

Task force, governor discuss reparations

By Ayesha Morris
Special to Sentinel-Voice
ST. THOMAS, Virgin Islands (NNPA) - Representatives of a joint task force of Denmark and the Virgin Islands met Friday with Gov. John deJongh Jr. in an effort to sensitize the government to the reparations movement.

Talks about redress for harm caused during slavery and colonization under the Danish flag continued this week with a public forum Monday at the University of the Virgin Islands' Chase Auditorium on St. Thomas.

Those attending Friday's meeting at Government House included visiting Danish human rights expert Morten Kjaerum; African Caribbean Reparations and Resettlement Alliance president Shelley Moorhead; ACRRA board member Kendall Petersen; and Sen. Terrence Nelson.

The meeting, which was closed to the public, was part of weekend activities scheduled around Kjaerum's visit to the territory from Denmark, which will include a

tour of historic Christiansted sponsored by the Department of Tourism and a reception co-sponsored by the V.I. Bar Association at Government House on St. Croix.

Kjaerum is the executive director of the Danish Institute for Human Rights and co-chair, along with Moorhead, of the joint reparations task force, which is a nongovernmental partnership.

Kjaerum said the goal of the meeting was to discuss a nontraditional approach to the subject of reparations.

"We want to discuss and get their reaction to the new paradigm. It's not about financial compensation. It's not about an apology," Kjaerum said. "This is a people-to-people initiative based on coming to terms with their history, contrary to other places where the primary focus has been on financial compensation."

The main objectives of the task force are education, restoration and reconciliation for areas such as the loss of land, language, religion, cul-

ture and educational institutions as a result of slavery.

"We're not interested in an apology," Moorhead said, adding that he was more interested in the collective ideas, projects and tasks that might be born out of Denmark.

"There's no way you can repair that with money."

After the meeting, Nelson described the governor as receptive and "honest about having to educate himself more. There is interest," Nelson said. "The government is on board and will be on board."

No official statement was released Friday from Government House.

People in Denmark are just becoming aware of their nation's role in more than 175 years of slavery in the territory and little information is provided in school textbooks, Kjaerum said.

"It's a minute part of the history curriculum," he said.

While some Danish groups have questioned the importance of the reparations movement, others are eager

to learn more, Kjaerum said.

"Those that we meet are very interested," he said. "There's an urge to know more about it."

Today's public forum is the third reparations roundtable to be hosted by ACRRA.

UVI professors, Kjaerum and Moorhead will talk about slavery, crimes against humanity, colonization, the transfer of the Virgin Islands and a model for repair in the 21st century.

The forum also will explore educational exchange between UVI and the University of Copenhagen.

In April 2005, a delegation of Virgin Islanders traveled to Denmark to discuss the issue, resulting in a memorandum of understanding and establishment of a joint task force to study the subject.

In May 2005, the V.I. Legislature adopted a resolution to condemn the institution of slavery and seek reparations from Denmark.

Last July, another Virgin Islands delegation was in-

ited to Emancipation celebrations in Ghana to explore reparations with the West African nation.

There are plans to send delegations to Denmark and Ghana again this year.

"I think we have a bright future ahead of us," said Petersen, who described the V.I.-Denmark reparations

movement as the civil rights movement of the 21st century.

"I see us as the forerunners for reparations for people all over the world who went through the great slave trade."

Ayesha Morris writes for the Virgin Islands Daily News.

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Your Horoscope Says... Feb. 8- Feb. 14

ARIES

Listen well for the indications that money can be found in an unusual place. Social and romantic interest should be your focus this evening. Love comes from what you do not say.

Soul Affirmation: I let my mind go slack and tighten up my body.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 45, 47

TAURUS

Some people may not "get" where you're coming from, but ask your family and significant other to give you time to explain your way of looking at life this week. Do it calmly and confidentially.

Soul Affirmation: I let go and let my spirit take control.

Lucky Numbers: 17, 30, 47

GEMINI

Now's a better than usual time for self-reflection and meditation. Share your ideas. They're more valuable than you think. Appreciation comes from someone far away. You make the call.

Soul Affirmation: I admit what I really want out of life this week.

Lucky Numbers: 23, 29, 38

CANCER

Creativity comes from a deep source. Take the chance to pursue creative goals. Others will understand later. You and a child can come to an unmatched understanding. Speak truth and let the chips fall where they may.

Soul Affirmation: I do not allow demands to be placed on me this week.

Lucky Numbers: 45, 47, 49

LEO

Listen carefully and follow good

advice that will come from someone you've often regarded as foolish. You run into difficulties with one of your projects; don't worry, it's only temporary. How you manage your mind will affect the eventual outcome.

Soul Affirmation: The deed is done. I must wait for the results to unfold.

Lucky Numbers: 10, 18, 39

VIRGO

If there is someone or something that you're avoiding, don't panic if you find you must confront what you've been hiding from. Wait for things to work themselves out. Don't force the issue. Time solves more problems than you ever can.

Soul Affirmation: I seek connection with the best that is in me.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 23, 29

LIBRA

Be flexible. Yes, you. There are many ways to be right and your lover or friend will have come up with one that is different from yours. You'll be asked to compromise this week, or you just have to give in. Remember you sometimes have to give a little to get a little.

Soul Affirmation: I see myself as a finisher rather than a starter this week.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 24, 29

SCORPIO

Use your natural magnetism to get to someone who might be hard to reach. If you have a problem that you need to get off your chest, tell a relative or friend, don't hold it inside. Where's the party? Find it. You need a social setting to make the magnetism work best.

Soul Affirmation: I give thanks for the chance to give.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 32, 33

SAGITTARIUS

Even if you can't be with someone you care for, call that person or send a soul vibration to let them know you care. You'll feel better, and so will the person. Take time to meditate on the good things life has in store for you.

Soul Affirmation: The success of others is the investment I make in myself.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 27, 38

CAPRICORN

A person is only as good as their word. If you have made any promises recently, remember to follow through. People will be counting on you. Any dissatisfaction you feel might come from not doing what you told someone that you would do.

Soul Affirmation: Superficiality is often the best route to clarity.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 50, 51

AQUARIUS

If you're not sure about a business deal, ask someone who knows. Asking questions now can help avoid mistakes in the future. The love that you have been looking for is right in front of you. Your ability to see it improves this week.

Soul Affirmation: When I am clear about who I am, the world becomes clearer.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 19, 20

PISCES

Your ability to display enormous grace under enormous pressure will be tested this week. Use your gifts this week to transcend petty criticism. Consider the source and know that you are doing just fine.

Soul Affirmation: I enjoy the love that others have for me.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 30, 39



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