic Hurricane Season is now underway, here a few tips to help you be prepared. A little planning today can make a big difference tomorrow.

Hurricane Emergency Kit

- Water
- Non-perishable food items
- Manual can opener
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Prescription medications
- Personal hygiene items
- Important documents in waterproof container
- Cash
- Power banks
- Rain jacket and sturdy shoes
- Board games or puzzles for children
- Cleaning supplies
- Battery-operated radio
- Whistle
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Face masks
- Duct tape
- Tarpaulin
- Mosquito repellent

#BeReady

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

Before a Hurricane

- Know local evacuation routes
- Prepare and safeguard your home
- Locate nearest shelters
- Plan for pets
- Build an Emergency Kit
- Choose a safe room in your home
- Share your plan with family/friends

#BeReady

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

During a Hurricane

- Stay indoors and away from windows
- Listen to emergency broadcasts
- Avoid using candles (safety hazard); use flashlights instead
- Keep emergency kit nearby

#BeReady

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

After a Hurricane

- Wait for all-clear before going outside
- Avoid flood waters
- Watch for downed power lines
- Use generators outdoors
- Check your home for structural damage. Take photos of damages.
- Continue monitoring local alerts and updates

#BeReady



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