October 27, 2026

Good Day, Inhabitants of the Virgin Islands and the Candidates vying for elective office in the General Election one week from today:

In the late 1980's I offered to help Democrat Governor Bruce King of New Mexico and the newly-formed New Mexico Border Authority, authorized by the Legislature and organized by the Lt. Governor's Office without an appropriation, execute their plan to develop a temporary US/Mexico Customs and Border Patrol trans-shipment facility on a greenfield site on the US side of the permitted temporary border crossing between Santa Teresa, NM, USA and San Jeronimo, Chihuahua, Mexico, pro bono with no state budget, so that the Mexican government would be induced to commence construction of a temporary trans-shipment crossing facility on its side of the border. In forty-five days beginning in early December. It took me seventy-five days.

I read recently that over $40Bn in goods were transshipped through the permanent international trans-shipment facilities at Santa Teresa/San Jeronimo last year.

I was advised by my friend on the New Mexico Border Authority, Tim Kraft, the person who I learned the need for from and made the offer to Governor King through, the friend who persuaded President Carter to bring his family to Club Comanche Hotel in 2009, that *if one is asked to do something by a governor or president, don't agree to take on any task you don't believe in and do your best to fulfill the obligation on time and on budget. And don't ever take them a problem without a thorough analysis and recommended solutions.*

I first met Tim when I was in law school after a classmate dropped out in our third year to work with Tim on the Jimmy Carter primary campaign in Iowa. After the election, Tim staffed the Appointments Desk in the Oval Office throughout President Carter's term. His desk approved every appointment made from the Oval Office - from family friends to Cabinet nominees, and Tim trusted my judgment. When President Carter wasn't re-elected, Tim and his wife Molly and young son Colt moved to Corrales, New Mexico and built a beautiful adobe home overlooking the Rio Grande Valley. Tim took the job of Executive Director of the New Mexico Democratic Party.

That same year and completely out of the blue, my name was offered to replace the county chairman from the floor at the Dona Ana County Democratic Central Committee, at its annual precinct meeting with roughly 400 precincts representing about 40,000 registered Democrats, when its chairman abruptly resigned on stage two months before the primary to work on a campaign for one of the candidates for governor who was willing to pay him.

I was at a table in the back row with my back to the stage, when I heard a voice from behind me, a voice I barely knew, yell out “I nominate Jack Pickel” for chairman. I visited with the Central Committee Board of Directors (10 members from a county at least 10 times the geographic size of St. Croix) for an interview, we got along fine and made a deal. The Democratic Party of Dona Ana County candidates won 27 of 27 seats in the “county courthouse” that year. I relied on Tim’s advice to help the candidates make that possible.

After I bought the controlling interest in Club Comanche, Inc., Tim and his wife Molly came to visit me a couple of times at the Comanche, and when Chip Carter asked Tim where he and his wife could retreat from the Obama Inauguration in January 2009 because it was sure to snow and if they were nearby they would have to walk with the family in the Inauguration Parade. Tim said let me ask Pickel. Chip etux stayed a week, the only guests, in the one room that was refurbished enough for guests. Gibbs Bully, my developer’s apprentice and security adviser, stayed in the room next door on a cot to make sure none of the Boardwalk vandals invaded their privacy.

Chip was the family location scout for the annual Carter Family Holiday Reunion, and when he left he said he really liked St Croix and Club Comanche, and asked if I would be willing to host his family for their annual Family Winter Holiday, from December 26, 2009 to January 2, 2010.

Despite the foreseen and unforeseeable issues that would arise, I said yes. The Comanche Team pulled it off, and Gibbs was the unofficial security detail for the Carter adult grandchildren during their visit.

In January 2024 Governor Albert Bryan, Jr. and David Bornn, his legal counsel, requested Raymond James and me to come up with a revitalization plan and founding board of directors for a Christiansted Revitalization 501c entity that the Winston Law Firm would assist in enabling.

Raymond and I have worked as colleagues on it ever since. I emailed Governor Bryan a final report this spring and his reply was brief: it was a Herculean task that wouldn't be accomplished during his term.

So I began developing BottomUpGovernment.org (BUG), dedicated to non-partisan research and public education on territorial governance and local democracy, and lobbying on the public's behalf for public policies derived from the bottom up.

All governors and politicians look inward after the last election while they are in office, wondering how complicated their legacy will be after their last term ends, and if there is anything they can do to add weight to the positive side of the ledger before sine die.

The Town of Christiansted Revitalization Plan, through the BottomUpGovernment VI Municipal Corporations Act of 2026, gives you a path to a legacy as the elected officials who returned the power to the people that they haven't had for seven decades, the power to do the work necessary to revitalize their towns, suburbs and villages every day, a community renaissance they want to make happen.

The obstacle is a unitary unicameral territorial government, without municipal corporations governing remote towns and villages to enable the processes of community economic development to be applied uniformly and reliably within the jurisdiction of its governing body, a town council.

I listen to the spirits, and the Comanche hosts centuries of them to advise me. The historic hotel at 1 Strand Street, where a young Alexander Hamilton is believed to have spent time at the first doctor's clinic on St. Croix next to the King's Harbour Yards and a half-block from Government House, was built c.1756, 20 years before the 1776 American Revolution.

The Spirits of Jimmy Carter and Bruce King and Tim Kraft have dropped by recently to advise me about what they are seeing happen with the Virgin Islands Democratic Party.

The Spirits of Jimmy and Bruce and Timmy said to me “Jack, tell the VI Democratic Party from us - “You have lost your path. It is time for you to be gone bush and reflect for some time. While you are there teach your children and emerging leaders the importance of being grounded in the principles of democracy and what they need to do to be leaders in their communities”, from grade school organizing a Library Club to learn the Dewey Decimal System for cataloging books and periodicals so you could help get them back in the stacks quickly for the next reader, to organizing a successful presidential campaign.

You are embarrassing all of us Democrats in front of our families, neighbors and friends. Enough of this parading around in royal blue t-shirts driving blue SUVs on the St. Thomas waterfront expecting a blue wave of votes on November 3rd…your wave broke prematurely and you’ve drifted away from helping us solve our problems.

Now is the time for repentance and resurrection…pass The BUG Act by November 3, 2026, and be gone bush with your families so we can all ***happily*** get on with the Herculean tasks you left for us at the last minute.

There are four charter-towns in waiting that could benefit from your knowledge, experience and support while you’re gone bush from elective office.

Your children and future grandchildren will thank you, as will generations of VI inhabitants to come.

All the best as lame ducks and in your personal life thereafter!

Respectfully,

Jack Pickel
1 Strand Street, Christiansted, St. Croix