

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Thomas Overtaken By Sea Of J'ouvert Revelers

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ST. THOMAS -- It seemed as if no one slept on Wednesday night, as music reverberated from the carnival village near the Emancipation Garden and throughout the neighboring areas, including where *VI Consortium* reporters are lodging. Yet, the crowds gathered on Thursday morning, beginning at the Western Cemetery and straight through downtown Charlotte Amalie for this year's j'ouvert morning -- an event marked by people simply wanting to have a fun time.

The bands, five in total, including the ubiquitous Stylee Band out of St. Croix and St. Thomas' new favorite, Poison Band, played hit after hit while men, women, boys and girls could be seen dancing to pulsating local rhythms.

Groups uniformly dressed paraded through the streets, moving their bodies in trademark Caribbean motions, 'wukking up' while onlookers lined both sides of the waterfront, all enjoying the daybreak event.

St. Thomas' J'ouvert, 2015

































































"J'ouvert has been totally awesome," said Kavish Blaize, originally from the island of Dominica but has lived on St. Thomas for over 15 years." Blaize said this year's crowd was greater than 2014's because last year's event was marked by multiple fights, which prompted law enforcement to prematurely end the festivities.

"This year we don't have any fights," she added, "everything is going smooth and everything is nice." Blaize said the reason she loves carnival is because of "the fact that you could be free and you don't have to worry about anything."

As is custom during carnival season, visitors and diasporans alike travel to the islands to experience the festivities, including first-time visitor Lisa Waddell from Wilmington, North Carolina.

"It's awesome," Waddell said, repeating comments made earlier by Blaize. "The celebration is wonderful." Waddell said she will tell her family all about the event once she travels back to Wilmington.

Deeper into Poison Band's crowd, near the front-facing speakers, Lieutenant Governor Osbert Potter was spotted 'chipping down de road', wearing a light green t-shirt and a wide smile. Potter had no time or desire to talk over the sounds of booming music, however, he willingly posed for a pic for *VI Consortium*.

The bands played until they arrived near the fire station across from the Earl B. Ottley Legislative Hall, bringing this year's j'ouvert to an end.

It was not incident-free, however, as a stabbing occurred at the very last minute of j'ouvert. *VI Consortium* was on the scene when the incident occurred, and will have more details in a followup story.

Festivities continue tonight with carnival village where more local and foreign bands will perform. Then, on Friday morning, the Children's Parade will commence, followed by the Adults Parade on Saturday.

VI Consortium will have comprehensive coverage of the aforementioned events.