

Island inspector

Steven van Beverhoudt, inspector general of the Virgin Islands, was on Guam during the week of May 20 to participate in the Association of Pacific Islands Public Auditors conference held at the Guam Marriott Resort.

Steven van Beverhoudt, 45, graduated cum laude from the University of the Virgin Islands in 1979, where he is remembered for his artistic talents. "In fact, I used to paint murals of album covers on my walls."

He began his career as a revenue agent with the Virgin Islands Bureau of Internal Revenue. Six years later he transferred to the Bureau of Audit, where he served in a supervisory position for the next four years. Appointed as the first Virgin Islands inspector general in 1989 by Governor Alexander Farrelly, van Beverhoudt has made the position his own since then. His nomination for a third term by Gov. Charles Turnbull was confirmed by the Virgin Islands Legislature on June 21.

Although he describes himself as "an accountant who hates accounting," van Beverhoudt enjoys the challenges of public auditing — meeting lots of people and seeing how different agencies and programs work. van Beverhoudt especially enjoys presenting his recommendations, which he compares to "writing a story." As most reports are released through the local media, the challenge lies in making the reports interesting enough to read, yet understandable by the general public. "The frustrating part is that sometimes it's very difficult to get government agencies to follow the recommendations. We come up with so many things that can help improve the operations of the government, but sometimes you feel like you're banging your head against a wall."

van Beverhoudt credits his parents for instilling the importance of "doing the right thing." Born and raised in St. Thomas, van Beverhoudt says, "Your integrity is basically all you have. If you build up a good reputation and the trust of the community, then the politicians really can't do too much to you. If you're doing the right things and the politicians want to get rid of you, then it's obvious that it's a political game they're playing, and the public

will make noise about it."

While his role as public auditor keeps him busy during the day, van Beverhoudt says, "I'm very close to my family. We spend all of our free time together, just about." Eldest son, Steven Jr., who graduates from high school this year, takes flying lessons and hopes to become an air force pilot. "He wants to join the military, but we kind of convinced him to go to college first."

Passionate about sports, van Beverhoudt played football and baseball as a youth, and continues to be a fan. "Before I messed up my back, my boys had me doing tae kwon do with them. I was a green belt with blue stripes." An active member of his church, van Beverhoudt also serves on his local parish council. "We're involved right now in a massive restoration campaign to restore the Saint Peter and Paul Cathedral, built in the 18th century."

With relatives in Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and the U.S. mainland, van Beverhoudt loves to travel with his family. "My sons are history buffs, so we like to go to places like Williamsburg and Jamestown — they really enjoy that." While they still plan to see the renaissance countries of Spain, France and Italy, this summer they may vacation closer to home on the island of Aruba. Although the family was considering a trip to Europe this summer, van Beverhoudt says, "All this 9-11 mess kind of dampened that a little bit."



Steven van Beverhoudt

Virgin Islands inspector general
Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

Education

1979 bachelor's in accounting from the University of the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas

Born

St. Thomas, one of four inhabited islands making up the Virgin Islands, an unincorporated territory of the United States.

Family

Wife, Myrna Velazquez van Beverhoudt, was born in New York, but raised in St. Croix, Virgin Islands — where her parents are from. Today she is a high school Spanish teacher in St. Thomas.

Sons Steven, Jr., 19, and Mark, 11.

Personal philosophy

"Do your best in everything, and always do what you feel is right."

Leisure activities

"I love sports — especially baseball and American football. I no longer participate, but I enjoy watching sports in my free time."

What's familiar in the Virgin Islands

"A power failure so the computers are down — life in the islands."