

SENATOR-AT-LARGE REPORTS

*From the office of the
Senator-At-Large, Craig W. Barshinger
“In service to all the people of the Virgin Islands”
August 2006*



Senator Craig W. Barshinger
26th Legislature
of the Virgin Islands

A Message From Your Senator

Dear Readers,
Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Senator At Large during the 26th Legislature. These first two years have been full of exciting challenges, and full of progress.

This newsletter reports some of the many areas in which my staff and I have labored on your behalf. We have accomplished many things, both big and small. We have many good works in progress, as well.

I would like to recog-

nize my staff and shower them with my heartfelt appreciation. Although you elect me as your Senator At Large, it is essential to have an entire team working to get the job done—the job of a senator is very broad.

I am proud of my talented, dedicated, hard-working staff: Omar B.U. Henry (Chief of Staff), Michelle Dominique (Research Analyst), Merlisa George (Legislative Assistant), Barbara Dalmida (Legislative Assistant), Elizabeth Vazquez

(Legislative Assistant), Marilyn Chandler (Receptionist), Khalila Frett (intern), Mervin McDougal (intern), Melba Moore (intern),

(Continued on page 2)



Supporting local Businesses means building our economy. Sen. Barshinger attending a business opening on the island of St. Thomas.

Volume 1, Issue 2

Date — August 2006

Inside this issue:

- *St. John Festival*
- *Senator’s Legislation*
- *Reduction in Marine Fees*
- *Senate Health Committee*
- *Hurricane Tracking Map*
- *Health and Beauty Fair*
- *Fill A Pack Program*
- *Summer Interns*
- *Upcoming Events*

Senator Participates In, Enjoys St. John Festival

As the St. John Festival wrapped up with its annual 4th of July celebrations, the spirit of our community came alive.

Residents and visitors alike showed up in full force to enjoy the “Mas, Music and a Cultural Mix for Festival 2006.”

The St. John signature event, The Children’s Carnival Village, was a resounding success again this year. Sen. Craig Barshinger organized a Senate Night on Friday, June 30, 2006 and got several of his colleagues and their staff to volunteer their time for



Senator Barshinger distributing water to parade participants during St. John’s 4th of July Festival.

the Children’s Carnival on the Senate Floor. However, the Senate Night had to be canceled due to the rain. Barshinger also volunteered to entertain the youngsters

with a juggling act and assisted in various games on other nights in the Village.

This year’s Food Fair in honor of Ms. Gwenda Dagou was a delectable event. “The tantalizing mix of smells, tastes and sights puts St. John’s Food Fair on par with its siblings of St. Thomas and St. Croix,” Barshinger said. “I love it.” The Senator-at-Large also surprised the crowd by distributing 100 copies of his cookbook filled with tasty island recipes. Barshinger received many compliments on his cookbook and other contributions to the Festival.

(Cont'd from page 1) A Message From Your Senator At Large

“My technique is to listen to your problem and evaluate it. Then I help you write a letter to the appropriate person in the Executive branch.”



Senator Barshinger giving a speech at the Majority Press Conference.

and Shakwana Albert (intern).

In my first term, I sponsored many town meetings. I believe in participative democracy where the individual's voice is heard.

We are in a new era, where Virgin Islanders are participating in the shaping of our own fu-

ture. The old days of patriarchal, top-down leadership are slowly giving way to participative democracy.

What am I most proud of in the 26th legislature? Many things!

We passed progressive legislation that defines and prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace. Before I introduced bill 26-0061 the words "sexual harassment" did not even appear in the Virgin Islands law, yet it was happening, creating a hostile work environment. The new law protects workers from a hostile work environment, and provides for education on how to avoid harassing and being harassed.

I am very proud of having brokered the passage of the Animal

Cruelty Legislation that has languished for five years, being kicked back and forth between the Legislature and the Chief Executive. I was able to bring Senators and the Governor together to work out a compromise that passed into law.

Please look at my website, www.barshinger.net, to see many more bills that we are sponsoring. As always, we are working for you, and value your input. Whether it is a problem you are experiencing with government services, or an idea for legislation, we look forward to hearing from you and working with you!

-Craig W. Barshinger
Senator at Large
26th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

Legislation Proposed by Senator Craig Barshinger

Senator Barshinger has introduced several bills to improve the quality of life for all Virgin Islanders. Of these many bills, three have been passed and signed into law. These new laws include:

- A **Sexual Harassment Law**, which is a law to adopt a standard, territory-wide definition of and prohibition of sexual harassment. This law is based on the best contemporary standards that acknowledge that legitimate human sexual interactions are based only on mutual consent. It was enacted on April 7, 2006.
- The **Environmental Cove-**

nants Act. This law protects human health and the environment from potential haz-



ardous substances by placing controls on the use of land that contains contamination, or where contamination could

occur because of a project. It ensures that property owners must have an environmental remediation plan in place with detailed requirements for keeping contamination to a minimum. This law was enacted on July 19, 2006

- A law to adopt the **Uniform Conservation Easements Act**, which would allow property owners to maintain ownership of their land while allowing it to be used for conservation or recreational uses. This law was enacted on July 19, 2006.

Senator Prodding on Behalf of Constituents Lead to Lower Marine Fees

Residents of St. John breathed a sigh of relief in June when the Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA) decided to reduce its port fees for vehicles going over to St. John on the barges.

This reduction did not come easy, however; but resulted partly because of the many complaints of residents and many requests from Senator Craig Barshinger – both written and verbal – to the Port Authority to rescind or reduce the fee increase.

On May 8, 2006, VIPA increased its marine fees for vehicles going over on the barge from Red Hook to St. John. Cars and small sport-utility vehicles were charged \$4 round trip; pickup trucks and vans, \$6; heavy trucks and equipment \$20 and freight containers, \$20 to \$30 depending on weight. Previously all vehicles were being charged \$2, with heavy trucks and equipment being charged \$2 a ton.

At a time when cost of living is at

its highest for the island's residents, the fee increases came as an added blow to St. Johnians, many of whom traverse daily on the barge to go to work on St. Thomas and to take care of other business.



“There was no proper public notice of the fee implementation,” Senator Barshinger said, when he found out about the fees. “This is unjust to the people of St. John.”

Senator Barshinger wrote to the Port Authority and invited the Executive Director Darlan Brin

and Board Chairman Robert O'Connor to attend a town meeting with residents to allow them to air their concerns to VIPA as well as to get an explanation of the increase in the fees.

The town meeting took place on Thursday, May 11, 2006 at 6 p.m. at the Westin Resort Conference Room. VIPA officials attended the meeting half-an-hour late, and did not fully address the residents concerns.

Senator Barshinger then wrote to his colleague, Senator Roosevelt David, chairman of the Government Operations & Consumer Protection Committee to host a meeting of the committee to address the matter.

Due to the concerns of the St. John residents and the urging of Senator Barshinger and other legislators, the Port Authority reduced its fees to \$1.50 for cars and small to medium sport utility vehicles and \$2 for trucks and vans.

Senator Barshinger now serving as chairman of Health Committee

With the change from the old minority to the new Senate Majority, Senator Craig Barshinger was afforded the opportunity to serve as Chairman of the Senate Health, Hospitals and Human Services Committee.

Senator Barshinger was ready and willing to accept this new responsibility and has been working to shepherd the various bills in the committee on to other committees.

One such bill in particular is the



Senator Barshinger serving as chairman over Health Committee Hearing on February 13, 2006.

Health Insurance Bill, sponsored by Senator Roosevelt David and

other senators, including Senator Barshinger. The bill seeks to provide health insurance for all employed persons in the Virgin Islands. Several committee meetings and town meetings were held on the Health Insurance bill to take comments, suggestions and ideas from the community in making this legislation work.



How Ready Are You for the 2006 Hurricane Season? The Professor wants to know —



2006 HURRICANE TRACKING

Did you trim all tree branches?

Yes, Professor Disaster Prevention.

Did you remove garbage from your yard?

Yes, Professor Disaster Prevention.

Did you repair your roof?

Yes, Professor Disaster Prevention.

Then Professor Disaster Prevention assesses that you are about 25% ready.

Do you have a battery operated radio, flashlight, and extra batteries?

Yes, Professor Disaster Prevention.

Do you have a cellular phone?

Do you have an extra supply of water and can goods?

Yes, Professor Disaster Prevention.

Then Professor Disaster Prevention assesses that you are just about 50% ready.

Do you have toothpaste, soap, deodorant, and other toiletries?

Yes, Professor Disaster Prevention.

Do you have an extra pair of glasses?

Do you have mosquito repellent?

Do you have extra medicine?

Do you have a full tank of gas?

Do you have extra cash?

Do you have your passport and other important documents?

Do you have insurance?

Yes, Professor Disaster Prevention.

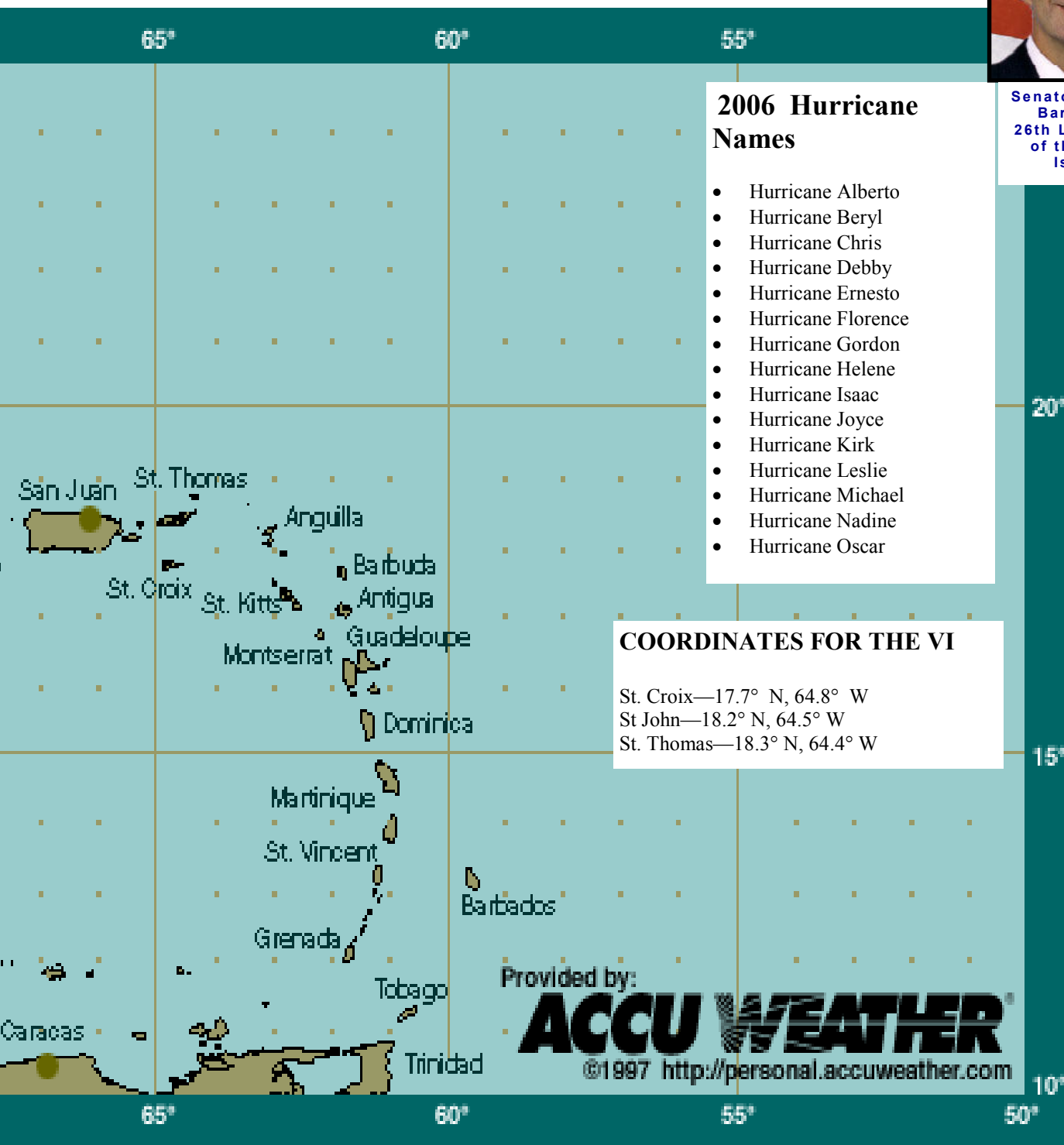
Then Professor Disaster Prevention assesses that you are just about 75% ready. Now the government must do its part in notifying and preparing the public for hurricane season 2006 and together we will be 100% prepared, with GOD's blessing.



HURRICANE SEASON TRACKING MAP



Senator Craig W.
Barshinger
26th Legislature
of the Virgin
Islands



“Mind, Body, Soul, and Spirit Expo”

On June 24, 2006 Senator Craig W. Barshinger hosted a health and beauty fair in the Center Court of Sunshine Mall on St.



Croix. This free event was open to all residents of St. Croix. During this health and beauty fair, residents received information on herbal and medicinal remedies, preparing for hurricanes, tai chi, holistic living, and nutrition and fitness education. Residents also

received blood pressure and glucose screening, beauty makeovers, massage therapy, and CPR training. Amongst participants in this event were the American Red Cross, the American Cancer Society, and the University of the Virgin Islands Medical Services.

“As chairman of the Committee on Health, Hospital and Human Services, I was especially pleased to invite the community to this wonderful event that my staff organized for your health benefit,” Barshinger said.

This fair not only gave residents great knowledge about improving health and beauty needs, but it gave them an opportunity to meet with the senator and share their opinions and concerns with him.



Senator Barshinger and fellow members of the Majority Caucus, Senator David, Senator Berry, and Senator Figueroa-Serville at the Majority Press Conference.

*In Service to
All the People
of the Virgin
Islands*

Territory’s Students Benefit from “Fill A Pack”

Senator Craig W. Barshinger takes his role as the At-Large Senator very seriously. He gets involved with various community projects on all three islands. One of the senator’s major projects is called the “Fill A Pack” program. With this program students, who are less fortunate, are provided with school supplies that they



may not be able to receive otherwise. These students are given backpacks, loose-leaf paper, and pens and pencils.

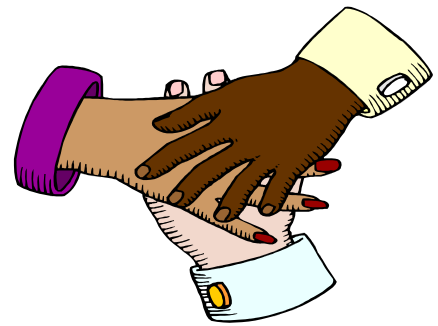
This annual program was first established in 2005. With the success of “Fill A Pack 2005” about 155 needy children on all three

islands received school supplies. Senator Barshinger hopes to provide school supplies to even more children in the future.

In efforts to do so, Senator Barshinger and his staff have been working with various organizations to identify needy children. Local K-mart stores have accepted the responsibility to collect and manage contributions towards this effort. In addition, many businesses and individuals make significant contributions to assist in this worthy cause of helping underprivileged students.

Special thanks to American Yacht Harbor, Belair Quartz Inc., Caneel Bay Inc., Divi Carina Bay, Emax Financial Group, Horizon Fuel & Financial Management, John & Patricia Thompson, K-Mart Sunshine Mall, Kazi Man-

agement VI., Kenzie Financial Management, Marmarus Management Company, Paula Corry,



St. Thomas Dairies, The March Group, Trans-Caribbean Dairy Corp., and Trust Asset Management for their donations towards this effort.

Thank you too all this year’s donors as well for making the program a continued success.

Summer Interns Attend National Competition in Nashville, Tennessee

In the summer of 2006, Senator Craig Barshinger gave two UVI students an opportunity to experience the world of politics by hiring them as summer interns in his St. Thomas office. These two interns, Khalila Frett, a 2006 graduate of the University, and Mervin McDougall, a junior business major, are active members of UVI's Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda organization. As members of this organization the two took part in FBLA-PBL National Conference and Competitions in Nashville, TN this past June.

In efforts to get to Nashville, members of this organization took part in many fundraising activities, including reaching out to members of the community for help. It is through these fundraising efforts that Senator Barshinger learned about these students. Impressed with these students' presentations, Barshinger hired them as summer interns.

UVI's FBLA-PBL chapter, including



Summer Interns Khalila Frett (third from the right) and Mervin McDougall (center) joined by fellow members of UVI's FBLA-PBL chapter during National Competitions in Nashville

McDougall and Frett, attended the organization's National Conference and Competitions to represent the University. Frett competed in the Computer Concepts Competition and prepared the chapter's Annual Business Report to present during the Conference. McDougall competed in C++ Programming Competition and the Visual Basic Programming Competition in which he placed ninth. Both students also

attended many professional workshops and conferences while in Nashville.

"I am proud of all our young men and ladies, our future business leaders, who took part in this year's Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda National Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. They have represented the Virgin Islands well, and I am happy to have been able to contribute towards their trip. I am especially proud of Mr. Mervin McDougall and Ms. Khalila Frett, two brilliant young people who are interning in my office this summer. Congratulations, Mervin for placing 9th in Visual Basic.net Programming Competition. You have made us proud" Barshinger said.

Upon their return from Nashville, this chapter has received many praises for representing UVI very well. The chapter is currently preparing for the new school year and plans to represent UVI in the 2007 National Conference in Chicago, IL.

Events

August 11, 2006 - Deadline for contributing to Fill-A-Pack 2006. If you are interested in donating to this worthwhile effort call our office at 693-3546. It costs \$35 to supply one needy student with a backpack and school supplies for a school year.

August 18, 2006 - Fill-A-Pack 2006. Senator Barshinger and his staff will be delivering backpacks and school supplies to needy students on all three islands.

August 19, 2006 - A Prayer Breakfast in honor of Senator Craig W. Barshinger to take place from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. at Victor's New Hideout, Sub Base, St. Thomas. Tickets cost \$25 and are available from Connections on St. John, Home Again in Red Hook, St. Thomas or by calling 643-4684.

September 2, 2006 - Tri-Island Soup Cook-off. The office of the Senator At Large is hosting its second part of the Tri-Island Soup Cook-off on St. Croix. There will be soups of all kinds and prizes to be given away. If you are interested in participating in this event visit www.barshinger.net for a deadlines and registration forms.

September 9, 2006 - PRIMARY ELECTION DAY. Come on out and take advantage of your rights. Your vote will make a difference.



Meet My Staff-

St. John

Barbara D. Thompson
Legislative Assistant

Shakwana Albert
Summer Intern

St. Thomas

Michelle Dominique
Research Analyst

Marilyn Chandler
Receptionist

Khalila Frett
Summer Intern

Mervin McDougall
Summer Intern

St. Croix

Mr. Omar B. U. Henry
Chief of Staff

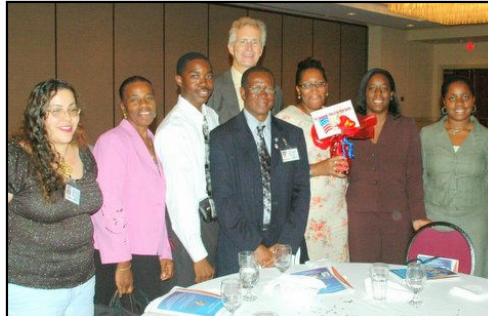
Merlisa R. George
Legislative Assistant

Elizabeth Vazquez
Legislative Assistant

Hector Saldana
Community Liaison

Juan Santiago
Community Liaison

Melba Moore
Summer Intern



Senator Barshinger joined by staff members Elizabeth Vazquez, Marilyn Chandler, Mervin McDougall, Omar Henry, Barbara Thompson, Michelle Dominique, and Khalila Frett

Senator Craig W. Barshinger 26th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

St. Croix—#1 Lagoon Street
Complex

St. John—#1302 Cruz Bay

St. Thomas—Capitol Building

(340) 712-2315, St. Croix

(340) 693-8061, St. John

(340) 693-3546, St. Thomas

We Salute You!

Rodger Dewey and the St. Croix Foundation—for leading the effort to revitalize ‘Market Square’ and, eventually, downtown C’sted.

Camille “King Derby” Macedon— for over 30 years of enriching the lives of our youth through cultural music.

Commissioner Dean C. Plaskett Esq., Robert McAuliffe (deceased), George Flores, and Toby Tobias – for determination and fortitude in the reconstruction of the “Fishermen’s Pier.”

ChenziRa Kahina and Carl Neb Ka Ra Christopher— STJ Unity rally against hate crimes.

**Or E-mail me, your
Senator At Large at
Craig@visenate.net**

**Visit my website,
www.barshinger.net**

Senator Craig W. Barshinger
Capitol Building
P.O. Box 1690
St. Thomas, VI 00804