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**There's a new DLCA in town.**

## Annual King Day Ceremony at Synagogue to Include Muslim Imam

by Barbara Birt

Jan. 14, 2008 -- A nationally renowned leader in the world of interfaith relations will deliver the keynote speech Friday at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Shabbat Service at the St. Thomas Synagogue, where six teens will be honored.



*Imam Yahya Hendi on stage at Bethania Hall in 2005. (Source file photo.)*

Imam Yahya Hendi, a spiritual leader to the Muslim community in Frederick, Md., and an advisor to presidents, will head the Friday service, where seniors from the six local high schools will receive Martin Luther King Jr. awards for their academic and community-service accomplishments.

"I can't think of a better person to exemplify what we're all about in sending Dr. King's message," said the synagogue's rabbi, Arthur Starr. "First and foremost, he's out there speaking peace, understanding and respect for diversity. He's one of the voices that needs to be heard more from the Islamic community -- someone who condemns violence, no matter where it comes from. He's very vocal, saying the only way to get along is to understand each other, and I think that was Dr. King's message."

This is the second time Starr has invited Hendi to St. Thomas, after the two hit it off during an 8-day seminar in Connecticut on building Abrahamic partnerships. Hendi visited the island in 2005 and spoke to enthusiastic audiences about similarities between Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Hendi is the first Muslim chaplain at Georgetown University, and perhaps the first in the country, according to Starr. Fluent in Arabic, Hebrew and English, with a doctorate in comparative religion, Hendi is regarded as a bridge builder between faiths. He has been an advisor to Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

While the subject of Hendi's speech Friday is not yet known, his talk is in honor of this year's recipients of the synagogue's MLK Jr. Awards: Megan McGrath of Antilles School, Savina Constantin of All



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Saints School, Odari Thomas of Charlotte Amalie High School, Ella Elizee of Ivanna Eudora Kean High School, Mohammad H. Mustafa of Sts. Peter and Paul School and Aclesia Scotland of the St. Thomas-St. John Seventh-Day Adventist School. The students were selected by their respective schools as seniors who best exemplify the principals of Dr. King's teachings.

Each student will receive a \$500 U.S. savings bond and a copy of the book *Shared Dreams: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Jewish Community* by Rabbi Marc Schneier.

The service begins at 6:30 p.m. at the synagogue, followed by a reception across the street at Lilienfeld House. The public is invited.

**Back Talk** Share your **reaction** to this news with other Source readers. Please include headline, your name and city and state/country or island where you reside.

### Black History Spotlight: Earle B. Ottley

In observance of February as Black History Month, the Source is highlighting Virgin Islanders who've made outstanding accomplishments in various fields. Today we spotlight a longtime legislator, affordable-housing pioneer and namesake for the Legislature building on St. Thomas, Earle B. Ottley.



[Click here for More...](#) 2008-02-21 05:21:07

### Judge Denies Motions to Dismiss Charges Against Plaskett and Biggs

Motions to dismiss the charges against former commissioners Dean Plaskett and Marc Biggs based on a lack of corroborated evidence were shot down Wednesday by presiding District Court Judge Curtis Gomez.



[Click here for More...](#) 2008-02-21 05:07:06

### Attorney General: Jails Need Immediate Fix to Avoid Serious Consequences

V.I. jails need to have facilities for the mentally ill in the next four months or face sanctions, contempt of court and possibly federal takeover, Attorney General Vincent Frazer told the Rules and Judiciary Committee Wednesday.

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## Port Authority Board Cuts Budget as Economy Sours

The V.I. Port Authority board discussed Wednesday reducing its budget in the face of the national economic slowdown, with a total of \$3.1 million in cuts drawn primarily from capital projects.

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## Brief: Enid M. Baa Library Wins National Award

The Enid M. Baa Public Library is one of three winners nationwide in the second annual Bookapalooza program, selected by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA).

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## Governor Will Present Hamilton Awards Tuesday During V.I. Day in Washington

The governor will present Alexander Hamilton Awards to two U.S. senators Tuesday, which the Washington, D.C., city council has proclaimed Virgin Islands Day in the nation's capital.

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## Senate Rules Committee Approves Nibbs for Top GERS Job

Rules and Judiciary on Wednesday gave a favorable recommendation to Austin L. Nibbs' nomination as administrator of the V.I. Government Employees' Retirement System, sending it out of committee to the full Senate.

[Click here for More...](#) 2008-02-21 04:00:51

## Elementary School Gets Equipment Gift to Help Kids Get Fit

In memory of her son Nigel O. Hodge, St. Thomas resident Josephine Hodge has adopted the Health and Fitness Program at Lockhart Elementary School and made a donation Tuesday of more than \$1,000 worth of exercise equipment to help the students stay physically fit.



[Click here for More...](#) 2008-02-20 17:39:27

## Refusal to Pay Kickback Cost Company Government Contracts, Witness Testifies

After refusing to pay a third kickback on a \$300,000 contract approved by former commissioners Dean Plaskett and Marc Biggs, PubSafe Engineering Consultants was pulled out of the running for other V.I. government contracts, company President David Tucker testified in District Court Tuesday.

[Click here for More...](#) 2008-02-20 02:15:29

## Residents to Constitutional Delegates: We Want Strong Municipal Government

Several St. Croix residents spoke Tuesday evening for strong, autonomous municipal government when the Fifth Constitutional Convention of the Virgin Islands' Committee on Government sought community input on what a V.I. constitution should say about local authority.

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## Luis Hospital CEO Fired Over Financial Concerns

Gregory Calliste was fired as the chief executive officer (CEO) of Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital Monday because of mounting debt, officials said Tuesday.

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## Scholarships Available for Dependents of GERS Members

High school seniors who are dependents of Government Employees' Retirement System members are eligible to apply for a GERS scholarship.

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## V.I. Democratic Delegate Count Actually Counts for a Change

At the upcoming DNC, how the Virgin Islands votes will be of national significance. As Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama seek the nomination in a virtual dead heat among delegates, the Virgin Islands is experiencing its own deadlock.

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## Doucana with Cassava? Culinary Horizons Expand as Ag Fair Concludes

A sea of cars filled the field across from the Agriculture Department fairground Monday as much of St. Croix and hundreds more from St. Thomas and the wider Caribbean came out in droves for the third and final day of this year's Virgin Islands Agriculture and Food Fair.

[Click here for More...](#) 2008-02-19 00:21:08



## Fishermen Reluctantly Agree to Try New Vented Pots

The St. Thomas Fishermen's Association is partnering with the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council (CFM) in a study to determine the number, if any, of compressed or juvenile fish that get trapped in fish pots.

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## Presidents Day Fills Tourism Coffers

Across the territory, hotels are booked for the Presidents Day weekend.

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## Sunday Rain Fails to Deter Crowds at Ag Fair

Sunday is seen by many as the big day of the big fair -- St. Croix's Agricultural and Food Fair -- and while morning rains reaching into the early afternoon threatened to dampen the festivities, it was just a threat.

[Click here for More...](#) 2008-02-18 21:12:26



## @Work: Zora Sandals

Chances are if you've lived on St. Thomas for a while, you own a pair of Zora's sandals. The sturdy shoes are as emblematic to St. Thomas as the hook bracelets are to St. Croix.

[Click here for More...](#) 2008-02-18 00:17:04



## V.I. Obama Backers Mix With Barack's New England Fans

What do chilly Massachusetts and the balmy Virgin Islands have in common? Women from both locales now have joined forces behind Sen. Barack Obama, launching the Massachusetts-U.S. Virgin Islands Women for Obama committee, whose kickoff event Sunday rallied some 75 to 100 people.

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## Antiques and Knicknacks Draw Crowd to Synagogue Auction

Raindrops Sunday did nothing to deter the throngs of art lovers, bargain hunters and ordinary folk out for an unusual time as they poured into the University of the Virgin Islands' Sports and Fitness Center for the Ninth Annual Synagogue Auction.

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