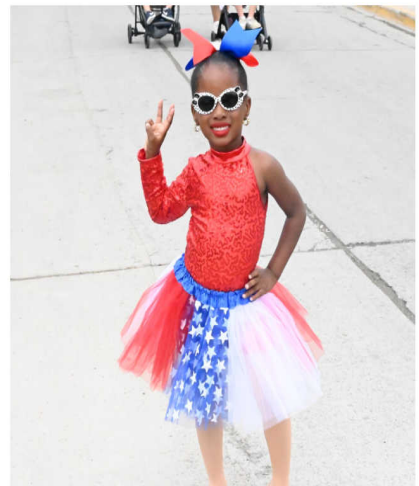


The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. John Celebrations Culminate in Spectacular Parade Featuring Vibrant Colors, Energetic Crowds

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Pictures from St. John's 2023 parade in Cruz Bay. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

ST. JOHN — In an electrifying display of community spirit, color, and cultural revelry, the St. John Celebration 2023 parade, which included both adult and children segments, swept through Cruz Bay on Tuesday afternoon, attracting participants of all ages and from all walks of life.

Approximately 15 troupes added to the festive atmosphere, painting a vibrant panorama of the island's cultural heritage.

This year, the streets were a river of vibrant colors and dancing crowds. From the swirling feathers of the celebratory costumes to the high-spirited moko jumbies, every aspect of the parade had a part to play in entertaining the assembled crowds. The graceful spins of the majorettes and the infectious rhythms from the steelpan bands filled the air, creating a mesmerizing spectacle.

Parade grand marshal George Lewis was visibly elated at his involvement in the celebrations. "It is a great honor for the committee to select me this year. It was a surprise for me, but I am grateful. I am enjoying the celebration, but what I love the most is that it is crime-free," Lewis shared, reflecting the community-oriented spirit that defines the St. John festivities.

Tae'Zha Maduro, the crowned Miss St. John Celebration Queen 2023, echoed the jubilant sentiment. Having previously held titles as the St. John Jubilee Princess in 2014 and the St. Thomas Centennial Princess in 2017, she reveled in the completion of her "royal journey" on St. John. "I look forward to village nights, especially when they have artists like Rock City, which is my absolute favorite," she enthused, speaking about her favorite part about the St. John festivities.

Young De' Janique Callwood, the 2023 St. John Celebration Princess, also shared her preferred moments. "My favorite part of this celebration is the parade because I get to participate as royalty and also, I get to twirl with the majorettes," she said.

For some, like Boston-native Karen Taleprt, this year's celebration was a chance to immerse themselves in the vibrant culture of St. John for the first time. "I am loving every single moment... Delicious foods, beautiful people, and the music is spot on," she said, echoing the joyous sentiment that resonated throughout Cruz Bay on Tuesday.

This year's festive season in St. John coincided with the 175th Emancipation of the Virgin Islands, which saw the infusion of special events aimed at commemorating the brave hearts, chief among them John Gottlieb, called General Buddhoe, who led a slave rebellion that resulted in the July 3rd, 1848 liberation of Africans in the USVI from their Danish masters. Interspersed with July 4th celebrations — the traditional end of the St. John festivities — residents and visitors alike were treated to a memorable, weeklong production that featured entertainment from top artists such as Koffee, Kes, Third World and others.