

## **Coral bay, St. John hosts the second leg of the Denmark-Virgin Islands Marathon**

Still recovering from marathon races in Charlotte Amalie four days earlier, stalwart Danish runners, here to join in observing the centennial anniversary of the Virgin Islands transfer from Danish to US rule, took on the roads of Coral Bay pre-dawn on Thursday. But first they had to endure the test of getting to the starting line. They had to get up early to catch a 3:35AM safari bus ride to Red Hook. The next test was the ferry to Cruz Bay, which would have been beautiful if it hadn't been so dark. Then there was the long safari bus ride to Coral Bay.

By the time the three events – full 26.2 mile marathon (42.1 kilometers), half-marathon, and 10 Kilometer races – had been completed Peter Simonsen had racked up his 299<sup>th</sup> full marathon, Margo Vargo had won her second 10K in four days and, as had happened on St. Thomas last Sunday, the next generation was adequately represented by the speedy legwork of a sub-teen runner.

The St. John leg of the Denmark-Virgin Islands marathon series was only possible because of the commitment and work of many locals. With safety and courtesy to visitors in mind, Linda Williams of VITEMA had played a major role in coordinating police, race managers, rescuers and volunteers. Advance guidance was provided by the Coral Bay Community Council and by St. Johnian runners and other residents such as Jude Woodcock and Ralf Boulon as well as by Senator Myron Jackson. Financial sponsorship was provided by the Virgin Islands Centennial Commission and by the St Thomas Association of Roadrunners (*STAR*).

Even before the sun rose on race day, the St. John Police Department was on hand to protect the runners, providing dedicated traffic control that was greatly appreciated. To facilitate the staging of the races without impeding traffic, the family of Senator Rocky Liburd had made space to site Start/Finish headquarters. Then as the races got going, St. John Rescue monitored the runners while water stops and providing of vigilance and good cheer were the contribution of other friendly resident volunteers, such as members of the St. John Community Foundation, organized by Celia Kalousek. Elroy Sprauve's generosity made the management of race logistics possible as did the contribution with Gary Ray, who came out at 4:00 AM to help the Danes and race organizers navigate the darkness.

On behalf of the Virgin Islands Pace, which assumed overall management of the historic event, *STAR* served as local event director. Its members and members of the St. Thomas Track Club and other volunteers from St. Thomas worked diligently with their St. John counterparts and friends to make this historic event a safe and enjoyable part of Virgin Islands Centennial celebrations.

The 10K went off without a hitch. It was won by last Sunday's winner on St. Thomas Mary Vargo in a time of 46:28, followed by the outstanding nine year old St. Johnian Quinn Wallace in 48:28. Third place went to sixty year-old Lars Vilhelmsen (49:18), who we learned has a 2:53 marathon to his credit.

Darkness and other problems caused the course to be shortened at one point forcing the 42 kilometer runners to make up the lost distance at the end of the races when they had every reason to be looking forward to rest, refreshment and relaxation. Some runners depended on their GPS watches to assure that they covered the correct distances. First and second place victors of the longest race finished as they had on St Thomas with Torben Jensen besting Martin Thomsen. Third place overall went to Kim

Smit, closely chased by Benny Bull. First female across the line was Hanne Christophersen with Anne Marie Lyngbye chasing.

Similar problems affected the half marathoners as well. At that distance, the women dominated. Giff Hill cross-country standout Lilliana Martinez finished first, followed by Hashia Wallace, also of St. John. Birgitte Rojek was the third female finished, followed by Brigitte Rojek. Third overall was Tommy Jensen from Denmark, finishing as the first male.

For more information about these results contact Roy Watlington at [rawatlington@earthlink.net](mailto:rawatlington@earthlink.net) or 340 777-8183.

The races offered interesting natural and cultural revelations. As donkeys and goats eyed the runners from the sidelines, the Coral Bay harbor provided changing beauty as the sun rose and displayed the bay's many shades of blue and boats at anchor rotated gently to face varying winds. For their part, Virgin Islands runners and volunteers learned the secret to running so many marathons over the years and so many in just a few days. We now know that these extreme Danish runners, unlike most Caribbean and North American counterparts, allow themselves a little nourishment on the run by consuming fruit (especially bananas), granola bars and cola mid-race.

Warm exchanges and farewells between visiting runners and local volunteers set the mood for the third and last event of the Denmark-Virgin Islands Transfer Centennial marathon series. On this coming Sunday – with just two days' rest, these outstanding athletes -- some as mature as they are experienced -- will take on the same three distances starting at Fort Christiansvaern in St. Croix. For information about this next event, visit the event web page <http://virginislandspace.org/transfermarathon.html> or contact [wallacewilliams@msn.com](mailto:wallacewilliams@msn.com).

**Results and photos follow below.**

The Denmark/Virgin Islands Transfer Marathon - St. John	42 Km (26.2 mile) Marathon	
Participants	Male/Female	TIME
Torben Jensen	M	3:35:24
Martin Thomsen	M	3:48:30
Kim Smit	M	3:52:06
Benny Bull	M	3:53:00
Bjarne Jensen	M	3:56:06
Michael Nilsson	M	4:01:30
T.J. Hinds	M	4:11:00
Karin Ericksen	F	4:14:02
Lars Troelsen	M	4:16:30
Peter Simonsen	M	4:17:30

Lars Simonsen	M	4:44:06
Søren Andersen	M	4:51:00
Per Hjorth	M	4:52:00
Jan Kjærsgaard	M	4:55:00
Mikael Schmidt Lassen	M	5:02:00
Hanne Christophersen	F	5:10:45
Anne-Marie Lyngbye	F	5:19:31
The Denmark/Virgin Islands Transfer Marathon - St. John	Half-Marathon	
Participants	Male/Female	
Lilliana Martinez	F	1:31:18
Hashia Wallace	F	2:09:24
Tommy Jensen	M	2:13:06
Birgitte Sørensen	F	2:13:12
Birgitte Rojek	F	2:21:12
Pia Festersen	F	2:31:24
Monique Simon	F	2:48:00
Tanja Thomsen	F	2:55:06
Tove Borg	F	3:34:00
The Denmark/Virgin Islands Transfer Marathon - St. John	10 kilometers	
Participants	Male/Female	TIME
Mary Vargo	F	46:38
Quinn Wallace	M	48:28
Lars Vilhelmsen	M	49:18
Stephen DiMaio	F	51:08
Kirsten Toft Nielsen	F	51:39

Jody Tanino	F	51:45
Mogens Søndergaard Nielsen	M	56:04
Anne Grete Jacobsen	F	1:01:00
Lisbeth Bach Sørensen	F	1:02:24
Karen Radtke	F	1:05:02
Ron Vargo	M	1:06:00
Jonna Andersen	F	1:15:12
Holger Jacobsen	M	1:19:06
Karin Birgitte Hougaard Grøn	F	1:29:06
Niels Christian Grøn	M	1:44:05
Martin Grøn	M	1:44:06