



The Virgin Islands

DAILY NEWS



A Pulitzer Prize-Winning Newspaper

Mini Page

Pages 14-15



ST. CROIX

ST. JOHN

ST. THOMAS

TORTOLA

CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE, CULTURES AND HISTORY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS



Illustration by ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ghislaine Maxwell enters a New York City courtroom escorted by U.S. Marshals on Monday at the start of her trial.

Ghislaine Maxwell: Epstein victim, or his partner in crime?

Trial opens for socialite accused of trafficking girls as young as 14 Page 3

Private center to aid diabetes outreach efforts

Page 2



No more delays

Judge orders trial of Casino Control Commission's Barnes to begin Monday

Page 3

Boston has perfect night

Sports, Back Page

www.virginislandsdailynews.com

Twitter: @VIDailyNews

www.facebook.com/VIDailyNews

ISSN 2159-3019

NEW FORD RANGER IN STOCK!

- Crew Cabs
- Super Cabs (Lariat, XLT & XL)
- 2 wheel drive and 4 wheel drive

You've ask for it and now we've got it. NOW it's time for you to **GET IT!**

METRO
MOTORS

ST. CROIX: (340) 718-2121
ST. THOMAS: (340) 775-4900



facebook



St. Croix organization aims to bring holiday sparkle to Christiansted

By **FIONA STOKES**
Special to The Daily News

ST. CROIX — The Crucian Cultural Group is gearing up to again bring holiday cheer to Christiansted with a series of events this month.

The events include a tree lighting and a lantern parade.

From 7 to 9 p.m., Friday, “Ah Glow In The Park” will fill Christiansted’s Limpricht Park with holiday lights. This year, 13 tree sponsors are aiming to live up to the theme “Light Dem Up: Festival of Trees!” by decorating a tree in preparation for the grand public lighting.

Wanda Violet, lead coordinator for the festival of trees, said there will be both a virtual viewing and in-person entertainment.

Access to the downtown park will be restricted, but the entertainment-filled show will be streamed live on the Facebook pages of both the Crucian Cultural Group and WTJX, Channel 12.

Violet said Frederiksted’s Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts brought students together to make “cultural lights” for a Crucian inkberry tree. She thanked Craig Williams and members of the Gentleman of Jones for finding the tree each year, noting that “this year is no different.”

According to Crucian Cultural



Daily News file photo

St. Croix’s Limpricht Park during the holiday season in 2019. A Christmas tree decorated by more than a dozen sponsors will return to the downtown Christiansted park Friday, courtesy of the Crucian Cultural Group.

Group President Vivian Fludd, last year’s tree lighting was livestreamed and had more than

16,500 views on Facebook, with viewers tuning in from across the mainland United States, as well as

Puerto Rico, and the U.S. and British Virgin Islands.

“This is our third year, and we

are looking forward to coordinating it even better and putting smiles on people’s faces, especially during the holidays,” she said. “We really want to reach even more viewers and grow every year.”

On Friday, the group will also debut “Look in Deh Window” at Hamilton House on King Street and at Top Hat Gallery on Company Street. Local artists have been tapped to create a cultural display in windows at each location.

And for the first time, there will be Christmas lights on the ruins on the western side of the Christiansted Bypass in Contentment.

“This is a prime spot to welcome everyone into Christiansted town with an awesome display,” Fludd said.

Those lights will be turned on Sunday and stay on through Jan. 9.

A mobile lantern parade is also in the works. As a no-contact alternative to a lantern street parade, motorists will be able to take part in “Dem Lanterns Moving Again.”

“We want everyone to register their vehicles and come out with us on Dec. 17. We had great entries last year and we expect bigger things this year,” Fludd said.

To register for the motorcade contact Suzie Bough at **340-626-0837**. For more information on the other events, contact Fludd at **340-643-5356**, Violet at **340-626-6477**.

Bryan announces partnership with diabetes center; 86th COVID death reported

By **SARA KIRKPATRICK**
Daily News Staff

Gov. Albert Bryan Jr. announced the launch of a private-public partnership between the V.I. Health Department, his office and the Diabetes Center of Excellence at a Government House press briefing Monday.

The center, according to the governor, will soon offer education and treatment to residents for free, in hopes of improving the quality of life for people who suffer from diabetes.



Ganesh Prasad

Diabetes has a significant impact on the territory as one in eight Virgin Islanders suffer from the disease, according to Ganesh Prasad, founder and chief executive officer of the center.

“I have personally lost a grandmother to diabetes, and have many immediate family members who are suffering from this illness,” Prasad

said during Monday’s hearing.

Bryan’s oldest daughter, Aliyah, has been living with the disease since being diagnosed at age 12. Daughter and father, along with first lady Yolanda Bryan, sat down recently for a televised interview with Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion to discuss living with the disease as part of National Diabetes Awareness Month, which is observed annually in November.

“We have identified the battle against obesity and diabetes as one of the many initiatives under our American Rescue Plan,” Bryan said Monday. “Over 30% of Virgin Islanders are obese, which is a precursor to diabetes, hypertension and other illnesses.”

Prasad said his center’s mission is simple, “to prevent the onset of diabetes and its complications through health promotion, patient education, treatment and research.”

He added that the center plans to bring diabetes services to V.I. residents through initiatives such as a rural health outreach program, telehealth and telemedicine services and

a medical adherence program.

“This includes utilizing mobile outreach vans, outfitted with diabetes care support services to include rapid A1C testing, foot and eye exams and lipid panel drawing stations,” Prasad said.

It wasn’t immediately clear whether Prasad’s company would have its own mobile vans or use one of those the Health Department currently operates.

According to Prasad, services will begin “in the first quarter of 2022,” as the center works to gather all necessary medical equipment and supplies, and builds public awareness of their services.

“The Center of Excellence hopes to have a direct enrollment of over 1,000 Virgin Islanders during the first year, and indirectly reach over an estimated 10,000 residents with its educational campaigns,” Prasad said.

The organization will also be expanding its services to St. Thomas and St. John.

Earlier this month, Government House committed \$1 million to the construction and operation of an

independent dialysis center on St. Croix to care for individuals with kidney failure.

Over time, diabetes can damage blood vessels in the kidneys and lead to kidney failure, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Our real goal is to make sure you don’t ever have to go into that center and use their services,” Bryan said. “Key to management of this disease is helping our residents understand how to implement the tools needed to change to a healthy lifestyle.”

According to Prasad, those with diabetes are also disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 virus.

No monetary details regarding the partnership were announced.

Health warns of new variant

The World Health Organization has classified a new COVID variant discovered in South Africa, now known as Omicron.

“No cases on this variant have been identified in the U.S. Virgin Islands to date, but that doesn’t mean that it’s not already presently circu-

lating,” Encarnacion said Monday. “We must be vigilant as this new variant has been described as highly contagious.”

Encarnacion explained that the Health Department regularly sends COVID-19 samples to Yale University for sequencing, in an effort to detect new variants.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention expects Omicron to be identified quickly if it emerges in the United States, and recommends that those who are not fully vaccinated to not travel internationally.

In order to prevent the spread of the virus, Encarnacion recommends residents continue mask wearing, hand washing, social distancing and receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

“Since the announcement of the availability of the COVID-19 vaccines for children ages 5 to 11, we have vaccinated 231 children in that age group,” Encarnacion said.

Encarnacion reported the territory’s COVID-19 related death toll is now at 86, as a 61-year-old woman on St. Croix died on Thanksgiving.