

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Sleepless Knights, Countless Residents And Two Big Christmas Parties

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ST. CROIX -- The tradition has gone on for nine straight years, reignited by the Virgin Islands Public Broadcasting System WTJX TV, whose officials approached the VIPD asking for permission to bring Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights back on the streets of St. Croix at 12:01 a.m. on Christmas Eve to help make live the Christmas season -- lifting the spirits of residents in various communities as they drive through on a big truck, readied with instruments and supported by multiple Islanders who follow the band into Frederiksted.

Prior to 2006, Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights would setup instruments at the back of a pickup truck and drive through the communities playing Christmas music during

the season. But they were stopped by the VIPD in 1992, after the force accused the band of having alternative motives.

Insulted by the incident, they stopped.

**Photo Gallery: Pictures of Virgin Islanders enjoying themselves with Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights in Frederiksted and Christiansted on Dec. 24 and 25.**











































































"We spoke to the VIPD because we wanted to document the event just to show the generations that's coming up what used to happen," Tania-Marie Singh, CEO of WTJX told the Consortium early Thursday morning while the band made its way through the west town. "But after 2006, the community wouldn't allow us to stop; so we documented a couple -- and we're actually airing it today on Channel 12 -- and now this is a tradition." Ms. Singh singled out Banco Popular for its support throughout the years. The bank is the sole sponsor of the event, expenses of which include a generator, truck, food, logistics and other costs.

On Christmas Eve, Stanley and the Knights started at the WTJX studios in Richmond at about 12:45 a.m., headed down to the Basin Triangle stoplights, and steered right heading out of Christiansted. As has become custom, the band snailed through various communities here and paused for refreshments in Estate Grove Place, a neighborhood that has traditionally supported with a respectable crowd, dancing and singing along with Stanley and the Knights.

"As long as they will keep playing we will keep sponsoring," said Senior Vice President of Banco Popular VI Oren Bowry.

If the participation on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day were any indication, and the passion with which Stanley and the Knights played throughout both days, the tradition appears to be in great health.

In contrast to last year's event, which was tempered by rainfall, Wednesday's party was blessed with favorable weather, and revelers took advantage of the opportunity. They came from different generations. Some wore regular clothes while others donned more elaborate J'ouvert attire. One man, depicting a hospital patient who had taken his bed to the party, danced through Frederiksted with a hospital gown, bed, walker, mismatched slippers, a wig and a musical instrument.

Lieutenant Governor Osbert Potter, a self-proclaimed reveler, could be seen -- as has been the case from the event's revival -- dancing along with residents down the streets of Frederiksted.

"There's no serenade, as long as I have health and strength, that I'm not going to be at," Mr. Potter said. "And once Stanley starts the serenade it means that the season is official here, and we can officially pause for a minute and just enjoy the good food and good tradition here on St. Croix."

Mr. Potter said ever since the event's comeback in 2006, he's only missed one because of medical reasons. "Other than that, we don't miss this!" he added.

Former Miss St. Croix Cliaunjel Williams-Mulley, attending her first ever Stanley Christmas tour, chimed in: "This is my first time out here, but I said I'm not going to miss it this time. It's always good to appreciate your culture. You're only here for a short time [so] appreciate it."

"This is the best thing to wake up to for real," said Crystal Peter. "Waking up to Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights, you have to get dressed and get out in the road quickly because you don't want to miss it. It's all a great feeling. This is what starts the Christmas season; I don't care what anyone says."

The event concluded around 8:00 a.m., but like the lieutenant governor had advised, the party was only just beginning, as a similar event was to be held in Christiansted on Christmas Day, that would see revelers joining Stanley and the Knights as the band made its way through Christiansted neighborhoods, pausing for refreshments in Gallows Bay, and heading back to the WTJX studios in Richmond, with a tramp beginning at the St. Croix Foundation building in Market Square.

There, too, the fete was alive. Crowds, as excited and exuberant as the Frederiksted gathering, sang, danced and waved along with the band. The event's atmosphere was marked by an elderly man (seen in the video above), who was among those who danced with more passion than other partygoers on Friday.

"Going into the New Year just like this elder. I love it," said Diane Fisher, a Consortium FB page user who shared [the video](#) on her profile. Others echoed her sentiments, and also lauded the Stanley events because of their non-violent nature.

"This is so beautiful to see how we can enjoy Christmas Day and bring in the new year without violence," said Sharon Haywood.

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