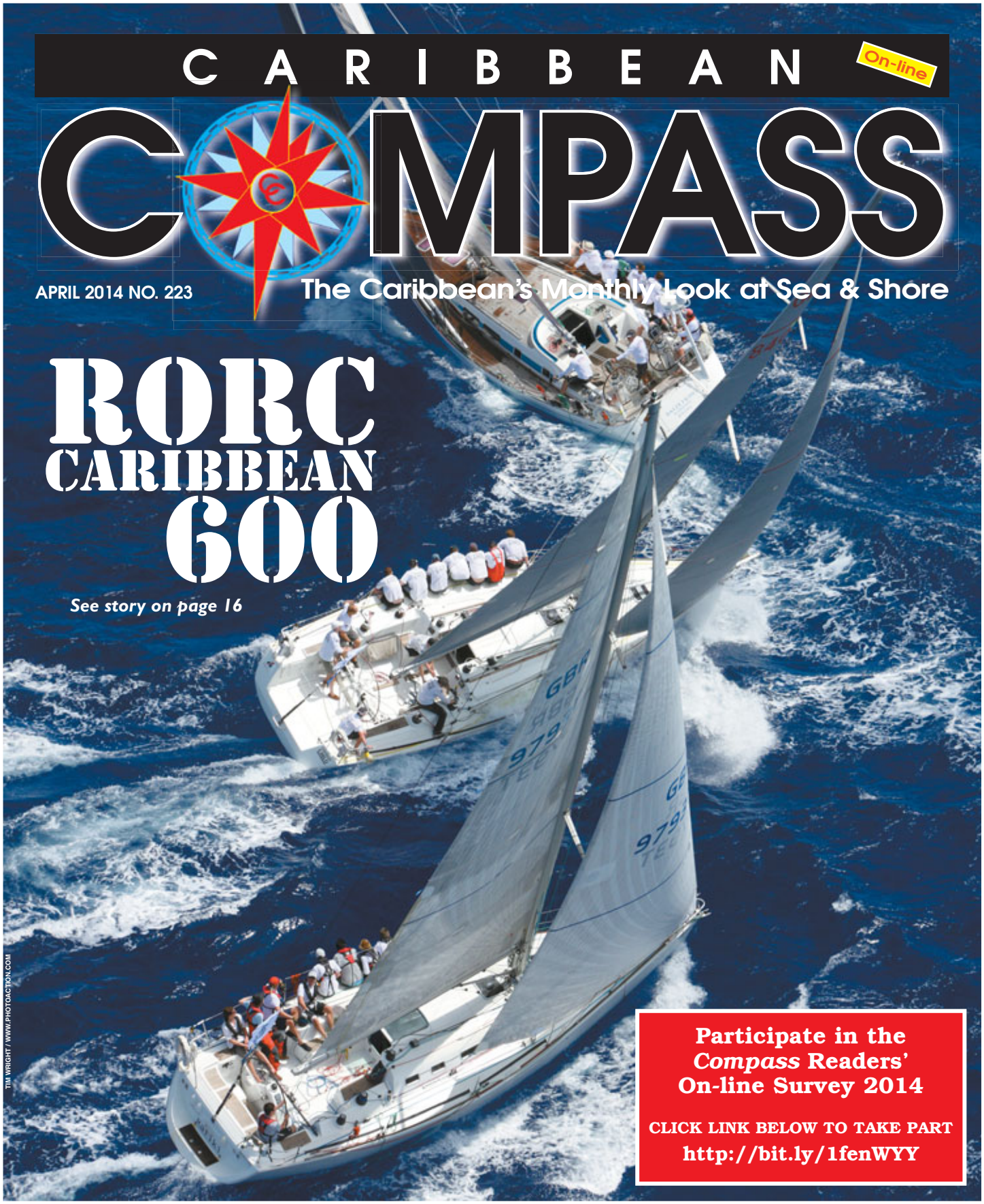
CARIBBEAN On-line
# COMPASS
APRIL 2014 NO. 223
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

# RORC CARIBBEAN 600

*See story on page 16*



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*The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore*

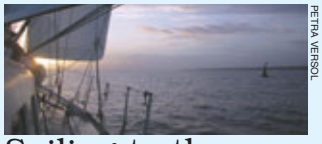
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APRIL 2014 • NUMBER 223


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*Caribbean Compass* is published monthly by Compass Publishing Ltd., P.O. Box 175 BQ, Bequia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines.
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*ISSN 1605 - 1998*

*On the cover: This year's RORC Caribbean 600 offshore race out of Antigua saw some of the hottest action yet, and yacht race photographer par excellence Tim Wright was there on the water — and in the air!*




***Compass* covers the Caribbean! From Cuba to Trinidad, from Panama to Barbuda, we've got the news and views that sailors can use. We're the Caribbean's monthly look at sea and shore.**

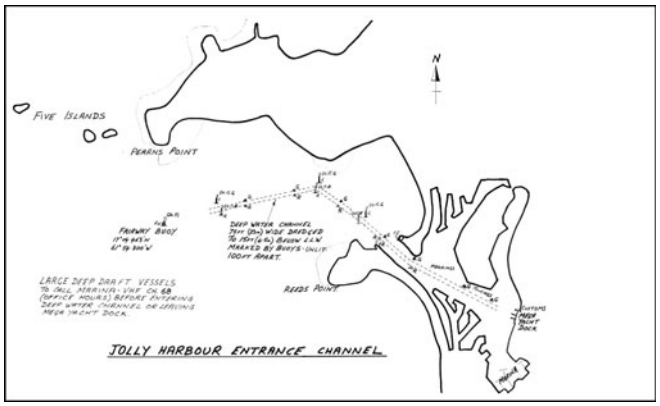
**'Without the *Caribbean Compass* this superannuated gob would lose all track of the goings on in the island chain he ranged so long!'**
***— Bruce Van Sant***
***Author of The Gentleman's Guide to Passages South: the Thornless Path to Windward; Tricks of the Trades; A Cruising and Watersports Guide to the Spanish Virgin islands; and Margarita Cat. www.thornlesspath.com***

**Click Google Map link below to find the *Caribbean Compass* near you!**

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# Info & Updates

**Jolly Harbour Antigua Dredging Complete**
As of mid-March, dredging is complete in Antigua's Jolly Harbour and the Jolly




Harbour Marina has provided an updated pilot chart for entry to the harbour. Clear marks during daylight and a lit marked channel at night give easy access.
Coming from the south, keep well clear of Cades Reef and Fryes (Ffryes) Rock.
The fairway buoy is at 17°04.463'N, 61°54.300'W.

The channel is identified by three pairs of lit channel-marker piles and unlit can buoys that identify the 15-foot dredged channel.
In the harbour you are guided by unlit small channel markers, past moorings to the Customs dock (yellow flag). Call Jolly Harbour Port Authority on VHF 16.
If already cleared in to Antigua & Barbuda, call for the Marina Dockmaster on VHF 68 or phone (268) 462 6041.
*For more information visit www.jolly-harbour-marina.com.*

**Eight Bells, Steve Black**


WORLD CRUISING CLUB

We were sorry to hear from our friends at World Cruising Club about the death on March 17th of Steve Black, founder of the Caribbean 1500 rally, following a long battle against cancer.
Steve was an inspiration to many sailors through his long and varied career in sailing, including numerous offshore races, many of which were single-handed, and a three-year stint as executive director of the US Sailing Association. However, there is no doubt that his biggest legacy will be the Caribbean 1500 cruising rally, which first set sail in 1990, with a fleet of 50 cruising boats sailing from Virginia, USA to the British Virgin Islands.
World Cruising Club reports: The impetus for the rally started when Steve saw that cruising sailors outnumbered offshore racing sailors, but there were virtually no organized events for cruisers. The Caribbean 1500 rally offered the chance to sail in company, combined with preparatory seminars taught by sailing experts, an SSB radio safety net at sea, and a great deal of fun and socializing. Always leading from the front, Steve sailed with the rally, helping to inspire and trouble-shoot the fleet at sea.
He always found time to foster personal connections, spending hours matching crew to boats, allowing those new to sailing to take experienced crew along, or placing novices onto boats with veteran skippers for mile-building. His calm manner and easygoing personality led to many firm friendships being formed over the years.
*—Continued on next page*

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**St Lucia**
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**Trinidad & Tobago** NEW
AMD
Chaguramas

**USVI St Croix**
Wilsons' Cruzan Canvas
Christiansted



*—Continued from previous page*

"Steve is the reason I'm doing what I'm doing today," says Andy Schell, event manager for the ARC Caribbean 1500 and offshore delivery skipper. "He put me on a 1500 boat back in 2006, which was my first offshore passage, and helped me make connections in the ocean sailing world. Steve was a huge inspiration. It's an honor to be managing the 25th Caribbean 1500 this year and carry his legacy into the future." When Steve announced his decision to retire in 2010, he was determined that "the 1500" would continue and develop into the future. It was his firm belief that after 21 years of his leadership, combining the Caribbean 1500 with World Cruising Club's worldwide portfolio of rallies would see it continue to inspire sailors for many years to come.

The 2014 rally, starting on November 2nd (weather permitting), will be the 25th edition of the Caribbean 1500, a fitting memorial to a man who encouraged so many cruisers to discover the delights offshore sailing.

**Union Island Teens to Stand Trial**

According to a report in the local newspaper *The News* dated February 7th: Following the brutal attack on a couple aboard their yacht last October, two teenagers of Union Island are to face a judge and jury for the alleged crime. Jerome Jordon (pictured) and Enard Douglas were on Monday February 3rd committed to stand trial before the High Court on charges of causing grievous bodily harm, unlawful and malicious wounding, and aggravated burglary, following preliminary inquiries. The preliminary inquiries began in October 2013 before the Serious Offenses Court in Kingstown. The teenagers' committal to trial came exactly four months after they allegedly boarded the yacht *Rainbow* anchored off Frigate Island in the Southern Grenadines and attacked the couple… Toward the conclusion of the preliminary inquiries on Monday, the prosecution called four witnesses including Detective Corporal Jerome James of the Royal Grenada Police Force, Justice of the Peace Kenneth Williams and Detective Constable Justin Cupid — the investigating officer attached to the local Criminal Investigations Department. The defence did not call any witnesses. Three teens were apprehended by members of the Royal St. Vincent & the Grenadines Police Force immediately after the attack. One of the young men has turned Crown Witness; the trial of the other two is expected to take place later this year.



COURTESY SEARCHLIGHT NEWSPAPER

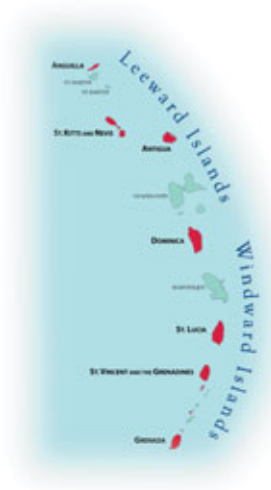
*Jerome Jordan, aged 16 years at the time of his arrest, is one of two teens who will stand trial for the attack on a cruising couple last year*

**Cruisers' Site-ings**

• Check your propane connections NOW. Another cruiser has died as a result of an apparent propane leak. Richard Muntzing died in hospital on January 8th after a catastrophic explosion on his boat, *S/V Panacea,* in the Rio Dulce six days earlier. See ***http://riodulcechisme.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1155&Itemid=1***.

• What a long, strange trip the yacht *Corcovado* had after breaking free of her mooring in St. Barths on January 10th. Her owner, Andrew Connell, told the whole story in the March issue of *Latitude 38* magazine. Read it free at ***www.latitude38.com/eBooks/2014/L38201403.pdf***, on page 99.

**Thanks for Giving a Hand to Hands!**




Hands Across the Sea, co-founded in 2007 by cruising sailors Harriet and Tom Linskey to promote children's literacy and assist schools and libraries in Caribbean communities, is facilitating the creation of vibrant school libraries — often where none existed before. School libraries are being born. Other school libraries that, over the years, have become little more than tombs of old, discarded, inappropriate books, are being rejuvenated. The children are discovering the joy and excitement of reading and the life-changing power of literacy. As more students take books home to share with their siblings and parents, school principals and teachers report that positive effects of their school library are rippling through families and the community.

Hands Across the Sea works on the islands shown on the map. What do Mill Reef Fund, Sandals Foundation, Western Union Foundation, Scotiabank Bright Future, Christophe Harbour Foundation, Palm Island Resort and Galley Bay Resort & Spa, the US Embassy (Barbados), FastCash, and Windjammer Landing have in common? They all believe that "Literacy is the gift that lasts a lifetime". And they've demonstrated this by making a big commitment to supporting the Hands mission in the Caribbean.

*For more information visit www.handsacrossthesea.net.*

*—Continued on next page*



**Caribbean Book Festival in Trinidad**
J. Wynner reports: Mariners, if you love books, are avid readers, and especially if you are fans of Caribbean literature you'll want to be in Trinidad from April 23rd through 27th for the annual book fair, the NGC Bocas Literary Festival.
There will be four days of readings, poetry, performances, discussions, open mic, debates, bookselling, films, and events for children. All the events are open to the public and are free.
Sponsored by the National Gas Company (NGC) of Trinidad & Tobago, the Bocas Literary Festival is named after the Bocas — the passageways situated at the northwestern tip of the island that sea voyagers sail through to get in and out of Trinidad. Boca is also the Spanish word for mouth: the organ of speech and song and storytelling. The NGC Bocas Lit Fest invites readers from around the world to enter through the Bocas and celebrate the rich literary heritage of Trinidad & Tobago and the wider Caribbean.
This is a festival to plan for. Note it in your diary.
*For more information visit www.bocaslitfest.com.*

**It's Your Chance to Chime In!**
Once again, it's your opportunity as a reader to tell those behind the *Compass* desk what you think, what you do, and what you want!



ANNA LANDRY

Ever since the *Caribbean Compass* was founded in 1995, every three years or so we've asked our readers for their input via a Readers' Survey published in print editions of the *Compass*. The results, thanks to your informed, intelligent and sometimes iconoclastic responses, have allowed us to increase "customer satisfaction" on an ongoing basis. You do a great job of plotting the waypoints that keep us on course!


PEGGY FISCHER

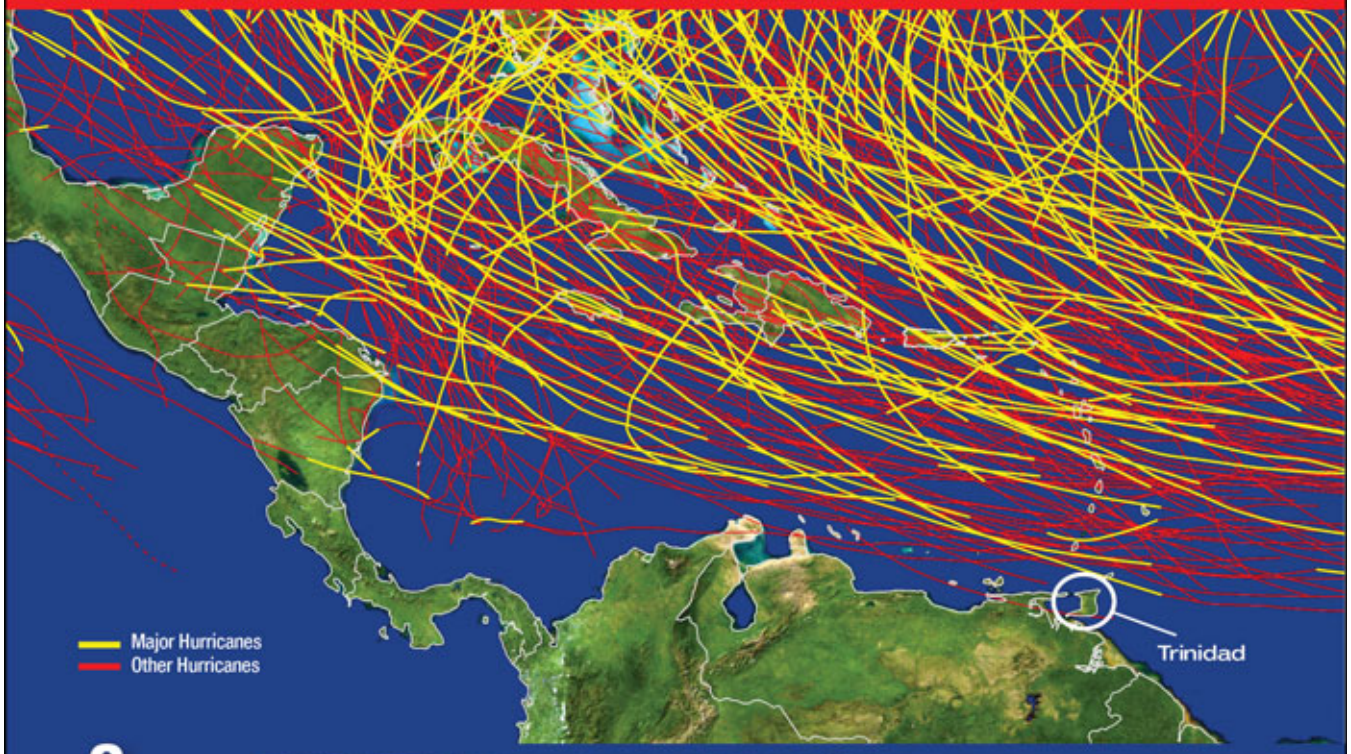
*You're invited! Participate in the* Compass *Readers' Survey 2014 online. See also ad on page 31.*

This year, in our sixth *Caribbean Compass* Readers' Survey, we are responding to an often-repeated special request: "We'd like to be able to complete future *Compass* Readers' Surveys on line."
Your wish is our command, so rather than fussing with envelopes and stamps, you can participate in the 2014 *Caribbean Compass* Readers' Survey now at http://freeonlinesurveys.com/s.asp?sid=xh3awys92i71yd9436758
or visit www.caribbeancompass.com

**Welcome Aboard!**
In this issue of *Caribbean Compass*, we welcome new advertiser SOL EC Ltd. fuel company of the Wider Caribbean, on page 29. Good to have you with us!

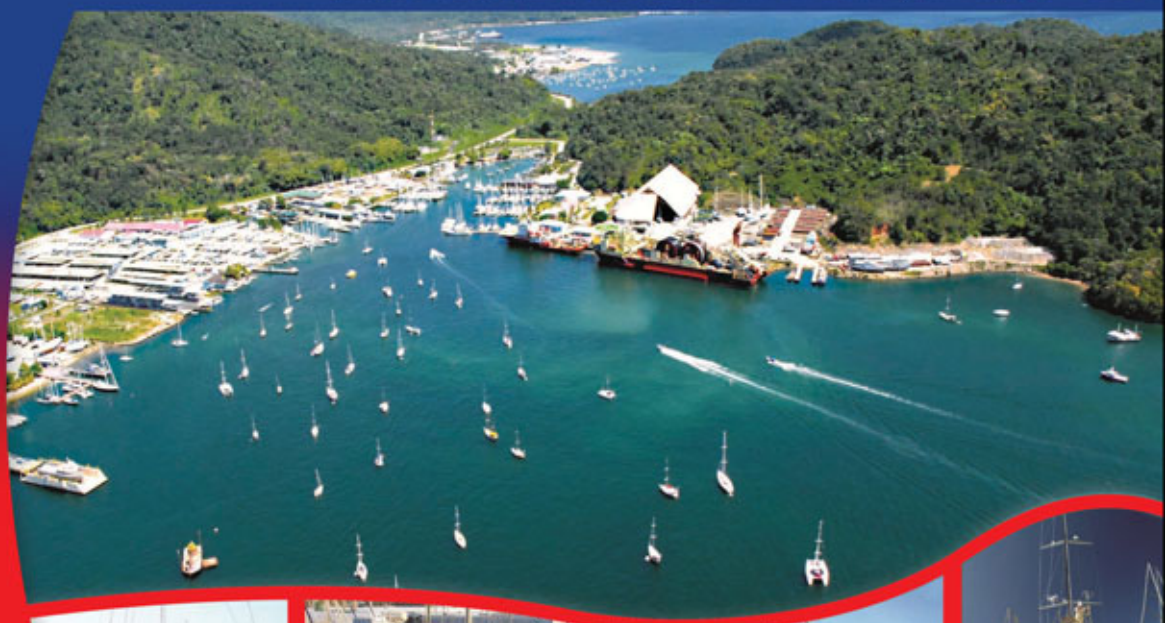


# Hurricane History 1851 to 2012 - Source: NOAA




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# BUSINESS BRIEFS

**New Nautical Coatings' New Epoxy System**

Just launched into the world of boating maintenance is Sea Hawk's new Hawk System, manufactured by Sea Hawk Paints, a division of New Nautical Coatings, Inc. It is a state-of-the-art system for building and repairing boats, planes, surfboards, canoes, and many other substrates. The Hawk System is an easy to use, low-viscosity, low-blush epoxy system that makes building and repair jobs a breeze.

"Building and repairing fiberglass structures is a demanding process that requires strict adherence to proper procedures," reports Erik Norrie, CEO of New Nautical Coatings. "The foundation of our system is our HS-15 Epoxy Resin, which fulfills all of the different application needs with its eleven-part catalyst and fairing options," he says. "Bonding, fairing, coating, waterproofing and air exchange reduction have never been simpler."

Any of the six Hawk System Fillers can be used with any combination of Hawk System Resin and Catalysts, giving the user a large range of epoxy blends, all within a single system. "If you need a fast cure due to schedule constraints or if you need a very thick fairing compound, the Hawk System has the situation covered," Norrie says. After the application is cured, it can be sanded into a fine-tuned shape for the highest-quality finish. The Hawk System's color-coded sizing procedure ensures accuracy.

New Nautical Coatings, Inc., manufacturer of Sea Hawk Paints, was established in 1978. Sea Hawk's mission is to provide boat owners around the world with the highest quality, most pleasurable to use, application-specific solutions for protecting and enhancing the longevity and performance of their vessels.

*For more information on Sea Hawk Paints see ad on page 10.*

**Yacht Transport Partners: DYT and Sevenstar**

Now that the partnership between leading yacht transport companies DYT Yacht Transport and Sevenstar Yacht Transport has been finalized, it's great news for yacht owners who, by choice or necessity, depend on the shipping of their prized posses-

LINDA TAYLOR



sions to various ports around the world. The two companies, while maintaining their separate identities, are fully equipped to advise on the best options for either float-on/float-off (FLO/FLO) or lift-on/lift-off (LO/LO) services offered by a fleet of over 120 ships that are wholly owned and operated by parent company the Spliethoff Group, one of the largest ship owners in The Netherlands, which plays a major role in the global transport market.

DYT's two ships — *Yacht Express* and *Super Servant 4* — are the world's only dedicated yacht transport ships that can submerge their dock bays for easy FLO/FLO entry and exit of yachts on their own keels and are assigned primarily to the safe and expeditious transport of yachts across the Atlantic Ocean. Sevenstar's expansive global routes, which have been serviced by Spliethoff's LO/LO carriers since 1987 — the same year that DYT performed its first yacht transport operations under the name Dock Express — offer yacht owners unlimited access to just about any travel destination in the world. A total of 12 experienced loading masters constantly travel the globe to orchestrate the loading and unloading of yachts entrusted to DYT and Sevenstar.

Says Richard Klabbers, Sevenstar's managing director, "Our business is about getting the yachts to their destinations safe, sound and hassle free. All insurance work and port clearances are completed in advance by our agents. All loading, unloading, cradling and fastening of yachts is overseen by our loading masters."

*For more information on DYT Yacht Transport see ad on page 16.*

**Don't Miss Parts & Power Specials**

Parts & Power Ltd in the British Virgin Islands, supplying products from some of the best names in the power and marine engine business, offers a changing array of monthly and overstock specials. Visit them regularly; they are constantly posting new exclusive deals at www.partsandpower.com/store_specials_monthly_specials.php and www.partsandpower.com/store_specials_featured_overstock.php.

*For more information on Parts & Power see ad on page 28.*

**Blue Lagoon Hotel & Marina Leaps Ahead**

Chris Doyle reports: The Blue Lagoon Hotel and Marina in St. Vincent was built about 50 years ago. Back then, as the base for Caribbean Sailing Yachts (CSY), it was an advanced concept for its time: a dock for bareboats with rooms for guests and a bar and restaurant overlooking the dock. Another charter company, Sunsail, subsequently took it over and added floating docks to extend the marina. Then Sunsail moved off the island and the property was bought by locally based boat owners Kelly and Jankie Glass.

This is excellent news for us sailors because the Glasses have both the vision and the funds not only to restore the facility but also to upgrade the old "boatel" into a modern hotel and marina. The rooms are being completely renovated.

*—Continued on next page*

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The east side of the building, which currently sports bits of fence and broken concrete, will become a broad deck, café and spa facing the beach. The addition of a proper grocery store, selling both regular and gourmet items, and a chandlery will make it easy to hang out here. The marine services section is to be expanded and will house the current canvas shop as well as a mechanic. Kelly hopes to be able to clean up Canash Beach, have derelict boats removed, move the inshore moorings farther off (as was done in Prickly Bay, Grenada), and make the beach a real asset to St. Vincent again.

Two things have made Blue Lagoon problematic for cruisers and Kelly intends to fix both. One is that boats with over six and a half feet of draft cannot enter the marked channel at low tide. Kelly aims to get permission to dredge this channel down another foot or so. There is also a southern channel through the reef, suitable for deeper-draft boats, but so many yachts have come to grief here that I mark it on my guide's sketch chart with a skull and crossbones! Kelly hopes to get permission to put beacons marking the entrance, which should make it safer.

One other problem has been the lack of Customs and Immigration in this area — an anomaly, since you can clear Customs in more remote St. Vincent anchorages such as Chateaubelair and Wallilabou, but not in the Blue Lagoon/Young Island area, the yachting center of the island. I can see no rational reason why Customs and Immigration should not be available here soon.

Other interesting ideas Kelly has include a coastal walkway to link the marina to Barefoot Marine Centre, the St. Vincent Yacht Club and the town of Calliaqua, thus avoiding the perilous walk along the main road with buses hurtling by at Formula One speeds.



*It's renaissance time at Blue Lagoon in St. Vincent — very good news for sailors*

The marina is staying open throughout the renovations; manager Tessa Glass and her team are welcoming. Dockage, fuel and water are available. The two restaurants will also stay open: the Black Pearl upstairs and the Flowt Beach Bar, where you can eat inexpensively and well enough that it is an incentive not to cook. Sunsail moving away has had an interesting effect: not only are nearly all the Sunsail boats gone, but the demand for bareboats out of St. Vincent is now so great that the other charter companies' boats are usually out on charter so there is plenty of room.

*For more information on Blue Lagoon Hotel and Marina see ad on page 24.*

**New MyYacht App**

A new app called MyYacht turns your phone into a database about your yacht. Here you can store all the basic information about the boat, add tasks, and keep track of installations, service and maintenance you have to do and what you have done. MyYacht will let you have all the specifications, from registration and insurance to size and weight; info on all the equipment, from electronics to deck gear and safety equipment; all the tasks that need doing and the plans to get them done; your logbook entries, which you can also post to Facebook at the touch of a button, and much more. The app MyYacht is IOS based and can be downloaded to iPhone and iPad.

*For more information visit www.yachtapps.no.*

**First Panama International Boat Show in June**

As reported by IBI news, the first Panama International Boat Show will be held from June 20th through 22nd at Flamenco Marina near downtown Panama City. The show is being organized by Show Management, organizer of the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, the Yacht & Brokerage Show in Miami Beach, the Palm Beach International Boat Show and more.

"Central and South America are two of the fastest growing regions in the world, both in general economic growth and growth of the marine industry," says Show Management CEO Skip Zimbalist. "Because of the country's economic and political stability and favorable tax policies, high net worth Central and South Americans frequently visit or have a residence in Panama, making it an excellent location for a boat show."

According to Show Management, Central America has few boat dealers, leading to unmet demand for boats particularly in the nine- to 18-metre (30- to 60-foot) range. With support from the Ministry of Tourism and the Maritime Administration, the show organizer plans to cater to buyers from Panama, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela and other countries in Central and South America.

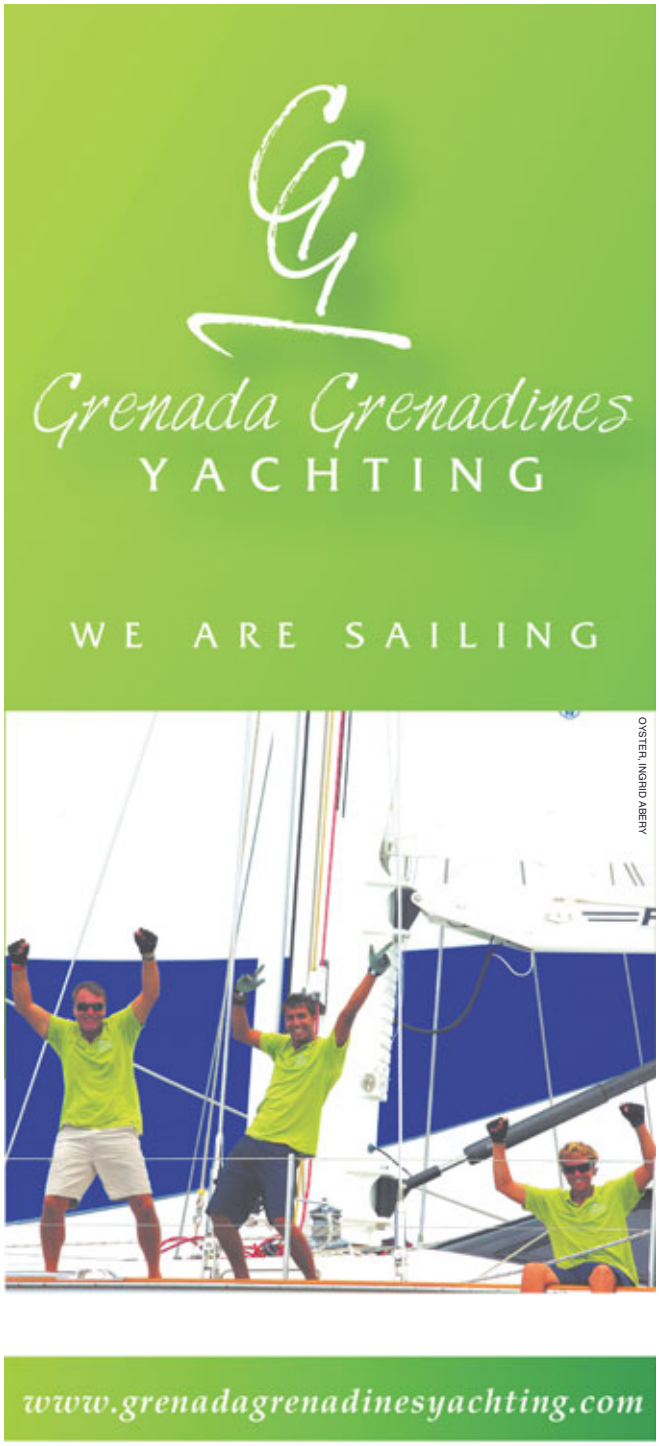
Meanwhile, both Puerto Rico and Colombia hosted international boat shows in late March; we'll have reports in next month's *Compass*.

**'Pacific Odyssey' for Sailors Bound for the South Seas**

Jimmy Cornell has launched a new rally aimed at sailors heading for the South Pacific from either Florida or the Eastern Caribbean. Starting in Miami on December 28th, the boats will head for Havana and greet the New Year in the Cuban capital. After a short cruise along Cuba's southwest coast, the rally will continue across the Caribbean Sea to the San Blas Islands. They will be joined there by those who had started from Martinique on January 11th, 2015. The combined fleet will spend one week among the islands of this archipelago. Preparations for the transit of the Panama Canal will be completed at Shelter Bay Marina, a convenient place to prepare the boat and crew for the onward passage to the Galapagos Islands. After a stop in the Galapagos, a landfall at Hiva Oa in the Marquesas will end the Pacific Odyssey.

The Pacific Odyssey will be an annual event and the first edition will be run as part of the Blue Planet Odyssey, a round-the-world event aimed at raising awareness of the effects of climate change.

*For more information visit www.blueplanetodyssey.com.*






# Regatta News

**Kops Tops Budget Marine Interlux in St. Maarten**

The 2014 Interlux One Design Regatta, held February 8th and 9th, organized by Lagoon Sailboats with shore activities sponsored by Coors Light, was a resounding success. The Budget Marine foreshore was regatta base, with the regatta village the social hub of the event. Fourteen teams rotated through eight Jeanneau 20s for 16 races on the north side of the St. Maarten airport runway. The winner by two points was Han de Bruyn Kops, sailing with brothers Pieter and Paul Soons. Second place went to Andrea Scarabelli of Team Budget Marine/Gillo; crew was Chris Marshall and Ryan Hope Ross. Third place went to the visiting team from the Volvo 70 *Monster Project* helmed by Andy Budgen sailing with Ali Merridew and Pippa Kirchman.



*For more information visit www.budgetmarine.com/events.aspx.*

***Scarlet Oyster* 'Best Boat' at Valentine's Regatta**

This year's edition of the Jolly Harbour Valentine's Regatta was held February 14th to 16th, organized by Jolly Harbour Yacht Club of Antigua. The 24 entries were split into Cruising, Racing-Cruising and Racing Classes.

*Scarlet Oyster*, an Oyster Lightwave 48 skippered by Ross Appleby, scored four firsts in the Saturday's Racing Class, with *No Face to Face*, a J/105 sailed by Robbie Ferron, battling with *Sunset Child*, a J/120 entered by Christian Reynolds, for the next place.

The Swedish Yachts 42 *Ocean Harmony*, sailed by John Wills, dominated the Cruising Class, utilizing the strong winds to great effect.

However, in the Racing-Cruising Class the result at the end of Saturday's racing was two wins and two seconds each for *Blue Peter*, a modified J/30, and *Frolic*, a former US Coastguard yawl. These boats, built in the 1960s and '70s respectively, race very competitively against more modern boats.

Sunday saw slightly lower winds but some heavy squalls gusting through Five Islands Harbour. *Ocean Harmony* did sufficiently well to guarantee the overall regatta honours in Cruising. In Racing-Cruising, *Blue Peter* claimed first.

*Scarlet Oyster* continued her dominance in Racing. Unfortunately, a heavy squall in the last race saw *Scarlet Oyster* lose her mast while flying her spinnaker. The "bang" as the rigging snapped was heard all over Five Islands Harbour, and a crewmember was swept into the sea by the boom (suffering minor injuries).



JOY SALTONSTALL

With a drop race, *Scarlet Oyster* won her class and the Best Boat in Regatta. The prizegiving was at Westpoint Bar, Jolly Harbour, with prizes awarded by Elizabeth Jordan of the Antigua Youth Sailing Academy.

*For full results visit http://jhycantigua.com.*

**Four Fight in Two-Day Round St. Lucia Race**

Of the seven boats that took to the start line for the St. Lucia Yacht Club's Independence Round the Island Race on February 22nd, three vessels retired an hour into the two-day competition for the Sir John Compton Memorial Trophy.

A reduced fleet of two J/24s and two cruising yachts sailed down the island's east coast in high seas and stiff, shifty winds, arriving in Laborie Bay to end the first leg.

*—Continued on next page*




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*—Continued from previous page*

First was the 54-foot *Caol Ila*, followed by J/24 *Sugar Beach Attitude*, the 44-foot *Hot Chocolate* and J/24 *Sunset Heights Grayling*. The crews joined in the village of Laborie's Independence Day celebrations.

On Day Two, after some calms in the island's lee, the finishing order was *Caol Ila, Sugar Beach Attitude, Grayling* and *Hot Chocolate*. CSA handicaps were being calculated, so final results waited until prizegiving at the St. Lucia Yacht Club. Guest of honour for the occasion was Lady Janice Compton, whose late husband, Sir John, the island's first prime minister, was a skilled sailor and Honorary Commodore of SLYC for many years.

Lady Janice and the audience were welcomed by SLYC's first woman Vice Commodore, Lily Bergasse, and treated to memories of Sir John's passion for sailing by SLYC committee veteran Jonathan Everett. Mr. Everett also gave a brief history of the Sir John Compton Memorial Trophy, which was formerly awarded for a three-day race to Martinique, but will in future be associated with the Independence Round the Island Race, a timely reintroduction on the occasion of the island's 35th anniversary of Independence.

In third place was SLYC's *Sunset Heights Grayling* skippered by Scott Anthony; second place went to *Caol Ila*, skippered by Alex Geddes, which demolished the previous Round the Island time record by more than an hour, although her corrected time was not enough to beat *Sugar Beach Attitude*.

Victorious Skipper Fredric Sweeney and his crew were presented with the Sir John Compton Memorial Trophy by Lady Janice. Sweeney presented Lady Janice with flowers, and on behalf of SLYC thanked all the participants, skippers, helpers, Laborie Development Foundation and the Marine Police for making the event a success.

Next year, SLYC will work with ARC organizers World Cruising Club to offer the Independence Round the Island Race as an opportunity for participants of the transatlantic rally to rendezvous back in St. Lucia in February for a weekend of fierce competition and a lot of fun.

*For more information visit http://stluciayachtclub.com.*

**BVI Teen Qualifies for the Youth Olympics**

With a third overall finish in the 2014 Byte CII North American Championships, held February 27th to March 2nd, 14-year-old Sam Morrell became the first British Virgin Island sailor to qualify for an Olympic yachting berth, one of four available for the North American and Caribbean region.

Ten races were run with 30 sailors from the USA, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean competing for the four remaining spots in the 2014 Youth Olympic Games, to be held in August in Nanjing, China. Antigua sailor Rhone Kirby, 15, narrowly missed qualifying as a result of a protest. Morrell joined young sailors from the Cayman Islands, Bahamas and the US Virgin Islands in winning spots.

**Ukrainian Olympian Wins Budget Marine Match Races**

Capping a solid day of competition on March 4th against match racers from Poland, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and the Caribbean, Rodion Luka from the Ukraine won the sixth edition of the Budget Marine Match Racing Cup with a 2-1 victory over Russian skipper Eugeny Nikiforov. Eight teams raced Jeanneau Sun Fast 20s in building tricky winds in Simpson Bay lagoon, St. Maarten.

A silver medalist in the 49er Class at the 2004 Olympics, Luka was joined by fellow Ukrainian Olympian, Igor Matvienko (gold in the 1996 Games in the 470 class). Dmitry



BOB GRIESER

Potosky rounded out Luka's winning crew, who earned a US$5,000 first-place check for their efforts. Nikiforov and his team won US$3,000 for second place. In the petit final, Poland's Przemyslaw Tarnacki edged out Colin Rathbun from the British Virgin Islands by 2-1 to secure the US$1,000 prize for third.

"Over the last couple of years, I've been to a lot of match-racing events as a coach," Luka said. "I was looking at it from the outside but I could also see how it worked. Once we had the boat handling down and that isn't a problem, you can begin to play chess, which is what match racing is."

Nikiforov sailed an outstanding series, tearing through the round-robin tournament with a perfect score, including a victory over Luka in the tenth and final flight of racing. It was Luka's first loss of the day and it set up an unexpected match in the best-of-three race finals. And after the first race, when Nikiforov overtook Luka on the second of three windward legs, and then held on for the victory to remain undefeated for the series, it appeared to be the Russian's day.

But it turned out Luka had some comeback magic of his own. Luka took the Race 2 start by six seconds and never looked back, leading Nikiforov around every mark of the three-lap course to register a wire-to-wire victory to knot the finals at 1-1. With the breeze now solid, the stage was set for a winner-take-all final race.

After such a dramatic day of yacht racing, it proved to be an anticlimactic finish. Luka and Nikiforov were in close quarters during the entire pre-start sequence, but less than a minute before the start, the Russian blinked and Luka was able to gain a slight advantage. "They made a mistake and we got a half boat length ahead," said Luka. "We were quite lucky. After that, it was quite easy. We got the first shift and took control."

*For more information visit www.budgetmarine.com/events.aspx.*

**34th St. Maarten Heineken 'The Tightest!'**

In one of the most dramatic concluding days in the history of this regatta, 20 division winners in a 210-boat fleet were crowned, wrapping up the 34th edition of the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, held March 6th through 9th.

At the outset of the final day, results in nearly 12 classes were too close to call. A few points or less separated the top boats in nearly all nine CSA, two Bareboat, and even in the Lottery division; everything was riding on the last race of the series from Marigot to Simpson Bay. "This is the tightest bloody regatta I've ever seen," said official scorer Paul Miller, the guru of the race management website regattaguru.com.

*—Continued on next page*


# Bequia Easter Regatta 2014 17 - 21 April

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BEQUIA EASTER REGATTA 2014

## YACHT RACES

- **Racing, 'Surprise', Cruising I & II Classes**

| | |
|---|---|
| Fri 18 April: | Mount Gay Friendship Bay Races |
| Sat 19 April: | Around Bequia Races |
| Sun 20 April, Layday: | Hairoun S/H Around Bequia Race |
| Mon 21 April: | Admiralty Bay Triangle Races |

- **J/24 Class**

| | |
|---|---|
| Fri 18 April: | Mount Gay Admiralty/Southside Race |
| Sat 19 April: | United Insurance 3-Race Challenge |
| Mon 21 April: | J/24 Races |

## LOCAL DOUBLE-ENDER RACES

| | |
|---|---|
| Sat/Sun 19/20 April: | 1st and 2nd Hairoun Challenges |
| Mon 21 April: | Mount Gay Challenge |

## LAY DAY SUNDAY FAMILY FUN

Sandcastle Competition & All Day Family Layday
@ Bequia Beach Hotel, Friendship Beach

**NOTICE OF RACE & YACHT PRE-REGISTRATION:**
**www.begos.com/easterregatta**
**Tel: (784) 457-3649**
**bsc@vincysurf.com**

BEQUIA SAILING CLUB

—Continued from previous page

Two days of solid breeze were followed by one with shifty, patchy winds of six to eight knots and squally skies.


BOB GRIESER

On the Class A circle, the race committee sent the big boats in CSA1 and CSA2, and Multihull1 and Multihull2, on a 23-nautical-mile race, taking them on a long windward leg up the Anguilla Channel, then downwind under spinnaker to Blowing Rocks, followed by another beat to the finish in Simpson Bay. The smaller boats sailed a 21-nautical-mile race, with yet others racing a 13-nautical-mile track that bypassed the leg to Blowing Rocks.

The CSA classes that rounded Blowing Rocks had an especially challenging time: after a good spinnaker run down the Anguilla Channel, the breeze dropped to three knots or less, making the last miles back to Simpson Bay difficult.

On the Class B circle, race officials sent the Bareboat, Multihull3-4 and Lottery classes on a pair of race courses, one 8.5 nautical miles, the other 12.5 nautical miles.

The St. Maarten-St. Martin Cup for the regatta's Most Worthy Performance Overall went to Rich Wesslund's J/122, *El Ocaso*, the winner of the event's biggest division, the 18-boat CSA4 class.

*With 20 divisions in this regatta, we don't have space to describe all the races or even list all the winners! For full results visit www.heinekenregatta.com.*

ON THE HORIZON…

**Sponsors Gear Up for Bequia Easter 2014**

Hairoun Beer, the new Platinum Sponsor of Bequia Easter Regatta, sealed its commitment to the event by presenting its sponsorship cheque to Bequia Sailing Club Commodore Orbin Ollivierre. Hairoun's marketing coordinator at the St. Vincent Brewery, Kelvin Franklyn, declared, "We are so proud to be the Platinum Sponsor of the Bequia Sailing Club's highly prestigious Bequia Easter Regatta, and delighted that Hairoun will be the official beer for all the thirsty competitors in need of refreshment after a hard day's racing!" Hairoun is also lending its name to the Single-Handed Round the Island Yacht Race on Lay Day Sunday, as well as to the hugely popular Saturday and Sunday local double-ender Challenges.

For 2014, Gold Sponsor Mount Gay Rum is expanding to include a full named day of Yacht Races on Good Friday, culminating in the not-to-be-missed Mount Gay prizegiving at the Frangipani Hotel, where Mount Gay Red Caps will be required apparel for all participants! The regatta's final local double-ender race on Easter Monday will once again be the Mount Gay Challenge.

Silver Sponsor United Insurance continues its support of the J/24 Class in Bequia by sponsoring Saturday's J/24 Three-Race Challenge, with the United Insurance Trophy to be presented at Saturday's Yacht Reception and prizegiving at the waterfront Fig Tree restaurant in Admiralty Bay.


WILFRED DEDERER

Loyal Bronze Sponsors Mountain Top Spring Water, who have played such a significant role in the community following the disastrous Christmas floods in St. Vincent, and the SVG Tourism Authority are also making generous contributions to the event, as are the Frangipani Hotel, the Bequia Beach Hotel, and the privately-funded Action Bequia, which is succeeding in fulfilling its pledge to make a big difference on a small island.

A generous discount is on offer for online pre-registration before April 11th!

*Visit www.begos.com/easterregatta for entry form and more details.*
*For more information see ad on page 11.*

**Sunsail Back as ASW's Yacht Charter Sponsor**

Sunsail is back on board for a third year as official yacht charter sponsor of Antigua Sailing Week; this year's edition is April 26th through May 2nd. Sunsail's North America head of marketing Brittany Weatherby says, "Antigua Sailing Week is one of the premier regattas in the Caribbean that our customers love to attend. With the changes in race format over the past few years, it is on many clients' bucket list of must-do regattas because of the great mix of superb sailing, class and course management, and of course the event parties each night." A large fleet of Sunsail 44s is entered in Antigua Sailing Week every year, providing highly competitive racing in a one-design bareboat class. Many serious sailors enjoy the competition in this class.

Of boat availability, Chairman of the Regatta Organizing Committee Kathy Lammers says, "We are working on available boat charters from other islands to ensure we satisfy the demand for race charters for Antigua Sailing Week, with this year looking to be the largest fleet in many years. For those able to take a vacation longer than the week needed to enjoy Antigua Sailing Week to the fullest, there is the opportunity to fly into another island and sail your boat to Antigua, race, and then sail back again, enjoying the opportunity to cruise to other islands as part of your itinerary."

—Continued on next page



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Sunsail will award a voucher worth US$2,500 towards a future Sunsail charter to the overall winner of the bareboat classes at the awards ceremony to be held in Nelson's Dockyard on May 2nd.

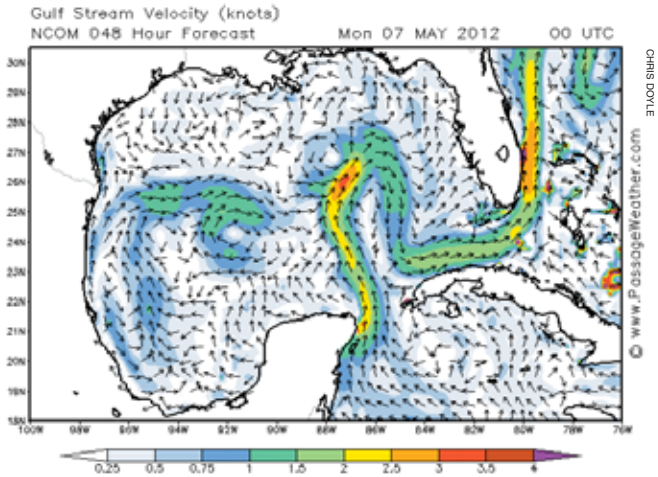
*For more information visit www.sailingweek.com.*

**Pensacola to Isla Mujeres Race Next Month**

The Regatta al Sol, first sailed in 1965, is a biennial challenge to skippers, navigators and crew. The race is sponsored by Southern Yacht Club, Pensacola Yacht Club, and the Club de Yates Isla de Mujeres. The race begins in Pensacola Bay, Florida on May 7th for the Cruising Division and May 8th for Racing Division. Line honors elapsed time to beat is 72 hours 23 minutes from Stephen Murray's Carkeek 40, *Decision*, from New Orleans.

It is 555 miles on the rhumb line from northwest Florida to Isla Mujeres, Mexico. Yachts must not only factor in the two sides of the Gulf Stream loop current, the weather and possible cold fronts passing through, but also decide how to handle the four-knot foul current flowing north between Cuba and the Yucatan.

*For more information visit www.regataalsol.org.*




*Talk about 'current events'! The Pensacola, Florida to Isla Mujeres, Mexico race will give navigators a real workout as they sail from northwest Florida to the east side of the Yucatan Peninsula*

# MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

## APRIL - MAY 2014

Crossing the channels between Caribbean islands with a favorable tide will make your passage faster and more comfortable. The table below, courtesy Don Street, author of Street's Guides and compiler of Imray-Iolaire charts, which shows the time of the meridian passage (or zenith) of the moon for this AND next month, will help you calculate the tides.

Water, Don explains, generally tries to run toward the moon. The tide starts running to the east soon after moonrise, continues to run east until about an hour after the moon reaches its zenith (see TIME below) and then runs westward. From just after the moon's setting to just after its nadir, the tide runs eastward; and from just after its nadir to soon after its rising, the tide runs westward; i.e. the tide floods from west to east. Times given are local.

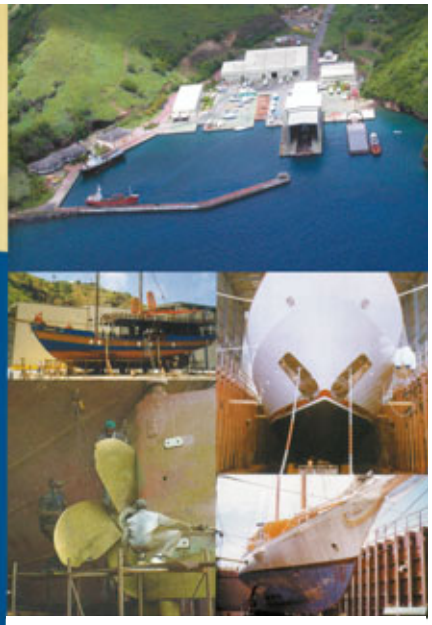
Note: the maximum tide is 3 or 4 days after the new and full moons.

For more information, see "Tides and Currents" on the back of all Imray Iolaire charts. Fair tides!

| **April 2014** | | 21 | 0511 | 12 | 2223 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DATE | TIME | 22 | 0608 | 13 | 2315 |
| 1 | 1331 | 23 | 0702 | 14 | 0000 (full moon) |
| 2 | 1423 | 24 | 0755 | 15 | 0010 |
| 3 | 1514 | 25 | 0847 | 16 | 0107 |
| 4 | 1605 | 26 | 0938 | 17 | 0206 |
| 5 | 1654 | 27 | 1029 | 18 | 0305 |
| 6 | 1743 | 28 | 1120 | 19 | 0453 |
| 7 | 1826 | 29 | 1211 | 20 | 0459 |
| 8 | 1915 | 30 | 1302 | 21 | 0552 |
| 9 | 1959 | **May 2014** | | 22 | 0644 |
| 10 | 2043 | 1 | 1354 | 23 | 0734 |
| 11 | 2147 | 2 | 1445 | 24 | 0824 |
| 12 | 2211 | 3 | 1534 | 25 | 0914 |
| 13 | 2257 | 4 | 1622 | 26 | 1004 |
| 14 | 2344 | 5 | 1709 | 27 | 1054 |
| 15 | 0000 (full moon) | 6 | 1753 | 28 | 1145 |
| 16 | 0034 | 7 | 1837 | 29 | 1236 |
| 17 | 0126 | 8 | 1921 | 30 | 1326 |
| 18 | 0220 | 9 | 2004 | 31 | 1415 |
| 19 | 0317 | 10 | 2049 | | |
| 20 | 0414 | 11 | 2135 | | |



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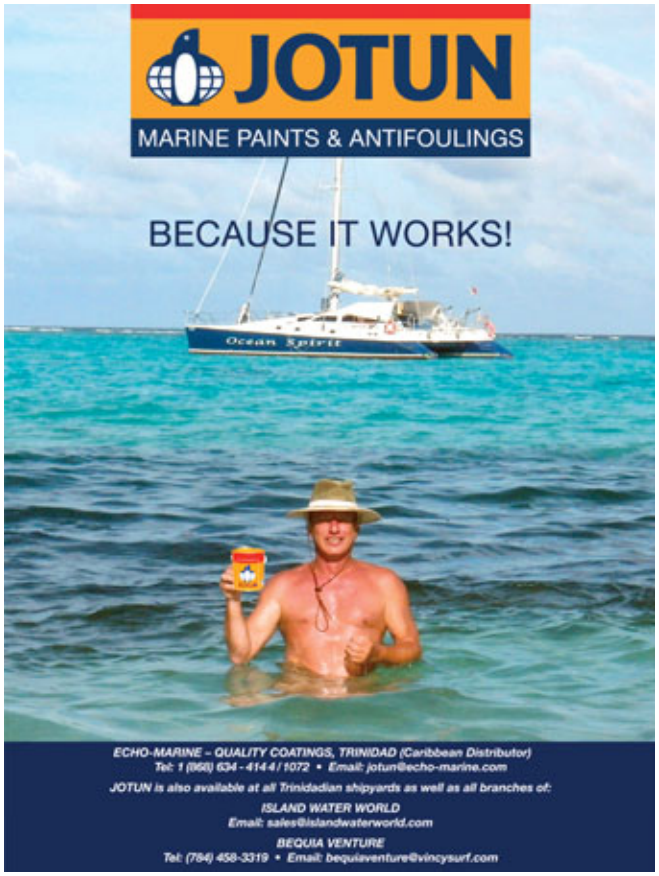
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UNITED INSURANCE WORKBOAT REGATTA

# It's a Double for *Trouble*: Champions Again!

In one of the closest and most exciting GSF16 Match Race Finals in the history of Grenada Sailing Festival's Workboat Regatta, Woburn skipper Allan Noel and his crew from *Trouble* stormed home to take the United Insurance "Champion of Champions" title and a cash prize of US$1,000. Sailing in *Tomorrow's Worries*, one of the five one-design boats owned by Grenada Sailing Festival, Noel and his crew used all their skills and tactics to fight off a determined Gouyave crew in *Mr. X*, skippered by Javid George. Positions switched throughout the race and the final result could have gone either way right to the finish line, keeping the big crowd at the water's edge in suspense until the last minute.

STEVE BRETT



*Above: A tight finish in the Workboat Regatta 'Champion of Champions' Match Race Final, raced in the Grenada Sailing Festival's own fleet of GSF16s. The crew of* Trouble *from the Woburn Community in the GSF16* Tomorrow's Worry *hold the lead against the crew of* Endeavour *of the Gouyave Community in the GSF16* Mr X

*Below: Racing action on February 2nd in the Sauteurs Community Class races*

STEVE BRETT



The 2014 Grenada Sailing Festival United Insurance Workboat Regatta began on Saturday, February 1st, and in excellent sailing conditions a fleet of 25 boats from Carriacou, Gouyave, Petite Martinique, Sauteurs and Woburn lined Grand Anse Beach. The racing was as close and competitive as ever in the Community Classes, with every skipper and crew sailing hard to take first place and thus the chance to race in the United Insurance National Team Sailing Match Races in the fleet of 16-foot workboats. The racing was particularly close in the Junior Final, when the 2013 result was reversed with skipper Shakeem Collins and Team Woburn in *Tomorrow's Worries* taking first from Team Gouyave in *Mr. X*, skippered by Kwesi Paul. Skipper Mike Nicholas and Team Sauteurs in *Gybe Talk* took an admirable third place.

*—Continued on next page*

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The crowds were treated to more high-octane racing in the Senior National Team Sailing Final sponsored by Carib, with skipper Ted Richards and Team Gouyave bringing in *Mr. X* in front of Carriacou aboard *Pink Gin*, with Petite Martinique sailing *Homer* into third place.

The afternoon ended on a high as Allan Noel and his crew from *Trouble* and Javid George and his crew from *Endeavour* battled it out in the "Champion of Champions" Final, with the title, trophy and cash prize going to Allan Noel and *Trouble* for the second year running.

As ever, there was a great atmosphere on the beach as well, with Festival favourite DJ Blackstorm making it a party all the time. The crowds were treated to a wide selection of local foods, traditional dishes and drinks from Community Kitchen food stalls, and Fit For Life Gym joined in the fun again with their popular Fitness Challenge. Local arts and crafts were on sale and on Saturday afternoon the crowds were also treated to live entertainment with traditional songs from the Presentation Brothers College Choir and a colourful performance from the dancers and drummers from Conception Dance Theatre. The whole event was rounded off with a special surprise: a visit from Sean Coutaine and his dynamic dance group and a performance from Luni Spark & Electrify. The sky over Grand Anse Beach was then lit up by a wonderful fireworks display courtesy of Spice Island Fireworks, Dodgy Dock and True Blue Bay Resort — a high spot to start the week of Independence celebrations.

The Grenada Sailing Festival thanks United Insurance for taking up the Title Sponsorship of the Work Boat Regatta once again for 2014. Thanks also go to all other sponsors for their valuable support: Spice Isle Fish House, Carib, Budget Marine, the Grenada Tourism Authority, Mount Gay Rum and Bryden & Minors, DeSign Factory, Waggy T, True Blue Bay Resort's Dodgy Dock, National Lotteries Authority, Victory Bar, Sailing School Grenada, SOL EC, Mecca Trading, Harris Paints, LIME, Coca Cola and Etang Water, Camper & Nicholsons Marinas, Unique Trophies, Courts, Horizon Yacht Charters, Island Dreams Yacht Services, LL Ramdhanny, Grenada Postal Corporation, and Spice Island Fireworks.

The organizers also thank the Grenada Tourism Authority beach-cleaning crews, the Grenada Solid Waste Management Authority, the Royal Grenada Police Force, the Grenada Coastguard, W & R Electrical Contractors, and all volunteers and helpers for their support and assistance, helping to make the event such a success.

*For more information visit www.grenadasailingfestival.com.*

# Grenada Sailing Festival United Insurance Workboat Regatta 2014

**Community Class Racing**
CARRIACOU
1) *Wet*, Daine Compton
2) *Fidel*, Ramon St. Hilaire
3) *Lightning*, Adolphus Forde
GOUYAVE CANOE
1) *Etieron*, Carlyle Joseph
2) *Want a Ride*, Cecil Commissiong
GOUYAVE SLOOP
1) *Endeavour*, Andy DeRoche
2) *VOOP*, Israel Dharangit
3) *Classic*, Ted Richards
PETITE MARTINIQUE
1) *Purple Blast*, Odlan De Coteau
2) *Storm*, Roy Delisle
3) *D Rage*, Janick Bethel
SAUTEURS
1) *No Retreat No Surrender*, Jason Charles
2) *I'm Watching*, Alister Noel
3) *Planass*, Neron Richardson
WOBURN
1) *Trouble*, Allan Noel
2) *El Tigre*, Shakeem Collins
3) *Local*, Clinton Brathwaite

**Match Race Finals**
NATIONAL TEAM SAILING - JUNIOR
1) Team Woburn, Shakeem Collins sailing in *Tomorrow's Worries*
2) Team Gouyave, Kwesi Paul sailing in *Mr X*
3) Team Sauteurs, Mike Nicholas sailing in *Gybe Talk*
CARIB NATIONAL TEAM SAILING - SENIOR
1) Team Gouyave, Ted Richards sailing in *Mr X*
2) Team Carriacou, Daine Compton sailing in *Pink Gin*
3) Team Petite Martinique, Odlan De Coteau sailing in *Homer*



ARTHUR DANIEL

*Skipper Alan Noel, his crew and supporters of Woburn's* Trouble *receiving the Champion of Champions trophy and a US$1,000 prize from Trevor Renwick of United Insurance, and Rudy Grant and Sheldon Keens-Douglas of the Grenada Tourism Authority*

**United Insurance Skipper of the Year Final**
The winning skipper and his crew from each class in the Community Class Racing enter a Match Race Final in the GSF16 workboats to find the Champion of Champions. The 2014 Champion of Champions is Alan Noel and his Woburn crew from the boat *Trouble*.







LUCY TULLOCH




*The Caribbean's offshore yacht racing extravaganza twists and turns around the Leewards. Don Street called this event 'more fun than the Fastnet' and many others agree*

# 600 MILES, 'FIGHTING IT OUT THE WHOLE WAY'

*by Louay Habib*

With 60 yachts from 11 different countries competing, and 682 crew taking part, the sixth RORC Caribbean 600, which started on February 24th, was a grand success. In just six years, "the 600" has established itself as a major offshore race in international yachting.

While many inshore Caribbean regattas have seen the number of entries decline or stagnate over recent years, the entry list for the RORC Caribbean 600 — a challenging 600-mile non-stop race looping through the islands from St. Martin to Guadeloupe — has not only grown year on year but is attracting some of the world's most high-profile racing yachts and world-class professional sailors: over a third of the yachts had crew from the Olympics, America's Cup or Volvo Ocean Race. In recent events of this type, only last year's record entry for the Rolex Fastnet Race had more yachts.

"RORC have created a fantastic event," commented Volvo Ocean Race winning skipper, Mike Sanderson, who was racing on *Bella Mente*, the monohull line honours winner. "It is a hard race; racing flat out for 48 hours with so many twists and turns means nobody can really get any sleep. Unlike other races where you can establish a proper watch system, this course has so many sail changes that most of the crew are needed a lot of the time. Modern offshore race boats like *Bella Mente* are very fast on the reach and this race course has plenty of that. It's fast, exhilarating sailing and probably one of my favourites."

*Bella Mente* is a fully professional crewed and maintained yacht but the majority of the yachts racing in the 600 are sailed by amateurs. There are also a significant number of entries that are race charters, where groups and individuals pay for a package. Sailors from overseas fly in to race on a well-prepared yacht and after the event fly home. There is a wonderful spirit within the race-charter fleet, exemplified by Ross Appleby's finding places for all of *Scarlet Logic*'s (a.k.a. *Scarlet Oyster*) race-charter guests after the yacht was dismasted before the start of the event. Several of the crew not only found themselves winning class but also sailing with a legend of offshore racing.




"Although we compete with each other for guests, we are all in the same boat — pardon the pun," explained Chris Jackson, boat captain of *Lancelot II*. "Just about every charter yacht helped Ross out, and that's important. All of us have issues from time to time and by mucking together, we can get round the problems. *Scarlet Logic*'s co-skipper, Tim Thubron and three charter guests came with us and they are all good sailors, especially Tim, and that strengthened our team, so it was a win-win situation."

*—Continued on next page*



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—*Continued from previous page*

*Lancelot II* went on to win a very competitive IRC Class Two and the last-minute guests were understandably delighted and not just because of the win, as Tim Thubron explains: "We pushed the boat very hard and while it was an exhausting race, it was incredibly satisfying. The guests that came on board from *Scarlet Logic* had a bit of an emotional roller coaster. It was a real downer to hear that *Scarlet* was not able to compete but round-the-world sailor Alex Thomson was on the *Lancelot* crew, and then winning class just put the icing on the cake."

IRC Three was won by the classic S&S 52-foot yawl, *Dorade*, and three vintage yachts took part in the race for the first time, including Carlo Falcone's Alfred Mylne-designed *Mariella*. Carlo had the boat especially modified to comply with the safety rules for the race and was sailing with his daughter, Shirley Falcone. "We had a fantastic race," smiled Carlo. "Before the start, chef Nico prepared freshly caught fish in various marinades, we had fresh pasta and a few bottles of fine wine, so we raced in style. It was so nice to spend time with Shirley offshore; she kept telling me off for



ALL PHOTOS: TIM WRIGHT / WWW.PHOTOACTION.COM

pinching on the helm, so I gave it to her most of the time! Over 30 years ago I raced to Antigua with my wife and young son, Shannon, and competing in the 600 with Shirley just brought that all back."

The closest finish for line honours in the history of the RORC Caribbean 600 played out on the last leg of the course. *Bella Mente*; George David's RP90, *Rambler*; and George Sakellaris' RP72, *Shockwave* were approaching Redonda — the last island of the course — in fighter formation. The adrenalin levels of the crew were peaking, but a cold beat on the rail awaited them back to the finish in Antigua. After an incredibly demanding 40 hours of non-stop action, the teams were exhausted, but dug deep to summon the energy for a last push to victory.

*Bella Mente* crossed the finish line to take Monohull Line Honours in an elapsed time of 48 hours, 5 minutes, 44 seconds. Ten minutes later, *Rambler* crossed the finish line, swiftly followed by *Shockwave* just over two minutes later. The winner of the RORC Caribbean 600 Trophy for the best yacht, overall in IRC on corrected time, was *Shockwave*.

"That is what ocean racing should be all about," commented *Shockwave's* tactician, Robbie Doyle. "Beautiful racing between three very tough competitors, all fighting it out the whole way. A heavyweight battle without a doubt — no question. I have had great moments in sailboats, but that was as much fun as I can remember. For 600 miles we were always in touch with each other, either up a few minutes or down a few minutes, and it all came down to the last beat to finish. It was like an epic tennis match. Every sail change was race critical. *Bella Mente* is a magic bullet when power reaching; we knew that before the start, so we set about minimizing the time lost. *Bella Mente* did a nice job getting through the lee of Guadeloupe by going inshore and at that time she had her time on us. All we tried to do was to stay in touch with her because we knew the race wasn't over. The critical point in the race happened just after Barbuda when *Bella Mente* got under a cloud and literally stopped and we sailed right up to them. After that we knew that if we just stayed in touch, the win would go to *Shockwave* — that's yacht racing for you, but what a fantastic experience."

The RORC Caribbean 600 has no title sponsor: the Royal Ocean Racing Club funds the race out of entry fees, organizing an opening party, race management and a fabulous prizegiving. Every yacht is welcomed home to Antigua, no matter what time they finish. The Antigua Yacht Club volunteers are dockside with a case of beer and big cheers, and the Yacht Club bar and restaurant is open 24/7.



*Above:* Bella Mente *charging toward a monohull line honours win*

*Left: The crew of* Lancelot II, *winner of IRC Class Two, included members of a team whose boat was dismasted before the race*

*Below: The victorious* Shockwave *crew, winners of the RORC Caribbean 600 Trophy for the best yacht, and overall in IRC on corrected time*



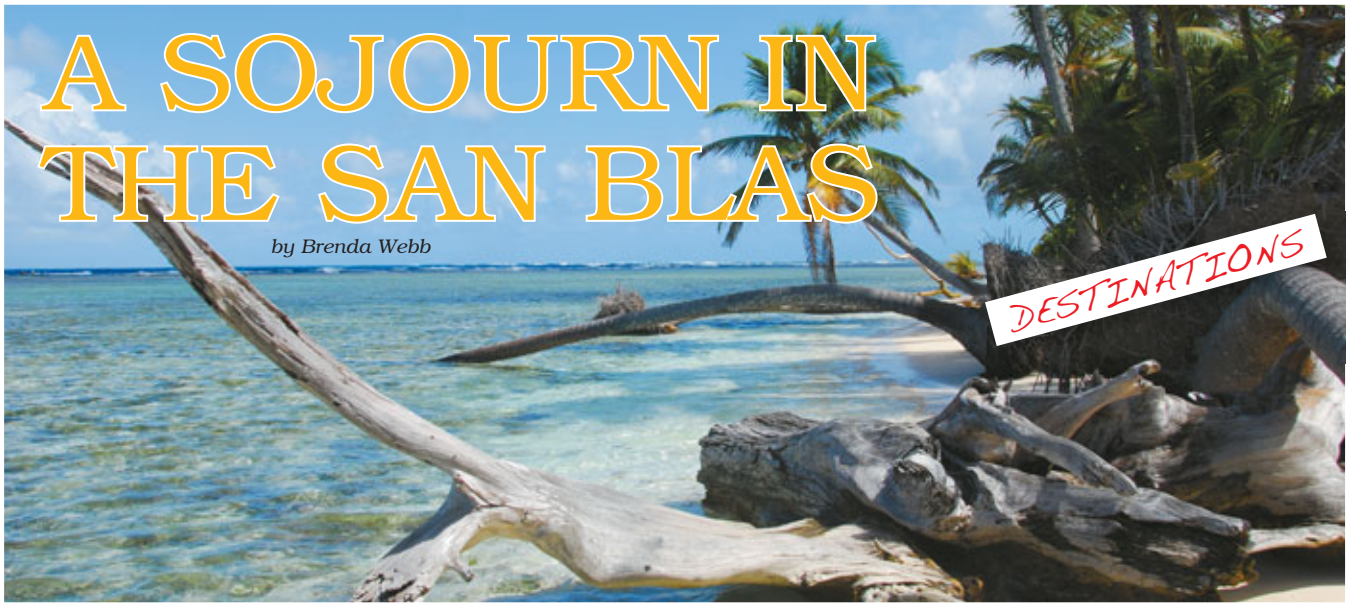

The 600 is very well run and provides a unique offshore course around 11 Caribbean islands, but probably the main reason that it is proving so successful is that it has a tremendous spirit, founded on a passion for sailing without the constraints of commercialism. Long may it prosper!

The race is continuing to grow and next year, the new RORC Transatlantic Race from Europe to Grenada will act as a feeder race for the event.

*For full results and more information visit http://caribbean600.rorc.org.*



# A SOJOURN IN THE SAN BLAS



DESTINATIONS

*by Brenda Webb*

Spending a few weeks in the magical San Blas islands during the Christmas and New Year holidays was a blissful way to end our Caribbean cruising.

After a wonderful two seasons exploring the Western and Eastern Caribbean, we're now set to head across the Pacific Ocean to New Zealand. However we couldn't leave without a sojourn in the San Blas.

My husband, David, and I left Jamaica in our Moody 46 in mid-December. The plan was to leave before the tradewinds really kicked in, but as everyone knows, this season has been particularly windy and finding a calm weather window was impossible. The upside of the 25- to 30-knot winds was a very quick trip to the San Blas.

For years we'd looked forward to visiting this idyllic archipelago off the Panama coast and home to the Kuna Indians. The Kuna maintain a very traditional lifestyle with a strict tribal system, are autonomous from Panama and don't intermarry or allow outsiders to buy land or run businesses there.

Sailing friends we met in the Mediterranean who visited the San Blas in the 1990s had waxed lyrical about these remote islands, expounding their beauty, isolation, transparent waters, fantastic snorkelling and uncrowdedness.

The first four adjectives are still true — there are few places as spectacularly beautiful as the San Blas, their isolation hasn't changed, the water is mostly (on the outer islands anyway) that amazing shade of Bombay Sapphire blue, and the snorkelling is wonderful.

Uncrowded however, is not an apt description anymore, particularly in the most beautiful anchorages in the Cayos Holandes, Coco Banderos and Lemmons where 30 or more boats in an anchorage is not uncommon. I guess it was too much to expect that paradise would remain undiscovered!

Our first stop was Waisaladup in the Western Holandes Cays, chosen for its reasonably straightforward entrance in late afternoon light. We were slightly nervous about this, but Eric Bauhaus' excellent *Panama Cruising Guide* had detailed waypoints and the water clarity made it possible to eyeball navigate.

Waisaladup was absolutely breathtaking: silky soft white sand beaches, the ubiquitous swaying palm trees and magnificent snorkelling on pristine coral reefs in some of the clearest water we'd seen for a while.

And best of all — hardly anyone there! We soon figured out why; constant talk on the VHF (which became a real nuisance, especially the child chatter) made us realize the large San Blas cruising community was anchored in the nearby East Lemmons for Christmas/New Year celebrations. At night we could see the lights from their masts — it was like a miniature city.

We made the most of it and had idyllic crowd-free days in Waisaladup enjoying the friendliness of the local Kuna who encouraged us to wander around their lovely island. After a few days we moved to the equally beautiful Swimming Pool anchorage in the East Holandes where we were the only boat. Bliss.

Slightly off the beaten track is Combombia, an idyllic and quiet anchorage where we enjoyed playing with the delightful Kuna children who followed us around as if we were Pied Pipers. We celebrated the arrival of the New Year there with only two other boats in the large anchorage.

After New Year the crowds descended. The day we decided to go to Chichime we counted 25 masts there and decided to steer clear. Similarly, the Swimming Pool anchorage was absolutely jam packed when we went past!

The Coco Banderos group is picture-postcard perfect but it, too, was crowded when we carefully nudged our way in. Not long after, a huge motoryacht arrived and took over one of the deserted islands, even installing a burly security guard to keep curious cruisers away while guests enjoyed lunch on the beach.

Then there are the backpacker boats doing the run from Panama to Cartagena — just when you think you've found a tranquil spot a boat will pull in with up to 20 young people on board.

Our worst experience was in the West Lemmon Cays, which we only visited to use the internet (it's rare in the San Blas unless you have a Panama data card). The bar was abuzz — a backpacker boat had just arrived and the tiny island was loaded with testosterone, alcohol and thumping music. The saddest sight was seeing a Kuna man wandering along absolutely drunk.

*—Continued on next page*






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The Kuna themselves are taking advantage of the crowds, and who can blame them for seeing us cruisers as cash cows? Enterprising they may be, but I refuse to pay $2 to walk on a beach when there's a nearby one I can walk on for free, or pay $15 for a crayfish in a popular anchorage when the same sized one is $3 in the more remote islands.

Similarly, we bought lovely molas in Waisaladup that were cheaper than ones offered to us in the more popular anchorages and they were every bit as nice and of good quality.

Cruising the San Blas is not cheap. There is the US$193 cruising permit, $100 per person for visas (it's cheaper on EU passports apparently) and $30 a month to the Kuna Congress. Many islands also charge an anchoring fee that varies between $10 and $20, usually per month.

Provisioning is difficult in the San Blas, with Nargana, near the mainland, the best option. If you're in luck, the produce boat from Colombia will have visited with a good selection of fresh fruit and vegetables. Produce boats apparently ply the popular crowded anchorages, but as we avoided those, we never saw one.

We skipped most of the islands close to the mainland, having heard from fellow cruisers they were overcrowded and polluted, and our one trip to Nargana confirmed that. Rubbish piled up in front of waterfront houses which all had long-drop toilets direct into the filthy brown water.

Navigating in the San Blas requires constant attention and once again we would advocate using the Bauhaus guide, which we found 100-percent accurate, along with eyeball navigation at all times. During our time in the San Blas, two yachts went aground on reefs and both were total losses — one Norwegian boat on the Chichime reef and a French boat close to the Carti islands near the mainland. A large yacht managed to use its tender to pull the French boat off but it sank — a stark reminder of how easily things can go wrong.

We loved our time in the San Blas and if you look hard enough you can still find those blissful deserted beaches. But don't be fooled — word is out; the San Blas have been well and truly discovered!

*Brenda Webb and David Morgan are sailing their Moody 46,* Bandit, *back home to New Zealand.*





*Clockwise from above left:*
*Brenda Webb checks out the intricate* molas *made by the Kuna women*
*A typical Kuna thatched-roof, bamboo-sided hut on Waisaladup in the Holandes Cays*
*A Kuna* ulu *sails past a tiny uninhabited island near Combombia in the San Blas*









## Visit Your Favorite Anchorage — And See It for the Very First Time:

# THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS



COURTESY THE MOORINGS

*by Frank Virgintino*

*The BVI is more than a staging post for post-season passages. Take time to relax and enjoy the Virgins as a cruising ground*

For many cruisers, the British Virgin Islands provided their first taste of Caribbean sailing when they spent some time there on a charter boat. Commonly referred to as the BVI, the British Virgin Islands are home to about 30,000 people, most of whom live on Tortola. These 50 or so islands, the majority of which are not inhabited, are the part of the larger Virgin Islands archipelago that is a British overseas territory. The other part of the archipelago is the US Virgin Islands.

The BVI, home of the world's largest charter boat fleet, is sometimes referred to as "the beaten track". Some think that the term is derogatory but in truth it is not. It just means that, like the routes of the wagon trains going west in the USA during the migration of the 19th century, the path is well established.

That brings us to our point: many of us have sailed in the BVI so many times that we now have our favorite anchorages and spots, and the rest of it is "seen it and did that".

If you want to see that the BVI really is a part of heaven for cruisers, you need only sail Sir Francis Drake Channel on a tradewind day and look around. It's a great sail in a protected channel with islands all around you. That is the beginning of "seeing it again for the very first time": the willingness to let the surroundings take you in.

You have been to the Caves and gone to the *Willy T* for drinks. You have been to Pusser's, perhaps more than once. And you went to the Bitter End in the North Sound of Virgin Gorda and swam in The Baths as well.

What more is there?

*So many islands offer a wealth of visiting — and revisiting — opportunities*




WIKIPEDIA

once. And you went to the Bitter End in the North Sound of Virgin Gorda and swam in The Baths as well.

What more is there?

Josiah's Bay Plantation is on Tortola's north shore in a beautiful spot. Most sugar plantations on Tortola are beyond repair, but the owner of this one has gone to great lengths to restore it. Many cruisers do not want to take the time to go to the bay, except perhaps for surfers as the bay is a big surfing spot, but the trip from the various Tortola marinas or anchorages is well worth it. You can also access it if you are anchored in White Bay on Guana Island, about a mile and a half to the northeast. The plantation has a restaurant, small gallery featuring the work of local artists, and a furniture gallery. It makes for a nice afternoon!

The "Shell Museum" is actually a restaurant and bar located in Carrot Bay. It is definitely homespun and if you have not been there, you have missed something special. The owner, Egbert, is like the thousands of shells he displays with little hand-lettered signs: quite distinctive. His cuisine is above average — most believe far above average. Carrot Bay is located about a mile southwest of Cane Garden Bay.

The highest point on Tortola is Sage Mountain at 1,716 feet. Sage Mountain National Park is a conservation preserve and, at just short of 100 acres, sufficient in size to offer nature lovers a full day. Don't be lazy; take a long hike and the vistas will make your heart jump for joy. The area includes a small rainforest, which, like all rainforests, tends to be misty. There are many of the original trees that populated the island before their fellows were cut down. The birds would have delighted Gould and Richter, and they will you.

*—Continued on next page*

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If you are an art lover, it is worth your time to see the Fahie Hill Mural — the "Great Wall" — located at Ridge Road, Tortola. It is a community art project featuring the work of local artists. The scenes represent the cultural history of the BVI while at the same time making a concrete retaining wall beautiful. It is exceptional.

While poking around Tortola, visit the Callwood Distillery in Cane Garden Bay. Most whom I tell this to, reply that they have been to enough distilleries in their lifetime and do not need to see one more. Big mistake! Aside from the fact that the original boiler still operates, what makes this distillery so different, especially for rum connoisseurs, is that the flavoring of their rum is unlike any other you have ever tasted. For a very small fee, you can sample a number of shots of different types. If you need more motivation, think of it as a happy hour tour at a cheap price.

Beyond Tortola, there are so many places in the BVI to poke around. One that is truly exceptional is the previously mentioned Guana Island, just northeast of Tortola — although the island is open only to hotel guests. Cruisers can anchor in the lee of the island in White Bay, however the hotel does not cater to anyone but registered guests and technically the property is off limits. The 850-acre resort is private and very upscale; the ad for the resort says "imagine the Virgin Islands before they went public." I have looked around discreetly; if you dress up as a tree, maybe no one will notice you!

Everyone loves Virgin Gorda, although getting "up there" is not always easy. I see so many sailors (probably bareboat charterers) fighting the afternoon trades to make North Sound. I have never understood why they do not wait until early morning to go, when the tradewinds are down. Or, if they do not draw too much, why they don't use the "back door" entrance south of Mosquito Island.



COURTESY SUNSAIL (2)

I hate to sound like an old fogey (notwithstanding that I am), but in years past when you entered the Sound you could see to the far side. Today, elephantine mega-motoryachts are anchored hither and thither. To make it worse, the Caribbean Marine Association is on record as wanting to encourage more megayachts to come because they bring dollars into the local economy. Man does not eat by bread alone and I believe that North Sound is much the worse for their presence, even if their captains are wise enough not to discharge holding tanks in the anchorage.

One of the areas that is most often overlooked by cruisers is the Gorda Peak National Park. At an elevation of 1,370 feet, Gorda Peak is one of the last remaining examples of Caribbean dry forest in the region and therefore is a high priority for conservation. The park is interesting for a number of reasons, including that the vegetation varies with the elevation: from dry scrub to greener landscape at higher elevations. The plants at the lower elevations have adapted to having less water and to see how they have done it is to learn something new. If you are familiar with the Geico Insurance company gecko, perhaps you'll think this is his home base, as the Virgin Gorda gecko thrives at the peak. The views from the summit are as good as the views from Sage Mountain on Tortola and on a clear day you can see Anegada. The hike up should take you about an hour.

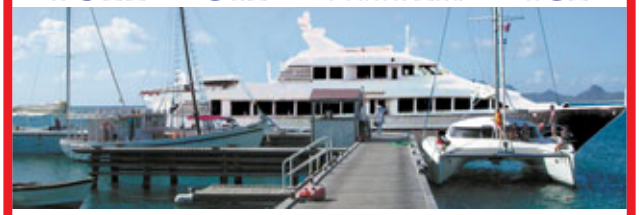


*For many, the British Virgins provided their first taste of Caribbean sailing: the BVI is home of the world's largest charter fleet (including Sunsail at Wickham's Cay, above). Busy facilities abound, but with so many islands and anchorages to choose from it's also possible to find your own slice of paradise*

One of the places in the BVI that is less visited is the island of Anegada. The island is not volcanic like the rest of the Virgin Islands; it is coral and limestone, and the highest point is only 28 feet above sea level. Suffice it to say that the small community that lives on the island usually vacates to Tortola when severe storms are announced. The population of the island is only about 200, which swells to near double that during tourist season. Some visitors say that they sailed there and found nothing to do, but with a population so tiny, a small "jump up" is a big thing. If you want to see the BVI for the very first time, you need to walk around and speak to a few of the folks who live there. Most of the time they are in no rush and if you care to strike up a conversation, most will accommodate you. Ask how their one-room schoolhouse is doing or enquire about their Christmas tree project. Find out what life is like on an island where the residents really do not have much more than each other. It is the very reason we go cruising and more often than not we forget that. Take a swim. Stroll the beach. Take a nap and listen to the sounds. Or if you are lucky and it is raining, take a long walk with the one you love and remember what we are doing and why we do it. Just go "singin' in the rain" and let the oil change wait! Cruising on the beaten track can still be a joy.

*Frank Virgintino is the author of Free Cruising Guides, http://freecruisingguides.com.*

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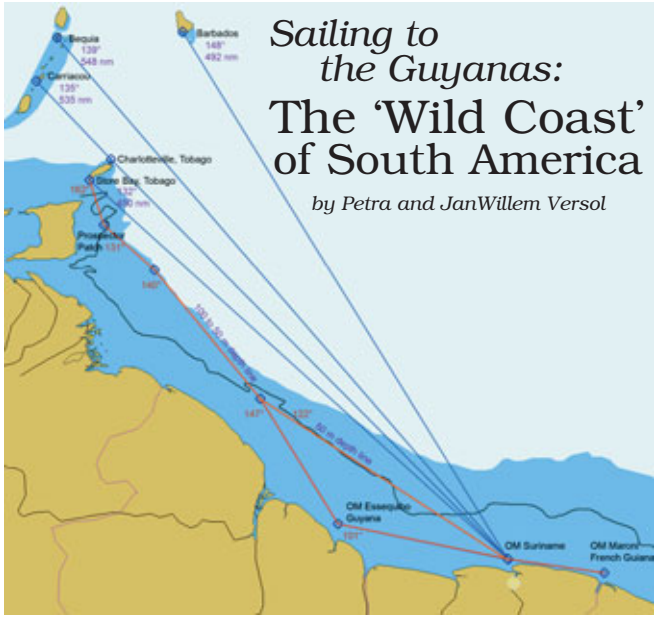
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# *Sailing to the Guyanas:* The 'Wild Coast' of South America

*by Petra and JanWillem Versol*




*When choosing a starting point, weigh distance against wind angle*

**The Old Days**

Cruisers complain that sailing to the Guyanas — nicknamed "The Wild Coast", as the seas can be rough on this lee shore — is difficult if not impossible. But what about the old days? When she was still a cargo ship, the *Friendship Rose* sailed many times from Bequia to the former British Guiana. Traditional whaleboat builder Jem Maloney from Bequia was one of *Friendship Rose's* crew in those days, and he told us about her record sailing from Tobago to Guyana: 46 hours! Yes, they had a little help from the engine, but it is a remarkable feat and Jem is still proud of it.

There were many more of those typical West Indian wooden cargo ships sailing between the Grenadines and Guyana. Perhaps sailing to the Wild Coast was hard, but certainly it was not impossible.

Or were boats better in those days? Was navigating easier without electronic gadgets? Were sailors braver? Perhaps the last may be true, but in the old days there was no question: West Indian crews sailed to Guyana to trade and make a living.

**A Challenge?**

Although Guyana is historically an often-visited destination from the Eastern Caribbean, times have changed. Now all of the Guyanas — Guyana, Suriname (formerly Dutch Guiana) and French Guiana — are earmarked as "off the beaten track" and yachtsmen seem reluctant to visit.

There may be many reasons. Most important is the equatorial current running from east to west at two knots, and the fact that the Guyanas are (when visited from the Eastern Caribbean) located to windward. In addition there are certain unknown factors such as assumed piracy, hazardous approaches, reliability of buoys/lights, and shallows. Indeed, visiting a relatively unknown area may be frightening to some, but adventurous and therefore appealing to others.

Concerning the unknown factors, we can be short:

On the issue of piracy, there were recorded cases of pirate attacks a few years ago, perpetrated on fishing vessels. Since the time of the attacks, the Guyana and Suriname Coast Guards have boosted their maritime capabilities and increased their presence at sea, in response to national strategies to eradicate piracy. Upon our request, the director of the Guyana Tourism Authority re-checked to see if any piracy occurred concerning yachts and affirmed that Guyana is indeed a safe haven: "There were no recorded cases of attacks on any yachts traversing the Guyana waters or en route to the destination."

Approaching the rivers Essequibo, Maroni and Suriname can never be a problem as charts are available and waypoints and tracks provided. Especially the approach to Suriname is a piece of cake, as lights and marks are 100-percent reliable. Stick to the green buoys and you'll always have enough water below the keel. Remember that Paramaribo is the biggest port on this coast and bauxite tankers and container ships move in and out all the time.

The Essequibo is dotted with shallows, but you'll stay out of trouble if you keep an eye on the chart and stick to the tracks and waypoints given in Chris Doyle's *Cruising Guide for Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Guyana*. The latest updates and a free download of his stand-alone 2012 *Guyana Guide* are available at www.doyleguides.com.

Sailing to the Guyanas is a bit of a challenge, but the effort is highly rewarded. The Guyanas are certainly completely different from the Eastern Caribbean islands and there is a lot to explore. Nature is abundant and the local people are extremely hospitable and helpful. They are delighted to welcome visiting yachtsmen; in fact they can hardly believe that you actually arrived in a sailing yacht.

Officials in Guyana do know how to handle yachts as the seamless entry of the vessels into Guyana is being facilitated through inter-agency collaboration with the Coast Guard, Customs and Immigration, the Guyana Police Force, the Maritime Administration and private sector stakeholders. This joint approach being employed is in keeping with current Tourism Minister Irfaan Ali's commitment to ensure that all systems are in place to make yachting a success.



*Early morning arrival on the Suriname River*

For Suriname the procedure is slightly more time consuming because tourists need a visa or tourist card before checking with Immigration, but on the other hand, yachts normally don't have to clear with Customs. See details on cruiserswiki.org.

**Best Time of Year**

If fleeing for the hurricane season is not an issue, the best time to sail from the Eastern Caribbean to the Guyanas is March or April.

From November to February, the seas are rather rough because the wind is generally stronger but has that northerly component we are looking for, resulting in a better wind angle (on average 50 to 60 degrees) if you choose a good weather window. In March and April, the wind usually eases a bit and veers gradually east (average wind angle 45 degrees), becoming southeasterly in June. In August and September the wind may be on the nose but on the other hand the equatorial current is down at that time of the year. So timing is actually a matter of personal preference:

Those who enjoy a fast sail and don't mind conditions a little rough pick March or April.

Those who prefer calmer conditions (and are prepared to run the engine) choose a period later in the year during the hurricane season.

*—Continued on next page*

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The overview of tracks below and the chartlet on page 23 show that bearings to either Guyana or Suriname do not differ so much. So if you plan to visit all of the Guyanas, it may be smart to keep pointing as high as possible to end up in Suriname or French Guiana, and visit Guyana on the way back to the Caribbean.

**Overview of Tracks**

| FROM | TO | BEARING | DISTANCE (nautical miles) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tobago | Guyana | 143° | 340 |
| Guyana | Suriname | 101° | 140 |
| Suriname | French Guiana | 098° | 80 |
| Tobago | Suriname | 135° | 450 |
| Carriacou | Suriname | 135° | 535 |
| Bequia | Suriname | 139° | 548 |
| Barbados | Suriname | 148° | 492 |

*Magnetic declination is not included so all given bearings and angles are true. For magnetic bearings and angles add 16 degrees.*



*The historic waterfront of Paramaribo, Suriname's capital*

**How to Get There?**

Whenever we meet an old salt, we bring up the subject of how to sail to the Guyanas. It is actually a perfect way to have a meaningful conversation with people you normally wouldn't dare to approach, and likewise those famous guys appear willing to share their wisdom. At the TTSA in Chaguaramas, Trinidad, we had many interesting conversations with Harold La Borde, who was the first Trinidadian to sail around the world — and he did it twice. Mr. La Borde knows the area thoroughly and strongly recommends sailing to Tobago first, and to Charlotteville in particular. He emphasizes the risk of being caught by the equatorial current, sweeping west at two knots if you set off from Store Bay. However, in our much shorter life as cruisers in the Caribbean, we did not experience a big difference in current so (pigheaded as we are) we prefer Store Bay, avoiding starting the passage with the wind on the nose.

Obviously, the farther north your departure point, the better your wind angle. Try Bequia, Martinique or Barbados; the latter would of course be ideal, but getting there is a different matter.

**What Professional Seamen Say**

Over the years, we talked to many fishermen in Suriname, Trinidad and Bequia. Their views all come down to one remark: *avoid the new moon*! While fishermen may not really care about a ten-degree difference in wind angle, which can be so important to us yachties, their main issue is that the new moon has an extremely heavy impact (even more than the full moon) on the equatorial current that already runs against us and will be even stronger at new moon springs.

Another thing to keep track of is the strength of the tidal currents. In August the tidal currents ease. Fishermen on the Surinamese coast comment that they experience almost no tidal current in August.

Setting off from Trinidad, there is the option of exiting via the Serpent's Mouth, separating Trinidad and Venezuela. But Mr. La Borde warns: "Be careful, my dear — the current is too strong there and there is no good spot to anchor." (Obviously he does not consider using the engine as a possibility.)

**The Serpent's Mouth**

Although Harold La Borde advises against Trinidad's "Serpent's Mouth", some younger yachtsmen have a different opinion. In September, a Frenchman motor-sailed around Trinidad's south coast to Suriname in three or four days, staying close to the shore on the ten-metre depth line. He even claimed to have encountered some current running east, plus offshore winds in the evenings, allowing him to sail!

By the end of 2012, the Trinidadian couple Peter and Louise Quentrall-Thomas covered the same route to Suriname with their classic power voyager, *Passagemaker*, in three to four days without any difficulties. More recently a solo sailor from Seattle motor-sailed his Hunter 28 from Trinidad to Suriname, staying close to the shore — and claiming that he was boarded by pirates popping up from a pirogue near the coast of Guyana. The story spread about was that the pirates took all his valuables but were kind enough to let him keep his cell phone. We have never heard of pirates being so nice, so we checked with the Guyana Tourism Authority to see if this story could be true, and it appeared a fraud. This is an example of how stories are sometimes made up and spread, wrongfully creating a negative perspective and in this case deterring other yachtsmen from exploring one of the region's best-kept secrets.

**Our Own Experiences: Sailing from Tobago to Suriname**

We undertook this passage in 2007, 2008, 2010 (failed) and 2014, and learned a lot.

On May 20th, 2007 (between new moon and first quarter) we left Charlotteville in east winds of 15 knots. After rounding Tobago's northeast rocks, we immediately experienced a strong current swooshing us in the wrong direction, so we first steered south with a generous apparent wind angle of 60 degrees, making speed to cross the current as quickly as possible. After we left deep water and reached the 200-metre depth line, the worst of the current was done with. During this passage we ran into many calms with fluky winds and especially struggled near the Orinoco and again off the Guyanese coast, making no progress at all for several hours.

—Continued on next page

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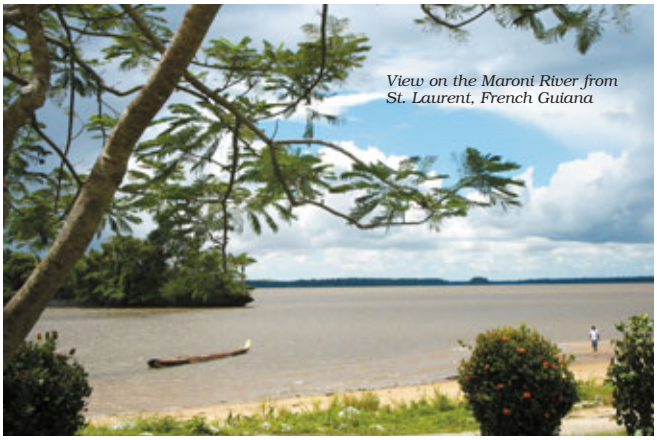


—*Continued from previous page*

We arrived at the outer marker of the Suriname River in exactly six days. Not too bad, but all in all we look back on this passage as very frustrating.

With this experience in mind, the next time we set off from Tobago to Suriname we did so from Store Bay. This was on April 9th, 2008, again between new moon and first quarter moon. The wind was east-northeast at 15 to 20 knots, and with a 60-degree apparent wind angle we were able to get out of the worst of the current quickly. The sailing went well; of course we ran into some calms, causing us to cover the distance in four days and three hours, otherwise it might have been under four days.

By the end of March 2010 we were once again in Store Bay and ready to set off for Suriname. Winds east at ten to 12 knots. We didn't make enough speed to fight the current so we turned back to try again later that day. But alas, the wind became even lighter and more southeasterly. Because we were in a hurry to get home, we decided to head for Chaguaramas instead, haul out and fly to Suriname.



*View on the Maroni River from St. Laurent, French Guiana*

January 2014. Waiting in Bequia for a weather window combining a 20-knot breeze with a northerly component, plus second quarter moon... impossible, especially as the winds north of Tobago tend to be more easterly than farther south, and are generally stronger. We left Bequia with east winds of 25 knots and headed for Tobago as a stopover. From Tobago we sailed on January 23rd with winds east-northeast at 25 knots, becoming northeast at 20 to 25 knots. It was the last quarter of the moon and the current was strong, especially off the Guyanese coast; but after we crossed the 50-metre depth line the worst was over. We reached the outer marker of the Suriname River in five days and 19 hours, having to tack only once as the waters over the sandbanks off the Surinamese shore turned out to be much more shallow than charted.

We could have made it more quickly if we hadn't run into bad luck. Owing to the strain on the rigging in these rough January seas, the fitting to the forestay of our mizzenmast broke. Luckily this happened in daytime and emergency repairs were made in a jiffy. But the real shit always hits the fan at night. Thirty nautical miles off the Guyanese coast, between the Essequibo and the Corantyne rivers, we sailed full speed into an unmarked fishing net. The net was floating off a Venezuelan fishing boat showing only a white flash — so be warned! The net was several kilometers long and blocked our rudder. After a lot of struggling and several breakers sloshing into the cockpit we eventually managed to clear the net from the rudder.

By the way, should we have chosen the Essequibo as our destination: we'd have reached the outer marker in two days and 12 hours. But we would not have beaten the *Friendship Rose*.

*For more information on Guyana visit cruiserswiki.org/wiki/Guyana and doyle-guides.com/files/guyana%202012.pdf. See also* Caribbean Compass *November 2013.*

*For more information on Suriname visit cruiserswiki.org/index.php?title=Suriname. See also* Caribbean Compass *September and October 2011.*

*For more information on French Guiana visit marinaslm.com/rally/Downloads.php*

*Petra and JanWillem Versol are a Dutch couple who live in Suriname and have been cruising the Caribbean for seven years. Their 40-foot ketch,* Witte Raaf, *returned to Suriname in January and will promote the Sailing Club Suriname in 2014 and 2015 (www.sailingclubsuriname.org). Visit them at www.witteraaf.info.*

## A RALLY TO THE GUYANAS

To provide an alternative hurricane season destination, the Marina St. Laurent du Maroni in French Guiana teamed up with the local sailing club and organized a rally from Trinidad to the Guyanas in 2013.



Why not start from Tobago, we asked David Matelicani, organizer of the Nereid's Rally (marinaslm.com/rally). Some larger yachts prefer to start from Trinidad because it is easier for the crew, but David agrees that Tobago is the ideal jump-off point and a Tobago start is an option in the online registration process. The official 2014 reception in Guyana will again be held at Hurakabra Resort with the continuing support of Kit Nascimento and Tourism Minister Irfaan Ali. For Suriname, David still has to work on the programme, but they have discussed logistics including facilitated check-in and a shore-shuttle service in Paramaribo. The tourist office in Saint-Laurent will again host a nautical-themed fête to coincide with the arrival of the fleet. This year, satellite yacht tracking will allow folks back home to view progress and help organizers coordinate the receptions at each stopover.

David concludes: "The 2013 rally was a great success. Despite several last minute scratchings and a rather small fleet, fun was had by all. Better a small fleet for the first event anyway, as there was a learning curve for everyone involved. For this year's rally we should easily accommodate many more yachts. The support from partners and sponsors has been tremendous and as the Nereid's Rally is the area's only yachting event, everyone wants it to be a success."

And so do we. We talked to some of the participants and they were extremely enthusiastic. Yes, getting there had been difficult. Even 56-foot *Spirited Lady of Fowey* needed five days to reach Guyana, as she ran out of wind and almost into some fishing nets when she sailed up the Essequibo and missed a waypoint. But her owner/skipper Susie Stanhope can't wait for the second rally to start on September 2nd. Susie joins other Caribbean events such as the Antigua Race Week, and actually prefers the rally being in September, during the hurricane season. And she takes the motor-sailing for granted.

We asked Susie for her opinion on Nereid's Rally 2013.

*Susie, what made you decide to participate in Nereid's Rally?*

I was looking for a new adventure and I always heard that Guyana was unspoilt, full of wildlife and lovely people.

*How easy was moving around on your own?*

In Guyana the Coastguard looked after us and provided transport, and there were water taxis. Everything was organized, but you can also easily move around on your own. In Suriname there are local buses and taxis, and I would encourage yachtsmen to rent a car. It's easy and cheap: I paid US$12 to 15 per day and got a Toyota RAV4! That made moving around extremely easy and it changed my whole view about Suriname.

In Guyana we flew to Kaieteur and some other waterfalls, went up rapids in local pirogues, enjoyed jungle walks, etcetera. A one-day tour for US$350 included the flight to and from the interior. In Suriname the trip to Atjoni and from there upriver in a pirogue to the maroon village, Gunsi, was stunning. In French Guiana we took some tours up the Maroni, and I also went up in a micro-light plane providing a gorgeous view over the jungle. Everybody adored the tour from St. Laurent to the Amerindian village Galibi on the Surinamese side of the river, fabulous.

*Did you encounter any problems with Customs or Immigration?*

None whatsoever, everybody was fantastically helpful. In Suriname the authorities are obviously not used to visiting yachts (Immigration is two bus rides into town) but they did the best they could and it was easy.

*General remarks?*

It was all completely safe. Information from the organization was very good. Navigational directions need to be studied thoroughly, as you *must* follow the given waypoints in Guyana. It was not difficult but different: I motor-sailed most of it and am not used to that. But it was completely worth the effort. I would definitely do it again and recommend it to others. Tobago gives a better angle so I would prefer to set off from there.

*Any recommendations for the next rally?*

Spend more time. Make it longer. You need at least 14 days in each place. Extend the rally to a month and a half or two months.

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*Time for a break from sand and sea? Head for the hills of St. Vincent and immerse yourself in beautifully 'controlled jungle'*

## *Take a Walk on the Wild Side:*

# Montreal Gardens, St. Vincent

Given the excessive fertility of the wet tropical climate, it is surprising that there are not more public gardens on the larger islands of the Lesser Antilles.

The good ones we have include Jardin de Balata in Martinique, Jardin Botanique de Deshaies in Guadeloupe, the Botanical Garden of Nevis, and the National Botanical Garden on St. Vincent. By far the best at this time, in my opinion, is the seven-acre Montreal Gardens in St. Vincent. At EC$10 per person to visit, it is also a bargain.

These gardens lie at the head of the Mesopotamia Valley, a rich agricultural area, where it is tucked close to the central mountain range, which adds drama to many a view. The gardens are beautifully designed with winding paths, bridges, steps, a tunnel and a river. I been visiting and loved this garden for many years. It was lovely in the early years, but this year it seems to have reached its apogee and I was completely blown away on my most recent visit by its intense exuberant wildness.

Gardening is a matter of controlling and orchestrating nature, selecting plants and providing a garden architecture that is appealing and, if done right, becomes a work of art. Most gardens tend to be somewhat formal: the plants well pruned and trimmed and neatly laid out. Tim Vaughn's genius has been to back off on the pruning and control over much of his garden and let the nature of his plants run riot. This has created a kind of controlled garden jungle — a riot of colors, leaf shapes and spectacular growth. The effect is breathtaking, like a visit to some fairytale land where you can, for an hour or two, feel like Alice in Wonderland strolling around in awe of the beauty. In the wilder parts, plants are allowed to encroach on the paths so you find yourself brushing though the vegetation, which adds to the experience, though if you come on a rainy day you might get a trifle damp.

The garden also has formal areas with lawns and careful order against a backdrop of wild rainforest-clad mountains.

This is not a place to rush, and it is a great place to bring a picnic lunch; several seating areas covered by roofs are tucked away among the leaves. The only sounds are rustling leaves, running water and birdsong. It rates as the number one attraction in St. Vincent on TripAdvisor, which is quite surprising as the visitor load is light and many cruise ship tour operators seem oblivious of its existence. (The current state of the narrow, winding road leading there might deter the big tour buses.)

Montreal Gardens is open from December to August, Monday to Friday from 0900 to 1600. The closest anchorage is Blue Lagoon. For those anchored in Bequia, it's possible to take the ferry to Kingstown, proceed from there, and get back the same day. I have usually gone to the Montreal Gardens in friends' cars or taken a taxi, but the more adventurous can take buses from Kingstown to the village of Richland Park, which is within hiking range. If you have a group, ask any of the local taxi drivers or tour companies about a rate.

*For more information visit www.montrealestgdns.f9.co.uk.*



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# Leaving the Eastern Caribbean for Europe

Spring is in the air and some sailors are thinking of leaving the Eastern Caribbean: heading to North America or Europe, or heading west or south within the Caribbean.

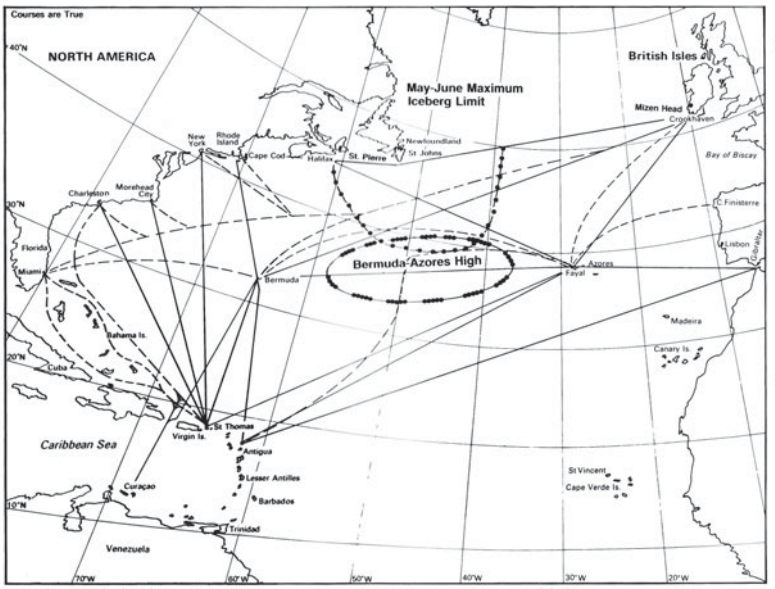
The first thing that should be done is to purchase the Imray Iolaire passage chart 100. It is a gnomonic projection, where a straight line is a Great Circle course. It covers the whole North Atlantic and also the Caribbean.

On the front of the chart are shown all the normal Great Circle courses that are likely to be sailed by a yacht, with the distance to be sailed. On the back there are weather and wave-height charts for the entire year except for the months of January, February and March, months when yachts should not be sailing in the North Atlantic. The weather charts show wind direction, frequency and strength, and the percentage of calms plus gale frequency. Regarding gale frequency, a word of warning: gales mean Force 8 (40 knots) or more, sometimes much more. Winter gales are usually stronger than summer gales. April gales are most likely more severe than May gales. The weather charts also show areas and frequency of wave heights of 12 feet or over. Again, the chart does not show how much over 12 feet can be expected. It must be remembered that if the waves are running 12 feet, occasionally they will get in sync and waves of 24 feet will arrive.

See last month's *Compass* for my directions on sailing from the Eastern Caribbean to Bermuda.

The Great Circle course from Bermuda to Falmouth, England leads through the southern edge of the area of icebergs, and boats heading from Bermuda to the Azores that take the northern route looking for wind will skirt the iceberg area. The passage chart 100 is a real eye-opener: it shows positions of icebergs that have been seen well south of the normal area — including four south of the Azores.

Yachts departing from Bermuda may head direct from Bermuda to Crookhaven, Ireland: 2,660 miles. Before doing this take a look at the Great Circle route on chart 100. Note that this route leads *through* the iceberg area for 600 miles. You will also have to expect strong winds and the possibility of gales that will be stronger than on the Bermuda-to-Azores route.




Routes from the Islands and Transatlantic Routes

Dashed lines (– – – –) show recommended sailing routes.
Solid lines (————) show great circle routes.
Dotted lines (— — — —) show approximate location of Bermuda and Azores high.
Dotted-dashed lines (– • – • –) show approximate mean limit of icebergs late May and June.

*After tooling around in the tradewinds, Europe-bound sailors need to be prepared for anything from gales to calms*

Bermuda to the Azores is a mixed bag. On chart 100 there are three routes shown: direct, middle and northern. The direct route is the shortest. It is straight through the Azores High. Some boats have reported not only light airs, but also long periods of flat calm requiring much motor-sailing or motoring. But this is not always so. In 2002, delivering an Oyster 48 ketch, we left Bermuda on a southwester. One day out, the wind switched to the east and started blowing. Every time the wind shifted we tacked, but each time the wind headed us. We spent two days going nowhere. Finally the wind suddenly switched to the west and started to really blow like hell. We sailed to Flores, straight through the normally windless Azores High, under shortened sail the entire time.

On *Iolaire* in 1985 we had a good, though cold, passage on the northern Azores route. It was distinctive in that the 46-foot, heavy displacement *Iolaire* did a 48-hour run of 410 miles. I would not believe my morning sight as I thought this was impossible. But a ship came over the horizon, which I contacted via VHF. They reported my calculated position was correct — and that 40 miles ahead of us at 41°N there was a large iceberg! On the first morning, 24 hours into this run, the wind was out of the north and building up a large sea that was crossing with the old southwest swell. Periodically, the seas would meet at such an angle that the sea would erupt forming a 20- to 30-foot geyser. It was blowing hard out of the north, cold and overcast, with a heavy mist almost like rain. The log reads, "The most miserable dawn I have ever seen in more than 30 years of offshore sailing."

On *Iolaire* in 1995 we had a good passage on the northern route until about 300 miles from Horta. We were beam reaching through a northerly full gale doing up to eight knots under mizzen and staysail alone, when we hove to for a good hot meal. About the time we finished dinner we discovered we had a serious leak. We discovered that by pumping ten minutes out of 30 on our Edson single-action, 30-gallon-per-minute diaphragm pump, the leak was kept under control. We did this for 48 hours until we reached Horta where we traced it to a broken stem bolt, the only part of the boat we did not work on in *Iolaire*'s 1994-'95 rebuild.

Some boats departing Antigua will head northeast on starboard tack, close reaching toward the Azores: Great Circle distance 2,070 miles. When the wind dies they turn north, power across the High, pick up the southwesterlies, and sail off to the Azores. But this does not always work. In 1989, *Iolaire* took off direct to the Azores on a fast close reach. At the end of seven days we were halfway there; the wind was dying. Many boats had left Antigua the same day and we were talking on the VHF. I announced that, as the wind was dying, I was turning north to cross the High and pick up the southwesterlies. *Wet and Wild* came on and said they had weather info and there was no wind in the entire North Atlantic: the only thing to do was to continue on and fight the light airs. We all did this. The boats with engines ran out of fuel. One day when all the others were becalmed, *Iolaire* did 70 miles. How? We dropped the main, squared the boom off, and hoisted two spinnakers. We were not towing a prop. The engineless *Iolaire* took 21 days Antigua to Horta: the boats with engines took 19 days.

But anything can happen. In 2002 I met a friend who was delivering a 38-foot sloop from St. Martin to the UK. He said he took off from St. Martin on a close reach, with a Number 2 genoa and no main. He sailed a rhumb line course, knocking off 160 miles per day, and never set the main.

Jamie Dobbs of *Lost Horizon* fame for years commuted across the Atlantic in his 38-foot Rival. He did 18 trips in 16 to 18 days. He said, "The wind vane did the steering, the course was set and sails trimmed according to what my Brooks and Gatehouse VMG told me, and I read a lot of books!" His luck finally ran out and he had a slow passage of 22 days.

When sailing from the Azores onward to Ireland or England, about 1,200 miles, check the weather carefully before departure as in the Azores you can run into periods of extended calm. Note the percentage of calms in the Azores in the months of June and July on the back of chart 100. In 1995 I had an unhappy crew on board *Iolaire* as I insisted in departing Horta in light airs. The breeze went flat, and 36 hours after leaving Horta we could still see the peak of Pico.

If the wind settles in the northeast, head north on a fast close reach until you reach the southwesterlies then head for Crookhaven, Ireland. Why Crookhaven? Because when you arrive at Falmouth you will discover the beer is warm, the pub is closed and a game of cricket is in progress. But if you sail into Crookhaven, even if the pub is closed, when they discover you have just sailed across the Atlantic they will open up and serve you a pint of Murphy's stout.

If heading for Spain or Portugal, lay off your course to a point 30 or 40 miles north of your landfall. When you approach the coast you will encounter the Portuguese trades blowing 20 to 25 knots from the north and a south-flowing current. If you end up south of your landfall, beating to windward against a strong foul current is a poor way to end a transatlantic.

If heading to Gibraltar, a rhumb line course is 800 miles from Santa Maria, the easternmost of the Azores.

For a few boats — those that sail well in light airs, have crews that are willing to do a lot of trimming and sail changes, have access to real-time weather reports, and have a moderate range under power using their normal fuel tanks, or are willing to supplement the fuel supply by carrying bladder tanks — Antigua to Gibraltar direct (3,160 miles) is a viable option. A crew on the Mylne-designed, Fife-built *Mariella* says, "We took off close reaching, course northeast, then turned east staying well south of the Great Circle route to the Azores. Thus we were south of the Azores High. We sailed her hard, in that we constantly trimmed sails and switched headsails as necessary. Whenever the wind went very light we motor-sailed, running the engine no more than half throttle, which gave us very many miles per gallon. Staying south we not only avoided the calms of the Azores High but also the heavy weather experienced by boats farther north. By bypassing the Azores we saved the three-day stop in Horta. Thus we did the entire trip in 18 days, which was five days faster than the boats that took the normal route to Horta and stopped, refuelled and re-stored."

As you have read, there are many routes to leave the Caribbean. On all routes the boat, skipper and crew, must all be prepared to weather a full gale at sea in COLD weather. It is essential before leaving the Caribbean that the skipper makes each crewmember lay out for inspection their foul- and cold-weather gear plus sea boots. If any of the gear is inadequate, the crewmember must beg, borrow, buy or steal the necessary gear so that he or she is fully equipped to stay warm and relatively dry in a cold gale at sea. Also the ship's medical kit should include anti-seasickness suppositories, not only oral remedies. Once a crew gets so seasick they can't keep anything down, a suppository up the backside is the only solution. A severely seasick crew is not only useless to the ship, but they can be a danger to themselves by becoming badly dehydrated.

*In the May issue of Compass, Don will describe westward routes for boats that have spent their winter in the Eastern Caribbean.*

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# Key Preparations for Your Eastbound Transatlantic

*by Duncan Sweet*

To begin with, we'll assume you are going to cross the Atlantic in a relatively strong boat and most of the deck leaks have been taken care of and there is plenty of room for storing nightwatch snacks!

The Azores is often the first landfall for boats coming directly from the Caribbean or Bermuda. One of the most persistent problems found when boats arrive here in Horta is contamination in fuel tanks, usually caused by water, dirt, sludge or microbes or a combination thereof. At sea this slurry can choke fuel filters and foul fuel/water separators and, if not dealt with, can seriously compromise engine reliability.

Rain and seawater can enter the fuel tanks through the on-deck filler pipe if the O-ring is cracked and leaking. A buildup of condensation can also play a part in the growth of tank microbes and bacteria. I am convinced the religious use of an anti-microbial diesel fuel additive is well worth the added cost.

If it has not been done for a while, a tank cleaning may save you a lot of grief at sea. The next time a fuel tank is "empty," consider opening the inspection hatch, the fuel suction pickup or the fuel gauge flange for a cleanout. A small DC pump with a nitrile impeller, a length of hose, and something rigid to help you position the hose in the tank is as technical as it needs to be. Obviously, you are trying to reach the lowest point in the tank where the water, crud and corruption will gather — usually near the fuel suction or pick-up pipe! The hose should be long enough to comfortably reach the bottom of the tank, from whence you can vacuum the contents into a sludge container for recycling.

> *'look closely for one or more thin black lines indicating a hairline crack in the swage body'*

Before this passage, change the primary and secondary fuel filters and make sure you have plenty of spare filters onboard, especially if your tanks have not been cleaned lately. If you have an unusual primary fuel filter/water separator, stock up when you have a chance, as they may be even harder to find where you are going. It's also a good idea to refer back to the original engine manufacturer's secondary filter number. The filter now fitted, if not an OEM part as per the manual, may be far removed from what was originally specified.

The engine's saltwater cooling pump is also a potential offshore headache. If there is any evidence of salt building up on the pump body, or a weeping seal or a slight drip, it is time to rebuild the pump and install new seals and a new impeller. When you have the pump dismounted for service, take a moment to check all the cooling hoses, pipes and connections for signs of old age, cracking, splitting, chafe and rusty hose clamps. If possible, check for old impeller bits that can block water flow into the heat exchanger.

The alternator(s) will normally do a lot of battery charging on a crossing and replacing the belt(s) is a task more easily accomplished in harbor than in a six-foot swell. Carry at least one spare of each belt fitted in your engine room and, if you haven't done it for a while, replace them anyway. It's cheap insurance.

Another pre-crossing item a lot of people seem to avoid is going aloft and having a good look around the rig and rigging. Use a comfortable bosun's chair, use two halyards, pick a calm day and take your time… and a camera. A very short knot onto the chair's halyard will make it easier at the masthead to look closely at the mast cap and all fittings and fixtures.

On older rigging, look for signs of de-swaging where one or more of the 1x19 strands may have broken, normally just out of sight inside the body of the swaged terminal. You are looking for a stainless steel strand or two that appears to be "relaxed" as it is no longer under tension and appears to stand ever so slightly proud of the companion wires on either side. If you are not sure, press on the strands with a small screwdriver trying to detect a slight movement at the break, even though you may not be able to see it. Terminals with a lot of rust discoloration are especially suspect. A high percentage of de-swaging is at deck level, especially in lower shrouds, but can happen to any swaged fitting. If the swages are seriously discolored, polish them and look closely for one or more thin black lines indicating a hairline crack in the swage body, usually near the wire end of the terminal. Many of these failures are in swages susceptible to salt water running down the wire and, with time, salt building up inside the swage body.

Also check the roller furling gear for halyard chafe and correct wrap-stop or fairlead positioning at the masthead. Many roller furling problems are due to the halyard car's position on the foil when the halyard is correctly tensioned and/or the halyard angle to the masthead sheave. Other furler problems are caused by an incorrect angle to the deck of the furling line where it exits the furling drum and leads aft. Research both these points in the manufacturer's literature to check if your setup is correct. Have a good look at all masthead fittings: VHF antenna and cable, wind instrument, masthead/tri-color light etcetera, should all be solidly fastened with no signs of chafe, stress or fatigue, and be able to withstand a few weeks of open ocean on passage. If anything looks suspect, take photos to show your crew or a knowledgeable rigger.

Above all, have a safe crossing and reef early!

*Duncan Sweet is the proprietor of Mid Atlantic Yacht Services, Horta, Faial, Azores. He can be contacted at mays@mail.telepac.pt.*

*The Azores for Caribbean Cruisers:*

# NOT JUST A STATION ON THE WAY



*by Linda Lane Thornton*

*Trav'ling lady, stay awhile*
*until the night is over.*
*I'm just a station on your way...*
*— from Winter Lady by Leonard Cohen*

So, you've had a superb season cruising the Caribbean, looking up favourite anchorages or exploring new ones, drifting from island to island. Now, though, it's time to plan for the summer — and the hurricane season. You'll have considered all of the options, talked to other yachties, teased out the pros and cons of one place or another: south to Trinidad or west to Cartagena; finding a hurricane hole somewhere along the island chain; into the Intra-Coastal Waterway or the Chesapeake; the Rio Dulce in Guatemala. In some ways there are too many options. For some yachties it will be the end of this cruising life as you return to Europe to replenish the bank balance or to catch up with family; others will want to extend explorations into Europe or the Mediterranean. In any event, the eastward crossing of the North Atlantic is likely to include the Azores in its itinerary. Take my advice: do yourself a favour and plan to spend at least a couple of months sailing around them.



*Top: The town hall at Praia*
*Above: View of Pico from the marina in Velas, São Jorge*

The Azores consist of three groups of islands, each group on a different tectonic plate. To the west are Flores and Corvo; Faial, Pico, São Jorge, Graciosa and Terceira make up the central group, leaving São Miguel and Santa Maria to the east, with overnight passages between the groups. Each island has its own characteristics, each one is unique, and in each one you will find a lasting memory, something that will warm the heart on a cold night.

In practical, prosaic terms, most islands have good supermarkets, and the quality of fresh produce is exemplary. If you're an adventurous foodie, you'll find yourself salivating over the cheeses — my mouth is watering just writing about them! Visit as many cheese farms as you can, as the size of the trial portions is a meal in itself, then buy some to take back on board. Together with a bottle of wine and a freshly baked loaf you'll find yourself enjoying a delicious and easy supper, especially in the company of fellow yachties. Beer is comparable in price to the Caribbean but wine, especially Portuguese wine, is much less expensive and in some supermarkets, such as the Continente chain, it is cheaper than orange juice or soda.

You will find just about everything you need in terms of groceries, fruit and vegetables, but if you crave a particularly expensive brand of face cream, the duty-free perfume and cosmetics shop in Ponta Delgada, São Miguel, should be able to supply your wants. Most marinas have showers, toilets and laundry facilities, and the water coming out of the taps is both potable and as deliciously refreshing as water can be. Every marina has free WiFi, as do most public squares. SIM cards are readily obtained and easy to get going.

Where crime is concerned, the Azores are some of the safest islands in the world. It is generally a perfectly safe place to wander around at all hours of the day and night. The reason for this is partly that the islands still retain a family orientated culture: crime is regarded as shameful, and retribution is swift. Yes, if you leave something lying on a park bench it might not be there when you come back, but such opportunistic crime is rare. In Flores we were lent a car by a local lady who told us not to take the key out of the ignition because it was stuck in. "What about locking the car?" I asked. "Why would you want to lock it? No one will steal it!" was her reply.

An additional plus factor is that many Azoreans have spent time in the United States, especially the Boston area, or in Canada, so English is widely spoken. Best of all, if you have just a smattering of Portuguese or Spanish, you will find sympathetic and willing listeners who want to understand and help you. In the 1950s and 1960s some of the islands suffered natural disasters, such as the emergence of the volcano at Capelinhos on Faial, in response to which North America opened its arms to those who wished to find a new life elsewhere. These emigrants are now returning to their islands, many with their families, finding the slower pace of life more to their liking, even when linked with harder physical work and the lack of some amenities. Their stories are interesting and informative, giving a different perspective to life, and they always seem to have time to chat.

Of course, with all the eating and drinking you'll be doing, you might be concerned with weight gain. Don't be! All of the lovely marinas are, not unnaturally, at sea level, and an uphill walk is needed to get to the shops, so you'll be well-toned by the time you leave. If walking is one of your passions, leaflets and booklets are readily available in tourist offices that will introduce you to the rich footpath network of the islands. Most of the walks can be reached by bus, and bus services are both regular and reliable. Taxis are also available, and are not too expensive.

If you are interested in geology, then the volcanic scenery of the islands will entrance you, while the intense blue of the hydrangea hedges in June and July is the colour of a summer sky. Diving companies offer a variety of excursions, the amazing clarity of the water making up for its rather cool temperature. One of my husband's abiding memories is of swimming with a 15-metre long whale shark off Santa Maria.

And for a memento of your time in the islands, AzulArt on Terceira can make a personalised *azulejo* — a blue and white tile — for a very reasonable price.

So extend your island time and consider the Azores as a cruising destination in their own right, not just a "station on your way".


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# APRIL 2014

**♈ ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)**
You'll have full sails in creative projects after the second week and communication skills will be at an all-time high. Both of these aspects will sail you to your chosen landfall. Don't let your humor spinnaker collapse, though: that would slow your way forward.

**♉ TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)**
The end of an affair of the heart could put you in irons regarding boat business. To keep moving, set your waypoint on your ingenuity and don't let fluky outside influences blow you off course.

**♊ GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)**
While romance is experiencing fickle winds, your efforts at balancing your sails will keep you busy and keep the crew happy.

**CANCER ♋ (22 Jun - 23 Jul)**
The winds of love will be steady and your good nature will contribute to VMG on that course. Don't let any small squalls of pickiness on your part upset an otherwise pleasant situation.

**♌ LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)**
Use your verbal skills to facilitate inventive onboard projects in the first three weeks. Financial doldrums could leave you with slack sails after then, so do everything you can while aspects are favorable.

**♍ VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)**
Your love life will be a beat during the second half of the month and will dominate your course until early in May.

**♎ LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)**
What energy you do have will be needed to deal with stormy weather with crew or cruising-pal relationships. Arguments and scuttlebutt could make this month a slog.

**♏ SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)**
A loved one could be of great help in boat-related business during the third week. Keep an open mind to new ideas and all will stay on course.

**♐ SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)**
Romance may be experiencing choppy seas but your creativity and communication skills will be full steam ahead. Be especially focused on onboard projects during weeks two and three and you'll see good results.

**♑ CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)**
Progress will be slow with generally stormy weather, rough seas and misunderstandings with others. Perhaps a period of singlehanding will be just the thing while you wait these aspects out.

**♒ AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)**
Your romance may be waning, sailor, but it will be on friendly terms. Boat business may experience a short period of the doldrums in the last week, but nothing serious.

**♓ PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)**
Venus sails into Pisces on the 6th and will bring you happy times with love and laughter. Enjoy it.

Island Poets

# RIBBONS OF BLUE

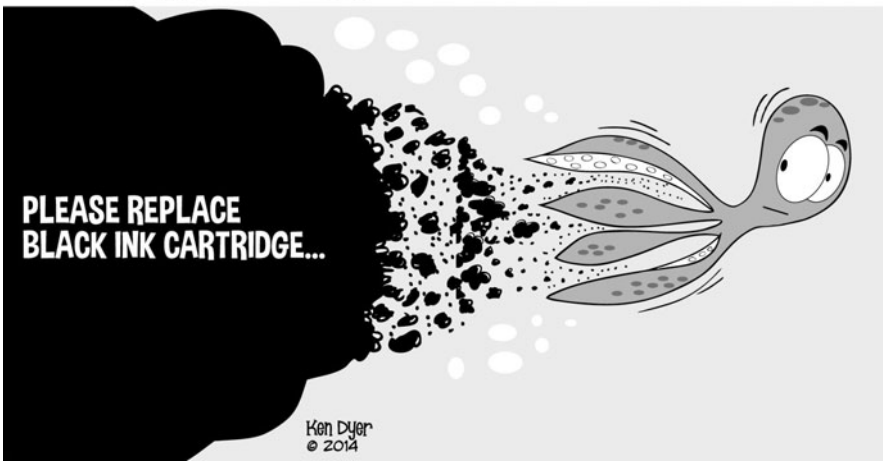
Sailing on ribbons of blue.
Inspired by the ocean and all the beautiful mysteries.
Beyond horizons.
We reach to touch pure bliss.
A life filled with nature, adventure and the unknown.
Together we close our eyes and open them to a world we create.
Respecting nature.



Forever grateful to see what is right in front of us.
This life.
This moment.
Showing us nothing is out of reach if you believe.
Like the moon and sun.
Everlasting proof there is a way.
Forever grateful for the gift of life.
We float on ribbons of blue.

*— Olivia Frank*

Seaweed




KEN DYER

CRUISING KIDS' CORNER

# AN EASTER EGG FOR JANIE

*by Lee Kessell*

On a sunny island in the lower Caribbean Janie lived with her granny. Her mother had left the island to earn a better living as a maid in America but she never had enough money to send anything home to help Granny out. Granny didn't mind this, as she made enough money baking buns and selling eggs to the housewives of the village to keep her seven-year-old granddaughter and herself fed. Then, with her small garden producing fruit and vegetables enough for her small family's needs, she was quite content. The only time Granny missed having some spare cash was at times like Christmas and Easter and birthdays when she would have given Janie a little present. Now it was Easter and some of the children of the village had small chocolate Easter eggs.

Janie didn't mind going without these small gifts but she had to admit to herself that a hollow chocolate Easter egg is what she really wanted. Granny had made lots of hot cross buns to sell on Good Friday and Janie had been given two. As everybody said that Granny's hot cross buns were the best in the island, Janie had to be content with that and try to forget about Easter eggs.

On Easter Sunday morning when Janie woke up in Granny's little cottage, what she saw on the windowsill made her eyes pop out with happiness. It was a big white hen's egg! But this was no ordinary egg. First of all it was twice the size of an ordinary egg and it was painted in a spiral design in pink, blue and violet with a thin silver ribbon tied around the middle with a pretty bow.

*But this was no ordinary egg…*

Granny was in the kitchen making scrambled eggs for breakfast when Janie rushed in holding the egg with her two hands.

"Oh Granny!" she cried, "Look at my lovely Easter egg that someone left on the windowsill."

Granny looked at the pretty egg and wondered where it had come from. "Keep it safe Janie. I'm sure there's magic in that egg."

Janie kept the egg in a box right next to her bed for safekeeping, so early the next morning when she was woken up by a sharp picking noise she sleepily looked into the box and there, just breaking through the painted shell, was the biggest chick she had ever seen. This chick was not at all like the little yellow chicks of Granny's hens. This chick was not only big but it was the most beautiful golden-red colour.

Granny watched with Janie as the chick grew big and strong. After a good many weeks the red chick had grown into a very big handsome rooster.

The rooster, "King", as Janie insisted on calling him, was certainly the most beautiful rooster that anyone in the village had ever seen. His chest was like burnished copper, his red comb sat upon his proud head like a crown and his tail feathers of scintillating blue and green spilled over like a waterfall sparkling and flashing in the sun. His bright eyes were black and glittered like diamonds as he strutted about.

Janie wanted to put a string around the proud rooster's neck because she considered he belonged to her, but Granny had more sense than that. "No, Janie doux-doux, that wouldn't be right. Although the magic egg was a gift for you, the rooster has magic of his own and he must be free to live his own life."

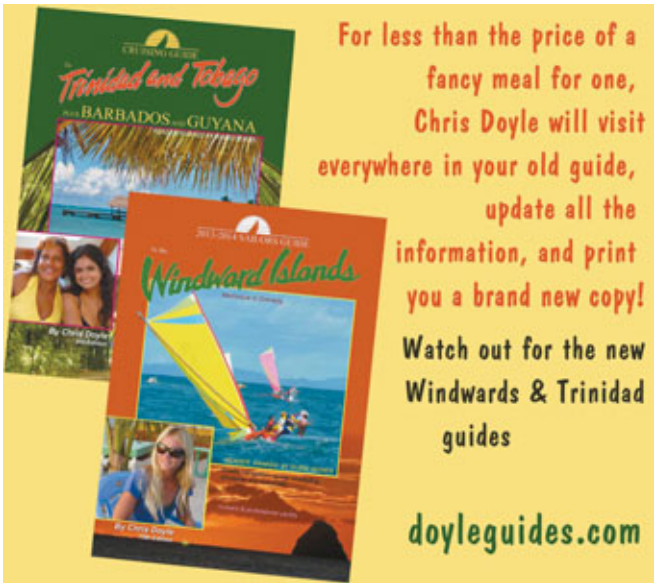
Janie cried a few tears but anyway there was no chance that the rooster was going to let anybody put a string about HIS neck. And so it was that in the course of time King had fathered many red hens and roosters but none as big or as beautiful as he was and no rooster had HIS magic to send a break of day "cock-a-doodle-do", waking everyone in every village all those miles right across the island.

THE END




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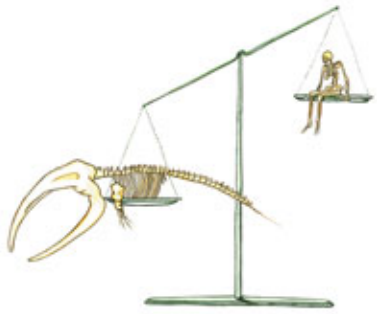
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# DO WHALES EVER...?

*Salty is a humpback whale that loves to jam and sing. Every the winter he swims throughout the Caribbean Sea. He doesn't need a passport because he's an international citizen! Want to know more about Salty?*

**Did whales ever have legs?**

The ancestors of whales lived on land, millions of years ago, and they did have legs. Today's whales have evolved to live only under water, so their front limbs



ALL: TESSA MORGAN

have become flippers and their hind limbs have disappeared — almost. Deep inside the muscles near the tail flukes are two tiny bones that are not even connected to the rest of the whale's skeleton. These bones are all that is left of a whale's legs.

The rest of a whale's skeleton can be huge. A human skeleton weights about 25 pounds, but a humpback's skeleton can weigh more than 20,000 pounds — that's as heavy as a small cruise ship.

**Do whales have belly buttons?**

Just like other mammals, whales do have belly buttons where their umbilical cord used to be. Whales and dolphins are born tail first. A newborn whale's fins, flippers and flukes are very rubbery and soft. After birth, the mother twists and turns to break the umbilical cord. Then she nudges her calf to the surface to take its first breath. Within the first week, the calf's cord withers away and drops off, and a belly button is left behind.

**Do whales ever drink milk?**

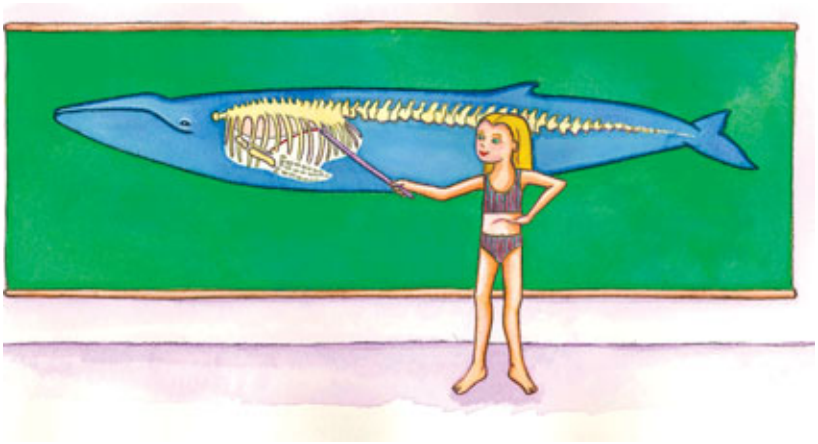
A large whale, such as a Bryde's whale or humpback whale, is pregnant for almost 12 months. At birth, the calf may be ten to 14 feet long and weigh almost a ton. That's about the weight of a small pickup truck.

A 20-foot newborn blue whale is even bigger. Its mother's milk is very rich and looks like yogurt or cottage cheese. A hungry blue whale calf drinks as much as 100 gallons of milk a day. It may increase its weight by an amazing nine pounds an hour, and it can grow more than an inch a day.

A mother pilot whale will nurse her calf for more than two years. Most whales nurse their young for one year. Twin calves are rare. They probably don't survive because the mother would have a hard time supplying enough milk.

**Do whales ever hiccup?**

Because they breathe air like humans, whales have lungs and a diaphragm. The diaphragm is a flat, strong membrane that looks like thin rubber. It separates the lungs from the stomach and other organs.



(Place your hands on your bottom rib and watch your stomach move in and out as you breathe. That's where your diaphragm is located.) Every once in a while, the diaphragm jerks suddenly, causing a sharp hiccup sound. It seems possible that whales can hiccup too, though nobody has yet heard that happen.

**Do whales go to the bathroom?**

A bottlenose dolphin eats 25 pounds of fish a day. A humpback whale may eat 150 pounds of fish in one gulp. Most whales have three stomachs to help them digest all that food. As everyone knows, what goes in must come out. Whale waste comes out as clear urine and as a brown powder that dissolves quickly in the water.

**Do whales have ears?**

A whale's ears are tiny openings — about the diameter of a pencil. They are found behind the whale's eyes. A long canal stretches from the outer ear hole to the inner ear. The canal is filled with a wax plug that keeps water from getting inside.

**Do whales get ever get fleas?**

Whales don't get fleas, but they do have other hitchhikers that can be a nuisance. What do these unwelcome guests look like? Whale lice look like tiny crabs, about the size of a button. They crawl into the creases and folds of skin.

Barnacles can be pests too. They cement their hard shells onto a whale's skin. Barnacles can be as small as a fingernail or as large as a fist. One humpback whale was found swimming with more than a ton of barnacles on its body — that's two pickup trucks full.

Cookie-cutter sharks can also damage a whale's skin. They hang on to whales and dolphins by using their lips as suction pads. Then they scoop out a circle of flesh with their razor-sharp teeth. The inch-deep hole leaves a two-inch round scar on the whale.



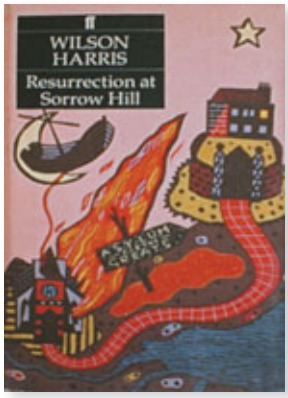





*For more facts about whales and sharks, see the books* Do Whales Ever...? *and* Do Sharks Ever...? *by Nathalie Ward, available at Amazon.com.*

BOOK REVIEW BY J. WYNNER

# Asylum for the Greats




***Resurrection at Sorrow Hill*** *by Wilson Harris. Faber and Faber Limited, 1993 edition. 244 pages. ISBN 0-571-16978-3.*

*Resurrection at Sorrow Hill's* author, Wilson Harris, who started his writing career as a poet, is one of the Caribbean's most brilliant and important writers. From the publication of his first novel, *Palace of the Peacock*, in 1960, a year after he left his native Guyana to reside in England, he was considered a novelist with a difference.

Harris, a qualified land surveyor by profession, has used his work-related expeditions in the 1940s and '50s into the Guyana rainforests as inspiration for most of his novels, which are usually journeys into the interior, to the hinterland of his country, to the hinterland of place and being — the interior of self — via the characters in his tales.

But Harris, as Trinidadians say, "ain't easy". Some readers find his works to be "dark and deep", others "cumbersome reading", and yet others, "difficult", "testing" "incomprehensible", and, as one *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill* reviewer put it, "*Sorrow Hill* makes daunting demands of even the most alert and sensitive reader: those who accompany Wilson to the end of his trek upriver may be touched with the fervour of the converted, but they are likely to be a select and hardy bunch."

*Resurrection at Sorrow Hill* is rich in content, and thought provoking to readers who are familiar with the author's surreal style, symbolism, philosophical bent, and historical theme of the coming of the Europeans to the Caribbean and Latin America.

It is a story of magical realism that opens with the drowning of Ruth, as told in the first part by the grandmother of Ruth's husband, Doctor Daemon. "The body of Ruth had never surfaced from the confluence of the three rivers, the Cuyuni, the Mazaruni, the Essequibo. The boat had overturned and had drifted ashore with other passengers clinging to it. But no sign of Ruth."

Dr. Daemon runs an asylum called "asylum for the greats" at Sorrow Hill where one of the patients, a main character called Hope, writes a book that he calls his Dream-book. He felt that the book provided an insight into processes of therapy pursued in the asylum by Dr. Daemon.

*Resurrection* is divided into seven books or segments. Each segment "tells of cells occupied by other significant inmates, who collaborated with Hope in this book, and whose state of mind led them to conceive of themselves as dual personalities." The author tells the inmates' story of their hellish existence in heavenly prose, in which the present meets the past, the New World meets the Old, and the people of Amazonia meet the people of Europe and beyond.

*Monty, the Venezuelan, claimed at times that he was Montezuma, the emperor of the Aztecs.*

*Len the Brazilian, claimed he was Leonardo da Vinci.*

*Captain Dis claimed he was Judas.*

*A nameless inmate claimed he was possessed by Socrates and the Buddha.*

*Father Robson was perceived by Hope as a heretic priest whose burning church was a relic of a collapsing Ptolemaic universe.*

*June, the sister of Mark, became the Virgin of Sorrow Hill in the mining town under the asylum.*

*Butterfly, Christopher D'eath's wife, wore the mask of Queen of El Dorado.*

And, though dead, coursing through the various books, "Ruth, Daemon's lost and drowned bride re-emerged as the mother of Egyptian Akhenaton."

Harris' novel with its resurrection theme and mental asylum inmates is a complex and multi-layered work. It also brings in a 20th century art form, cinema, which projects Len's story in Book Four. The Brazilian masterminded a robbery that only a madman could have carried out, a bank robbery at the Bank of El Dorado under Sorrow Hill: "It was the work of an inventor of Sorrow Hill cinema who threaded his gifts into parables of conquest (ghost-politics, ghost-economics, ghost-robberies-of-banks)."

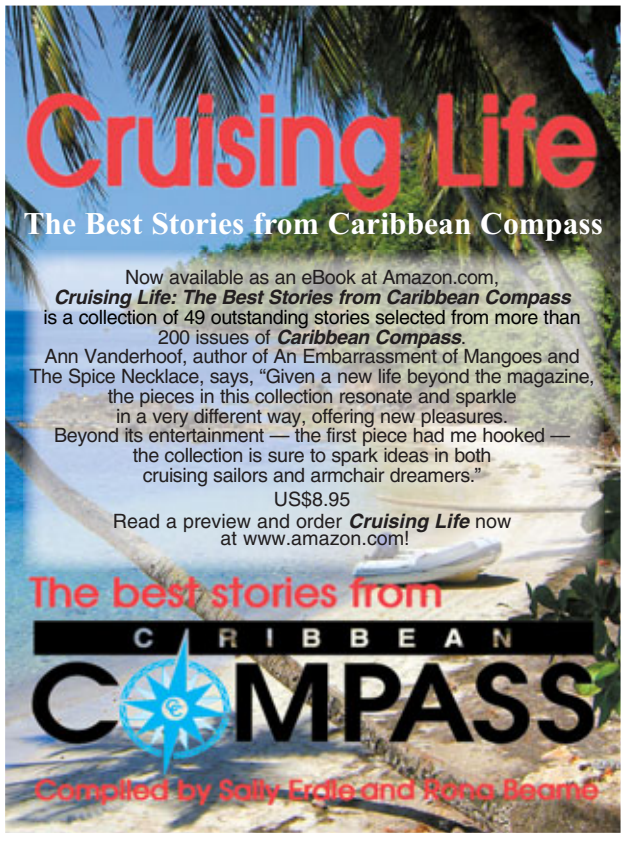
But, as Harris would have him say later on, "Temptation is the mind's cinema and when we turn a switch we glimpse our past selves. We glimpse ourselves as spectral actors within the heart of our resistance to things or pleasures we craved for, causes that seemed right, compelling. Perhaps good."

Readers will perhaps find *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill* great. So, go on, give it a read and become one of the select and hardy bunch of Harris' readers and be touched with the fervour of the converted.

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# The Sky from Mid-April to Mid-May

*by Jim Ulik*

**Space Rocks**

Spring is the time of year when meteor activity blooms. In addition to the random asteroids, meteors and falling space debris there will be 13 meteor showers through May 19th. Three major showers are the Lyrids, the Alpha Scorpiid and the Eta Aquarids.

There are currently 10,695 known Near Earth Asteroids (NEA) and 1,453 of those are considered Potentially Hazardous Asteroids (PHA). PHAs are orbiting space rocks that are large enough to cause damage on regional or global scale if they were ever to hit our planet. There will be 19 PHAs that will make close approaches to Earth between April 16th and May 15th, 2014. No worries this month: the one passing closest to Earth is known as 2008 UY91. It is 134 feet in diameter, traveling at 106,137 mph (70,812 km/h) and will safely pass 61,274 miles (98,611 km) from Earth on this trip around.

**Tuesday, April 15th**

This morning brings the first Full Moon of Spring at 0343 hours.

It may not be a night sky event but, it is 5:00 somewhere and the Sun is a star. Here is some welcome news for those of us that do not take the time to manually rotate their solar panels towards the Sun every hour. What? I'm the only one not doing it? The solar panels will put out maximum power as the Sun becomes more directly overhead. The Sun will transit 10° latitude today. Here are more optimum battery charging dates for those located near other latitudes.

FIGURE 1




*Lepus as depicted in 'Western Constellation Art'*

April 18 - 11°
April 21 - 12°
April 24 - 13°
April 27 - 14°
April 30 - 15°
May 04 - 16°
May 07 - 17°
May 11 - 18°
May 15 - 19°

**Sunday/Monday, April 20th and 21st**

Because it is Easter, here is a look at constellation Lepus the Hare. The celestial rabbit is surrounded by hungry dogs (Canis Major and Canis Minor) and the hunter (Orion). The rabbit became one of the symbols of Easter. A reason could be that during the spring season rabbits flaunt their fertility with numerous bunnies. The Osterhase or egg-laying bunny is a tradition that came from Germany. The first edible Easter bunnies were made in Germany during the early 1800s.

The date of Easter was based on the first Full Moon (Paschal) after the vernal equinox. Easter meanders between March and April as it is based on the Paschal Full Moon along with a formula first written in AD 532 and adjusted so that Easter Day falls on Sunday. The results were made into updated tables in AD 1583. Those tables provide the date of a moon that does not match with the astronomical Full Moon. The difference between the moons could be two to three days.

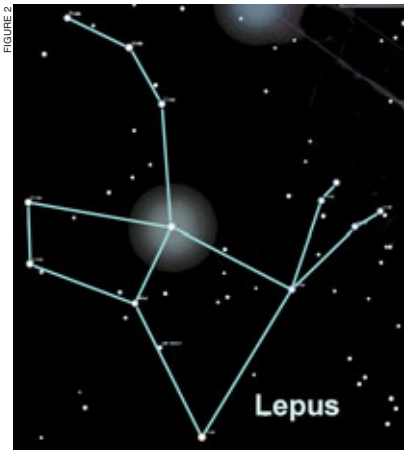
In Chinese and Korean culture the Hare constellation is a Toilet. Fortunately, there is a star formation of a Screen next to it. Curiously there is a constellation of a Soldiers' Market next to the Toilet. Seriously, I don't make this up!

**Tuesday and Wednesday, April 22nd and 23rd – Lyrids Meteor Shower**

On April 16th through 25th the Earth will pass through the debris left behind from Comet Thatcher. The shower will originate from the constellation Lyra. The best days to spot the most meteors will be April 22nd and 23rd. On April 22nd look in the northeast sky for Vega. It is the first star to rise in Lyra.

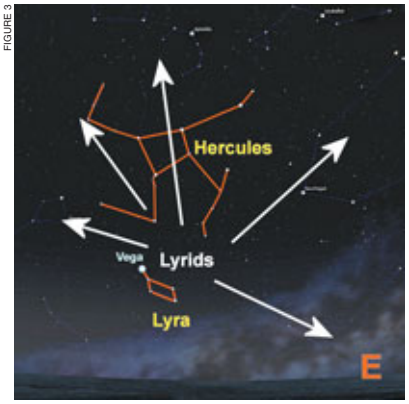
*—Continued on next page*

FIGURE 2




*The star pattern forming the Lepus constellation*

FIGURE 3




*The constellation Lyra on April 23rd at 0100 hours, showing the apparent source (radiant) of the Lyrids Meteor Showet*

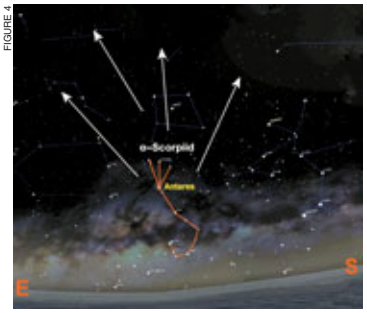




—*Continued from previous page*

The entire constellation should become visible after 2319 hours*. See if you can find any meteors before the moon rises at 0024. Wait until the 23rd and you will have an extra 52 minutes to search without the interference of moonlight. The best viewing time is between 0100 and 0300. The material left behind from the comet is traveling at 110,000 mph (177,028 km/h) as it enters the atmosphere. These "shooting stars" may leave visible ionized gas or smoke trails as they burn up.

FIGURE 4




*The Alpha–Scorpiid meteor shower on April 27th at 2350 hours*

**Wednesday, April 23rd**

The Moon will reach its closest point to Earth today at 2024. The Moon will still be below the horizon when that occurs but a larger Moon can still been seen when it rises at 0205 on the 24th. When you look at the Moon tonight, ponder the idea that the Moon will never be this close again. The Moon's orbit is gradually getting larger, taking it farther from Earth.

They may be hard to see but there will be three comets, K1 Panstarrs, 209P Linear and X1 Linear, in the north and east night sky. Vega will split the distance between them. Look for more of 209P Linear towards the end of May.

**Sunday, April 27th**

The Alpha–Scorpiid meteor shower will be visible each night from April 20th to May 19th. The peak viewing for April is on the 27th. The radiant is near the red star, Antares. Antares, a star used in celestial navigation, should be easy to spot because it is 700 times the Sun's diameter and 11,000 times brighter. There will be very little interference from the Moon as it is almost in the New Moon phase, which occurs on April 29th.

**Tuesday, April 29th**

On April 27th the Moon has passed the closest point to the Sun in its orbit. Today the Moon enters the new phase, which occurs at 0215. The New Moon rises at 0602 and sets at 1853. Because the Sun and Moon will almost be in alignment throughout the day, the tidal range will be slightly larger. Watch out that your dinghy doesn't get jammed under a fixed dock.

**Monday, May 5th**

Adding more fireballs to the night sky will be the Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower. The meteors are dust particles left behind from Halley's Comet. They radiate from the constellation Aquarius at 147,000 mph (237,000 km/h). The shower runs from April 19th through May 28th, but the peak activity is tonight. Aquarius becomes visible around 0230 but some meteors will show up earlier. Try looking about 90° from the source.

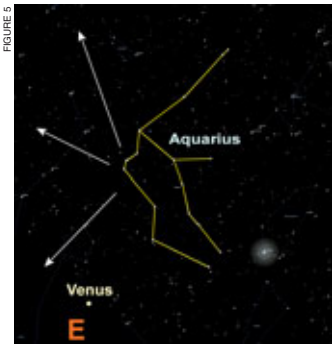
**Monday, May 12th**

This is the peak viewing night in May for the Alpha–Scorpiid meteor shower. The Moon is approaching the full phase so only the brightest meteors will shine through.

**Wednesday, May 14th**

The Moon reaches the full phase at 1516. Cultures throughout history have attached names to the full moon. For the month of May these names include the Flower Moon, Hare Moon, Corn Planting Moon, and the Milk Moon.

FIGURE 5




*The radiant of the Eta Aquarids Meteor shower on May 5th at 0430 hours*

**In Case You Missed It**

On February 27th, NASA and the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) launched the Global Precipitation Measurement (GPM) Core Observatory satellite. On April 27th this satellite will be put into full operation in time for the 2014 hurricane season. The satellite will take precipitation readings from virtually the entire globe every three hours. Some of the science obtained from the advanced instruments on board GPM will improve the ability to predict hurricanes, as well as improve tracking and forecast models, which will benefit those of us who live in the Caribbean Basin.

**All times are given as Atlantic Standard Time (AST) unless otherwise noted. The times are based on the viewing position in Grenada and may vary by only a few minutes in different Caribbean locations.*

*Jim Ulik is a photographer and cruiser currently based in Grenada.*

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# Lionfish:
## Eat 'Em to Beat 'Em!

*by Bill and JoAnne Harris*

After more than four years cruising from Texas to the Caribbean, we have witnessed numerous beautiful things above and down under. With a combined 50 years of scuba diving experience, one creature we are spotting more often is the lionfish. They are breathtakingly beautiful, but belong to Indo-Pacific reefs and not the Caribbean. Lionfish have venomous dorsal, ventral and anal spines, which deter predators and can cause painful wounds to humans — but this is not the big problem. The lionfish matures sexually within a year and one female can lay some two million eggs per year. Those eggs hatch in about 26 days. Lionfish are voracious predators, consuming many commercially and ecologically significant species.



*Diving, catching, cleaning, cooking, eating — a busy day yields culinary and ecological rewards*



Our first lionfish encounter in the wild was in the Bahamas. We knew they were around, but seeing one immediately was a shocker. We saw signs everywhere telling divers to kill lionfish and advertising an event called the "Lionfish Roundup: Wanted Dead or Alive". A contest was on, where fishermen came from around the globe and huge prizes went to teams for their catches.

We had speared several lobsters and fish before, but never a lionfish, so rather than join the Roundup, we had our own informal event. With our Hawaiian slings — bam! — we speared two right away. With scissors and fillet knife, Bill cut off the dangerous spines and removed the skin and guts. Left was super-firm white flesh. He sautéed the fillets in butter and within seconds the fish was ready to serve. Gourmet all the way!

Since then, after sailing the Eastern and now the Western Caribbean, we have seen that some islands have a policy of encouraging the annihilation of lionfish while others are undecided. Some authorities are divided on which tack to take, so nothing gets done. In many places, fishermen are unaware of lionfish as food source, or don't know how to properly clean them, so they either don't catch them or toss them back in the sea.

The worst cases of lionfish infestations we have seen include at Saba, where on a hundred-foot dive we spotted about 20 very large lionfish and numerous small ones, and at St. Pierre, Martinique, where on an 80-foot dive we saw about ten very large lionfish and several small ones; the lionfish surrounded the shipwrecks we dove. In Saba's National Marine Park, a divemaster said there was one authority responsible for lionfish elimination, however, they lack the funds required to control them. It was heartbreaking to see the concentration of enormous lionfish among fish that might soon not exist there.

Additionally, we spotted several in the BVI, and authorities told us to place a washer and plastic ribbon to mark the site, which seems quite pointless. The dive shops don't have time to go back and look for lionfish at every dive site. Therefore, the responsible thing to do is eliminate them on the spot!

On a positive note, based on our experience, we listed places we believe are taking great measures to rid their waters of lionfish (some requiring a license) including Puerto Rico, the USVI, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, Belize, Grenada, the Bay Islands of Honduras, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe and Martinique (notwithstanding what we saw at St. Pierre).

We have done our part to eradicate lionfish and educate people about the dangers of being passive with this killer. We have eaten many lionfish now, and cannot stress enough how delicious it is. We heartily recommend that you try it! Order it and support the fishermen: it's their efforts that are helping to return the oceans to normal. On our recent trips to the Cayman Islands and the Bay Islands, we saw lionfish on restaurant menus. [*Editor's note: On St. Vincent, Indigo Dive catches, cleans and packages lionfish for sale. Contact info@indigodive.com.*) If you are located where lionfish hunting is allowed, organize a snorkeling or diving group and have a great lionfish barbecue.

*—Continued on page 45*




SHOOT-OUT WITH VENEZUELAN PIRATES

**Dear *Compass*,**

I left Puerto la Cruz, Venezuela on February 21st, bound for Trinidad in my sailing vessel, *Costa Mucho*. The next day, while tacking in headwinds, I reached a village on the coast called Tres Puntas, and set about



*Ed's boat, which he defended with a rifle while underway in notoriously pirate-infested waters off Venezuela*

on the other tack for the open ocean. When I was about ten miles or so from the shore I saw a small boat racing towards me at a high speed and I knew there was trouble coming. I had my Winchester pump-action shotgun ready, and my heart was in my throat. They came astern of my boat, and when they saw what I had in my hand, they went forward about a hundred feet to my port side. When one of the men (there were three in their boat) pulled a pistol I shot directly at them with 12-gauge buckshot. They ducked to the floor, and I continued to shoot until they were well out of my range — I was shaking so much. I pushed the throttle full forward (only to get 6.2 knots upwind) and I blacked out all the lighting on my vessel. This incident happened at around 6:00PM on Saturday, February 22nd, and I was alert all night thinking that they were going to come back because I was alone. I do thank God that I made it safe — and when I see any craft coming towards me at a high speed I am going to shoot first.

**Ed Brangman**
**Bermuda**

***Dear Ed,***

*We're glad you made it safely, but how many times do we have to say it? DO NOT sail anywhere near the north coast of Venezuela east of Cumaná (i.e. the north shore of the Peninsula of Paria, not to be confused with the Gulf of Paria). We've lost count of the number of yachts that have experienced armed attacks off this coast. Please spread the word: just do not go there.*

***CC***

HIGH PRAISE FOR 'PAYS'

**Dear *Compass*,**

Since bad news always travels faster than good news I thought I would buck that tide and pass on some good words about the great job that Jeffrey and Edison and others at PAYS are doing in Portsmouth, Dominica.

I was recently singlehanding from Martinique to Dominica in strong Christmas winds and had the starboard engine of my 38-foot catamaran quit as a result of the combination of fuel tank sediment and rough seas as I was coming into Roseau. I decided to continue on to Portsmouth, which is a more protected harbor, and was met several miles off shore by a member of PAYS who promised to have someone waiting to assist me with picking up a mooring when I arrived.

Good to his word, Jeffrey from *Sea Bird* was waiting when I limped in an hour later and made sure I was secure. He then took me in his boat to the Budget Marine dealer to secure the necessary replacement fuel pump, all without asking for anything.

In the following days I began to appreciate the positive changes since my last visit ten years ago. PAYS stands for Portsmouth Area Yacht Security and its members, led by Jeffrey, provide 30 government inspected moorings available at US$10 per night with proceeds going to fund their yacht security program. The members are also licensed guides and can arrange wonderful tours of one of the last pristine ocean rainforests.

The highlight is the PAYS barbecue held every Sunday night on the beach at the PAYS pavilion (and occasionally Wednesdays as well), usually with live music and always with a great fish and chicken dinner and all the rum punch you can drink all for US$20 per person. This is followed by several hours of dancing in the sand. If you've had too many strong rum punches they will give you a ride back to your boat. Again, the proceeds go toward increased yacht security. The program has become so successful that PAYS was able to build a bathroom facility on the beach for cruisers.

I believe that the PAYS program is an example of a win/win for both cruisers and local businesses and other islands may want to consider copying this wonderful model. We all know that when cruisers feel safe and appreciated, they will stick around and spend money. In the month I was there almost all the moorings were filled and a good, safe time was had by all. My hat's off to Jeffrey and crew!

**George Russell**
***TirNanOg*, Lagoon 380**
**Currently in the Grenadines**

HAPPY IN ST. LUCIA

**Open letter to Hon. Lorne Theophilus**
**Minister for Tourism, Heritage**
**& Creative Industries**
**St. Lucia**

I would just like to say a great big thank you to the people of St Lucia.

We arrived in St. Lucia on December 19th with the ARC 2013 and our stay has been enforced due to engine problems. Not a bad place to be stuck, many would say, especially while our friends and family back in the UK are suffering extreme cold and very windy conditions.

My wife and I have fallen in love with your country and your people. Everyone we have met or worked with has been happy, polite, professional and a pleasure to know. We have made so many new friends here that we now plan to stay in Rodney Bay for the coming year.

St. Lucia really is a place of love, kindness and friendship and smiles.

Thank you people of St. Lucia for welcoming us to your beautiful island.

**Best regards,**
**Ian and Wendy McLaren-Morris**
***Yacht Silver Slipper***
**Rodney Bay Marina, St. Lucia**

THANKS FROM CARRIACOU

**Dear *Compass* Readers,**

The second annual Carriacou Animal Hospital Silent Auction Fundraiser was a night to be remembered. Held on Christmas Night 2013, the auction was once again one of the many highlights of Fitzroy Alexis' annual Christmas party. Yachtsmen and -women, local Carriacouans, and ex-pats joined together to celebrate the holidays and more importantly to support the efforts of the Carriacou Animal Hospital.

Thanks to the generous donations of local merchants, business owners, restaurant and villa owners and local and international artists, the auction offered all in attendance an array of fun and interesting items. The bidding was intense at times, bringing out the competitive yet humorous personalities of guests.

Proceeds from donations at the door and from auction items far surpassed Year One, coming in at over EC$4,500. One hundred percent of these funds are used to ensure the ongoing services provided by the only medical facility for dogs and cats on the island of Carriacou.

Carriacou Animal Hospital met and exceeded their 2013 goals by providing more than 350 spays and neuters, attending to the medical needs of over 1,700 dogs and cats, and re-homing 40 dogs and cats.

A BIG thank you goes out to Fitzroy, all who attended, donated and bid, from Team CAH and the dogs and cats of Carriacou!

If you are in need of medical attention for your dog or cat please call us at (473) 443-6063 or visit the hospital on Airport Road.

**Kathy Lupke, Shurlyn Matheson and**
**Susan Valentine**

MEMORIES OF SAMANA

**Dear *Compass*,**

During our cruising years, my husband, John, and I lived for a while in Samaná in the Dominican Republic. This was 1974. That's John in the photo.

*—Continued on next page*



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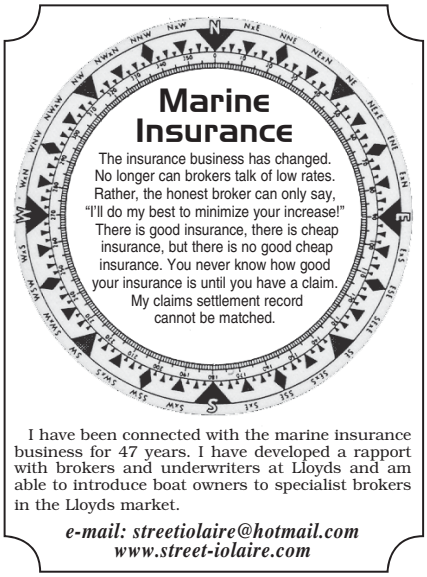
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## Read in Next Month's *Compass*:

Multifaceted South Grenada Regatta
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*Before tourism hit.' The late John Tomasik strolls through Samaná in the Dominican Republic in the early Seventies*

*—Continued from previous page*

Okay, it was my first real culture clash — it was like being on another planet, as this area was quite isolated then. It was sort of like living a hundred years ago. But the people were fantastic; Dominicanas are the finest people in the world. To them we were like aliens that had landed, so it all worked out.

This is where we spoke our first words of Spanish. We started by learning the numbers so we could buy fruit and vegetables. Anyway, we ended up staying for six months, sailed away, and then returned for another six months. John went off on a freelance job in Puerto Rico that was supposed to last two weeks but it stretched into two months. Yep — I was alone there for two months. Okay, one other boat did show up and stay for the duration; that was nice!

Samaná had been earmarked for tourism so all the people had their fingers crossed and their candles lit. (They kept asking us why we would want to be there if we could be in Disneyland.) The tourism development took a while but it did happen; do a Google search if you want to see the changes. Now cruise ships come, disgorging thousands of tourists daily; there are resorts, the full nine yards. Mind boggling.

Anyway, we were there before it all happened and thank goodness. So many fond memories of the DR. Some of the best memories were riding horses on an infinite, far-as-the-eye-could-see beach, learning to live on whatever there was (bring your own bags), even attending a full moon voudoo event, and so many other things = awesome.

**Patty Tomasik**
**Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela**

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

***Dear Compass Readers,***

*We want to hear from YOU!*

*Be sure to include your name, boat name or shoreside address, and a way we can contact you (preferably by e-mail) if clarification is required.*

*We do not publish individual consumer complaints or individual regatta results complaints. (Kudos are okay!) We do not publish anonymous letters; however, your name may be withheld from print at your request. Please keep letters shorter than 600 words. Letters may be edited for length, clarity and fair play.*

*Send your letters to sally@caribbeancompass.com.*


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# Letter of the Month

**Dear *Caribbean Compass*,**

I want to alert your readers to my unfortunate experience with Antigua Customs. I arrived on my sailboat, *Kismet*, at Falmouth Harbour in Antigua in the afternoon of January 28th, 2014, intending to stay for one night to drop off my relatives at the airport after cruising with them for a week, and also to check out Antigua Yacht Club Marina for the upcoming RORC Caribbean 600 sailboat race, in which I was entered.

I sent my crew to check in the boat at English Harbor Customs. The crew included my two sisters (visiting from England but US citizens), and my female cousin (a UK citizen). I unwittingly ran an errand at the airport, as I knew that we were already registered with ESeaClear and was not aware that the master must be present.

When my crew arrived at English Harbour Customs, she checked in as usual on the ESeaClear computer, and then went to the Customs desk. The agent at Customs asked her whether she was the captain. She responded that I had gone to run an errand and the agent started shaking her head and said that she would have to go back to the boat, and that the captain had to do the Customs check-in. My crew explained that I was without my phone and might not be back until after Customs closed (at 4:30, I recall) and that they were leaving that night to fly back to England.

The Customs agent responded that they would not be leaving that night in any event, because I had left the ship and was subject to an EC$25,000 fine per person that walks off the boat before it is cleared in. My relatives then told the agent that they were going home to their children, but the Customs agent was undeterred, and when they requested her help in paging me at the airport she said, "That's not my problem." My sisters and cousin were, as you can imagine, visibly and genuinely scared and distressed. They and my crewmember had the distinct impression that she was biased against them for some inexplicable reason, despite the fact that they were being completely open and compliant.

I returned to the boat and was told by my sisters to rush to Customs, which I did. The same female agent told me that all of us needed to come back in the morning (despite the fact that she knew three people had plane tickets that night). I told her that I would happily come back, but it was unreasonable to detain my relatives because I had made the mistake of not coming myself. She showed me a book (which appeared to be Antigua laws) with a previously highlighted paragraph that the penalty for what I had done is EC$25,000 per person. That is an absurd penalty for such an oversight. I had clearly observed the spirit of the law — to prevent visitors from not checking in — by immediately sending my crew to Customs.

The agent said she would have to call her boss (P. George), which she did. After some conversation, she told me that my sisters and cousin could leave, but that I and my crew were having our US passports seized immediately, and I needed to present myself to Mr. George in St John's the next day at 8:00AM. I note at this point that I was completely apologetic and cooperative, but was being treated very differently.

I showed up in St John's on time, and was told by Mr. George to wait because "an enforcement agent" was joining us. This had all the elements of a shakedown, including a second person to provide apparent legitimacy. The enforcement agent was in plain clothes but called himself Benjy. I explained that I was made aware I should not have run an errand while my crew were at Customs, but that in most Caribbean countries that is allowed so long as someone presents themselves at Customs at the same time. I also said that I was unaware that the captain had to be the one going to Customs, and certainly did not intend to break any laws.

Mr. George then told me that actually the crew could check in with Customs (contrary to what the female agent had said the previous night), but that by leaving the boat I had subjected myself to the aforementioned fine.

They asked me to leave the room, then after 15 minutes or so called me back in and said they were going to fine me "only" $5,000 because I had admitted what I'd done. They wouldn't take anything but cash, and the enforcement agent was happy to show me around to where the banks are. They became quite friendly. I had the impression that they had discussed the maximum fine that I would pay without complaining, or perhaps the maximum amount of cash I could take out.

My two credit cards maxed out at $1,000 each, and so I returned and asked them if they could possibly take a check. The enforcement agent looked at my wallet and asked to see how much was in it. I told him that I had about US$300, and some Euros. He said "give that to me" — leaving a tiny amount when I told him I needed the taxi fare home. They converted it into EC dollars and gave me a receipt for EC$3,340. Frankly, I felt as though I had been robbed at gunpoint.

At a minimum this is massively overbearing enforcement, but it sure feels like government-sanctioned extortion. The Customs agent at English Harbour visibly took pleasure in torturing my sisters (none of whom will return to Antigua). I had to return, because my boat was booked in to the RORC Caribbean 600 sailboat race and I had crew lined up with vacations scheduled, but it was with great concern for reprisal upon my return that I made the decision to stay in. Given the complexity of the entry procedures (which in Antigua include Customs, Immigration and the Port Authority, all separate) an agent can always find some fault. Amazingly, this appears to be actively encouraged by the government, who recently changed their legislation, given that the written fine for the infraction I committed is listed as The Customs Control and Management Act of 2013, section 19 (2).

If Customs is this unfriendly, and is primarily looking to extort visitors for the slightest infraction, then a warning has to be given to cruising and racing boatowners visiting Antigua. I have recommended to the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC), who ran a great race, that the next 600 should be conducted in a more boat-friendly country like St. Maarten, St. Barts, or Guadeloupe, all of which are on the course.

I have traveled extensively around the world, and recently to most of the good sailing destinations in the Caribbean, and I have never met a Customs agent more anxious to find fault and maximize the consequences than the woman in English Harbour. When I checked out the next day I asked for her name, and the Customs agent on duty refused to give it to me, saying that I wanted to "get her in trouble".

I have the uneasy feeling that Customs in Antigua is run as a profit center.

**Best,**
**David P. Southwell**
**Kismet**

*David's letter was also sent to Chris Doyle, who comments:*

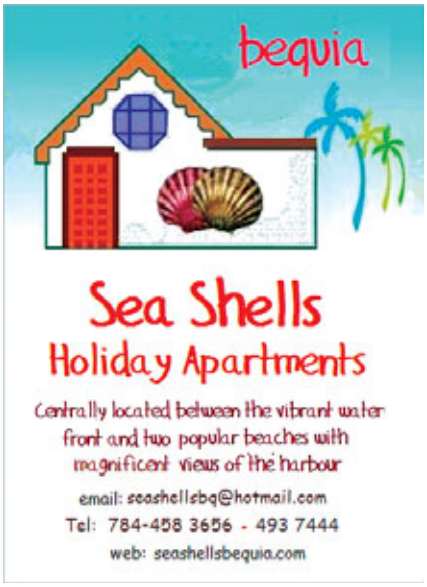
Unfortunately this is not the first time this kind of thing has happened in Antigua. In my current *Leewards Islands Guide* under Jolly Harbour I say, "Do not wander ashore or eat out till you have cleared in, even if it is a holiday. Three yachts have each been fined EC$5,000 here for ridiculously minor infractions of the regulations."

I am sorry to hear that this kind of thing has now spread to English Harbour, where previously I found most officers were friendlier to those on yachts.

Obviously we need to obey the laws of the land. Coming in on a yacht is not like coming into an airport, where Customs and Immigration are always waiting. I am on the move more often than most sailors and find I spend considerable time altering my schedule to fit in with when and where I can find Customs to clear in, often having to stay an extra day to fit in outward clearance. It is a hassle, and in some islands Customs officers have meetings and other official business, so they often either come late or leave early, which can disrupt the best-laid plans.

But in most islands, by compensation, I find officers are very humane and reasonable and while asking you to obey the law are not out to shake you down for thousands of dollars if, like David, you find yourself in a time bind. I remember when we would arrive in Martinique many years ago too late to clear, but the officer, whom we used to call "007", would be in the nearby bar. "Don't worry," he would say. "Come back tomorrow to clear and in the meantime feel free to enjoy Fort de France." Do not expect that laissez faire attitude in Antigua, though, where it seems Customs would like the opportunity to fine you. Don't give it to them!

*—Continued on next page*


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# CALENDAR

## APRIL

**2 - 6** Curaçao International Film Festival. www1.curacaoiffr.com
**4 – 6** BVI Spring Regatta. www.bvispringregatta.org
**7 – 12** Oyster Regatta, Antigua. www.oystermarine.com/events
**7 – 13** Puerto Rico International Film Festival, Rincón, Puerto Rico. www.rinconfilm.com
**10 – 11** Trinidad to Grenada Race for Girl Pat Trophy. Grenada Yacht Club (GYC) www.grenadayachtclub.com
**10 - 13** Annual BVI Yacht Brokerage Showcase, Virgin Gorda. Bitter End Yacht Club (BEYC), tel (312) 506-6205, binfo@beyc.com, www.beyc.com
**12 – 13** Girl Pat Race Series in Grenada. GYC, www.grenadayachtclub.com
**13** Island Water World Fishing Tournament, Philipsburg, St. Maarten. www.sxmsportfishing.com
**14 - 19** 5th Annual Les Voiles de Saint-Barth. www.lesvoilesdesaintbarth.com
**15** FULL MOON Parties at Trellis Bay and West End, Tortola, and at Pinney's Beach, Nevis
**17 – 21** Bequia Easter Regatta. ***See ad on page 11***
**17 – 22** Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta. www.antiguaclassics.com
**18** Public holiday in many places (Good Friday)
**18 - 20** Spanish Town Fisherman Jamboree & Wahoo Fishing Tournament, Virgin Gorda. www.bvitourism.com
**18 - 21** Gouyave Easter Regatta, Grenada. gogouyave.gd/events10/annual-events
**19** Public holiday in Venezuela (Signing of the Act of Venezuelan Independence)
**19** Virgin Queen Pursuit Race, Royal British Virgin Islands Yacht Club (RBVIYC) www.royalbviyc.org
**19 - 21** Virgin Gorda Easter Festival. www.bvitourism.com
**19 – 22** Tobago Jazz Experience. www.tobagojazzexperience.com
**21** Public holiday in many places (Easter Monday)
**22** International Earth Day
**25** Guadeloupe to Antigua Race. www.sailingweek.com
**25 - 27** 5th Annual Carriacou Maroon & String Band Music Festival. ***See ad on page 8***
**25 - 30** St. Barth Film Festival. www.stbarthff.org
**26** Yachting World Round Antigua Race. www.sailingweek.com
**26 – 2 May** 47th Annual Antigua Sailing Week. www.sailingweek.com
**27** Public holiday in Dutch islands (Netherlands King's Birthday)
**28** Public holiday in Barbados (National Heroes' Day)
**30 – 11 May** 24th St. Lucia Jazz Festival. www.stluciajazz.org

## MAY

**1** Public holiday in many places (Labour Day)
**1** Around St. Barth Windsurf & Beach Cat Race. www.saintbarth-tourisme.com
**1 – 4** 6th West Indies Regatta, St. Barth's. www.westindiesregatta.com
**3** Start of ARC USA rally from Tortola, BVI to Virginia and Florida. www.worldcruising.com
**3** Start of ARC Europe, Tortola BVI to Portugal. www.worldcruising.com
**3 - 4** Commodore's Cup Regatta, St. John, USVI. henstjohn@yahoo.com
**5** Public holiday in Guyana (Arrival Day)
**6** Public holiday in St. Kitts & Nevis (Labour Day)
**7 – 11** Triskell Tour Guadeloupe & Dominica Regatta. www.triskellcup.com
**9** Public holiday in some places (Ascension Day)
**10 – 11** St. Barth Mini-Bucket. http://stbarthyachtclub.com
**14** FULL MOON Parties at Trellis Bay and West End, Tortola, and at Pinney's Beach, Nevis
**15 – 18** Barbados Regatta. Barbados Sailing Association, www.sailbarbados.com
**16 – 25** St. Barth Theatre Festival. www.saintbarth-tourisme.com
**17 – 18** BVI Dinghy Championship, Tortola. RBVIYC, www.royalbviyc.org
**17 – 18** 10th Annual Captain Oliver's Regatta, St. Maarten. www.coyc-sxm.com
**17 - 18** Lowell Wheatley Anegada Pursuit Race, RBVIYC, www.royalbviyc.org
**18** Public holiday in Haiti (Flag Day)
**21** Public holiday in Cayman Islands (Discovery Day)
**23 – 24** BVI Music Festival, Cane Garden Bay, Tortola. www.facebook.com/BVIMusicFest
**23 – 25** 40th Annual Foxy's Wooden Boat Regatta, Jost Van Dyke. www.foxysbar.com/woodenboatregatta
**24** BVI Exquisite Boat Show, Scrub Island, BVI. bviexquisiteboatshow@gmail.com
**25** Reef Jam marine conservation event, Frederiksted, St. Croix. www.reefjam.com
**26** Public holiday in Guyana (Independence Day)
**26** Public holiday in Belize (Sovereign's Day celebrated)
**28 -31** Combat de Coques, Martinique. Club Nautique du Marin (CNM), www.clubnautiquedumarin.com
**29** Martinique Yole Festival, Ste. Anne, Martinique. http://yoles-rondes.net
**29 – 1 June** Windsurf & SUP Challenge, Curaçao. www.curacaochallenge.com
**30** Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Indian Arrival Day), Anguilla (Anguilla Day), Haiti (Mothers' Day), and many other places (Corpus Christi)

*All information was correct to the best of our knowledge at the time this issue of* Compass *went to press — but plans change, so please contact event organizers directly for confirmation. If you would like a nautical or tourism event listed FREE in our monthly calendar, please send the name and date(s) of the event and the name and contact information of the organizing body to sally@caribbeancompass.com*

*—Continued from previous page*

*Editor's note:*

*Regardless of whether or not one feels an infraction is "minor", or whether or not some officials in other countries might be more casual about enforcement of their own regulations, the law in Antigua & Barbuda is clear that when arriving in Antigua by yacht, as stated (among other readily accessible places) on the Antigua and Barbuda Marine Association website,* "The Master only may proceed ashore to the customs and immigration office. No other crew members are allowed ashore until the entry procedures have been completed."

*We asked Antigua & Barbuda's Customs and Excise Division for more information, which was kindly supplied by George Brown, as follows.*

I was asked to reply to your concern stemming from the letter you received from David P. Southwell, owner of *Kismet*. I will not deal specifically with areas of the letter but will instead just list sections of The Customs Control and Management Act, No 3 and No 8 of 2013 that governs arrival and departure of vessels or aircraft into Antigua and Barbuda. I will also point you to various websites that deal specifically with the arrival and departure of vessels or yachts.

**The Customs Control and Management Act:**

The Customs Control and Management Act, No 3 and No 8 of 2013 can be found on the Customs website at www.customs.gov.ag

*19. Conveyance to arrive at notified place only*

*(1) Where a conveyance —*

*(a) arrives in Antigua and Barbuda; and*

*(b) is carrying persons or goods subject to the control of the Customs and Excise Division, brought in that conveyance or any other conveyance from a place outside Antigua and Barbuda, the master, commander, driver or his agent shall ensure that the conveyance lands, anchors, or otherwise arrives only at the place notified by that person.*

*(2) On arrival at the notified place or the place directed to by the proper officer, or a customs controlled area within that place, and until an inward report in accordance with section 23 has been made, no person shall leave or board the conveyance unless authorised to do so by the proper officer.*

*(3) A person who contravenes sub-section (1) or acts in contravention of sub-section (2) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of $25,000, or three times the value of the goods whichever is the greater.*

*20. Conveyance arriving at place other than notified place*

*(3) Subject to any authorisation granted by the Comptroller, no member of the crew and no passenger on the conveyance shall, without the consent of the proper officer (b) depart from the vicinity of the conveyance, and all such persons shall comply with any customs directions given by the proper officer.*

*(4) When a conveyance is directed by the proper officer pursuant to section 16 (3) to arrive at a place other than the place notified in accordance with section 16 (1)(b), no person shall depart from or board the conveyance unless authorised to do so by the proper officer.*

*(5) A person who fails to comply with or acts in contravention of this section commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of $25,000.*

**Related Websites and information readily available for public knowledge:**

• Antigua & Barbuda Customs Website www.customs.gov.ag/index.php/customs_procedures/private_yachts

*You must clear in within 24 hours of arrival. There are severe penalties for failing to do so. Any crew or guests should remain on the vessel until clearing-in procedures are complete. Masters wishing to exchange crew members must in the presence of an Immigration Officer, sign the said crew member(s) off one vessel and onto another with both masters taking full responsibility. Failure to do so will result in legal action. Any crew member leaving a vessel in Antigua must have a valid airline ticket departing from Antigua to a foreign destination.*

• Antigua and Barbuda Marine Association www.abma.ag/yachting.php?id=5

*All passengers and crew will remain on board the vessel or yacht until clearance has been obtained.*

*The Master only may proceed ashore to the customs and immigration office. No other crew members are allowed ashore until the entry procedures have been completed.*

*Masters of vessels arriving after hours must make certain no crew member is allowed ashore until entry procedure has been completed at the first available opportunity.*

*Masters of vessels wishing to cruise must check with the local Port Authority for permission to do so.*

• Antigua and Barbuda National Parks www.http://nationalparksantigua.com/entry-clearance

*REMEMBER! You must clear in within 24 hours of arrival. There are severe penalties for failing to do so. Any crew or guests should remain on the vessel until clearing procedures are complete.*

*LEAVING OR EXCHANGING CREW: Masters wishing to exchange crew members must do so in the presence of an Immigration Officer, signing the said crew member(s) off one vessel and onto another with both masters taking full responsibility. Failure to do so will result in legal action. Any crew member leaving a vessel in Antigua must have a valid airline ticket departing from Antigua to a foreign destination.*

• ESeaClear online software https://www.eseaclear.com/home/index.cfm

This site has links to all the sites listed above, so you would be able to access any information that is required about the laws and the process to clear in and out of Antigua & Barbuda if you had any questions.

Additionally, when you are making your declaration on ESeaClear, there is a pop-up that informs the user of certain requirements you need to meet to satisfy the Antiguan Authorities.


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# Paying It Forward – Grenada Style

*By D'Arcy O'Connor*

It started off as a cruising sailor's nightmare: to wake up in the morning on your anchored yacht and find your dinghy missing.

On the evening of last November 20th, Mike Magee returned from visiting friends at Grenada's Clarkes Court Marina to his 43-foot Beneteau sloop, *Premier Cru*, anchored in the Calivigny cut between Clarkes Court Bay and Woburn Bay. He secured his dinghy to the stern and went below to his bunk. The next morning he came up on deck and was horrified to discover the AB inflatable and its 9.8-horsepower Tohatsu outboard engine gone.




ANN ELSDON

*Lisa Charles of the Bel Air Children's Home on Grenada receives a check from thankful cruiser Mike Magee*

Mike's initial reaction was that it had somehow drifted free. Or perhaps it had been stolen during the night — a not unheard of occurrence in some parts of the Caribbean. He immediately got on his VHF radio to the Grenada police, Coast Guard, and the Channel 66 sailors' net asking them to be on the lookout for the errant dinghy. He and his friend Mike Nelder of the tugboat *Flying Buzzard* then scoured the nearby leeward coastline, including Hog Island, in search of the boat. They spent the next day searching the shore around Calivigny Island and in and out of the next two bays to the north. All to no avail.

Meanwhile, many of the local yachties morosely concluded that it was a case of theft, and that Mike could write off his dinghy and motor. This despite the fact that the Caribbean Security Index (www.freecruisingguides.com) cites Grenada, even with its 40-percent unemployment rate, as one of the least theft-prone islands for cruisers. And Mike, a staunch believer in the honesty of the inhabitants of his favorite island, refused to accept that his two-year-old dinghy and motor had been nicked.

His optimism was rewarded three days later when, on November 23rd, Nigel Paul, manager of the Grenville fish market, called local marinas to report that a dinghy with the name *Premier Cru* on its side had been found by a fishing boat four miles out to sea, towed to shore, and was now securely stored at the market. The news was quickly forwarded to an ecstatic Mike Magee over the sailors' net, and he immediately set out by taxi to Grenville.

As Mike recalls it today, "I was delighted to hear it had been found after having despaired for a few days wondering how it went missing. I was quick to get on the local sailors' net and inform the police and coast guard that it was my error… To get back US$4,000 worth of equipment was a major relief."

When he arrived at the fish market and met Nigel Paul, Mike was told that the dinghy had been seen drifting to the north well off of Grenada's east coast. Dillon Jackson, captain of the fishing boat *Nuff Respect* from the town of Marquis, had spotted it the day before and dutifully towed it into Grenville. It had drifted northward almost 30 miles from Calivigny cut to where it was found two days later. Mike figures that "the unusually light winds that week in November left the tides in charge, and from a certain point off south Grenada the current does head north, which is how it was swept in that general direction." Like a frisky colt escaping the confines of its pen, the errant dinghy had been merrily bobbing its way towards the east coast of the Grenadines.

Unfortunately, Dillon Jackson was out fishing when Mike arrived in Grenville, and so couldn't be thanked personally. "I left an appreciation gift (EC$300) with the manager of the fish market and he said he'd look after the skipper for me." A less honorable man might have taken a 'finders keepers' attitude with a dinghy and outboard adrift that far offshore. Not so Mr. Jackson.

Nigel Paul then insisted on giving Mike a tour of the market. "They made me feel like a celebrity — showed me around and had the dinghy carried down to the water by some of the fish market workers for the ride home." And to top it off, "I was given four perfect slices of yellowfin tuna that had been delivered by the *Nuff Respect* at the same time as my dinghy… It was a memorable visit for more reasons than collecting my boat."

After a rough two-hour open-water ride south, Mike returned to *Premier Cru* in the Calivigny cut. The runaway colt had come back to its paddock. When he inspected the heavy-gauge wire and padlock locking system, Mike saw that it hadn't been tampered with and that he had simply not secured it properly to his yacht. "Obviously," he says, "I was to blame. So I quickly got on the sailors' net to admit my mistake and to make absolutely sure that no fellow sailors or locals could perceive that the dinghy was the victim of theft."

The following month Mike flew home to Montreal for the Christmas holidays. He was still marveling at his luck at finding the dinghy, and he wanted to repay the kindness and honesty he'd experienced in Grenada. So he, along with a Montreal neighbor, decided to somehow help the people of Grenada. (A year earlier the two of them had contributed a dozen or so used Blackberry phones to an island school). This time they decided to assist one of the many Grenadian non-profit organizations.

They selected the Bel Air Children's Home (www.belairchildrenshome.com) at the south end of the island in the village of Calliste. Founded in January 1999, the home relies partly on corporate and individual donations to provide full-time shelter for up to 40 Grenadian youngsters — from babies to teenagers — most of whom have been abandoned, neglected or abused.

On January 16th Mike Magee met with Lisa Charles, Manager of the Bel Air Home, and presented her with a cheque for US$1,500 — a gift for the home's 15th anniversary.

He'd simply paid forward the kindness shown him by an honest fisherman and the folks at the Grenville fish market.

*D'Arcy O'Connor is an author, freelance journalist and a round-the-world sailor. He divides his time between winters in Grenada and the rest of the year at his home in Montreal, Canada.*

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continued on next page →

—Continued from page 36 ...Lionfish

Meanwhile, with lionfish having no natural predators, a rapid reproduction rate and a tremendous appetite for juvenile fish, it is apparent that the current programs in place will not work. There are not enough divers harvesting the lionfish population. More islands must offer and heavily promote organized lionfish-spearing tournaments and dive trip events. Some people cannot afford the lionfish-spearing permit fees (approximately US $25 to $50) charged in some areas. Governments need to approach this not as a moneymaking effort, but as an ecological one, and not charge for permits. On a little lighter note, Bill suggests, with his crazy sense of humor, a new marketing campaign for lionfish: "Lionfish, the new Viagra". All kidding aside, lionfish do need to become popularized as a food source.

We do not want to sound like doom and gloom, but if you love the oceans and its creatures as we do, then help protect what we all love. Everyone get onboard to organize a lionfish defense plan.

*For more lionfish information and to purchase a lionfish cookbook visit www.REEF.org.*

**Ultra Lionfish Ceviche**

2 pounds lionfish fillets, diced
1 Cup diced fresh tomatoes
1/2 red onion, finely diced
1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and diced
2 teaspoons salt
Dash Tabasco
1 Cup freshly squeezed lime juice
Cilantro or chadon beni
Avocado
Tortilla chips

Put all ingredients except lime juice, cilantro, avocado and tortilla chips in a glass dish, then cover with lime juice. Let sit covered in the refrigerator for an hour, and then give it a quick stir. Chill again. Garnish with cilantro and avocado and serve with tortilla chips and a bottle of Tabasco for people who want more spice. Serves six to eight people. Enjoy!

*JoAnne and Bill Harris are from Clear Lake, Texas and both hold 100-ton USCG Master licenses and sail aboard their trimaran, S/V Ultra. They enjoy writing cruising articles and sharing their experiences.*

*To follow their sailing adventures visit www.jandbyachtultraadventure.blogspot.com.*

# Caribbean Compass Market Place

## Caribbean-wide




**2006 Island Packet 445 "Tirnanog"**
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Published by Compass Publishing Limited, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and printed by Guardian Media Limited, Trinidad & Tobago