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The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

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— Story on page 18

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COMPASS
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

MAY/JUNE 2022 • ISSUE 320


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Seaweed



ON THE COVER:
After a two-year hiatus, the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta was back in action for its 33rd running, and ace on-board photographer Lucy Tulloch was there. Report by David Lyman on page 18.

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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.



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***— Capt. Daniel Moreland, Barque* Picton Castle**

CARIBBEAN COMPASS

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Info & Updates

Laura Dekker Joins Caribbean Sail Training NGO



The Scorpio 72 Guppy at Simpson Bay, St. Maarten.

JEAN JARREAU FOR CARIBBEAN SAIL TRAINING

Jan Roosens reports: Caribbean Sail Training (CST) was established 18 years ago as a registered nonprofit association with the aim of providing sail training for young people of all nationalities, cultures, religions and social backgrounds, especially people living in the Caribbean.

Laura Dekker, famous for being youngest person to circumnavigate the world singlehanded under sail, became the newest member of CST with her Laura Dekker World Sailing Foundation and her yacht *Guppy*, a Scorpio 72. Laura completed her solo circumnavigation at the age of 16 in a 40-foot ketch, also named *Guppy*, arriving in Simpson Bay, St. Maarten, in 2012.

She now holds a Yacht Master Ocean 200 ton certificate. She and her partner, Sander, do sail training with youngsters in Europe and have been cruising in the Caribbean.

"My father and the sea were the best teachers I have ever had. And I want to pass on exactly these experiences that have shaped me so much," Laura says. "We want to bring together young people from very different social classes and sail with them. They learn to take responsibility, they have to face the forces of nature, operate the boat, navigate, cook, and repair equipment. This will be hard for some. But only what challenges you makes you grow and helps you to discover your self-confidence, your interests and talents."

Guppy is now member number 73 on the list of Caribbean Sail Training vessels.

CTA offers youngsters from the Caribbean the opportunity to enroll as trainees on sail training vessels and sponsors their fees. CST also covers airfares and hotel accommodation for the trainees if needed. Several hundred kids have sailed CST member vessels as trainees.

Guppy recently completed a several-month training sail around the Caribbean with 14 young students. She left St. Martin on March 22 en route to Holland, where she will undergo maintenance and upgrades before returning with new students to St. Maarten-St. Martin in November.

Visit https://lauradekkerworldsailingfoundation.com for more information about the Laura Dekker World Sailing Foundation.

Visit www.CaribbeanSailTraining.com for information about Caribbean Sail Training.

Free Program Leads to USCG Captain's License for VI Youth

Carol Bareuther reports: The marine tourism sector is booming in the US Virgin Islands. Yacht chartering directly contributed $88 million to the territory's economy in 2021. This figure is forecast to be higher in 2022.

To meet the USVI's growing need for a marine workforce and enable young Virgin Islanders to fill these positions and build professional careers, the Virgin Islands Professional Charter Association (VIPCA) has announced new and continuing marine-workforce development programs that are free to selected participants. These are a first-time Junior Sailing Summer Camp, July 5th to 15th, for ages 13 to 17; the fifth annual Marine Apprenticeship Program, May 27th to June 24th and August 1st to 5th, for ages 18 to 29; and in partnership with the Department of Labor, a VIPCA-led 12-month Marine Apprenticeship Work Placement Program with sea time to qualify for a US Coast Guard Captain's License, for ages 18 to 29.

"The US Virgin Islands has a booming yachting industry with marine tourism at a historic peak. Captains are needed, and the best place to start in becoming a captain is on the water! Making captain's training available locally has been at the forefront of VIPCA's mission since the association's inception. Recognizing this, VIPCA was nominated by the Governor to represent the marine industry on the Virgin Islands Workforce Development board while appointing VIPCA as an eligible training provider," says Oriel Blake, VIPCA's Executive Director.

The Junior Sailing Camp (vipca.org/junior-sailing-summer-camp), held at the St. Thomas Yacht Club, offers teenagers ten days of learning to sail IC24s and Hobie Cats. Instruction on land and sea includes understanding the parts of a boat, navigation skills, reading weather and conditions, safety basics, and of course plenty of sailing. The Junior Sailing Camp is entirely free to students and sponsored by RapierMed.

Since 2017, VIPCA has graduated 40 students from its Marine Apprenticeship program (vipca.org/youth-training), with more than half of the graduates successfully entering the workforce locally in marine industry careers.

—Continued on next page



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The five-week Marine Apprenticeship provides intensive captain's and STCW (Standards of Training and Certification of Watch-keeping) training. The schedule includes swimming, sailing, scuba diving, and power-boating instruction; First Aid, CPR and Boating Safety certification; charter vessel maintenance and charter



New and continuing marine-workforce development programs enable young Virgin Islanders to fill positions and build professional careers in yachting.

business operations; technical skills and proficiency in diesel engines, outboards, electrical systems, and plumbing; and a half-day at the US Coast Guard's Marine Safety Detachment onboard a response vessel. The Marine Apprenticeship is free to participants and sponsored by the Island Foundation and fiscally managed by the Marine Rebuild Fund within the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands.

The Marine Apprenticeship Work Placement (vipca.org/youth-training) is a program that supports the apprentices in careers as paid crew, including obtaining their US Coast Guard Captain's License. Enrollment is open on a rolling basis and includes the training of VIPCA's Marine Apprenticeship program. Cruz Bay Watersports and the Lovango Resort & Beach Club are currently employing graduates of VIPCA's Marine Apprenticeship as Marine Apprentices and are actively recruiting for this 12-month placement.

Visit www.VIPCA.org for more information about VIPCA and its programs.

USVI's Pilot Program for Yacht Crew Without B1/B2 Visas

Caroline Blatter reported at www.superyachtservicesguide.com: The US Virgin Islands is temporarily allowing entry for yacht crew without B1/B2 Visas. This is an exciting, unprecedented event for the USVI — one that allows for greater economic benefit.

The B1/B2 visa allows non-US crew to work on board vessels in US waters.

Temporary changes to the entry requirements are currently in place for the USVI only, directly related to professional vessel crew without B1/B2 or C-1/D visas. The parole program, identified by the US Customs and Border Protection (USVI Customs Zone) as the Significant Public Benefit Parole or "SPBP," allows vessels manned by professional crew without B1/B2 or C-1/D visas to cruise the US Virgin Islands for up to six months.

For the next six months, yachts seeking to enter the USVI can apply for the parole program, which is purposed for single entry. While multiple entry is possible, it is not the general intent of the program. Also, entry to the United States, Puerto Rico, or Puerto Rican waters is not permitted for paroled crewmembers visiting the US Virgin Islands.

The parole program is applied for at entry, along with a US $75 fee per person payable to the USCBP officer, with each crewmember required to show his or her seaman's book. Each re-entry thereafter requires a new application with the same requirements.

The SPBP parole program is only available at three locations in St. Thomas with the ability to obtain biometric data, one of which is Yacht Haven Grande Marina. "IGY Marinas is very excited of the potential permanency of this pilot program," says Bert Fowles, IGY Marinas Vice President of Marketing. "IGY serves as host to many superyachts that travel internationally, and these changes would allow European vessels to participate in this year's Caribbean Charter Yacht Show."

As this is a test program all protocols and guidelines must be followed exactly as advised by the relevant authorities.

Yacht Haven Grande Marina (pblake@igymarinas.com) will provide guidance to captains of vessels submitting applications for the parole program.

Read the full story at https://bit.ly/397eueV

New Rules

• MONTSERRAT

On March 31st the government of Montserrat relaxed its Covid-19 regulations. Persons traveling to Montserrat are no longer required to fill out an online declaration form for permission to enter.

Additionally, Rapid Antigen tests have been added to the list of Covid-19 tests accepted for entry into Montserrat; the other two are RNA and PCR. Antibody tests are not accepted.

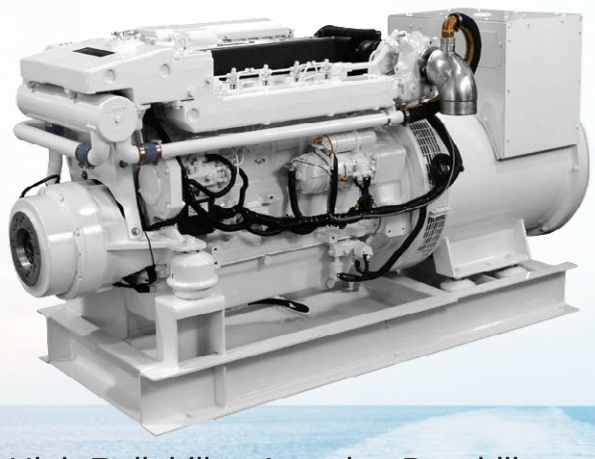
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Persons five years of age or older entering Montserrat must present a negative result of a Covid-19 test taken no earlier than three days prior to entry into. The negative test result document must include the full name, address, and date of birth of the person tested, the date the test was conducted, and the date the sample was taken.

The borders are open to passengers arriving by sea, including by yacht; only vaccinated persons arriving on yachts will be allowed on island. You must provide the Medical or Health officer with proof of your vaccination status. If this evidence is not provided, then you will be regarded and treated as being not fully vaccinated. The owner of a vessel must ensure that persons traveling are in possession of a copy of a negative test; if not, the owner will be committing an offence. Yachtspeople must alert the Montserrat Port Authority ahead of their visit to the island via email info@mpa.ms and/or VHF Channel 16. Advance clearance can be made on the regional pre-arrival notification system at www.sailclear.com.

Persons arriving on Montserrat are required to answer all questions asked by the Medical or Health Officer, and may be required to undertake health checks and screenings.

A fully vaccinated person is required to be tested for Covid-19 on entry into Montserrat (cost US$56). If the Covid-19 test result indicates that the person is not infected, then the individual is not required to isolate. However, if the test result is positive or indeterminate (unknown/inconclusive) then you must go directly to your place of occupancy, designated quarantine facility or place of isolation and remain there to await the results of further tests.

Once on Montserrat it is mandatory for face coverings to be worn in public places where business is being conducted.

Visit www.visitmontserrat.com/travel-advisory for more information.

• DOMINICA

Effective April 4th, Portsmouth and Roseau ports are both open, and fully opened for vaccinated sailors. Testing is no longer required, before or after arrival, for fully vaccinated travelers. Travelers are no longer required to submit the pre-travel form online.

Pre-arrival testing for unvaccinated travelers remains in place (PCR 72 hours or antigen 48 hours). Testing on arrival for unvaccinated travelers has been removed.

Children 12 and under will assume the vaccination status of parents or guardians.

Testing on arrival for symptomatic sailors or travelers will remain in effect. Travelers who test positive will be isolated and can quarantine on their yachts or in a government-approved property.

Use of an agent is recommended in Roseau and mandatory in Portsmouth. Approved agents include:

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info@dominicayachtservices.com
and
Cobra Tours
Portsmouth
(767) 245-6382
cobratours@hotmail.com

Visit https://discoverdominica.com for more information.

• MARTINIQUE

As of April 9th, Martinique's curfew start time was moved to 2:00AM, a vaccination certification is no longer required to enter restaurants, discotheques will be open, and the mask requirement was lifted except in crowded venues or medical centres.

Visitors of all nationalities still need to have a complete vaccination schedule.

Coming from countries classified as a risk Orange, Red or Scarlet (includes all Caribbean islands) the requirement of a PCR test within 72 hours of arrival or an antigen test within 48 hours of arrival remains in place.



CHRIS DOYLE

No problem! As of April 9th, Martinique's curfew start time was moved to 2:00AM, a vaccination certification is no longer required to enter restaurants, discotheques will be open, and the general mask requirement was lifted.

However, the French bubble remains in place with no further testing required for travel directly from one French island to another.

• GRENADA

Effective from April 4th, no Covid-19 testing or vaccination is required to enter Grenada. The Health Declaration form is no longer required, and there is no quarantine on arrival.

Visit puregrenada.com for more information.

Welcome Aboard!

In this issue of *Compass* we welcome new advertiser WhitCo Insurance of the USA, on page 11. Good to have you with us!



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Caribbean Yachting Outlook: FAIR TO FINE WITH CHANCE OF SQUALLS?

WE were recently asked to come up with a forecast of how Caribbean yachting might do in the upcoming post-pandemic period. Lacking a crystal ball, we asked some industry leaders to peek at their business barometers and offer their outlooks — and we think they are interesting enough to share with *Compass* readers.

Overall demand is there

As a major chandlery owner says, "The post-pandemic period is proving clearly the interest of boat owners for sailing and boating in the Caribbean. There is no indication that demand for sailing the Caribbean has decreased to any degree."

And a leading yachting guide publisher says, "I see positive growth in truth — with maybe a slight re-distribution of where yachts go. Things have been super busy, although maybe not for every island. St. Maarten, Antigua, and the US Virgin Islands are definitely attracting the larger yachts as bases for them while in the Caribbean, and St. Barths does so as always. Grenada has been busy too."



IGY MARINAS

The US Virgin Islands are definitely attracting the larger yachts as bases."

International cruisers' associations also report seeing an upsurge in boat movements in the Caribbean. This is partially due to the usual spring migration season, but also due to the relaxing (or in some cases elimination of) Covid regulations. As one association president says, "Easing the restrictions, and the drop in actively sick communities, makes a large difference in cruising attitudes."

The hugely popular Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC), ending in St. Lucia, and its sister rally ARC+, ending in Grenada, are already sold out for their November 2022 starts, and ARC January's entry list is filling up fast. Other rally organizers bringing boats to the Caribbean also report excellent entry levels.



CHRIS DOYLE

"With the islands starting to open up, people are ready to go somewhere!"

More boats remaining in Caribbean

Although the yacht transport services have reported good business to and from the islands, and incoming rallies are chock-a-block, one industry leader reports, "There are also more boats presently in the Caribbean that are not intending to arrive and depart seasonally."

Our cruising association correspondent notes, "We still have residual boat build-up from Covid [i.e. boats that stayed put during the pandemic] in the Eastern Caribbean." Included are many of the boats that remained in Trinidad during Trinidad & Tobago's entire 16-month lockdown. Several owners have only recently been able to return to check on their boats and begin to prepare them to cruise again after hurricane season.



SALLY ERDLE

"Cruisers have the options of anchoring out and keeping their expenses down."

Some redistribution among destinations

More than one business barometer reported that the distribution of boats has changed to some degree. There are fewer in some territories like the BVI and Trinidad, and more in others like Antigua and Grenada "where the availability of services and the geographic offering of numerous anchorages play a greater role."

Charter activity in the US Virgin Islands is reportedly booming, and initiatives — such as a pilot study allowing yacht crew without B1/B2 visas to enter, and training programs offering entry into professional yachting — support future growth. (*See details on the pilot study and the training programs on page 5 of this issue.*)

More new owners and new boats

Our cruising association correspondent notes, "Boats are starting to cruise again, with many owners being new to their boats, and to the locations and services available."

A busy yacht broker tells us that even during the pandemic, "Our yacht brokerage was booming! People were buying boats sight unseen — we would do video walkthroughs and attend the survey or sea trial in their stead. The yacht market is on fire, with boats selling for asking and above asking price. Brokers are desperate for inventory as the list of buyers continues to grow." However, a caveat is offered: "I think it is a surge" — that is, when some new boat owners realize they don't like to sail, we'll see a glut of hastily bought boats on the market. Any eventual glut of boats for sale, though, would be an opportunity for serious buyers who don't want to make a purchase at current prices.

The outlook

From the chandlery owner: "The marine businesses will largely match the growth in [numbers of] boats, but where possible consumers will increasingly source products online from outside the region. That will not disturb those parts of the business that provide services that cannot be transported (such as haulouts, marina dockage and on-site services) but it will further skew support-material suppliers and the logistics behind them.

"Services provision will continue to be highly varied with many factors affecting their business level, with the underlying challenge in all cases being the availability of skilled personnel on an ongoing basis. As service providers can tackle areas of operation for which they can attract sufficient skilled technicians, can get sufficient and consistent ongoing workers, and can model themselves around seasonality, so the increased chance of getting world-quality service provision in the Caribbean."

The cruising association official says, "I cautiously predict recovery. Another bad Covid outbreak (with or without lockdowns) and cruising boats will change their plans. The economic situation, fuel costs and inflation are also going to have an impact, but cruisers, who traditionally are very budget-concerned, do have the options of anchoring out and keeping their expenses down. Any hike in country entry fees will also be of concern. During this rebuilding stage countries in the Caribbean should continue to adapt policies to encourage yachting visitors." She adds, on the upside, "On the East Coast of the USA there are hardly any marina slips available, and it sounds like boats will be looking for cruising opportunities for winter 2022-23. We hear quite a few comments from our members of travel plans. I do think we will see an uptick."

And from a long-term cruising couple, "Our observations are that those who have doggedly attempted to get down to the Caribbean this past winter and have a season will be a core from which the recovery will grow. In our own group of friends, which is large, we know of only a handful that have sold their boats or are selling. Of these, at least two sales were inevitable because their time had come to swallow the anchor, or the particular boat just did not suit them.

"We have also monitored boat prices and they are significantly high. The ease by which boats sell is also an indicator of a strong market. These factors can make one optimistic that, especially with the Covid-related mandates and barriers dropping away, there should be a return to something viable.

"Against these positive notes are the issues related to potential security issues related to the increase in poverty of the region, the inability to acquire needed materials for cruisers related to the global shortages, and the 'whatever' issues related to energy costs. Nevertheless, we think these negative issues will not stop our cruising friends from making the attempt, however. If anything, many may just realize that it is time to further loosen the purse strings and realize time is limited to do what we want."

As our yacht broker put it, "With the islands starting to open up, people are ready to go somewhere!"

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Barque *Picton Castle* Sets Sail Again

Captain Daniel Moreland reports: The barque *Picton Castle* is a classic Age of Sail square-rigged sailing ship making deep-sea voyages. This October we will set sail on a voyage around the world. You can sign on and sail as trainee crew on this incredible voyage. Sailing blue water while learning the way of a ship is our life for about a year and a half. We'll sail 35,000 nautical miles along the traditional routes of the world's great sailing ships and explorers of old.



We put into ports all along the way, while you are becoming increasingly accomplished seafarers and learning seamanship skills hands-on through crewing a square-rigged ship.

When you sign aboard *Picton Castle*, you become part of the crew that sails the ship. Don't have any sailing experience? That's okay! As a training ship, it's *Picton Castle's* mission to teach you the ropes — literally. Our professional crew are here to instruct you and guide you as you learn the intricacies of square-rig sailing.

This voyage is open to people of all nationalities and genders, ages 18 and up.

We will set sail westabout from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, and via the Panama Canal, on this monumental voyage around the world starting in October 2022.

Leg 5, from Cape Town, South Africa to Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Canada, will run from January 16th, 2024 to June 1st, 2024. During this leg we'll visit a number of Eastern Caribbean islands, getting to know each for its own unique characteristics beyond what the usual tourist sees. *Picton Castle* is known in these islands and our crew are welcomed. I cannot say enough about how great these islands are. Here is where I started to learn my seafaring trade skills, such as shipwright skills, spar making, rigging and sail making.

Full details, including dates, ports and costs, can be found at www.picton-castle.com/voyages/the-voyages/sail-around-the-world.html.

Expanded Menu at Mac's, Bequia

Kevin Carr reports: Mac's Pizza & Kitchen, right on the shore of Admiralty Bay, Bequia, is open every day for lunch and dinner. We've been making delicious pizzas for more than 40 years. Our expanded menu also includes pork tenderloin, Japanese-style seared tuna, spare-ribs and big salads. All desserts are made in house including meringue-topped Bequia lime pie and decadent ice cream.

Reserve a table upstairs in the ocean view dining room or grab one on the bayside patio. Take-away and delivery is available to boats, homes and hotels.

For more information see ad in the Market Place section, pages 36 and 37.

Pitufino — Not Just Another Nav Gateway!

Birgit Hackl reports: Do your nav instruments refuse to talk to each other? Wish you had a remote control for your autopilot? Would you like to turn your mobile devices into proper nav instruments?

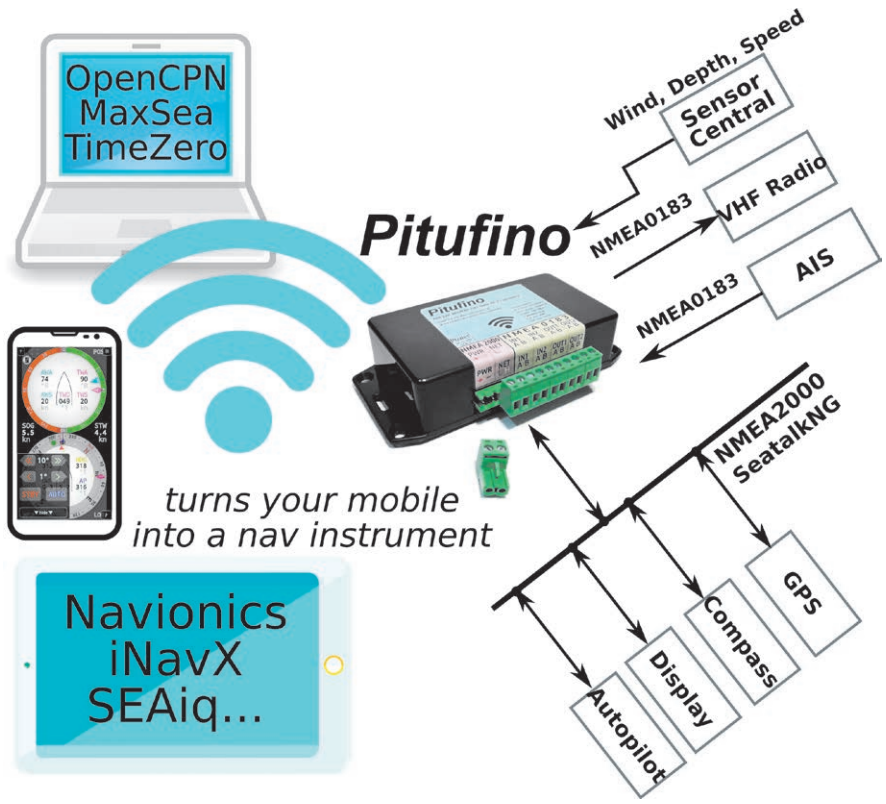
Then you'll be interested in my Pitufino gateway. In 11 years as a full-time cruising sailor I gathered lots of insights into different nav devices on our boat and on friends' boats. Comparing their advantages and shortcomings I accumulated plenty of ideas and wishes. I always loved programming, so I started designing and programming a nav-data gateway combining all those ideas.

Like some other navigation WiFi gateways on the market, Pitufino multiplexes data from connected nav devices (NMEA2000 & 2 x NMEA0183) via WiFi to your portable devices, providing chart-plotter apps on your laptop, phone or tablet with GPS, AIS and instrument data.

Unlike the others on the market, Pitufino comes with sophisticated apps that turn your mobile into a proper sailing instrument, engine dashboard, anchor watch and, on top of that, a remote control for several popular autopilots. These apps run in your browser, so you don't even have to install them.

Pitufino also enables your connected nav devices to communicate with each other, converting data between the NMEA2000 and NMEA0183 ports and it provides a sentence translator, for instance, this lets you use your AIS transponder as a source for position even if it does not output GPS sentences.

Pitufino properly calculates true wind and provides data damping. It computes long-term averages for boat speed, course and wind data and laylines. It implements the latest world-magnetic model and more items otherwise found in a chart plotter. This way there is no need to have a chart plotter running all the time. Pitufino's extensive data routing and filtering options ensure you always get the right data, even if some of your nav devices are not always switched on, enabling you to run an energy efficient small core system. Pitufino can provide either its own WiFi network or it can connect to an existing one. More features *are being added.*



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Duncan Sweet reports: When you visit the Azores, be it for a few days, a few weeks or longer, Mid Atlantic Yacht Services can assist with all manner of support and services for the yacht and the crew alike.

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If you need to get back to a life waiting at home we can assist with planning an extended visit to our world. We have good flight connections to Horta from Lisbon as well as frequent service from Boston to Sao Miguel and/or Terceira, all with Azores Airlines (www.azoresairlines.pt/en).

We look forward to seeing you in Horta and hope you have a safe, swift and uneventful crossing!

For more information see ad in the Market Place section, pages 36 and 37.

Tropical Gives to Grenada Sailing Association

Tropical Shipping has made a financial contribution to the Grenada Sailing Association (GSA) through its Giving Committee. The donation of US$2,500 was made possible through the Tropical Shipping Grenada office.

Tropical Shipping Island Manager for Grenada, Cheney Joseph, in presenting the contribution to the Sailing Association, urged the GSA to continue their contribution to society through their positive impact on Grenadian youngsters.

On accepting the contribution, President of the Grenada Sailing Association James Benoit said that the proceeds would be well utilized and would go a long way in assisting the GSA with training, as well as purchasing additional equipment to continue the group's grassroots programs. Some 30 youngsters from across the island will benefit.

Sailing is a sport for all. It inherently teaches all elements of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) as well as values such as self-reliance and responsibility that shape sailors into athletes and well-rounded individuals. Sailing also fosters an appreciation and understanding of nature, which helps create a culture of preservation of our environment.



Visit www.tropical.com for more information on Tropical Shipping.
Visit www.facebook.com/grenadasailingassociation for more information on the Grenada Sailing Association.

CARIBBEAN ECO-NEWS

TNC's Impact in the Caribbean

The Caribbean is one of the most beautiful but vulnerable regions in the world, facing serious threats from climate change and other factors. In 2021, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) worked with partners and local communities to advance lasting conservation outcomes during a critical time for the Caribbean and our planet.



THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

The Nature Conservancy is helping create a healthier, more resilient future for the region's coastal communities.

Through a science-guided, nature-based approach, TNC is helping create a more resilient future for the region's ocean and coastal communities with the following projects.

• TNC's mapping tool is an extension of the Mapping Ocean Wealth Data Explorer developed specifically to support the Caribbean Regional Oceanscape Project (CROP). The objective of CROP is to improve systems and put relevant structures in place in an effort to foster a Blue Economy and to promote greater consideration of the ecosystem functions and services that the ocean provides.

Under CROP, TNC used the Mapping Ocean Wealth approach to develop ecosystem service models at the scale of the Eastern Caribbean. Existing coral reef tourism and fisheries models were adapted to the regional scale, and novel methodologies were developed to characterize recreational fishing and wildlife viewing in participating Eastern Caribbean countries (Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines). These data will support these countries in ongoing and future marine spatial planning through the direct provision of spatially explicit information on their ecosystem service values, particularly relating to fisheries and nature-based tourism. Use this data explorer to explore the mapped outputs of these models, along with country-specific reports and statistics.

Read more about this project at oceanwealth.org/project-areas/caribbean/crop.

• The Resilient Islands project identifies opportunities for leveraging nature-based solutions to help reduce disaster risks in three Caribbean coastal communities: Old Harbour Bay, Jamaica; Miches, the Dominican Republic; and Grenville, Grenada. Joining conservation with disaster-risk reduction, TNC helped develop nature-based action plans that empower communities to become stronger in the face of climate change.

An analysis of vulnerability was conducted by intersecting social sensitivity, community adaptive capacity, and community exposure. This analysis identified high priority areas for investment, including Grenville Bay on the central east coast of Grenada. It also suggested that interventions in adaptive capacity would be most appropriate in this area.

The Nature Conservancy began implementing the At the Water's Edge (AWE) project, working with communities to strengthen their resilience to climate change in Grenville Bay. With the support of the Government of Grenada, community groups and project partners, the Grenada Red Cross Society and the Grenada Fund for Conservation, TNC embarked on a series of community engagements and educational outreach. This included training of persons, particularly fishers, in first aid, safety at sea and environmental education, and training of community members to collect, care for and out-plant mangroves seedlings in key areas along the coastline.

In 2015, 30 metres of hybrid pilot structures made with common local materials and designed to reduce wave energy reaching shore and promote natural biological growth and accretion of coral were installed on the northern reef. The full hybrid breakwater structures (300 metres) should reduce 80 to 90 percent of wave energy and alongshore currents, thus reducing erosion and run-up flooding at the beach. As the structures are seeded with corals and become reefs, they will grow and maintain their function while increasing marine life in the bay.

TNC and the fishers have monitored the hybrid pilot since its installation. They are stable, are attracting a plethora of marine species such as lobsters, conchs (lambie), sea urchins and blue spotted stingrays, to name a few, they are reducing wave energy to the extent expected of the small pilot scale structures and are recruiting corals.

In 2017, TNC and partners launched Reef Week, a biennial event held in the Grenville Bay Area to raise awareness of the importance of mangroves and coral reefs in local communities and schools. Students were taught about the degradation of the reefs in Grenville Bay and the impacts of that reef loss on coastal erosion and fisheries depletion, with the goal of instilling in the younger generation the importance of conserving and these coastal and marine habitats.

Read the full story at https://bit.ly/3KZ6PNG

Sea Urchins Are Dying

According to an April 14th Associated Press report from Dánica Coto in San Juan, Puerto Rico, sea urchins are dying across the Caribbean at a pace scientists say could rival a mass die-off that last occurred in 1983.

Dive shops first began reporting the deaths in February, and governments are receiving a growing number of reports about dying sea urchins in islands including Antigua, St. Lucia, Dominica, Jamaica, St. Vincent, Saba and the US Virgin Islands, as well as Cozumel in Mexico.

"It's very concerning, particularly because it's happening so quickly," said Patricia Kramer, a marine biologist and program director of the Atlantic and Gulf Rapid Reef Assessment (AGRRA), a scientific collaboration to improve reef conditions in the region.

At first, the mortality event was linked only to black sea urchins (*Diadema antillarum*), which are recognizable by their extremely long, skinny spines. But two other species have since been affected, including the Rock Boring Sea Urchin and the West Indian Sea Egg.

The deaths worry scientists including Dana Wusinich-Mendez, Atlantic-Caribbean team lead for the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's coral reef conservation program: "Losing our sea urchins would be really devastating." The deaths are of concern because sea urchins are herbivores known for being efficient grazers that remove macro algae from coral reefs and clear space for baby sea corals to attach themselves.

While macro algae are an important source of food and shelter for some fish, too many of them can degrade coral reefs that are under stress by warmer-than-average ocean temperatures and stony coral tissue loss disease. Overfishing across the Caribbean already had led to a greater abundance of macro algae, which was kept in check by sea urchins that are now dying, said Shamal Connell, an officer with St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Fisheries Service who oversees research. "It's very urgent that we find a solution," he said.

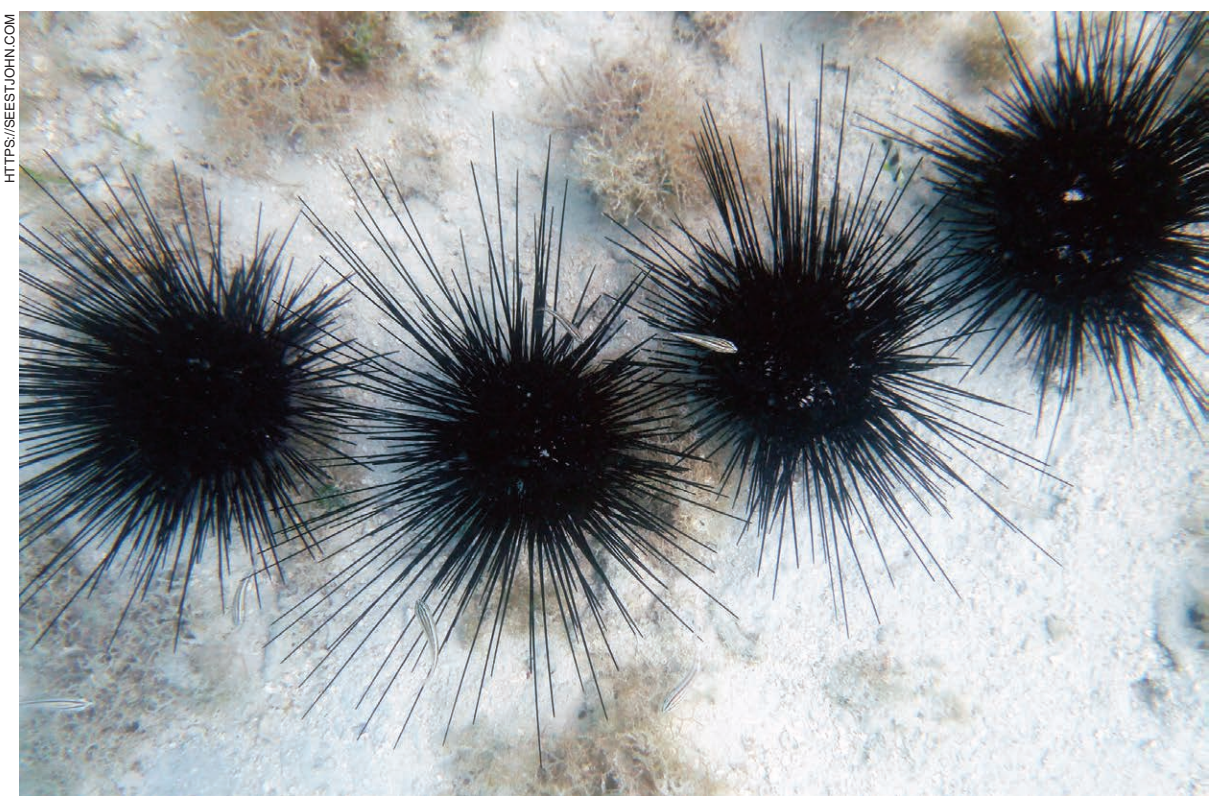
AGRRA recently helped create a network to investigate the deaths, analyze tissue samples and find solutions. It includes the Florida-based Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute and nearly two dozen groups in the Caribbean and US.

Kramer noted that very few black sea urchin populations recovered from the 1983 event that began near the Panama Canal and spread northward and then eastward over the following 13 months. During that time, only the black sea urchin was affected, with 90 percent or more of the population dying, though at a much slower rate than the current event. "Just when we're getting to the point where they're recovering, they're dying," Kramer said.

The island of St. Thomas was the first to report the newest round of deaths, although it's unclear whether that's where the event started. In mid-March, Saba reported similar deaths, noting that 50 percent of the sea urchin population in its harbor was dead a week later. Officials in Saba said they have around 200 sea urchins in a nursery and are gathering information about the new mortality event, adding that they are treating some with antibiotics that might cure them or prevent them from getting sick.

Meanwhile, Monique Calderon, a fisheries biologist with the government of St. Lucia, said scientists there are considering launching their own survey to get more details about where the sea urchins are dying and why. "When the last die-off occurred in the 1980s, the sampling done wasn't robust enough to determine what the issue was exactly, what might have caused it," Calderon said, adding that she hopes to find an explanation with improved technology.

—Continued on next page



HTTPS://SEESTJOHN.COM

Suddenly, healthy sea urchins like these are an increasingly rare sight. Researchers attempt to find out why.

—*Continued from previous page*

Watch for New Invasive Coral

The invasive coral *Unomia stolonifera* has reportedly spread throughout Venezuela's Morrocoy National Park and Mochima National Park, putting their ecosystems at risk.

The Indo-Pacific octocoral has been reported as a successful invasive species of the Venezuelan coral reefs. Since its first appearance there, it has dispersed along the shallow reefs, overgrowing corals and seagrass. Surveys revealed that *Unomia stolonifera* dominated all studied sites, featuring an average percentage cover of 30 to 80 percent, far above that of the native corals.

Native to Indonesia, *Unomia stolonifera* was introduced into northeastern Venezuela, possibly via the illegal aquarium trade, between 2000 and 2005 and had not been registered in any other location of Venezuela or in the Caribbean Sea until recently. Since its initial discovery it has rapidly spread. Dispersal of this invasive has been intensified by drifting colonies, by colonies settled on detached seagrass fragments and by colonies entangled on fish nets and consequently translocated. This intensifying invasion is causing severe ecological damage to the Venezuelan reefs. The spread of *Unomia stolonifera* in places where it has become established while displacing native species leads to a decrease in diversity of the seafloor-dwelling communities.

It seems that *Unomia stolonifera* is equally capable of successfully colonizing stony reefs, soft substrates and seagrass beds. Stony corals are vital for the survival of a variety of organisms while, similarly, the seagrass meadows constitute a food source, refuge site, and breeding and nursery grounds for diverse life forms. Consequently, it is apparent that this invasive octocoral constitutes a source of harm to benthic organisms and fishes, negatively impacting their living space and food sources.

It should be noted that most of the sites colonized by the invasive species have also been subjected to prolonged anthropogenic disturbances, such as both land-based and coastal activities as well as overfishing. The invasive soft coral is therefore not the only cause of deterioration in the recipient ecosystem, but it has nonetheless become a determinant factor in weakening this ecosystem's resilience and stability. A lack of natural predators also favors the success of *Unomia stolonifera*.

"Approximately 50 to 60 percent of the coral reef of the Mochima National Park has been invaded," warns Sybil Sant, marine biologist and professor at the Universidad de Oriente. "The consequence is fatal, it is killing all the species that make up a coral reef. We are trying to see, to study, what kind of antidotes can be used. For that we need research projects, for that we need funding,"

Fishermen in the area say they first saw this species a decade ago, but in recent years they have noted how voraciously it has expanded. José Gregorio Jiménez, a fisherman who has worked for 34 years on the island of Arapo, in Mochima, cast his hook to show what the species looks like: gelatinous, similar to an algae, with a white body and dark brown tints. For Jiménez, the advance of *unomia* has had economic consequences. His income depends on the sales of the varieties of fish that have moved away due to the invasion.

Readers are urged to be alert to the appearance of *Unomia stolonifera* in other regions of the Caribbean. Since the invaded sites are adjacent to international trade ports (Guanta and Guaraguao) it is likely that the larvae will be transported in ballast water and even small colonies might attach to a vessel's hull and become dispersed to other regions.

Visit www.researchgate.net/publication/351854325 for more information.

Below: Be on the lookout for this invasive, reef-killing coral. If seen, report to the nearest Fisheries Department or the Gulf & Caribbean Fisheries Institute at www.gcfi.org.



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REGATTA NEWS

Successful Return of St. Barths Bucket

Following a three-year hiatus, the St. Barths Bucket made its comeback with superyacht owners, crews and guests, bringing the Bucket back to life with exhilarating racing and shoreside fun. Covid protocols were in place for the 2022 edition and the show went on… and what a show it was!



CORY SILKEN

The J Class Ranger *took first place in the St. Barths Bucket's comeback event.*

This 35th running of the event, March 17th through 20th, showcased 30 entries divided into seven classes including the spectacular J Class, a five-yacht Corinthian Spirit class and the debut of the 90-Foot Class. Winds of at least 20 to 25 knots were in play daily, and conditions were testing at times, with delays on the racecourse waiting for the wind to drop. Racing on the final day was abandoned as winds rose into the 30s. While Sunday's race was not to be, there was plenty of action at the upper end of the wind range the previous three days.

In the J Class, after four races, *Ranger* took first place overall with two firsts, a second and a fourth. Tied with *Velsheda* on points, *Hanuman* took second place on the podium by virtue of having a first and two second places.

Mark your calendar for the 2023 St. Barths Bucket: 15-19 March 2023

Visit bucketregatta.com for full results and more information.

'The Wind Decides' at 48th STIR

Carol Bareuther reports: Nearly 50 boats with sailors hailing from the USA, Europe and around the Caribbean competed in the 48th St. Thomas International Regatta (STIR), held March 25th through 27th.

The 2022 STIR delivered a little something for everyone, with gusts from 25 to 30 knots during the warm-up Round the Rocks race on March 24th to a light eight- to ten-knot breeze on the last day of the series. *Fox, Blitz, Chili Pepper, Bill T* and *Total Recall* showed their prowess in handing these conditions to top their respective classes — in two classes by a tiebreaker. Each class winner received a precision Virgin Islands-designed timepiece, The Pirate, from Cardow Jewelers.

In the CSA 1 Class, the USA's Victor Wild's Botin 52, *Fox,* won with all first-place finishes.

"We came for the wind. It was breezy at the start of the regatta, and then it progressively dropped. It opened my eyes to the variety of conditions that are possible here. The light winds today meant it was shiftier and puffier. Still, it was great sailing," says Andy Horton, *Fox's* tactician.

The USVI's Peter Corr's Summit 40, *Blitz,* and Puerto Rico's Jaime Torres' Melges 32, *Smile and Wave*, tied on points after three days and six races. The tiebreaker, *Blitz's* two first-place finishes for the regatta compared to Torres's one, handed *Blitz* the prize.

"Our strategy is to always sail the best that we can and to work as a team. Key is to sail to the wind; the wind decides. High winds, low winds, we were constantly tweaking the boat to keep it going fast. Sometimes it's all the little things that count," says Corr.

Puerto Rico's Bastian Sarh won the CSA 3 Class on his Beneteau 10m, *Chili Pepper.*

"We were overpowered the first day and underpowered the last day. We finished first in every race until today when we got a fourth and a sixth. So, today was difficult, but it didn't stop us from sailing and having a great time," says Sarh.

One of the most incredible sailing feats happened in the one-design IC24 class. Puerto Rico's Marco Teixidor and his team on *Cachondo* led the uber-competitive 18-boat fleet from Day 1 and started the last day 12 points in front of the second-place boat, *Bill T,* driven by the USVI's Cy Thompson. The ultimate win for *Bill T* came down to the last race and literally at the finish line.

"We went out today knowing we had to chip away at *Cachondo's* lead. In the last race, we needed to put five boats between us to win. At the last second, two boats passed *Cachondo*, and literally at the finish line the entire outcome of the regatta changed for us," says Chris Rosenberg, tactician aboard *Bill T.*

Thompson, a two-time Olympian in the Laser Class adds, "The wind was oscillating a lot today, but the team did a good job and kept the boat moving."

Finally, it was also a nail-biter finish in the one-design Hobie Wave Class. After 13 races in two days, the USA's Michael Compton and the UK's Niall Bartlett finished tied on points. Again, the tiebreaker was the total number of first-place finishes and Compton beat Bartlett 6 to 5, respectively.

"I was the only one who steered the tiller with my foot. Doing that moves my body weight forward and enables me to go faster. I did that all three days," says Compton.

The 49th STIR will take place March 24th to 26th, 2023, with the Round the Rocks Race on March 23td, 2023.



DEAN BARNES

Racers came for wind and got it at the 48th St. Thomas International Regatta.

Full scores are available at: https://yachtscoring.com/emenu.cfm?eID=14738 under Race Results.

For more information, visit www.stthomasinternationalregatta.com

Challenging Conditions for Thornton Multiclass

Fierce competition between 32 teams in five classes marked the 2022 Grant Thornton Multiclass Regatta, held March 26th and 27th and hosted by the Sint Maarten Yacht Club.

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Competitors came from five different Caribbean sailing clubs, including Club de Voile de Friar's Bay from St. Martin, St. Barths Yacht Club, the Maritime School of the West Indies, and the Sint Maarten Yacht Club Sailing School. A special mention goes to Coen van der Gulik, who came from Curaçao to race in the Laser class.

The teams were divided over five classes — Sunfast 20, Laser, RS Zest, RS Quest and Optimist — and witnessed excellent racing in challenging conditions. Rain and passing squalls made it very difficult for both the race committee and sailors. The different weather systems caused very light and shifty winds that picked up approximately one hour after the squalls, ending in great sailing weather with 17 knots of wind on Saturday. Sunday started the same. All competitors left the lagoon into Simpson Bay with a lot of rain, followed by no wind, but all of them battled through and were rewarded with races in beautiful sailing conditions.

The four top sailors in the six-boat Optimist Class enjoyed very close racing. Correntine Corroy and Clement le Normand from Club de Voile de Friar's Bay sailed very well on Saturday and Clement took first place after the first day of racing. But Sarah Michaux and Thomas Magras from the St. Barths Yacht Club sailed more consistently over both days, which led to an overall fourth place for Corroy, with the same points as le Normand in third place. Magras came in second with the same number of points as Michaux in first place.

A special prize for the "Benjamin of the Optimist Fleet," based on lowest age, was won by Stanley Haes from Club de Voile de Friar's Bay.



There was excellent racing in challenging conditions for five classes at the Grant Thornton Multiclass Regatta.

SAINT MAARTEN YACHT CLUB

The RS Zest class also saw six sailors compete. Massimo Lapierre came in third, Melina de Vries and Dax Henriquez came in second, and Rio Stomp, sailing together with Arhan Baharani on Saturday, took the class win.

Three Sint Maarten teams competed in the Sunfast 20 class. Rien Korteknie and his students from the Maritime School of the West Indies came in third, as they only sailed the morning on Saturday. Jordan Pieterse and her crew came in second and Robbie Ferron and his team took the class win with five bullets.

Sam Peeks, racing coach of the Sint Maarten Yacht Club, says, "It was a challenging weekend. The weather conditions were hard to deal with, but the race committee did a very good job. Jolyon Ferron, the race officer on Saturday, had to re-lay the course a couple of times as the wind kept shifting, but the conditions ended up being perfect. On Sunday, race officer Paul Henriquez managed to start the fleet off in very light conditions and shortened the first race for the Optimists and the RS Zest fleet halfway through. This made it possible to do more starts in stable conditions. I am proud to see all the progress that the sailors are making. It was a great event."

Visit smyc.com/multiclass-regatta for more information.

ON THE HORIZON

Antigua Week's Y2K Race Day Returns May 3rd

Antigua Sailing Week, considered one of the Caribbean's most prestigious regattas, is held annually at the end of April. The 53rd edition commences with the Peters & May Round Antigua Race on April 30th, followed by five days of competitive racing, wrapping up on May 6th.

For 2022 Antigua Sailing Week (ASW) welcomes Axxess Marine as sponsors of the Youth to Keelboat (Y2K) Race Day. Axxess Marine Y2K Race Day takes place on May 3rd. Launched in 2018, Youth to Keelboat programme in its first two years saw 65 Antiguan youths take to the fleet and race as part of ASW.

Although many youths have been placed on board yachts racing in ASW over the years using personal contacts from Antigua Yacht Club and its members, this structured approach was an initiative of the Caribbean Sailing Association's development programme seeking to bridge the gap between dinghy sailing and keelboat sailing. It gives those youths without access to the yacht club and family network to advance them in the sport, the opportunity to be part of a race team for Antigua Sailing Week.

Youths aged 14 to 25 wishing to participate in the Youth to Keelboat programme must have significant dinghy sailing experience and be (or have been) in an existing programme and able to take part for all five race days of ASW.

While ASW has been in hiatus, many Antigua youths have been lucky enough to race in weekly Saturday sailing sessions hosted by Antigua and Jolly Harbour Yacht Clubs. Many of those same youths will be racing as part of now established homegrown teams. In some cases whole youth teams will be part of the fleet, including the crew on Ashley Rhodes' *Whiplash*, Jules Mitchell's *Spirit* and Rocco Falcone's *Scia*. Additionally, a new crop of dinghy sailors will undertake a short keelboat dinghy course and be ready to join willing boats entered into ASW.

Axxess Marine (www.axxess-marine.com) is a leading provider of connectivity and communication solutions, operating from locations across the Caribbean, Europe and USA. Specializing in VSAT, 4G/5G LTE-A, and satellite TV services, and supported by a unique on-demand software platform, Axxess Marine serves and supports a growing number of marine clients across a variety of maritime sectors. Founder Dennis Henri says, "Community development has always been a key focal point for our team, especially the English Harbour community, the home of our main office branch. We are indeed honoured to be the 2022 sponsor of Y2K Race Day, and supporting collaboration between the National Sailing Academy, the Antigua & Barbuda Sailing Association and Antigua Sailing Week as it is geared towards the development of youth sailing both recreationally and professionally. Sailing provides a great deal of aspiration for young people towards future career opportunities."

Alison Sly-Adams, President of ASW and General Manager of Antigua & Barbuda's National Sailing Academy, says of the programme, "I am truly excited that we can again offer students from the National Sailing Academy and Antigua Yacht Club programmes the opportunity to experience competitive sailing at such a young age. We know this experience has already inspired past students with examples such as Alesea Charles and Junella King who race on board Sir Peter Harrison's *Sojana*, and are now employed on the Round the World Tour on board Tracy Edwards' *Maiden Factor*."

Visit www.sailingweek.com for more information.

Sint Maarten YC Welcomes ARC Europe Start

The Sint Maarten Yacht Club will be hosting the start of the ARC Europe rally 2022. The club's welcome started off with a cocktail party on April 28th. The ARC Europe office in St. Maarten opens on May 2nd, and the fleet is scheduled to depart for its first stop, Bermuda, on May 7th.

ARC Europe is a cruise in company from the Caribbean or US East Coast to Portugal, with stops in Bermuda and the Azores en route — a convivial way to start a European adventure or to end a Caribbean season. The rally has two starts — from St. Maarten with live support or from the US East Coast with online support — with the two fleets meeting in Bermuda. Then the fleet sails on to cruise the Azores before the final leg to Europe.

In St. Maarten there will be social activities and a programme of seminars and safety checks. St. Maarten offers excellent marine services.

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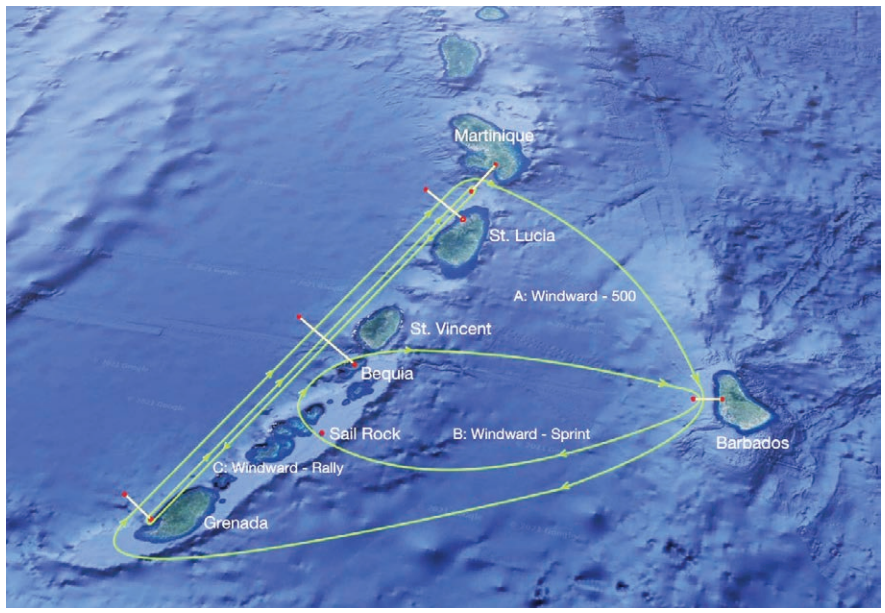
A World Cruising Club team will be in St. Maarten, Bermuda, the Azores and Portugal, helping participants make the most of their time there with parties and tours, advice and support. Some 30 boats are entered as this issue of *Compass* goes to press.

Visit www.worldcruising.com for more information.

Attention Distance Race Competitors!

Steven Kern reports: For those who enjoyed the 2021 Windward 500, we welcome you and others to the 2022 Windward 500 scheduled to start on May 16th.

The organizing authority, the Caribbean Ocean Racing Club (CORC), is encouraged by the number of regattas that have run so far this season, despite the lingering challenges of the pandemic. The Mango Bowl in St. Lucia kicked off the racing season in November 2021, and in St. Maarten recently we were pleased to see Mango Bowl T-shirts on competitors from Martinique. The Mount Gay Round Barbados Sail Week in January saw an inclusive mix of dinghy and kite classes, coastal keelboat racing, and the Round the Island Race. Grenada hosted a special



round the island race. Then it was off to the big leagues, the 2022 RORC Caribbean 600 and the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, and at each event, the organizers of the Windward 500 Series conversed with race officers, competitors, event organizers, class associations, yacht club and sail training officers, and members of the sailing development committee and board of the Caribbean Sailing Association.

The input was consistent: It was great to see the Windward 500 come to life in 2021 during the challenging times of the pandemic. The all-virtual race committee, jury, skippers' briefing, and prizegiving worked well for the race format. Racing through waypoint gates and Yellowbrick's capture of finishes through geofences with auto-feed to YachtScoring.com was unique. The windward beat from Martinique to Barbados is challenging. The sleigh ride that follows — from Barbados down to Grenada — and the picturesque reach up the Windwards to Diamond Rock, Martinique, are exhilarating and rewarding.

But what's next from the Caribbean Ocean Racing Club?

CORC intends to host the 2022 Windward 500 Series, and we have variants that we want to put effort behind this year as well. We see the Windward 500 Series, which includes two shorter-distance races designed as qualifying event opportunities for those that want to take on the RORC Caribbean 600 or Storm TriSail's 800-nautical-mile Pineapple Cup. Many Caribbean regattas host round the island races, but these are often 45 to 65 nautical mile races in daylight. Our Caribbean racers need more than overnight passage delivery experience. They need races designed to develop navigational, tactical, and boat handling skills and the stamina required in distance racing.

This year, we will focus on the Windward-Zero and Windward-Sprint courses. The Zero offers young double-handed and fully crewed racers a safe sailing ground to develop their distance racing skills. It is an approximate 360-nautical-mile loop between Point Saline, Grenada, in the south, Bequia, Fort Rodney, St. Lucia, and Diamond Rock, Martinique, in the north and back. Like the Windward 500, Windward-Zero racers can pick their start/finish island from the four listed. By safely and competitively completing the course, racers will build sailing resumes to meet the entry requirements for longer races.

The Windward-Sprint Course is a 300-nautical-mile race encompassing Barbados, Sail Rock in the Grenadines, and Bequia. For cruisers and racers in the Grenadines looking to stretch their sea legs, this race offers a big Windward-Leeward Race with up to two nights of racing. CORC is willing to run the race in two separate legs for those starting in Barbados. The race's first leg would deliver cruisers and races from Barbados, around Sail Rock, and into Bequia. They can then join the Windward-Zero and later race the second half of their Windward-Sprint from Bequia back to Barbados.

For the experienced racer, the Windward-500 still presents the best run, reach and beat in the Windward Islands. We continue to work closely with the Caribbean Sailing Association to develop these unique qualifying distance races, so feel free to offer us your input.

Contact us or register to race at CaribbeanORC@Gmail.com.

2023 Superyacht Challenge Antigua

The Notice of Race for the 2023 Superyacht Challenge Antigua (SYCA) has been issued and SYCA 2023 is scheduled to take place March 6th through 12th. The Superyacht Challenge Antigua has one clear objective: to provide all the facilities to stage an ideal event for an exclusive selection of superyachts, where fair racing and good companionship are valued above all else.

The regatta includes an optional race around the island of Antigua, the record for which was set at last year's SYCA by the 218-foot ketch *Hetairos* at 3 hours 46 minutes and 8 seconds. A yacht that breaks the record will be awarded the skipper's weight in rum!

The 2023 Notice of Race and entry forms can be downloaded at http://superyachtchallengeantigua.com/2023-race-documents.



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SHAKING OUT THE COBWEBS!



ALL IMAGES: BROADSWORD COMMUNICATIONS

Above: Shaking out the cobwebs on the windward-leeward course in Performance Cruising Class.

Below: Six bullets and a second place put El Ocaso (at right) *in first overall in CSA 3.*



After a three-year pandemic-induced hiatus, the British Virgin Islands once again celebrated its famous combination of a fun Sailing Festival and a serious Spring Regatta.

The BVI Sailing Festival's island-to-island action started on March 30th with a race from Tortola to the resort on neighboring Scrub Island, and concluded on the 31st with a race to Foxy's iconic beach bar on Jost Van Dyke. Then April 1st through 3rd saw the three-day Spring Regatta, featuring racing round rocks and islands. With 18 classes across the two events, there was a boat and a course for everyone.

Boats could elect to race the full week, or either or both of the Sailing Festival races, or just the Spring Regatta.

Festival Day One: "Perfect"

The first race of the Sailing Festival took the fleet on an approximately 15 nautical mile course from Tortola to Scrub Island. With boats leaving Nanny Cay Marina to race for the first time in three years, cheering shoreside accompanied the fleet as it headed to the start line. For most sailors it was an opportunity to shake out the cobwebs after a few years of downtime.

In Racing 1, the Botin 52 *Fox*, owned and skippered by Victor Wild of the US and racing in both the Festival and the Regatta, took first.

Happy to take first for the day in the Cruising/Performance Cruising division, Antonio Teixidor navigated for his dad, Juan, aboard *Portomar*, the family's Hanse 455. The Teixidors, from Puerto Rico, are regulars to Spring Regatta, keeping their boat in Nanny Cay year-round.

Kent Haeger of the US, owner/skipper of *Mach Schnell*, the Gunboat 62, took first in Performance Multihull. He'd participated in the BVI Spring Regatta & Sailing Festival some five times previously and was thrilled to have his boat off the dock and racing again.

"We had 14 to 18 knots and conditions were beautiful, just perfect," Haeger smiled. "It's awesome to be back racing again — this is pent-up demand!"

In Bareboat/Cruising Multihull, *Candle in the Dark*, a Sunsail 41 skippered by Brian McCarthy of the US, took first.

Festival Day Two: "Fantastic"

A steady 18 knots, which built to 24 throughout racing, greeted the fleet for the day's race to Jost Van Dyke. An exciting start by *Fox*, in Racing division, saw the sleek and extremely fast Botin 52 come down hard and slide through a tight port-tacked fleet to easily take the start line and carry on to a first-place finish. The big breeze saw a few boats sustain some breakages and a few early retirees.

Aboard the Biecker 53 catamaran *Fujin*, the day's winner in Performance Mulithull Class, well known US sailor and Olympian Jonathan McKee, who has called tactics on the boat for many years, commented, "Today was fantastic. It was on the windier side, and it was a reaching-oriented course around islands, which made for really tricky navigation and tricky sail handling, too, because the legs are pretty short. But that close reaching angle is really nice for *Fujin*."

Relaxing at Foxy's Bar on Jost Van Dyke was a fitting end to a great race day. The legendary Foxy regaled the crowd with stories about his humble start on the beach some 50 years ago.

"I've been here since 1968. I first started down the beach next door to the church until the church began to complain about my customers for making too much noise. Then I later found out that the real reason was because I was making more money than they were!" Foxy laughed.

Regatta Day One: "Fresh to frightening!"

A total of 58 boats signed up for the 49th running of the BVI Spring Regatta. On Day One, Mount Gay Race Day, 11 classes set out for two challenging races spread among multiple courses. Chris Haycraft, Tortola resident and long-time BVISR participant, summed up April first's conditions: "Fresh to frightening! It was a steady 18 and 19, peaking into the 24s and 25s, which, going around the islands, made some of those gusts coming off quite significant. Good speeds were attained!" Haycraft and his crew on *Ting-a-Ling* took first in Sport Multihull.

In CSA 1, *Fox* earned two bullets. "The boat is getting faster and faster, and the crew is functioning superbly," Wild stated. "We had winds of 18 to 26 knots all day, with huge rollers that we were punching through — we were going faster than them. It was a little rough out there, especially between the islands, and we spent half our day underwater!"

Regatta Day Two: "Pretty rough"

It was another windy day as the race committee prepared to send 11 fleets out on various courses. After three days of long reaching courses, the racing boats had requested a day of windward-leeward courses, while the remainder of the fleet were happy to "take a tour" of the north side of Tortola in the Round Tortola race.

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—*Continued from previous page*

The wind picked up, laid down, picked up again, and a surprising squall ripped through the windward-leeward course around mid-morning, creating havoc before settling into a more consistent breeze in the afternoon. While courses for the Round Tortola fleet were modified according to class, it was still a long day with the last boats finishing around 6:30PM.

Just two in the Offshore Multihull fleet completed the Round Tortola race. As Tony Teale, boat captain for *Flow*, a US-flagged Gunboat 60, commented. "We sailed all the way around the BVI, and it was a very long day. It was very windy and exhausting! But it was an exciting day. It took us about five hours. We finished about 30 minutes after *Fujin*, but we were the only two in our fleet who made it around the course. At least two dropped out with issues; it was pretty rough."



ALL IMAGES: BROADSWORD COMMUNICATIONS

On board *Fujin*, the experience was similar, as tactician Jonathan McKee commented, "The course distance was 60 but the mileage we sailed was closer to 80. It was good, it was an exciting day. We were just a couple of hundred yards from *Mach Schnell* for the first half of the race before they broke their mainsheet. They were ahead of us and sailing very well. It was really rough once we got around the top of Virgin Gorda and it was a tight reach, which is a difficult angle for these boats — both boats were fighting hard to keep control. We ripped one of our sails, so we weren't without damage either."

For CSA 2 and CSA 3, mayhem ensued on the SOL course where the windward-leeward courses were run, when a vicious squall hit the fleet mid-morning resulting in plenty of torn sails that sent boats back to the dock early. Three races were sailed although just a few boats managed to hang in for the duration.

Sitting pretty in first in CSA 2, the Cape-31 *Arabella*, a brand-new boat with barely eight races under its belt, had another great day of Caribbean racing. Anthony Haines, boat manager and the upwind/downwind trimmer, noted that the big mix of boats in the class made it exciting.

Britain's Tony Mack, helming the J/122 *El Ocaso*, took three bullets and "just did not make one mistake," according to Sam Talbot, who helmed *Spike*, the J/111, today in CSA 3.

Regatta Day 3: "Absolutely beautiful"

It was victory for Victor Wild of *Fox*, as he took five bullets over three days of racing for a clean sweep of CSA 1.

Greg Slyngstad, owner/driver of *Fujin*, finished first in Offshore Multihull. "The first two days were really heavy air and that's when this boat really does well," Slyngstad said. "Today was lighter so we took two third places — the boat's got a relatively short rig and it just likes lots of breeze. We've had a blast. It's a great regatta and for the multihulls it's unique in that we get to dock together and socialize — most places we're spread out, anchored out. It's great being together."

In CSA 2 the Cape 31 *Arabella* took first overall. Niall Dowling, who owns the boat with his wife Olivia, said he's enjoying the new boat, which was raced for the first time in St. Maarten just recently. "It was absolutely beautiful today, fantastic sailing through all those islands with spinnakers up," Dowling commented. "It was a bit lighter today — maybe 15 — but the past few days we had around 22. It was great fun. The format is great; all the boats were friendly. It was very close racing: at every mark there was a change of place and it's been like that all week."

Six bullets and a second place put *El Ocaso* in first overall in CSA 3. "In the last race it was touch and go all the way around. For the last hour, probably, we could have talked to the three boats around us," Tony Mack said. "Some would fall into a hole, then we did, then people got past us, we got past them, it was really exciting."

In Performance Cruising, *EH01*, a Beneteau First 47.7, scored five bullets over three days of racing. "Our crew worked really well together, and we got the perfect conditions for our boat," helmswoman Caty Rota said. "We have a 15-metre boat with powerful sails, and we can drive the boat fast. The crew listened to instructions and managed to keep the boat high and fast. We were a bit overpowered in the first few races but over the past three days we got the trim right and that's worked for us. Our class had very tight racing, especially today, among the top three."

Marty J, a Moorings 48, made a clean sweep in Bareboat 1 with five bullets. *Seas the Daze*, a Moorings 45 helmed by Florian Lienau sailing with friends from Hamburg and Kiel, Germany, took first in Bareboat 2. Four bullets and a third firmly placed 93-year-old BV Islander Robin Tattersall and his crew on *Moon Rainbow*, a Sunsail 41, first overall in Bareboat 3.

As main trimmer Anthony Patterson on *Marty J* summed up the whole event: "It's been crazy good!"

Thanks to Judy Petz for information in this report.

Visit https://bvispringregatta.org for more information and full results.





Top left: Fox *took five bullets over three days of racing for a clean sweep of CSA 1.*

Above: To reef or not to reef? That was the question!

Right: The busy Regatta Village at Nanny Cay at night. "This is pent-up demand."

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It Was Exhausting.

This was the 33rd running of the Classic, back on course after a two-year break due to the pandemic. Participation was down from previous years, but enthusiasm remained high as 35 boats raced in seven classes: Classic GRP, Traditional, Historic, Vintage, Spirit of Tradition, Schooner and Tall Ships. One–design Dragons also raced (see sidebar).



LUCY TULLOCH / WWW.THELUCY.COM (2)

The 141-foot gaff schooner Columbia *is a replica of the original Starling Burgess design.*

For the Classic GRP Class, boats must have a full long keel with a keel-hung rudder, and be a descendant of a wooden boat design. Traditional is for Carriacou sloops and other indigenous craft; Historic is for yachts designed and built before the end of 1976 in any material with any keel configuration. To be eligible for Vintage, Traditional and Tall Ship classes, boats shall have a full keel, be of moderate to heavy displacement, built of wood or steel, and have a traditional rig and appearance. Old craft using modern materials, such as epoxy or glass sheathing, or new craft built along the lines of an old design, are acceptable. Boats built of other materials may be acceptable if they have a gaff or traditional schooner rig. Schooner Class is self-explanatory. All boats in the Classic are monohulls.

The Classic broke away from Antigua Sailing Week years ago when one of the big boats, the 114-foot schooner *Aschanti IV*, driven by Uli Pruesse, had to make an emergency maneuver to avoid one of the bareboats that was racing. Later that day, the owners and skippers of the larger boats came together in *Aschanti's* cabin to discuss the need for a separate category for the large, traditional sailing yachts. The Classic Regatta was added to the beginning of Sailing Week as a separate three-day event.

More recently, the Classic Regatta was moved a month earlier in the calendar, as skippers of the large yachts wanted to leave for the transatlantic voyage to the Med earlier than mid-May.

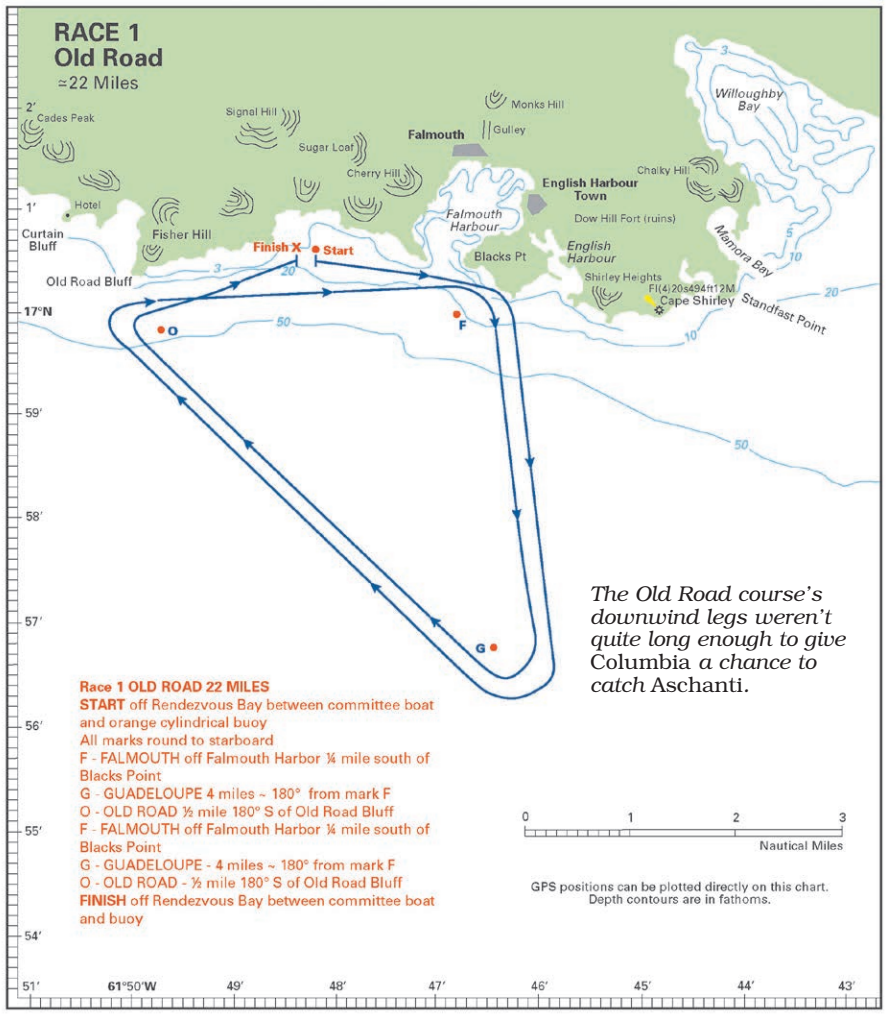
This sailing event now is one of the Caribbean's standout regattas, drawing classic yachts large and small. Each year crews and boats from around the world end up in Antigua just for this gathering of like-minded sailors and their boats. "It's the boats that draw them here," Jane Coombs told me. She and her late husband, Kenny, founded the Classic with a few others back in 1996. "The racing is just an excuse to gather," she added.

The 2022 Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta encompassed three days of round-the-buoys racing with a party each evening. It was exhausting. It was exciting.

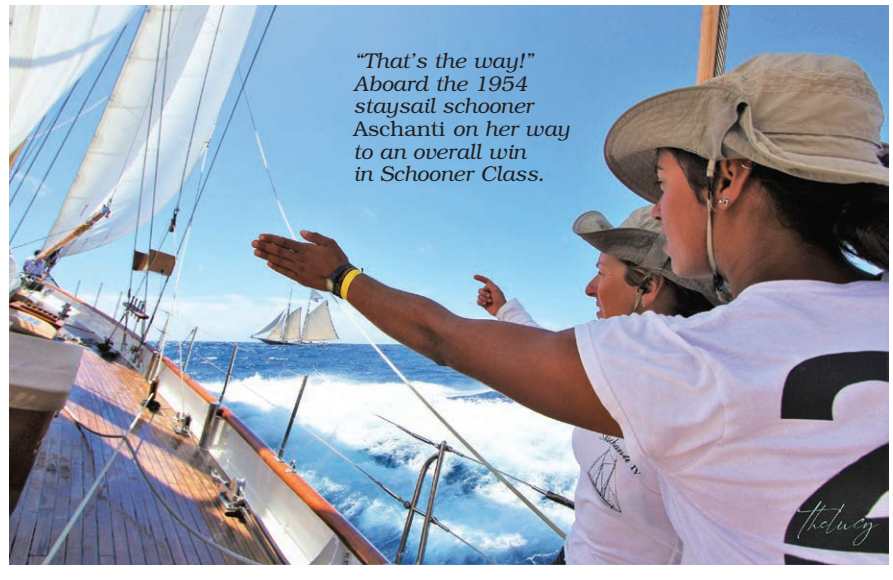
It Was Exciting!

by David H. Lyman

Due to strong winds, the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta 2022 got underway on March 31st with the cancellation of the single-handed race. And the winds kept blowing for the next two days, testing boats, gear and crews. We'll get into that in a bit. First, some background on this very special event in Antigua's jam-packed calendar of sailboat races.



The Old Road course's downwind legs weren't quite long enough to give Columbia *a chance to catch* Aschanti.



"That's the way!" Aboard the 1954 staysail schooner Aschanti *on her way to an overall win in Schooner Class.*

Each year, the Classic draws a variety of ketches, sloops, schooners and yawls, including traditional craft from the islands. Tall Ships, more newly built Spirit of Tradition yachts, and a fleet of Dragon Class racing sloops also get out on the water.

Thursday, March 31st

The single-handed race was to have been the kick-off event, but strong winds prompted officials to cancel. So, there was just a party…

…and, of course, the Concours D'Elegance. Since it's all about the boats, the Classic has a Concours D'Elegance judging to award recognition to crews and skippers on how well they care for and present their yachts. Varnished trim, scrubbed decks, coiled lines, polished brass, cabins clean and organized, it all counts.

Gold winners were the 2003 Nat Benjamin gaff schooner *Juno*, the 1983 46-foot gaff cutter *Windbreker*, the 1936 Herreshoff ketch *Ticonderoga*, the 1936 H. Rasmussen *Seefalke*, the 2004 40-foot sloop *Freya of Midgard*, the 2010 32-foot Carriacou sloop *New Moon* and the 1973 Swan 48 *Montana*. The Arne Frissel award for the most seaworthy vessel went to *Vela*, a 112-foot sail-training schooner built in 2020. The overall winner of the Locman Italy watch was *Ticonderoga*.

Friday, April 1st

The first race, the Old Road course, started off Rendevous Bay and wound around three marks. Winds were east, brisk, 20 to 28 knots, gusting to 35.

—Continued on next page

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Seas were five to 12 feet, some larger and breaking. No one came ashore dry, as spray would often engulf entire boats. More than once, the bowsprit of the 141-foot schooner *Columbia* was buried, the bowman hanging on to a forestay for dear life.

The challenge to watch was between the two black, steel-hulled schooners, *Aschanti* and *Columbia*. The Gruber-designed Bermudan-rigged staysail schooner *Aschanti* was built in 1954, and *Columbia*, a gaff-rigged replica of the original Starling Burgess design, was built in 2009. Try as he could, *Columbia's* skipper Seth Salzmann could not best *Aschanti's* ability to work to windward. *Columbia's* large main can drive her faster on the downwind legs, but Seth said, "We couldn't catch and pass *Aschanti*. The downwind legs were not long enough. We never had enough time to beat her to the next mark."

The day's winners included *Aschanti* in Schooner Class, and the 42-foot Carriacou sloop *Genesis* in Traditional. *Seefalke* topped the Vintage Class, the Spirit of Tradition Class was won by the 91-foot yawl *Bequia*, the Tall Ship Class was topped by the 157-foot staysail ketch *Chronos*, and the 44-foot *L.J.Windward* won the Historic Class.

Alani won the day's Classic Class. She is a 36-foot sloop, built in 1960 in Denmark after a design of Alan Gurney. Her current owner, Sarah Schelbert, found her on a beach in Guatemala, bought her, spent three years returning her to seaworthy condition, sailed her to the Eastern Caribbean, and this year entered *Alani* in the Classic. It was Sarah's first-ever regatta, racing with a novice crew of friends and relatives.

In the evening, with the day's competition put to rest, the dock party at the Antigua Yacht Club was standing room, or dancing room, only. There was a steel band, and with plenty of Carib beer and Mount Gay rum the crews, skippers and owners partied until midnight.

Saturday, April 2nd

On Saturday, the second day of the Classic, winds remained east, but were down to 18 to 25 knots. Swells from the previous day's winds continued, so it was another wet-deck race around the buoys for all the crews. The Butterfly course took boats out into the Caribbean Sea south of Antigua. Skies were clear, with a warm spray over the bow, and there was another party ashore after the boats were secure and the salt washed off.

The 65-foot Alfred Mylne cutter *The Blue Peter*, built in 1929, won the Vintage Class and *Montana* beat the rest of the fleet in the Historic Class. *Bequia* came first again in the Spirit of Tradition class, as did *Aschanti* in the Schooner Class, *Genesis* in Traditional, and *Chronos* in Tall Ships.



DAVID H. LYMAN

Sarah Schelbert found Alani *on a beach in Guatemala, restored her, and this year entered her in the Classic — Sarah's first-ever regatta.*



LUCY TULLOCH

Well reefed down, the 1929 Alfred Mylne designed The Blue Peter *in hot pursuit of the 1936 Herreshoff-designed Ticonderoga in Vintage Class.*

Sunday, April 3rd

Winds were still east, but down to a comfortable 15 to 18 knots. The fleet sailed around the circular Windward course outside Falmouth and English Harbours. It was a pleasant romp in moderate seas. *Juno* emerged in first place in Schooner Class, *Ticonderoga* in Vintage, and Antiguan-owned Contention 33 *Encore* in Historic. The other class winners were repeats of Days One and Two.

The Antigua Classic Regatta 2022 wrapped up with a prizegiving ceremony on Sunday evening at Lucky Eddie's, a concert venue at English Harbour. The crowd of more than 400 boat owners, captains and crews filled the arena. The regatta chairman, Carlo Falcone, introduced His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams, Governor-General of Antigua & Barbuda, who presented the awards. "Admiral" Tommy Paterson, dock master at the Yard Club Marina, was a jovial and knowledgeable MC.

In the overall standings, *Chronos* won the Tall Ship Class with three bullets and a special mention for best start. *Encore*, with a first and two seconds, won Historic Class. *Alani* took home a Locman watch by sweeping Classic Class. *Genesis,* also with three wins, topped Traditional Class. *The Blue Peter* won the Locman watch prize in Vintage Class with a first and two seconds. *Bequia* won first place in her Spirit of Tradition Class, another clean sweep. *Aschanti*, with two firsts and a second, won first place and a Locman watch in her Schooner Class, as well as the Lyman Morse-Wayfarer Trophy for the lowest corrected time overall.

Press Officer Ginny Field reports, "The feedback from the yacht owners and captains was positive and enthusiastic for them returning next year. We are hopeful that as Covid restrictions ease worldwide more classic yachts will return to the Caribbean next season.

"Please come back and mark our dates — March 29th through April 2nd, 2023 — in your calendar. We look forward to you joining us then!"

The Dragon Challenge

Over the three days of big boat racing off Antigua's southern coast, the invitation-only Dragon Challenge was going on inside Falmouth Harbour, where wind and seas were more lenient. Seven identical 29-foot Olympic Dragon Class boats competed against each other, with teams flown in from New York, Monaco, Italy and St. Maarten competing against local teams from the Mill Reef Club and the Antigua Yacht Club.

Rocco Falcone, representing Antigua Yacht Club, successfully defended his 2019 title, while Filippo Amonti of Italy's Cortina Yacht Club took second and Jules Mitchell representing the Monaco Yacht Club came in third.

This fleet of seven Dragons lives most of the year hauled out in the Yacht Club Marina, not being used. They are fun and demanding boats to sail and, since they have an international reputation, more could be done to promote their use here on Antigua and throughout the Caribbean.

BOUNTY FOR BEAUTIFUL BONACCA CAY



Two hundred homes and businesses on El Cayo were destroyed in an October 2021 fire.

by JoAnne and Bill Harris

The first time we arrived here was around seven years ago, sailing from Grand Cayman.

Guanaja is one of the Bay Islands of Honduras. It is 43 miles (70 km) off the Honduran Coast, and boasts 19 square miles (50km^2) with a population of 5,538. It was the last stop in Christopher Columbus's last trip to the New World in 1502; he arrived at Saldado Beach and claimed the Bay Islands for Spain.

We recalled the pristine forest with pine trees and high terrain surrounded by a number of small cays. The highlands still bore a scar from 1998's Category 5 Hurricane Mitch, which had uprooted a long line of pine trees. That storm sank the 282-foot, four-masted windjammer *Fantome* just off Guanaja (see www.caribbeancompass.com/fantome.htm).

During our 48-hour passage from Grand Cayman, we had experienced very bad weather and arrived exhausted. We dropped our anchor in The Bight anchorage in front of the German restaurant, Manatee, and headed ashore to get internet. Back then, internet was pretty much non-existent and super-crazy slow, but on a tiny island we were grateful to have it available to us at all. It took over an hour to send one email with a short and sweet "We have arrived safely in Guanaja" message to family and friends. During that waiting time, we each had a rum & Coke and listened to two salty sailors discussing life and trying to solve the problems of the world. Due to either their excessive intake of alcohol or their lack of hearing, the two of them were speaking extremely loudly to each other even though they were seated side by side at the bar.

The boat that we were anchored behind back then was the beautiful classic Carriacou sloop *Mermaid*, with the legendary Captain John Smith. We enjoyed meeting him and hearing all of his interesting stories. Small world, since we had recently arrived after being years in the Eastern Caribbean.

Humanitarian Effort: Ultra Community Projects

Fast forward several years later, and we sailed into Guanaja once again. However, this time it was for a humanitarian effort through our Ultra Community Projects to offer help to recent fire victims.

On October 2nd, 2021, a devastating fire broke out at 2:00AM on El Cayo. Although only 0.6 km (0.37 of a mile) wide, El Cayo — a.k.a. The Cay, a.k.a. Bonacca Cay — is the largest community of Guanaja Island and its other cays, with 2,500 residents and 450 homes. The fire ravaged the beautiful and brightly painted wooden structures that lined the canals that once looked like a Caribbean Venice, an area ironically named Fire Point. A total of 200 homes and businesses were lost and 800 people instantly became homeless.

The day of the fire, we were in Rio Dulce, Guatemala, with *Ultra* hauled out on the marine railway for much-needed repairs and painting. We quickly organized communications with government officials and local contacts in El Cayo, to discuss how we and others could provide help. We sent out messages to friends and family around the globe telling them of this disaster and asking if they wished to contribute — we would be purchasing food, personal care items, and more to make supply bags and send them immediately to Bonacca Cay.

In three days, we received enough monetary donations to full 65 bags to the brim. They were shopped for, filled, loaded and delivered to Bonacca Cay by October 6th by our friends, Gale Arch Carter and her husband Derrik Carter of *Captain Bambino*, for free. A huge thank you goes to Cynthia Hyde for her generous help in coordinating the bags. We also sincerely thank Guanaja Mayor Spurgeon and his team for coordinating with us for the distribution of the supply bags directly to the fire victims. Julick Haylock was also extremely helpful in the beginning to give us a play-by-play of how it was going in Bonacca.

We arrived in Guanaja on a bright sunny day in February 2022, and anchored in front of Manatee. We chilled out for the night and the next day dinghied to El Cayo to confirm delivery details for all of the donations and also to coordinate visits to the school and the library. While on our way to meet the mayor, we met Mr. Wendall, who is the mayor's right-hand director and was on the municipal dock recording supplies being unloaded off freighters. He explained that each family received 200 concrete blocks for the rebuilding of their homes; the municipality had purchased them with donations. While standing there with Mr. Wendall we were in awe to see the vast and heartbreaking list of victims who had lost their homes in the fire. So many lives impacted in just minutes, and without insurance or any savings for that matter. This is a fishing village where many people live from day to day.

We had permission to put our big trimaran, *Ultra*, wherever we wished on the dock to unload everything that we had brought. Before we even spoke to Mr. Wendall, he said he already knew who we were, and it turns out the entire El Cayo knew who we were. The Coconut Telegraph is always at work on these islands. They called us the Sailboat People.

After speaking to Mr. Wendall, we met Ms. Riksy at the Bonacca Library and Learning Center and she was delighted to receive the 300 books we delivered to her. The books were in several languages and collected from generous donors. We also brought lots of workbooks and art and school supplies for everyone to enjoy.

That Thursday, we had scheduled to go to the municipal dock and unload 250 food bags, 32 bed pillows, numerous cushions/mattresses, personal care products, first aid products, balls, toys and stuffed animals, games and art supplies, housewares, school supplies, luggage, bedding, clothing for men, women and children, waterproof containers, plastic tarps, interior and exterior paints, hand and power tools, building materials, fuel jugs, fiberglass and epoxy repair products, and more. Peter, Simone and Marc of *S/V La Boheme* generously donated many bags and boxes full of amazing things from their boat, and also purchased food for the food bags and helped to assemble them.

However, the day of the delivery there was a bad storm that blew in high, shifting winds and brought heaps of rain.

We waited for the rain to slow down and cruised aboard *Ultra* over to the dock along with Peter and Marc. As planned, Mr. Wendall and his team were waiting for us to help unload everything and deliver it to the gymnasium for distribution. After we quickly set up, families started coming. A huge thank-you went to Mrs. Sharna and her team for all of their assistance. The entire distribution event was extremely well organized, and it was fun to see all of those happy faces receiving donations from all of you out there that helped.



Within days, supplies delivered to Bonacca Cay by our friends, Gale Arch Carter and her husband Derrik Carter of Captain Bambino, *for free.*

The next day, along with Peter, Simone and Marc we came ashore at El Cayo loaded with a homemade chocolate cake, a unicorn piñata, games, toys, stuffed animals, lots of candy, school and art supplies, juice, musical instruments and more for children at one of the affected schools to enjoy. We met with the school director, Mrs. Sheena, and we all had a wonderful time playing with the children and bringing them some joy.

→

They are currently having classes in a temporary building after their school burned to the ground in the fire.

We also visited another school, Escuela José Cecilio Del Valle, where many students of all ages had been affected by the devastating fire. Coupled with the Covid pandemic, these families have been really struggling. We was to visit the incredible waterfall. During our previous visits to Guanaja, we had only taken the dinghy through the narrow channel to explore, but this time the weather was calm enough to sail *Ultra* and anchor on the other side. St. Michael's Rock is named after the British pirate ship that went down off of the rock and sank to the deep.

hold a special place in our hearts since we shared so many magical moments and amazing stories with the people of El Cayo where so many lost everything, but are still so very kind.

We have had a wonderful time being the OCC and SSCA Hosts for Honduras and posting helpful information and



Left: School visits brought a mix of laughing, screaming, crying, giggling and cheering.



Right: Later we anchored off of St. Michael's Rock with our buddy boats and hiked into the jungle, scampering over boulders and through streams.

arrived with a homemade chocolate cake, Mickey Mouse piñata, games and prizes, art and school supplies, homemade bamboo drums, balls, toys and more. This was the very first day back at real school for these little ones without their parents, so we had to keep a great sense of humor. The day brought a mix of laughing, screaming, crying, giggling and cheering. After the event the children and teachers thanked us and everyone who donated to make it possible. We sincerely appreciate the local community for joining in the fun.

Exploring Guanaja

We later moved *Ultra* and anchored off of St. Michael's Rock along with our buddy boats, the catamarans *La Boheme* and *Sea Born*. We were ready to explore more of what Guanaja had to offer, including the many beaches and spectacular scuba diving. The other reason we moved

For the waterfall hike, we left the dinghies at the Green Flash Bar and hiked into the jungle, scampering over boulders and through streams and rivers. We finally reached the gorgeous 30-foot waterfall that was flowing well after the recent rain. It was a fun time spent together with a picnic lunch and jumping into the waterfall and pool.

We enjoyed long walks together on the semi-sand-fly-free wild beaches and happy hours, too. The daily scuba diving was truly spectacular, since there is not too much tourist traffic. The sea life is not shy and there was an abundance of fish of all types and turtles swimming among brilliant coral formations.

We look forward to visiting Bonacca Cay and Guanaja again soon. It has so much to offer with its spectacularly wild beauty and friendly people. This island will always

encouraging other boats to visit Bonacca and the other islands as well as answering the questions we receive regarding the Bay Islands and Honduras. Many cruisers who never thought of visiting or who had bypassed the islands are now visiting, and others who had not visited in years and are now returning.

We have been doing humanitarian efforts for almost 30 years now and have loved every minute of helping those in need. Through our Ultra Community Projects and the generous donations received from around the globe, we have been able to continue to help thousands of families. We sincerely thank all of you from the bottom of our hearts. You can see our projects at our You Tube channel: yachtultra1 or visit Instagram at: #yachtultraadventures.

MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON MAY - JUNE 2022

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!

May					
DATE	TIME	21	0459	10	2038
1	1228	22	0554	11	2128
2	1314	23	0605	12	2221
3	1402	24	0741	13	2327
4	1452	25	0816	14	2433
5	1543	26	0858	15	0003 FULL MOON
6	1633	27	0941	16	0141
7	1723	28	1025	17	0245
8	1811	29	1110	18	0345
9	1858	30	1157	19	0438
10	1943	31	1247	20	0528
11	2028			21	0614
12	2114	**June**		22	0658
13	2201	1	1337	23	0740
14	2251	2	1428	24	0828
15	2346	3	1518	25	0908
16	2445	4	1606	26	0959
17	0045 FULL MOON	5	1653	27	1043
18	0149	6	1738	28	1133
19	0254	7	1821	29	1224
20	0359	8	1905	30	1314
		9	1950		



A New Look at Hurricanes and the Eastern Caribbean Sailing Season

by Don Street

June, too soon

I recently made a discovery that could revolutionize the Caribbean charter yacht business. It offers an opportunity to extend the charter season an extra six weeks, while enjoying the best sailing weather of the year.

Checking NOAA's records on hurricane activity in the North Atlantic, I saw that from 1851 to 2020 only two hurricanes had ever hit the islands of the Eastern Caribbean during the month of June and the first two weeks of July.

During this period the wind blows 10 to 12 knots — seldom less and never more, except in brief squalls. But bareboat charter companies often have their fleets already secured for hurricane season.



STEVE JOST

Above: June and July are idyllic times to cruise.

Below: One of only two November hurricanes since 1851 to strike the Eastern Caribbean, 1999's Lenny put this freighter ashore in St. Maarten.



The low risk of hurricanes before mid-July is of particular interest to the charter boats and organizations operating in the Virgin Islands. The west coast of Virgin Gorda, north coast of Tortola, northwest of coast of St. Thomas, and north coasts of Culebra and Culebrita all have magnificent white sand beaches where boats do not anchor in the winter because of the groundswell. However, groundswell season ends approximately mid-April. This gives a full ten weeks of wonderful cruising after the groundswells end and the risk of hurricanes increases. If charter brokers and charter companies advertise this "shoulder" period, I feel in the next few years it will revolutionize the charter season.

June and early July are great for cruising sailors, too. The weather is lovely and the anchorages will be less crowded — at least until the charter companies catch on!

Minimizing hurricane risk on the hard

May and June, while you're enjoying the great sailing, is also the time for boat owners to organize what you're going to do with your boat for hurricane season. If you are going to lay up ashore, contact the yards you're interested in, ask how many boats they can haul and how many (if any) blew out of their cradles or jack stands the last time the yard was hit by hurricane. Ask what, if any, changes have been made to minimize the chance of that happening again.

Make your decision on what yard to choose after you have verified with your insurance company or underwriter that you will be covered for hurricane damage there. It is also important to obtain from the yard manager a signed agreement that the boats on either side of yours will also be properly laid up to withstand a hurricane. Book early, since the popular boatyards will fill up fast.

Properly stored boats can survive a direct hit from a hurricane, and strapping boats down to "dead men," or ground anchors, seems to be key. For example, in 2017 as a hurricane approached Marina del Rey in Puerto Rico, a 38-foot boat with a fin keel was hauled at the last minute. After the hurricane passed the boat was still standing upright, although the jack stands had blown away. It was held upright by heavy straps secured to dead men.

Also be aware of the amount of pressure per square foot generated by high winds. The pressure per square foot goes up with the *square* of the wind velocity. At 60 mph the pressure is nine pounds per square foot; at 120 mph it is 37 pounds per square foot; at 180 mph it is 83 pounds per square foot!

So, should the mast be unstepped for hurricane storage? The load in pounds on a 60-foot mast is exerted about 30 feet above the deck. At 100 mph, the load is 1,700 pounds; at 120 mph, 2,245 pounds; at 140 mph, 3,350 pounds; at 160 mph, 2,425 pounds; and at 180 mph, 5,450 pounds. These loads *might* be bearable when the wind is in line with the axis of the boat. But with the wind on the beam, with these loads centered at 30 feet above the deck, will a boat on the hard stay upright?

Even if you decide to leave the mast standing, dodgers, biminis, spray curtains, and *all* sails should come off. Wrapping a roller-furling jib in its sheets *might* keep it from unfurling, but this gift-wrapped bundle presents a lot of windage aloft. All halyards except the main halyard should be run up to the top of the mast. The boom can be detached and lashed down along the toerail.

If you cannot lay up your boat yourself and must rely on the yard to do the job, give the yard detailed written instructions on what should be done. I highly recommended that you hire a surveyor, and give him or her a copy of those instructions and a letter of authority, so that he or she can make sure the yard lays up your boat properly. This will be money very well spent.

See more many more tips on minimizing hurricane season risk for boats stored in the Caribbean at www.street-ilolaire.com and on page page 24 at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/march18compass_online.pdf.

If not hauled out

Don't leave a boat for the summer on a hurricane mooring unless the location is completely remote from all other boats. Even if your boat is on a good mooring, the chances of it being hit by another boat dragging or adrift in a storm might be high. That is how I lost *Li'l Iolaire* — a 28-foot yawl could not survive being attacked by 55-foot catamaran!

If you are going to stay on the boat and keep it in commission in hurricane season, what to do if a hurricane is aimed at your anchorage? Forget about riding out a hurricane on anchors or a hurricane mooring. Be ready to take evasive action.

As soon as depressions off the coast of Africa below the Cape Verdes or sometimes farther west pick up a circular motion, they are named and tracked by NOAA. Once the wind is over 42 knots they are labeled tropical storms. At 62 knots they become hurricanes, which can blow anywhere from 62 to 180 knots or more.

The alert sailor should be tracking these systems daily (or even more frequently) via the US National Hurricane Center at www.nhc.noaa.gov.

If properly anchored with appropriate gear, you should be able to weather a tropical storm (winds up to 62 knots). But remember that the load on your gear goes up with the square of the wind speed. Thus, in 40 knots of wind the load on the anchor line will be four times the load at 20 knots. At 60 knots of wind the load will be six times the load at 20 knots.

Then consider the loads in hurricane-force winds. If the load on your anchor line is 500 pounds at 20 knots it will be 8,000 pounds at 120 knots. Anchors drag, rodes break, windlasses tear out of the decks.

If a potential hurricane is approaching the Eastern Caribbean across the Atlantic, as long as it stays below 19°N its track can be predicted with a very high degree of reliability. The tracks almost never curve south of west; they almost always curve north of west. Hurricanes tracking west, down in the very low latitudes, 11° or 12°N, like Ivan, occasionally do turn slightly south, but seldom more than five degrees in 24 hours. A few zigs to the south have lasted 48 hours, and one 72 hours, before turning west.

If a hurricane looks like it is heading for you, 48 hours before it is predicted to hit, head south or southwest, sailing or motor sailing. If your boat is making six knots, in 24 hours you will be 150 miles south of the hurricane, and in 36 hours, 225 miles — well clear of any strong winds.

But if a hurricane is predicted to hit the island immediately to the south of you, that's a problem. Do you sit tight and figure that the center of the hurricane is far enough south that the wind north of the center will be at a velocity that you can handle at your anchorage or in your marina, or do you head farther south? Now is the time to contact a professional weather router and pay his or her fee!

When hurricanes hit the islands of the Eastern Caribbean they are often small in diameter but frequently very intense, as seen when Hurricane Maria devastated Dominica but did no significant damage to the southern end of Guadeloupe or the northern end of Martinique.

Once hurricanes go above 19° and get into the warm waters of the Bahamas, or pass through the islands of the Eastern Caribbean and get into the warm water of the Caribbean Sea, they frequently increase in size and ferocity.

—Continued on next page

—*Continued from previous page*

Also, once above 19°N or once in the Caribbean Sea they become so erratic that their tracks are difficult to predict accurately.

November, remember!

Hurricane season still peaks around September 10th, and storms remain most likely to form between early August and mid-October.

In 1965, NOAA moved the official end of hurricane season from October 31st to November 30th, and in the late 1990s insurance companies followed suit by changing their hurricane season closing date to November 30th. Why? In the last 40 years there have been more November hurricanes than in the previous hundred years. Historically the period from June 1st to November 30th encompasses about 97 percent of the tropical activity in the Atlantic basin.

However, NOAA paints hurricanes with a broad brush. It tracks hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, the Western Caribbean, the Bahamas, the East Coast of the US and the whole Atlantic. But let's look at hurricanes as they affect the Eastern Caribbean.

The only two November hurricanes to affect the Lesser Antilles since 1981 were oddballs — they started in the Caribbean and headed east. In early November 1984 Klaus formed south of Puerto Rico, headed northeast hitting the US and British Virgin Islands, and continued eastward passing north of St. Martin. (See how the engineless yawl *Iolaire*, caught unaware on a lee coast, survived at anchor at www.street-iolaire, "Surviving Klaus".)

The fourth strongest November hurricane on record was 1999's famous "Wrong Way Lenny." Lenny formed on November 13th in the western Caribbean and maintained a west-to-east track for its entire duration. It attained hurricane status south of Jamaica on November 15th and passed south of Hispaniola and Puerto Rico over the next few days. Lenny rapidly intensified over the northeastern Caribbean on November 17th, attaining peak winds of 134 knots about 21 miles south of St. Croix. It gradually weakened while moving through the Leeward Islands, eventually dissipating on November 23rd over the open Atlantic. Lenny's storm surges affected the entire Eastern Caribbean chain.



A June sunset in Carriacou. The weather is settled and the crowds are gone.

In summary

So, if we conclude that all of June, the first two weeks of July, and the whole month of November are at low risk for hurricanes in the Eastern Caribbean, that gives a chartering and cruising season of a full eight-and-a-half months, including a glorious early summer period. Not bad!

Minimize your risk when hauled out for the 15-week mid-July to late October period — or even keep cruising with a sharp eye on the weather — and the Eastern Caribbean remains one of the world's best sailing grounds.

For more of Don Street's writings on many aspects of hurricanes in the Caribbean, from experiences to insurance, visit www.street-iolaire.com.



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BOOK REVIEW BY JOHN EVERTON

A Book for All Tastes

***A Sea Dog's Tale: The True Story of a Small Dog on a Big Ocean**, by Peter Muilenburg. ©2012, published by Cadent Publishing and distributed by the University Press of New England. 272 pages. ISBN 978-1-937644-07-9 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-937644-08-6 (ebook).*

I first met the author in 1962, when I was 14 years old, at Brent School in the Philippines. I wrote about my 50-year friendship with Peter in *Caribbean Compass* in the January 2020 issue (see page 41 *at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/january20compass_online.pdf*). Sadly he passed away after battling Parkinson's disease for more than 30 years — an ordeal through which he never once showed a glimmer of self-pity. He lived life to the hilt, never wasting a moment, and by the end when he was ready to meet his maker he certainly had no regrets.



Re-reading *A Sea Dog's Tale* with a new perspective after many years convinced me that Peter's stories could be appreciated by the general public, not just boat and dog lovers and people who have known him. In other words, a book for all tastes. This can be attributed to Peter's skill as a writer: the ability to paint a portrait and put the reader in the middle of it. His use of words results in stories that flow seamlessly and hold the reader's attention from the first sentence.

The sea dog in the title is Santos, an all black purebred schipperke (meaning little captain in Flemish). He is an ideal boat dog, being small with a feisty spirit, the perfect burglar and man-overboard alarm with his incessant barking at anything that moves in the water. Schipperkes were originally bred to be shipmates on Belgian canal barges.

The book, with chapters arranged in chronological order, starts with the Muilenburgs' acquisition of the puppy from a boat he and his wife met on the Indian River in Florida. At the time, *Breath*, their 42-foot gaff ketch, was on her maiden voyage. Succeeding chapters trace Santos's travels through Florida, the Bahamas, on through Hispaniola and Puerto Rico, and to the Muilenburgs' homeport in St. John, USVI.

Santos's experiences continue with voyages to Venezuela, across the Atlantic to Spain and the Med, and cruising 200 miles up the Gambia River in West Africa, during which his adventures included being lost overboard and held for ransom.

Throughout these stories Peter and his family (loyal wife Dorothy and sons Raffy and Diego) are portrayed as a team working aboard *Breath*. Peter's devotion to Dorothy and the close bonds he builds with his sons throughout their experiences and adventures play a huge role in shaping the relationship among them all.

Peter was a keen observer of nature in all its forms: weather, life underwater, animals and plants and human nature.

Although Peter uses Santos as a motif for the broader experiences of his family on *Breath*, Santos emerges as the foremost character. After all, if Santos hadn't been there, many of these stories would not have happened. As it is, his presence adds a special resonance to all the stories.

Peter gives us the impression that he can actually get inside Santos's mind and see what makes him tick. His empathy for animals adds flavor to the book. Other strengths in Peter's writing are his creative use of similes, rendering apt powers of description, and his ironic sense of humor, which often involves making himself the butt of his own jokes.

Peter's stories are full of emotion, a prime example being "Santos in Corfu," which includes a tearful story told to Peter about the Holocaust. As Peter recounts the story, tears are transmitted from the teller to the author to the reader. Tears were flowing down my cheeks for the second time in a month; I had re-read it earlier in another volume of Peter's entitled *Adrift on a Sea of Blue Light*, where it was originally published.

It's been a wonderful time for me re-reading Peter's books with my morning coffee. I feel like I've been able to share time with the Muilenburgs, each of whom I know well, albeit at a younger age in a different time. Through his writing, Peter's spirit still burns brightly.

Happy reading!

CARIBBEAN FOLKTALES BY TELFOR BEDEAU

THE NIGHT LION RAN

Grenadian folk tales are called Nancy Stories. To begin a story the narrator says, "Tim Tim!" and the audience answers, "Papa Belcome." At the end of the story the narrator either says, "I was there but they gave me one kick and I end up here," Or "The story end and the wire bend."

Some of the most popular Nancy Stories are those about animals personified. In these stories the males are addressed as Compere (Comrade) and the females as Macmere.

Narrator: Tim Tim!

Audience: Papa Belcome!

Narrator: Once upon a time, the animals used to gather in a clearing near a stream in the forest on moonlight nights to cook and enjoy themselves with games, music and songs. They never invited Compere Lion. It was too dangerous to have him around. To everybody's peace of mind, Compere Lion's home was a very long distance away. However, that was no good reason to be careless, so they commissioned Compere Sheeshut (bat) and his men to patrol the area around their playground.

Things went well for a long time. The animals had fun every time the moon was out at night. However, news travels and Lion heard about the activities taking place in that part of the forest. He thought it was a good opportunity to get an easy meal, but he also knew it would not be so easy to approach the gathering in the form of a lion as the other animals would be sure to have patrols that would warn them in time of his coming. He therefore decided to settle down and plan how to get between the animals without frightening them away.

Lion developed a good plan. He got the hide of a bull, and with the help of Macmere Lion he dressed himself with it and attached a pair of horns. He spent time practicing to bellow and after many bad tries his wife finally told him he was doing fine. Lion then left his house clad in his bull's attire and his wife warned him to be careful as other lions may spring upon him thinking he was a real bull. He promised his wife a delicious meal within an hour or two.

As soon as Lion left his house and headed in the direction of the animals' playground one of Compere Sheeshut's men, who was monitoring his movements, flew off at a great speed and brought the news that Lion was coming in the form of a bull. The senior animals had a hasty meeting and decided upon a plan of action. When Lion arrived everyone greeted him very cordially although he smelled of both lion and cattle and his paws were clearly printed on the ground. Everyone inquired as to where his home was. He said his name was Compere Taureau (bull) from Denland. No one knew of such a place so they agreed it must be very far indeed.

Lion "Taureau" was given a seat close to the cattle family, which made him believe he had completely fooled the animals. What he did not know was that he was sitting right over the nest of Compere Tack Tack (an ant about half an inch long that stings like fire) and his clan of one thousand members. Then there was Compere Bee with a regiment of soldiers gathered on a branch over his head. Not aware of these insignificant insects, Lion settled down and gave half of his attention to the entertainment and half to planning which animal he would grab when the time was right. He joined the crowd in clapping and occasionally bellowing when the real bulls did, but he was a bit off in that venture so he pretended to be hoarse.

> *" Lion then left his house clad in his bull's attire and his wife warned him to be careful…"*

While Lion was pretending to enjoy the show, Compere Parrot was sitting on a branch observing his actions. Meanwhile Tack Tack and his men were quietly climbing up and positioning themselves on the very delicate organs located between Lion's hind legs, while Bee and his regiment were aiming at his ears, nostrils and eyes. At this point the party got to a climax. The music and dancing drew Lion's attention in such a way that he forgot everything else. Then Parrot gave the signal, at which Bee and Tack Tack struck their targets with perfect timing and precision.

It took perhaps one thousandth of a second before Lion's brain was able to register the severity of the strike, so that Lion for a short time assumed a posture of being uncertain as to what he should do. At the end of this brief moment the animals heard a terrifying roar of pain and Lion, whether as a result of muscle power or the powerful trail of hot material that ejected out of the exhaust at his rear, rocketed thirty feet into the air and fell in a sitting position into a huge pot of boiling soup. He rocketed once more, but this time his trajectory was flatter and he quickly accelerated to a hundred miles an hour! But it was bad for him because his bull-hide dress had started to fall off and covered his head so he could not see.

Lion bumped into trees. He fell into the river and almost drowned. Next he started running in a circle and almost collided with a real bull, who butted him. The young ones pelted him with every missile including cups of hot soup. Eventually his bull hide stuck on a stump and he was having a problem to free himself, but Compere Jackass dealt him a severe kick in his rear and the hide ripped off and he was able to see once more. He then took off at great speed towards his home never to return again.

While Lion was running away the music started and everyone sang:

Tirez Lion, tirez,
You doh see how Lion running?
Tirez Lion, tirez,
Compere Tack Tack make you run 'way!
I was there, and joined in the singing, but they gave me one kick and I end up here.

Telfor Bedeau is a folklorist, naturalist and hiking guide in Grenada. He is also the only person to have circumnavigated Grenada by rowboat both clockwise and counterclockwise. He is now writing his memoirs.

This article first appeared in the July 2002 issue of Compass. *See our entire Back Issue Archive at www.caribbeancompass.com/backissues.html.*

Cooperation and Devotion: The Common Ground Dove

The most distinct trait of the Common Ground Dove is its size — or rather, a lack of it. One of the world's smallest doves and among the smallest in the family (Columbidae), this pint-sized beauty is only 15 to 18 centimetres (about six or seven inches) in length and has an average body weight of 28 to 40 grams (1 to 1.4 ounces). Not surprisingly, the bird's genus name. *Columbina,* is Latin for "little dove," while the species name, *passerina,* derives from the Latin word "passerinus" meaning sparrow-like, again as a reference to its small size.

Another key feature of this dove, also known as the Scaly-Breasted Dove, is the area that extends from the throat to the lower breast, which appears scaly due to the dark centers of its feathers.

Small and stocky, the Common Ground Dove is easily identified by pale grey-brown feathers and pale pink legs. Males are slightly brighter than the females with bluish-grey crowns and a pinkish wash on their heads, necks and chests, while the legs become bright pink during the breeding season.



Left: Its feathers' dark centers cause the Common Ground Dove's scaly-breasted appearance.

The Common Ground Dove belongs to a group of small New World doves that forage on the ground and live in pairs, rather than flocks. Its closest relative is the very similar Plain-Breasted Ground Dove, followed by the Ruddy Ground Dove. There are about 19 subspecies of the Common Ground Dove, depending on the taxonomic authority, with slight differences in size and colouration. Additionally, there appear to be physical variations among West Indian populations. For example, Common Ground Doves in Grenada have a longer tarsus (the part of the leg between the "knee" and the "ankle") than those on any other island.

Found in a combination of natural and human-altered habitats, this species has the broadest range in the genus *Columbina*: from California to Florida, to the West Indies, Mexico, Central America and northern South America. It inhabits open forest, forest edges, pastures, scrubland, savanna, gardens, plantations, mangrove forests and suburbs.

Common Ground Doves are abundant throughout the Eastern Caribbean. Individuals are often seen moving with tail cocked and head down, jabbing at seeds on the ground. Unfortunately, they tend to feed on small, busy roads and as a result 38 percent of deaths are caused by collisions with cars and trucks.

Primarily a grain-eating species, the Common Ground Dove feeds on tiny, scattered weed and grass seeds, as well as berries, insects, worms and snail shells. Like all granivorous columbids, the Common Ground Dove possesses the ability to store large amounts of seeds in its crop — an expanding storage organ that slowly releases food into the gizzard to be ground up. One bird taken near a feeder was found to have 697 seeds in its crop (Dennis J.V. 1994. A complete guide to bird feeding); while another found in Texas had 22,000 seeds in its crop (Passmore, M.F. 1981. Population biology of the Common Ground Dove and ecological relationships with Mourning and White-winged doves in South Texas).

Common Ground Doves differ from other doves in that they form permanent bonds and have few other social interactions. Individuals may be found drinking at water holes in groups of six to 20, but they arrive and depart in pairs or alone.

Common Ground Doves hold territories, but rarely resort to aggressive displays and when they do, it's usually in a restrained manner. During competition for food resources and mates, a male may lower its body parallel to the ground, then flick its wings and tail while uttering *woot woot.* This may be followed by a short aerial chase before the intruder flees. The confrontation may climax into a more aggressive display, with rivals rushing at each other with one or both wings raised vertically, above their backs. While raising both wings represents a greater willingness to battle, neither bird attempts to make physical contact.

Common Ground Doves are gentle, loving and extremely devoted to their mates. They are monogamous, forming close relationships that last for life in most cases. Members of mated pairs remain together at all times, no further than three to four metres from one another, except during incubation or while raising their brood. When one member of a nesting pair dies, the survivor will try to take care of its dead companion for a while afterwards, and may also return to the place where the death occurred.

Common Ground Doves are prolific breeders that nest almost continuously from February to October. Their courtship and pair-maintenance displays include bowing, cooing, head bobbing, puffed feathers, flicking wings and guttural growls. Males may feed their mates with regurgitated food just before copulation. Common Ground Doves are highly faithful creatures that copulate only with their mates.

They build flimsy nests on the ground, in cavities, low shrubs, low trees and low-growing mangroves, and on man-made structures such as fence posts, walls and even boats. In Grenada, I have seen them build their flimsy nests on the decks of boats at our local boatyard. The nests are built hastily with grasses, weeds, palm fibers and rootlets. Couples are egalitarian, with both members of the pair gathering, carrying material and building the nest, as well as incubating, feeding, brooding and defending the chicks. They raise two chicks per clutch, which in turn, may start breeding as early as six to eight months of age, before reaching maturity. Immature nesting birds always pair with older, more experienced mates.

Common Ground Doves' cooperative nesting behaviour and close, permanent pair bonds are highly effective, allowing for a minimum of four broods to be raised each year. Indeed, these little Ground Doves have long discovered what we humans appear to have forgotten — that cooperation is the key to success.

Below: They raise two chicks per clutch, with both parents sharing their care.



The Sky from Mid-April to Mid-May

BY JIM ULIK

"As the Secretary General of the United Nations, an organization of 147 member states who represent almost all of the human inhabitants of the planet Earth, I send greetings on behalf of the people of our planet. We step out of our solar system into the universe seeking only peace and friendship, to teach if we are called upon, to be taught if we are fortunate."

— UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim's message included on the Voyager's "Golden Record," June 3rd, 1977.

Forty-five years ago copper records were cut and gold plated for placement aboard the space probes Voyager 1 and Voyager 2, which were launched to study the outer planets and interstellar space beyond the Sun's heliosphere. The "Golden Record" is an audio-visual time capsule containing sounds and images that portray the diversity of life and culture on Earth. It includes 115 images and a variety of natural sounds such as those made by surf, wind and thunder, and birds, whales, and other animals. There are also 90 minutes of musical selections from different cultures and eras. The record also contains spoken greetings in 55 languages. The record data is designed to survive from one to five billion years, longer than humanity will likely exist. The record's cover is electroplated uranium-238, which can be used to date its age.

"The spacecraft will be encountered and the record played only if there are advanced spacefaring civilizations in interstellar space."

— Carl Sagan

Voyager 1 and 2 took 45 years to reach their current positions. It only takes 21.5 hours for TV and radio signals to reach Voyager 1 and 18 hours to reach Voyager 2. Nevertheless, signals carrying the news of day will quickly pass ahead of the Voyager spacecraft. Advanced civilizations paying attention will make their assumptions based on those events that took place on Earth rather than the positive messages on the "Golden Record."

Monday, May 16th

The lunar eclipse began last night around 2130 hours*. One half hour before midnight the Full Flower Moon turns its blossoms into a deep red-brown hue. The Full Blood Moon effect will last for about 84 minutes. The Moon will leave Earth's shadow around 0250. The red-orange star 15 degrees east of the Moon is Antares.

Four planets remain dominant in the predawn sky. Saturn is the first to rise, followed by Mars, Jupiter, then Venus. The predicted path of the International Space Station isn't always reliable two months out (i.e. at this writing) but take a look around 0430, as it may pass near Jupiter. The predicted path of the ISS will take nine minutes and pass from the northwest to southeast. Considering all the orbital variables (i.e. Earth's gravitational pull and atmospheric drag) the ISS could appear in other locations in this morning's sky.

Tuesday, May 17th

Mars will make a close approach to Neptune in the predawn sky. Both planets should be visible through a pair of binoculars. Neptune is located less than one degree north of Mars. As long as you are up, look one degree away from Mars in the opposite direction to find the comet 22P/Kopff. The comet has just passed close to Mars and will reach its closest approach to the Sun tomorrow.

Sunday, May 22nd

There is a close approach of the Moon and Saturn today. Rising a few minutes after midnight the two bodies will gradually get closer throughout the day. Saturn is located north of the Moon.

In a few hours the Moon will enter its third quarter phase. Before sunrise notice the large circular area on the Moon. That round circular sea is named Mare Imbrium (Sea of Showers or Rain). This basin was created after impact by an object that was about 250 km or 150 miles in diameter. (The estimated size of the object that struck the Moon was based upon hypervelocity impact experiments performed using the Vertical Gun Range at the NASA Ames Research Center.) The sea measures about 1,200 km or 750 miles across.

Tuesday, May 24th – Wednesday, May 25th

The Waning Crescent Moon will drift past Mars and Jupiter over the next two days. On May 24th look for the Moon to be west of Mars. By May 25th it has relocated east of Jupiter. This assembly will take place very early, in the constellation Pisces.

NASA/JPL



Friday, May 27th

The illuminated portion of the Crescent Moon has been reduced to about eight percent. This morning it lies in close proximity to Venus. Unfortunately you would have to be in Asia or Indonesia to watch the Moon slowly occult or pass in front of Venus.

Saturday, May 28th

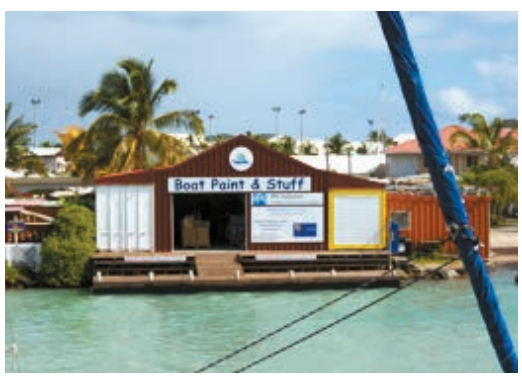
This morning's conjunction is between Mars and Jupiter. The pair will appear to touch each other to the naked eye. It would be helpful to observe the pair through binoculars. Then you would be able to see four of Jupiter's moons. A little searching west-southwest of Mars and you might find the comet 22P/Kopff.

Monday, May 30th

Today marks the New Moon as it passes very close to the Sun. There is less than one degree separating the pair this morning near the horizon.

—Continued on next page

BOAT PAINT & STUFF
Time Out Boat Yard Saint Martin
Next to the French Bridge



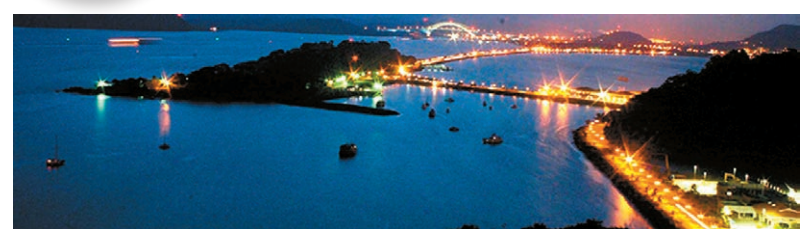
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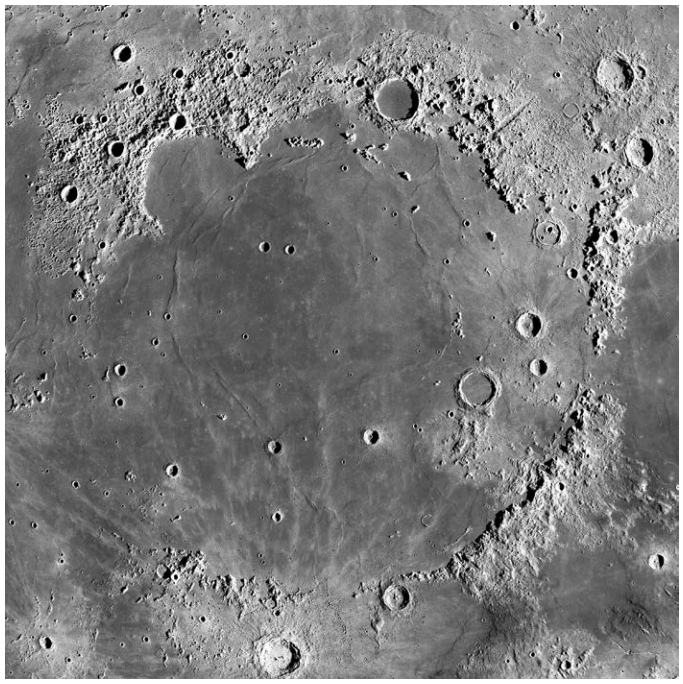
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Left: Circular sea named Mare Imbrium (Sea of Showers or Rain), taken by the NASA

—Continued from previous page

Oh, so close to a partial solar eclipse, but not today. The next partial solar eclipse for the Caribbean won't be until October 14th, 2023.

Thursday, June 2nd

Finally the Moon meets up with some stars in the night sky. The waxing crescent Moon is leaving the Sun behind to enter Gemini. Tonight the Moon will pair up with the main stars of Gemini, Castor and Pollux.

Tuesday, June 7th

If you spot some fast-traveling meteors low in the eastern sky near Venus this morning they are from the Daytime Arietids shower. As the morning progresses the meteors will travel longer distances across the sky. There could be up to 50 meteors per hour during today's peak event. Fewer meteors will be seen as the sky gets brighter. The Daytime Arietids is active May 14th through June 24th.

Thursday, June 9th

The Moon is a couple of days past first quarter as it joins Spica in the constellation Virgo. Even though the Moon is increasing in brightness a few meteors from the Tau Herculids may be seen traveling out of the eastern sky after 1900h. This variable shower peaks tonight, producing from one to 72 meteors per hour. The shower runs May 19th through June 19th.

Friday, June 10th

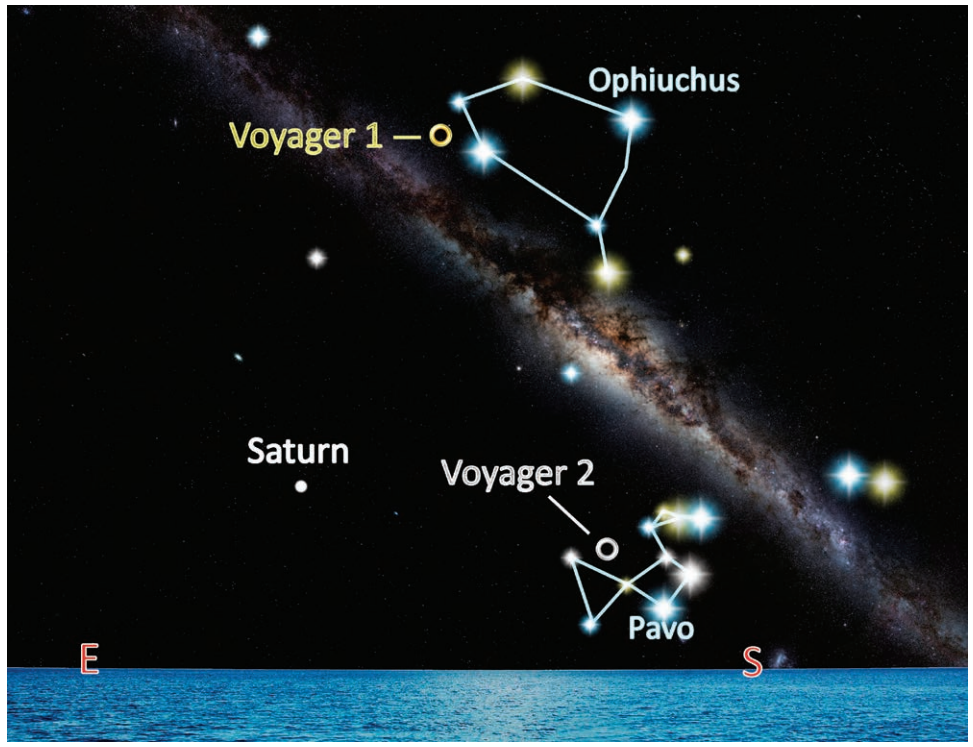
There is almost a month to spot shooting stars from the Theta Ophiuchids meteor shower. Maybe you can spot a brighter fireball or two. The Ophiuchids peaks tonight with a possibility of about ten meteors per hour radiating through the night sky. This shower is active May 21st through June 16th. Moonlight will begin to obstruct viewing after June 11th.

Tuesday, June 14th

Weather cooperating, there could be a spectacular moonrise this evening. Look for it to rise about one half hour after sunset. Currently the Moon is near its closest approach to Earth. It will appear larger and brighter than usual. Tonight's Full Moon is the first of three Supermoons in 2022.

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

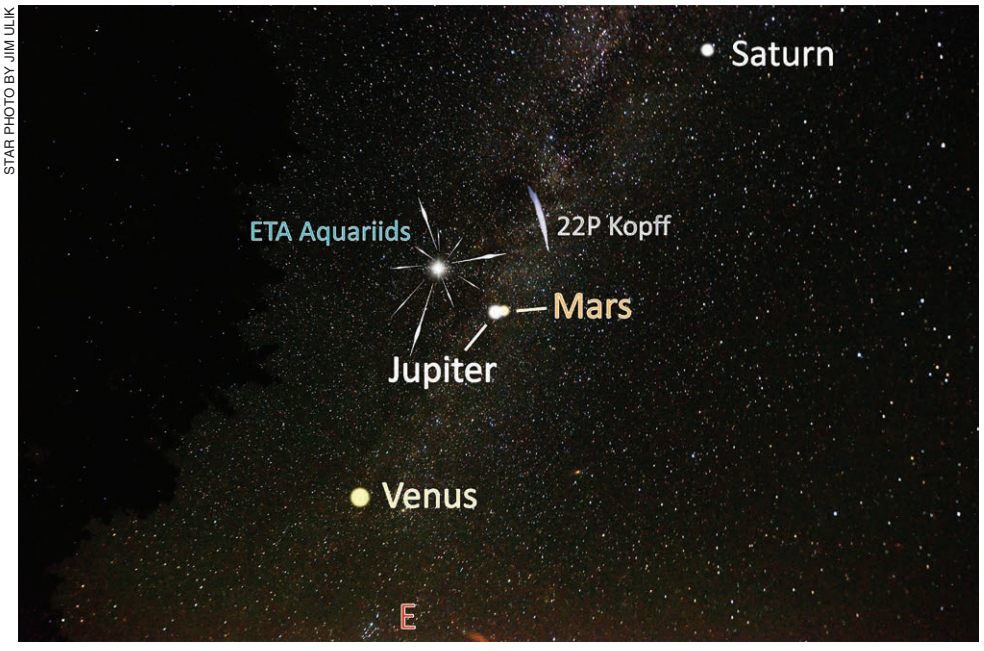
Jim Ulik sails on S/V Merengue.



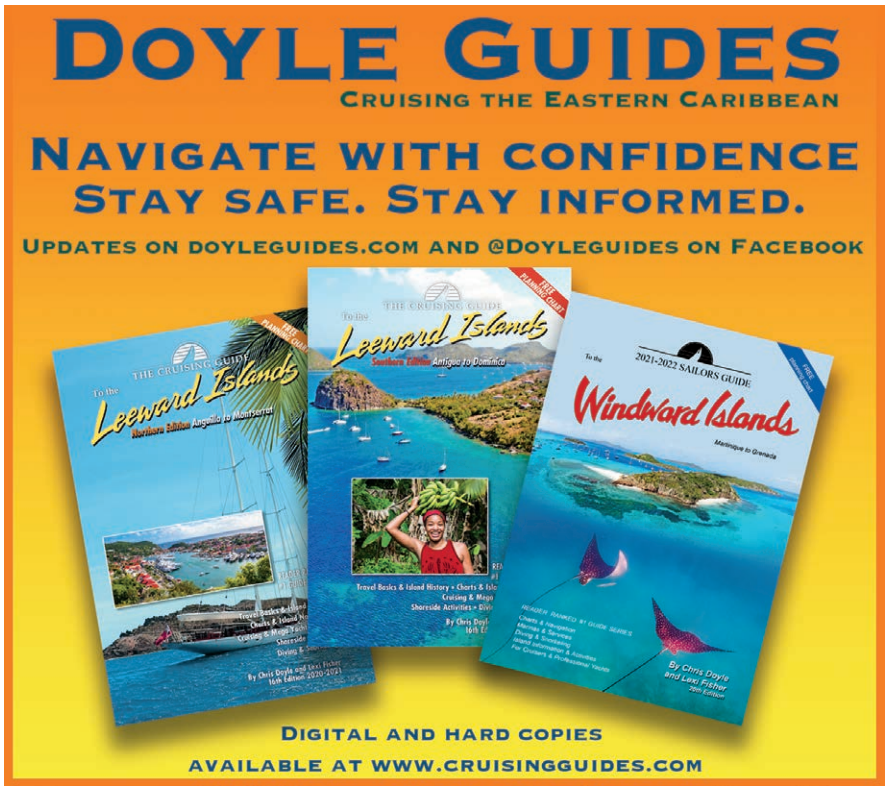
Above: Location of Voyagers 1 and 2 at 0115 hours on May 29th.

Below: Mars and Jupiter in conjunction on May 28th. The end of the ETA Aquariids meteor shower producing 40 to 85 meteors per hour.

STAR PHOTO BY JIM ULIK







MORE ODD-SHAPED SWIMMERS TO DISCOVER

by Darelle Snyman

In previous articles we have looked at some of the odd-shaped fish that grace the Caribbean reefs. Many fish known for their unusual body shapes tend to be slow and awkward. For them speed is just not that important; they rely on other mechanisms to reduce their chances of becoming part of the reef nutrient cycle. Some are poisonous, others are masters of camouflage and some can pack a powerful bite. Below are a few more of these creatively designed creatures that make the underwater world such an amazing place to explore.

The Sharpnose Pufferfish

A group of odd-shaped fish full of personality and charm that needs no introduction is the pufferfish. They are probably best known for their ability to turn themselves into virtually inedible, often spiky balls by inflating their elastic stomachs with huge amounts of water. A predator that swallows a puffer before it inflates will soon regret it.

Most pufferfish contain the foul-tasting and often lethal toxin called tetrodotoxin. There is enough of this deadly toxin in one pufferfish to kill 30 adult humans and there is no known antidote. It is produced by bacteria within the puffers, which they obtain from the algae and invertebrates they feed on.

Toxic or not, they are just fascinating creatures. A really endearing puffer found widely across the Caribbean in a variety of habitats is the Sharpnose Puffer (*Canthigaster rostrata*). This is such a fun little fish to encounter, hovering with its little fins as it surveys you from a wary distance. This large-eyed critter is characterized, as the name indicates, by a pointed snout. It comes in a variety of hues. It has beautiful blue markings on its snout and radiating from its eyes. Its tail fin is edged with wide dark borders, making it an easy fish to identify.

You will find Sharpnose Puffers actively foraging for food during the day. They clearly have no diet restrictions, feeding on small crabs, shrimps, sea urchins, sponges and worms. Their palate also extends to the non-animal variety and they are known to feed on algae and seagrass.

This delicate-looking character, like all puffers, has a very strong beak formed by the fusion of the only four teeth it has. This allows it to crush shells and scrape off algae from the rocks. It is from these four teeth that it received its family name, Tetraodontidae.

Do not be deceived by their gentle look, Sharpnose Puffers are very territorial and females maintain small, permanent territories within larger territories defended by males. A trespassing puffer shows it submission when passing through a neighbor's territory by becoming mottled in color and flattening its belly. The aggrieved property owner will respond with aggressive displays, such as tilting the body and presenting the flank. If the intruder dares to ignore these displays the defending puffer will face its enemy head on with its fins spread to make it look bigger.

Apart from dealing with annoying intrusions from their own kind, Sharpnose Puffers also need to keep an eye out for predators such as the Great Barracuda (*Sphyraena barracuda*) and the invasive Red Lionfish (*Pterois volitans*).

Sharpnose Puffers are caring mates and the male helps the female lay her eggs by continuously nudging her in encouragement. Once the eggs are laid and fertilized both partners return to their territories and the eggs are left uncared for. These adorable fish can live up to ten years and older.

The Slender Filefish

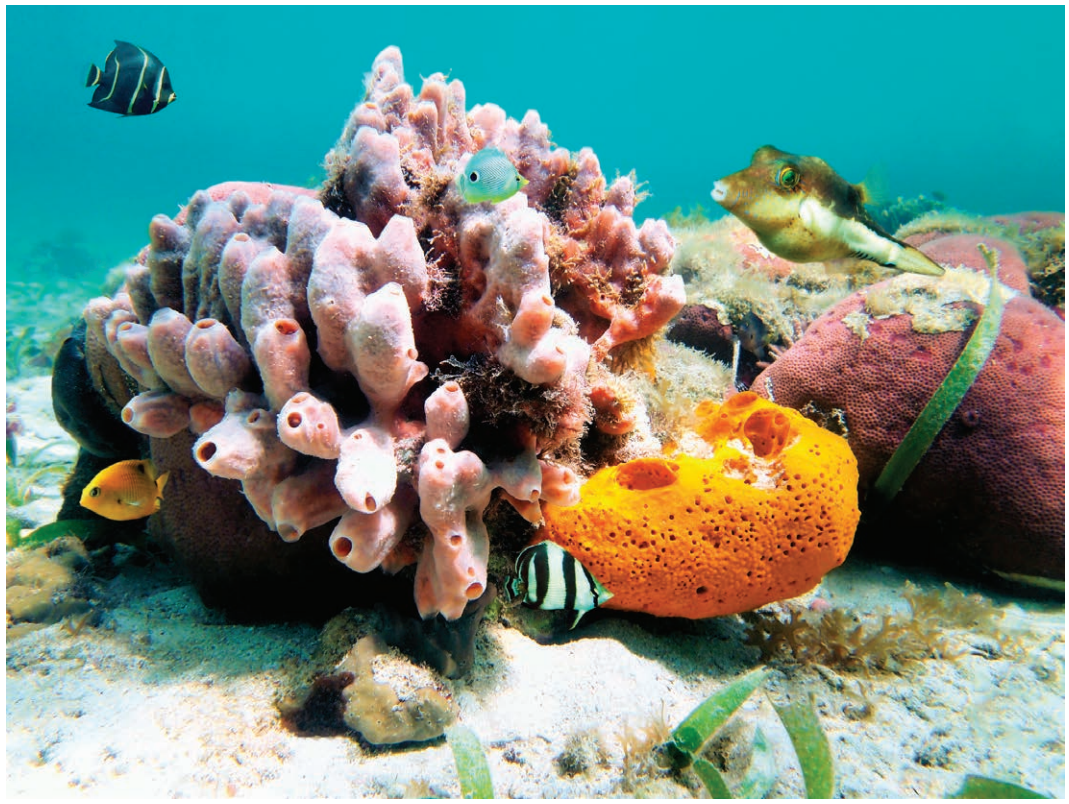
A tiny fish and a true master of camouflage that you really have to hunt for is the Slender Filefish (*Monacanthus tuckeri*). The Slender Filefish has an amazing ability to change color in the blink of an eye as it swims among the coral. This quick change happens in less than four seconds! Dermal flaps, small projections that protrude from the skin, add to its disguise as they soften the distinct edges of the fish.

These delightful animals are recognized by their long snouts, small mouths and large dewlaps or extendable belly flaps. They range in shades of green to reddish-brown to yellow-brown with a white reticulated body pattern. Like their kin, they also bear a slender, front dorsal spine that is retractable. They live solitary or in pairs and frequent gorgonians where they can remain well hidden among the branches, often hanging vertically in the water, a habit that makes them hard to spot. Here they feed on algae and invertebrates and even rest or sleep at night by biting down on the coral polyps, preventing them from being carried away by the currents. This behavior is a common trait among members of the filefish family.

The Black Durgon

Well-known odd-shaped fish that are more robust in stature are members of the triggerfish or Balistidae family. Triggerfish are united by their oval-shaped bodies and presence of a locking dorsal spine. They use this spine to deter predators or to lock themselves into holes, crevices, and other hiding spots. Many are brightly colored with amazing patterns and markings. These awkward swimmers rely on a somewhat disgruntled disposition and a powerful set of jaws to deter would-be predators.

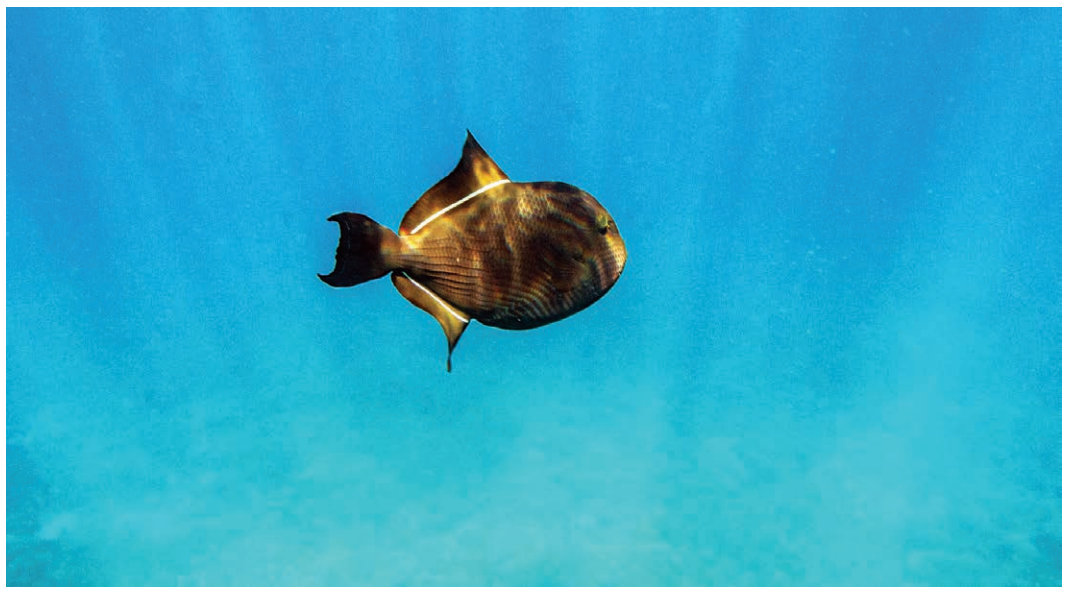
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The Sharpnose Pufferfish (at upper right in the photo) is a fun fish to encounter, hovering with its little fins as it surveys you from a wary distance.



The Slender Filefish can change color in seconds as it swims among the coral.



When viewed in direct light the Black Durgon presents a dramatic palette of color and pattern.

LOOK OUT FOR...

Mimbro: The Cucumber Tree

by Lynn Kaak

Every month in the Caribbean there's something special to look out for.

Averrhoa bilimbi, commonly known as the tree cucumber or cucumber tree, mimbro, or tree sorrel, is closely related to the carambola (starfruit). However, the ripe fruit is not particularly pleasant to eat straight up, as it is acidic and very tart. However, it has much more going for it than that.



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This tree is originally from Indonesia and spread through that part of the world with human migration. European voyagers brought it to Jamaica in the 1790s, and it spread to the rest of the Caribbean. It tends to be found as part of a garden in this part of the world, with few trees found in the wild.



IAN BLAKE (2)

The fruits, which are what the English-language names are based on, are an oblong, cucumber-like shape. They can measure from ten to 15 centimetres (four to ten inches) in length and are pale green when ripe. Some of the fruits may have the hint of five lobes when viewed from the bottom, showing the relationship to carambola. They are edible, but tend to taste better when made into a relish, chutney or juice, or cooked into a dish so that the sourness can contribute to the overall flavour. In Grenada, one can occasionally find *condicion* for sale, which is a heavily sugared drink made from the fruit. Tree cucumbers tend to have more culinary uses in other parts of the world than in the Eastern Caribbean, but some South American countries have adopted them into their cooking.



The seeds in the fruit are reminiscent of cucumber seeds, but are less prolific. The fruit can grow directly from either the trunk or branches.

The mimbro tree grows to a height of ten to 15 metres (30 to 50 feet). A true tropical tree, it does not do well in the cold. You won't find it in the rainforests, as it doesn't enjoy that much rainfall. Well-draining or even sandy soil, with lots of sunlight, helps it flourish.

The light brown bark is quite rough. The leaves are smooth, looking like smaller versions of fern leaves, with leaflets growing out in pairs from the stem. They don't make for a large canopy, but the tree isn't too bad for giving shade.

The fragrant flowers grow in clumps, and can be found anywhere on the tree. The flowers have five petals, and literally hang around in a group. They may be green and can progress into a red or purple towards the petals.

Besides culinary uses, there are traditional medicinal uses for parts of the mimbro tree, too. A paste of the leaves is reportedly used for wound healing, while a decoction of the leaves is said to be used for syphilis and high blood pressure. The fruit is reportedly used for fevers, stomach problems and some other conditions. The flowers are also said to be beneficial, as a tea or as a topical paste.

The fruit can also be used for removing stains from clothing and surfaces, and is effective for cleaning metal and for getting those stubborn messes off cookware. A purple dye derived from the flower petals has a use as a reactant in chemistry.

This is not a fruit you will be likely to find in most markets, but be on the lookout for it!

—Continued from previous page *...Get to Know Your Caribbean Marine Life*

A triggerfish that always attracts my attention is the Black Durgon (*Melichthys niger*) or Black Triggerfish. At first glance it appears black, with its only distinctive feature being the blue-white lines at the base of its dorsal and anal fins. When viewed in direct light however you discover it is actually a dramatic palette of color and pattern.

To capture this dramatic color transformation however is not easy and I mostly have photos of them swimming away from me appearing all black. They can actually move backwards by reversing their fins' undulations.

They are mostly loners, but I have encountered them in loose aggregations.

During mating males and females construct a nest in the sandy bottom together and the female cares for the thousands of eggs, aerating them by puffing water on them. These masses of gelatinous eggs are, however, an irresistible delicacy for wrasses and damselfishes. So both mom and dad stand guard over their future offspring — a task that is luckily short-lived, as the eggs hatch within a day or two of being laid.

These omnivores eat virtually anything, which explains their somewhat unpalatable behavior of offal feeding. They have been shown to join groups of spinner dolphins at Fernando de Noronha Archipelago, in the southeast Atlantic, to feed on the feces and vomit of these mammals when they congregate in shallow bays for rest and social interactions. The fish seem to recognize the posture the dolphin adopts before defecating and vomiting, converging on the dolphin before the actual event. Such refined behavior!

The Glassy Sweepers

The Glassy Sweepers (*Pempheris schomburgkii*), also known as the Copper Sweepers, are probably the least odd-shaped of this lot of clumsy swimmers. These silvery to reddish colored fish have large eyes and thin bodies with deep or keeled bellies. They also have a distinctive dark band on their anal fins. Young ones appear transparent in color, hence the common name "glassy sweeper."

During the day you will find schools of these night owls hiding in caves, under ledges and among dense branching coral. When you peek into these shelters you will find them often sharing the same space with other nocturnal species such as cardinal fishes and bigeyes. When night settles over the reef they come alive and scour the reef for zooplankton, their primary food source.

Nature keeps on astounding me. I hope you enjoy learning more about these oddballs of the reef.



The silvery to reddish-colored Glassy Sweepers are also known as the Copper Sweepers.

SAVE THE QUEEN?



THE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS GROUP

The Iconic Caribbean Conch

by Ralph Trout

In Caribbean homes, bars and businesses, and on yachts, you're likely to see beautiful queen conch shells resting on tables or used as bookends. You might have been anchored in a pristine bay and heard a fisherman blowing his conch horn to announce that his fish are ready to sell.

I was free diving off Fortuna Bay, west of the airport in St. Thomas, USVI, when I encountered my first conch bed. It was 1981. We'd gone there to see what remained of a plane that failed to take off successfully. The seagrass wavered around weird pinkish creatures with two protruding space-alien eyes on stalks, tube mouths, and single claws. These alien creatures were encased in gorgeous pink to vermillion shells, crawling across bottom. The experienced divers scoffed at my ignorance of the Queen Conch as they told of their great flavor — and warned me to never to take a baby conch. Queen Conch are slow growing and late to mature. Forty years ago, my dive buddies kept to a simple rule: to harvest, the shell had to be longer than your hand and the outer edge thick and curved out. Today, be safe and not sorry: check the local maritime conch regulations as they vary by island.

Red is the first color to fade in the depths. We'd free dive to 40 feet and flip over a dozen shells to find the prettiest that retained a reddish hue for a high protein dinner with a souvenir. A decent Queen can weigh five pounds; it was a struggle to the surface.

Bill collectors must be after the Queen. Marine biologists keep changing her name. Originally it was *Strombus gigas*, and recently became *Aliger gigas.* She's also known on some islands as lambie. The name conch refers to over 60 different sea snails. If the shell gets big and its lip flares out, it is a Queen Conch. They only live in the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico from Brazil to Bermuda. Queen Conch are found from shallow waters to about 100 feet or more, and remote cameras have viewed conch as deep as 250 feet.

By their third year, their shell lip starts to flare and by four to five years it has grown thicker. Conch can then reproduce. In shallow, clean, sandy beds, both sexes mate many times, and eggs are fertilized internally. Females lay hundreds of thousands of microscopic eggs in a sticky mass. The eggs hatch in four days, and the larvae feed on phytoplankton (microscopic algae). After three weeks the larvae settle in seagrass beds. Juvenile conch then become part of the great Caribbean nature food web for crabs, nurse sharks, stingrays and turtles. During their first year, baby conchs live under the sand, hiding from the bright sun, and crawl out to feed on the sea floor in the darker hours. Those who can hide the best survive. Juvenile and mature conch also eat microscopic algae that is attached to seaweeds, seagrass blades, and sediment.

A Queen Conch with an inch-thick lip on a foot-long shell can be 40 years old. The inside of an elder's shell is white to brilliant pink to purple. The outside shell is light brown for natural camouflage. I've seen some grannies with shells growing forests of algae and coral.

Getting Fished Out

Sadly, Queen Conchs are quickly getting fished out. Coastal development and water pollution also damage conch habitats.

The harvesting of conch has greatly increased since the 1970s. Queen Conch meat was 15 percent of the Caribbean's seafood export in 2017, second only to lobster. Nicaragua, The Bahamas, Jamaica and Belize are the largest conch exporters. This income is crucial to the islands' economies. But larger island populations, more tourists, and international shipping to supply global demands, mean fewer conch remain in the sea. They've been considered endangered in Bermuda since 1973.

During my first trip to Anegada, BVI, to snorkel that massive reef in 1983, part of the land tour included huge pre-Columbian piles of conch shells called middens. Native Amerindians could wade into the clear water, grab conch, and eat them raw for an easy meal. Thirty-plus years ago, the white sand bottom off Loblolly Beach was packed with conch. It was the same in Privateer Bay on the east end of St. John. In a decade, both were emptied. Yes, I know conch travel, but I returned several times and the conch didn't.

Seventy percent of the international trade in conch meat goes to the US, followed by France (including Martinique and Guadeloupe). The Queen Conch represents one of the most important fishery resources of the Caribbean, but heavy fishing pressure has led to the depletion of stocks throughout the region, causing the inclusion of this species into Convention in Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendix II. Looking to manage for a less bleak future, CITES lists species including the Queen that are not presently at death's door, but for which extinction is a possibility unless trade is moderated through detailed fisheries controls. What's necessary is a universal fisheries management code that includes every Caribbean, South, and Central American nation, strictly enforced.

What can be done?

Historically, diving conch was, and in some places still is, a sustainable, albeit dangerous, family occupation. A friend in Windward, Carriacou, who provided the conch for the photo below, has been diving conch for 40 years. Carriacou's fishermen understand that stocks can be depleted, so the divers rotate areas, and have so far kept larger, commercial operations out.

Fisheries management actions and the specific fishing regulations vary around the region. Due to decades of overfishing, it's been illegal to grab a Queen Conch in Florida waters since 1986. Many island nations have penalties for selling conch shells as souvenirs. Belize manages the conch fishery via harvest limits and closes the season in consultation with fishers when the quota is reached. But there will always be poachers and pirates unless protectors are vigilant and the punishment is swift and stiff. Be sure to check on national laws where you are before taking any conch.

The Bahamas reduced legal export quotas in 2019 and propose to phase out exportation by 2024. It has implemented the "Conchservation" campaign with fishers, restaurants and consumers through government, non-government and protected area partners. There's even a song by top musicians called "Conch Gone" on YouTube.

In 2020, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and CITES joined forces to design a transboundary Queen Conch project in Grenada, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and St. Lucia.

The first commercial conch-breeding farm was on Providenciales Island in the Turks & Caicos. It folded after 2017, when it was damaged by two hurricanes. Chuck Hesse, a smart, environmentally active American, partnered with Dr. Megan Davis of Florida Atlantic University and Gary Hodgkins. It took 20 years of experimentation to develop a successful breeding process and environment.

Dr. Davis has never stopped trying to save the Queen. With her help and expertise, a new conch hatchery and nursery has been established with funding from NOAA Fisheries and is located in the Naguabo Commercial Fishing Association in Puerto Rico, south of the El Yunque National Forest between Humacao and Ceiba. This is a community-based project partnering Florida Atlantic University Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, the local group Conservación ConCiencia, and the Fishing Association — it's open to visitors.

RALPH TROUT



Taking conch shells across international borders without the necessary permit isn't allowed, so beware having them aboard if you're cruising.

There is also a conch farm in Curaçao, and soon to be one in The Bahamas. Others in the Caribbean have expressed an interest and a goal of the Queen Conch Lab at FAU Harbor Branch (https://conchaquaculture.org) is for there to be a conch farm in every Caribbean nation. These community-based conch farms are for restoration and conservation education. The Queen Conch Lab has manuals and videos on how to grow conch.

Yet as much as people shout "conservation" and stress the word "endangered", it seems that achieving sustainable conch fishing requires more effort, partnerships, and investment at all levels — from international treaties through to fishers and consumers. Without conservation and/or cultivation, here's the gloomy downside: no income for the conch fishermen, no conch chowder at the restaurants, no conch grazing to keep the seagrass beds clean, and the tourists leave without knowing the beauty of the conch shell.

Queen Conch deserve respect, to live free and breed in the wild. Future generations of cruisers and skin divers deserve to see their unusual shells that meld several colors, which can be enjoyed without the species' demise. Grab your mask and fins, take a deep breath, and pull towards the sea floor. The Queen's long ET eyes will be checking you out.

Author's note: Thanks to the Compass Crew for addressing this article with expert advice from Dr. Megan Davis, a respected, future-thinking marine environmentalist. Google The Fish Site – Women in Aquaculture.

—Continued on next page

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Some Uses for Conch

The conch's main predator is man, although an octopus can use its beaks to kill a conch; it then hangs out in the shell to consume the meat. Now that you know these creatures are threatened, you'll know that taking a conch for a souvenir shell is bad



RALPH TROUT (2)

Fritters and "cracked conch" are among the many popular dishes made.

environmental manners. Be aware that due to the CITES listing, taking conch shells across international borders without the necessary permit is illegal and punishable. So, DON'T bring any onboard and DON'T let your visitors take them home as souvenirs.

However, respecting local regulations and keeping in mind that only full-grown conch with a fully developed lip should be harvested, the meat is popular and the shells are useful.

I've seen modern docks built of conch shells. Small islands, such as Happy Island in the Grenadines, have been created from piles of discarded conch shells. The empty shells, however, are great protective habitats for small crabs, lobsters, and fry, so it's best to leave empty shells where you find them.

Getting the meat out without damaging the dazzling shells can be a struggle. Conch divers know exactly where to knock the shell, between the second and third spire ring, and slice the muscle loose from the inside spiral of the shell. Those notched shells can become conch horns. To make a horn, cut a hole at or across the top sharp point, which is also called the apex. Purse your lips and blow into the shell as if it were a trumpet. Experienced "conchies" can adjust the pitch by moving their hand over the flared opening. The more it's covered, the lower the tone.

If you have a freezer, there's an easy way to separate meat and shell. Put the shell in a plastic bag and freeze for two days. Defrost, and the flesh will slip out.

Clean the fillet by trimming the edges and washing the excretory tract. The trimmings make great crab- and fish-trap bait. Some folks will advise you to roll the sticky, slimy conch flesh in sand to clean it. Don't, as you'll be crunching sand. A buddy taught me to wash the conch fillet and my hands with cheap, clear distilled vinegar to remove the slime. The reason Queen Conch are depleted is they taste so damn great and are nutritious. A hundred grams, almost a quarter pound, of the white steak is 25 percent protein with only 130 calories. Conch has supplies calcium, iron, vitamins E and B12, magnesium, selenium, and folate.

My favorite way to prepare the meat after cleaning is to butterfly it. With a sharp knife slice the filet to the right, but not completely through. Stop about three quarters of an inch from the end and then dig the blade a bit deeper and slice back to the left. The conch filet should unfold and spread to make a piece bigger than a dinner plate.



Pound both sides to make it softer and thinner. This makes many recipes possible, e.g. stir-fry, shish kabob, or chowder. If you bread the pieces and deep-fry them you can make a delicious cracked conch sandwich. Chop the pieces smaller and add finely chopped onion, mix into a batter and deep fry. Viola — delectable conch fritters. A Frenchie taught me to make a conch wrap with the flattened conch fillet. Fill it with rice, mixed chopped veggies including peppers, onions and garlic, and hold it together with toothpicks, and then steam, bake, or broil. Ceviche is the sashimi of conch: slice the raw filet into small pieces, lay them in a bowl, and cover with lime juice. Let sit for an afternoon and it'll be ready for a tart appetizer at sunset.

The very best conch I ever had was at Diana Herman's Sea Side Inn just east of Independent/Antilles Boatyard on the lagoon in St. Thomas, USVI. Her daughter Luella still makes the tenderest conch with boiled green bananas and yellow rice. Yummy!

BEQUIA WHALING

Island Poets

In the bar we heard Francie relating the tales
Of the hunt and the slaughter of three humpback whales.
"What do they do with them, Francie?" I asked,
"We eat them, of course! Is a feast unsurpassed!
Drink lime juice an' whale oil, an' when you are done,
You fin' that the 'flu and the fever is gone!
An' then all the locals has plenty to eat,
For we Bequia people enjoy the whale meat!
One day when I sit an' I gaze out to sea,
I see a surf breaking where no surf should be…
Then as I watchin' I see the whale blow,
An' I know very soon that the whalers will go
In a small lickle boat they reach up to the whale
An' drive in the harpoon — like some giant nail.
Mr. Whale pulls an' tugs — tows the line all aroun'
And a whaler waits there to cut rope if it sound,
An' goes to the bottom, takin' boat and crew with it,
For the men like to be on the sea and not in it!
When it's exhausted, the humpback stands still,
Then whalers will sew up the mouth, or it will
Sink to the bottom. The hunters will fail,
Oh Man! It not easy, this catching of whale!
Then they boil up the blubber, an' butcher the meat,
An' we Bequia people is in for a treat!"

Is it right? Is it wrong, to kill leviathans?
Are we exploiting "dominion of man"?
It's not like the Japanese hunting of whale
In factory ships where nothing can fail,
But efficiently slaughtered or hunted instead,
Does it really matter when all whales are dead?
That I cannot answer, I really don't know,
But I think when I sail into Bequia I'll go
To listen to Francie and hear the new tales
Of the hunting and capture of great humpback whales!

— Nan Hatch



YAMONACO

Surrounded by Fresh GREEN Leafy Vegetables!

STEVE JOST



If you don't recognize the greens in the market, ask the vendor how to prepare them

by Mary Heckrotte

It's Saturday morning, fresh veggie day in most towns and villages across the Caribbean. Several cruising women from here, there, and everywhere gather around a basket filled with tied bundles of foot-long, tender, curly, green leaves. "What's this?" asks one woman, picking up a bunch and smelling of it.

"Spinach," someone in the group replies.

"Oh, that's callaloo," says a woman who is brown as a nut from her years sailing in the Caribbean sun. "They make some great soup out of that in Trinidad."

"Acelgas," says the dark-eyed shopkeeper, quietly, as he seems intimidated by such a crowd of chattering *gringas*.

"Nuh-uh. Ain't neither one. It's collard greens," says a drawling voice.

A cruising lady with big earrings and fluffy permed hair sniffs, "That is most definitely Swiss chahhhd." I'm pretty sure she's saying Swiss chard.

Turns out the shopkeeper knows his veggies — and so does Ms. Boston. *Acelgas* is the Spanish name for Swiss chard and that's exactly what fills the vendor's basket. Chard is a type of beet grown not for its root but for its broad leaves that taste much like spinach.

But its name really doesn't matter much, as few vegetables are as interchangeable as "greens." In the Appalachian mountains, folks eat turnip and beet greens, poke salat, and even dandelion leaves, while "down South" their cousins eat collard greens by the bale. In places with a Mediterranean, Latin, or Middle-Eastern influence, spinach and Swiss chard get top billing in dishes such as Risotto with Swiss Chard and Walnuts, or Halibut with Chard and Ginger Cream Sauce. And yes, in Trinidad the soup made from callaloo, or dasheen leaves, is all the rage. In Chinese dishes you're likely to find greens called pak choy or bokchoy. While botanic differences do exist, no matter which greens you may be accustomed to, you can usually substitute the local variety in most recipes. That is indeed handy here in the Caribbean, where climates and customs vary to produce many types of greens.

Greens are basically grouped into two categories: mild and aggressive, though the dividing line is easy to fudge. Mild greens include spinach, Swiss chard, pak choy, bokchoy and kale. The stronger-flavored greens are collards, turnip, and mustard. The culinary difference is far more noticeable when you eat uncooked greens and, you'll agree, the milder ones are decidedly more pleasing. Though they don't taste particularly good raw, aggressive greens end up a great deal more docile, competing nicely with the milder varieties, if you change their cooking water and cook them longer.

Note that some aggressive greens, such as pokeweed, are poisonous when raw, and callaloo eaten raw is like eating fiberglass shards due to its oxalic acid content.

For cruisers, the only disadvantage of greens is that they require considerable water for washing. Just running water over them in a colander won't remove the clinging garden dirt. Instead, cut off the heavy stems and plunge the leaves into a pot of water treated with a few drops of iodine or household bleach to disinfect them. (You'll find that lukewarm water removes dirt faster than cold water.) Swirl the leaves about, let the water settle a minute, and then lift them out. Repeat this procedure two times in plain water. If you plan to eat the greens raw, pat them dry with paper towels. Store washed greens wrapped in a paper towel and placed in the refrigerator in a perforated plastic bag.

When cooking greens, always use an enamel, glass, or stainless steel pot. Aluminum or copper pots react with sulfur compounds in the greens, destroy the folic acid, Vitamin C, and Vitamin E, and result in an unpleasant odor and bitter taste. Another method of reducing cooking odors is to add a whole walnut to your cooking water. Remember that greens cook down to about three-fourths of their original volume so be sure that you cook enough. One pound of greens will measure approximately two cups when cooked.

Tender greens are delicious just steamed, wilted, sautéed, microwaved, or braised. These can be simply dressed with oil and vinegar or butter and lemon juice. Very young spinach, dandelion leaves, or Swiss chard can be added to or serve as the base for salads. The cooked stems from these young greens are excellent with any cream sauce. Stems from older or stronger greens go fine in soups or stews if you first blanch them to take the bitter taste out. If you cook greens and plan to use them as a filling with other ingredients, they should be squeezed dry and chopped. The liquid you squeeze out, full of good nutrients, can be added to stews or soups.

Greens are low in calories and sodium, and have no fat or cholesterol. They're high in fiber, calcium, Vitamin E, ascorbic acid, Vitamin C, and Beta-Carotene. What could be better? Since there's not a doubt in anyone's mind that greens are good for us, it's worth the effort to discover new ways to combine them with other ingredients to make the most of their flavor. Surrounded as we are by the abundance of fresh greens available throughout the Caribbean, we definitely don't have to resort to eating Popeye's plain canned spinach. With a cruiser's inherent sense of just "making do" with what's on hand, we can substitute one kind of greens for another in recipes to our heart's content — and health.

Tender Greens Pie

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 large bunch Swiss chard, spinach, kale or other mild greens
6 eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon salt
cracked pepper to taste
1 cup shredded cheddar, Swiss, Monterey jack or other cheese
2 unbaked piecrusts

—Continued on next page





—*Continued from previous page*

Heat oil in skillet and sauté onion and garlic. Trim off heaviest parts of greens stems and chop leaves. Add greens to skillet and sauté until wilted. Stir in eggs, salt, pepper and cheese. Divide mixture and pour into piecrusts. Bake in preheated 400°F oven for 30 to 40 minutes until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

Greens with Parmesan Cream Sauce

1/2 cup water
1 chicken bouillon cube
1 large bunch greens, heavy stems removed, leaves chopped
3 tablespoons butter, divided
1 small onion, grated
2 tablespoons flour
1/2 cup heavy cream
salt and cracked pepper to taste
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Bring water to boil in a large pot. Add bouillon cube and chopped greens, cover, and cook until tender, about four minutes. Drain greens and save the water.

In a small saucepan, melt 1 tablespoon butter. Sauté onion until tender, and then add remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and flour. Stir to blend in flour then add water from drained greens, cream, salt and pepper, and Parmesan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly until smooth and bubbly. Pour cream mixture over greens in large pot and stir gently to coat all. Serve hot.

Chicken and Greens Enchiladas

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 large bunch greens, leaves and stems separated, chopped
1/4 cup water
1 to 2 cups cooked chicken breast, chopped
1 teaspoon salt (optional)
cracked black pepper to taste
vegetable oil
12 corn tortillas, slightly dry
2 1/2 cups Ranchero salsa
1/2 cup chicken broth
6 ounces Monterey jack cheese
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

In a large skillet, sauté garlic in olive oil for 2 minutes and then add stems from greens and 1/4 cup water. Cover pan and steam stems for about 5 minutes until tender, stirring occasionally. Add greens leaves and continue to cook, covered, until leaves are tender, about 2 to 3 minutes more. Drain greens and put them into a large bowl. Add chicken, salt and pepper and mix gently.

Heat about 1/4 inch of vegetable oil in same large skillet over moderate heat until oil is hot but not smoking. Fry tortillas one at a time, about 3 to 4 seconds on each side, until they are softened. Lay softened tortillas on paper towels to drain.

In another bowl, mix Ranchero sauce with chicken broth. Put about one-third of this in the bottom of a 9"x13" baking pan. Layer four tortillas over this. Spoon on half of the greens and chicken mixture and half of the Monterey jack cheese. Spoon about half of the remaining sauce over the cheese then layer with another four tortillas. Spread on the rest of the greens and chicken and then top with the remaining four tortillas, the rest of the Ranchero sauce, and then top with Parmesan cheese.

Cover the pan with foil and bake enchiladas in a preheated 350°F oven for 15 minutes. Remove foil and bake uncovered another 5 to 10 minutes or until all is bubbling. Serve hot.

Sauteed Greens and Fettuccine

12 ounces fettuccine
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 pound mushrooms, any sort
1 tablespoon fresh ginger root, grated
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 jalapeños, minced
1 bunch pak choy, bokchoy, Swiss chard, spinach, or other greens
4 green onions, sliced
2 tablespoons sesame oil
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons fresh parsley or cilantro, minced
Parmesan or Romano cheese, grated

Prepare fettuccine by package directions to al dente stage, then drain.

Meanwhile, prepare vegetables. In a large skillet heat olive oil over high heat and sauté mushrooms, garlic, ginger, and jalapeños until lightly browned, about 4 minutes. Add greens and onions and sauté 2 to 3 minutes more until greens are just tender-crisp. Remove from heat and stir in sesame oil and soy sauce. Combine greens with drained fettuccine and serve sprinkled with parsley or cilantro and cheese.

This article first appeared in the March 2004 issue of Compass. *See our entire Back Issue Archive at www.caribbeancompass.com/backissues.html.*



No matter which greens you may be accustomed to, you can usually substitute the local variety in most recipes.



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One Man's Sampler
by Jim Hutchinson



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— Thanks,
"One Man" Hutch

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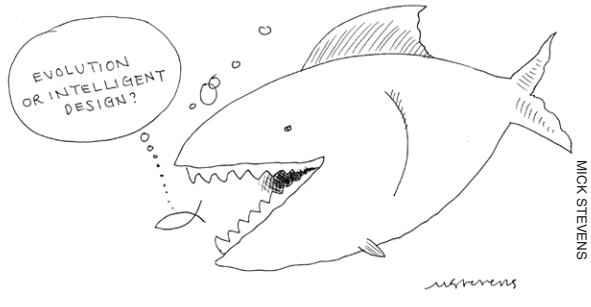
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COMPASS CARTOON



An SVG-Grenada Common Sailing Space? A SIMPLE SOLUTION OFFERED

by Chris Doyle



ALL PHOTOS: CHRIS DOYLE

There is no question that shared between the countries of St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Grenada (including Carriacou and Petit Martinique) lies one of the most superb sailing areas in the world. St. Vincent at the north and Grenada at the south are both mountainous islands with beautiful rainforests and spectacular hiking. Each has an international airport. Between them lie the Grenadines, a string of islands and cays with spectacular white sand beaches, great snorkeling, interesting communities and hikes with wonderful sea views. SVG includes most of the Grenadines, from Bequia to PSV, but Grenada's small share, with Carriacou and its surrounding isles, is also outstanding.

Unfortunately, a line on the map divides the area into two countries. This creates a problem that hinders yacht movement, and thus stunts the growth of yachting tourism and the money flowing to both.

Sailors, including charter guests wanting to visit the other nation, must first clear out at a port of entry of the country they are in. Then they must go to a port of entry in the other country and, even when using the SailClear pre-entry system online, spend more time than they would like waiting in line to clear in before they can go where they want. Then, if they want to return to the first country, they must go to a port of entry (often the same one where they cleared in), go through the outbound clearance routine, and then go to a port of entry in the country they started in and do another inbound clearance. Having to consider making four major visits to



Customs and Immigration offices, which dictates how you spend your time and where you sail in the Grenadines, is ridiculous — especially for charterers on a seven-day cruise — and severely limits the movement of yachts altogether.

I would point out here that during the pandemic, Grenada was full of yachts. It is a fabulously popular cruiser hangout and many more of these would have cruised up the Grenadines and spent some money there if it hadn't been for the country barrier.

I have heard that some in St. Vincent have thought that they are in a better position, as they have more Grenadines, and therefore anything easing up on restrictions may be bad for them, subjecting them to more competition from Grenada. Such thinking may have had some validity when Grenada had an international airport and St. Vincent did not, but now all the advantages are with SVG. St. Vincent now has an international airport, and being only eight miles from the nearest Grenadine is ideally situated for starting a charter. But St. Vincent's available space for charter bases is pretty well taken up and there is little room for expansion. Grenada has many more sheltered anchorages and marinas for charter bases, but boaters starting there have 30-mile slog to windward to reach Carriacou.

It is also true that the fabulous SVG cruising ground has shrunk since I first came here some 50 years ago. While Mustique is still open to visiting yachts, the regulations now involve hefty mooring fees and often prevent visitors from wandering very far ashore. In Canouan, Anse Guyac is now closed as an anchorage, ostensibly due to fisheries concerns, but I am told the owner of the shoreside property does not want to see yachts in "his" bay. Yachts are also no longer allowed behind the reef on the windward side of the island, which was once a popular kiteboarding spot. Both the north and south ends of Canouan are gated, and while permission can be obtained to enter these areas it is not the comfortable and accessible place it was years ago. As a final blow, the new ownership at Soho House in Charlestown no longer allows yacht tenders to use the dock, thus restricting yachtspeople's access to the town. PSV now severely limits where those on yachts may walk ashore, though they have, by recompense, devoted some space to them and put up a lovely beach bar.

Expanding the cruising area to include Carriacou, Petite Martinique and their associated islands increases its range and diversity and makes it far more interesting for attracting visitors and getting them to return. This has been so obvious to us in the industry that for years many of us have advocated and pushed for SVG and Grenada to become a single cruising space — to no avail as yet.

Bureaucracy can be a daunting barrier; it feels a bit like bashing one's head against a brick wall. But to me the concept of a single space is still a great one, and could be achieved, with both governments gaining greater revenue while maintaining security.

There are many problems in having a single sailing space. Each country needs to know who exactly is in its waters at any time, and the two countries would have to figure out how to divide up the revenue from yacht entry fees.

However, for the first time I see a solution that only requires minor

Left: It's just a short hop between Union Island (foreground) and Carriacou. But at the moment sailing from one to the other can involve hours of form-filling and office visits.

Below: Whether starting from St. Vincent or Grenada, charter guests want to visit the Tobago Cays.

Bottom Left: Sometimes reluctance to jump through the clearance hoops means that Sandy Island, Carriacou, is the only uninhabited Grenadine islet that Grenada-based charter boats will see.



alterations of the regulations and procedures, and keeps all paid fees exactly as they are. This is thanks to the digital age and SailClear.com, which, for the first time this year, does both inward and outward clearances and is available in both SVG and Grenada.

The SailClear.com system, by which yacht skippers provide the required information to their next port of entry electronically, is called "pre-clearance," but with some minor tweaking it could become a proper clearance between SVG and Grenada. Four little sessions on a computer are preferable to having to organize one's whole itinerary around being physically present in certain ports, when certain offices are open.

The way I envisage this working is simple. When a yacht wants to go from one country to the other they do the clearance, either inward or outward, on SailClear.com. Electronic payment of entry fees (e.g. by credit card) would have to be added to the system. The payment could easily be made via a link to a government site that would, with a simple questionnaire, add up the total amount due. The skipper would then pay online and get a digital receipt. (Note that Grenada has been running a very successful online payment system for paying government fees.)

Currently there is a hybrid system: part electronic and part paper. When a skipper arrives to clear in, a Customs officer has to view the pre-clearance data online and then print out a few copies and give them to the skipper. The skipper has to pass them on to others, such as Immigration and port officials, who need them. Ideally, that would all be done electronically; everyone would be getting all the same information they do now. Currently Immigration and port officers do not have access to the SailClear system. It would be best and simplest if they did. But if Customs would not allow this, then Customs could still print the forms, as it does now, and pass them on. The skipper would keep his or her SailClear number and payment receipt as proof of entry. Passports would no longer be stamped by Immigration, as they are not now in many islands, and that would be a blessing.

I doubt there are too many realistic security concerns. I wonder, for example, how many people sailing between these islands by yacht have, during clearance, ever been apprehended as criminals or not allowed entry.

Electronic clearance would not be adequate for vessels carrying cargo or substantial amounts of high-duty stores. Those entries would have to be done in the regular fashion. But for ordinary pleasure yachts, it would ease the work of Customs and Immigration officers and allow yachting visitors simplified access to both countries.

This simple change would greatly address the existing problem of the country barrier and could add revenue to both island nations.

CALENDAR

MAY

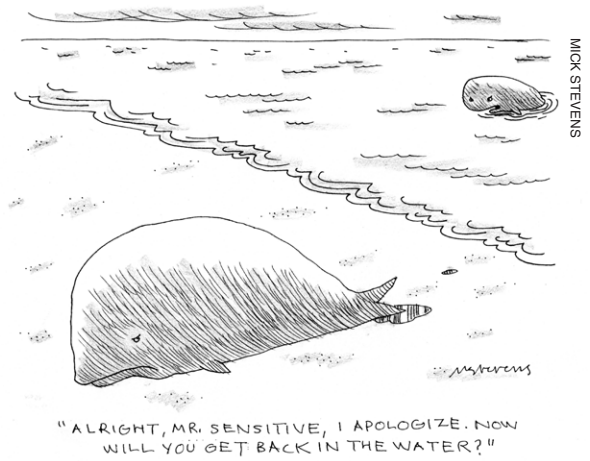
1 Public holiday in many places (Labour Day)
1 St. Thomas USVI Carnival
1 Dominica Creole & Jazz Fest. facebook.com/DiscoverDominica
2 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Eid ul-Fitr, end of Ramadan), and St. Maarten (Labor Day)
2 – 3 St. Maarten Carnival. www.facebook.com/sxmcarnival
3 Antigua Sailing Week Women's Race Day. www.sailingweek.com
5 Point Fortin Borough Day, Point Fortin, Trinidad
7 Start of ARC Europe rally from St. Maarten to Portugal via Bermuda. www.worldcruising.com/arc_europe
10 Start of Salty Dawg Spring Rally to the US from Virgin Gorda, BVI. www.saltydawgsailing.org
12 - 22 St. Barts Theater Festival. www.saintbarth-tourisme.com
13 – 14 BVI Spring Charter Show. www.crewedyachtsbvi.com/charter-yacht-shows
13 – 15 St. Thomas Yacht Club Invitational Regatta. stthomasyachtclub.org
14 BVI Dinghy Championships, Tortola. www.royalbviyc.org
14 - 15 (TBC) Anguilla Regatta. www.smyc.com
15 Domino's Interschool Dinghy Championship, St. Maarten. www.smyc.com/interschool-championship
16 FULL MOON
16 Public holiday in the Cayman Islands (Discovery Day)
16 - 20 Windward 500 Races. skern@oneenergyisland.com
26 Public holiday in Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao and St. Maarten (Ascension Day)
28 – 29 Foxy's Wooden Boat Regatta, Jost Van Dyke, BVI. www.westendyachtclubbvi.com
28 – 1 June Barbuda Carnival 'Caribana'
30 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Indian Arrival Day), Puerto Rico (Memorial Day) and Anguilla (Anguilla Day)

JUNE

5 World Environment Day
5 **(TBC)** Petite Martinique Whitsuntide Regatta. www.puregrenada.com
6 Public holiday in some places (Whit Monday)
8 World Oceans Day
11 Lowell Wheatley Anegada Pursuit Race. http://www.royalbviyc.org
13 Public holiday in BVI and Anguilla (Queen's Birthday)
14 FULL MOON
15 – 4 July St. John USVI Festival
16 Holiday in some places (Corpus Christi)
18 – 24 International Opti Regatta, St. Thomas. stthomasyachtclub.org
19 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Labour Day)
19 Tobago Culinary Festival. www.visittobago.gov.tt/festivals-events
20 Summer Solstice
21 Fête de la Musique, all French West Indies
24 – 25 St. Kitts Music Festival. www.stkittstourism.kn/about/events/st-kitts-music-festival
24 – 5 July St. Vincent Carnival (Vincy Mas)
28-29 Fisherman's Birthday, local boat racing in many coastal communities
TBA Tobago Dragon Boat Association Regatta. www.visittobago.gov.tt/festivals-events
TBA Massy Stores Dinghy Regatta, Barbados. barbadosyachtclub.com/massy-regattas

All information was correct to the best of our knowledgeat the time this issue of *Compass* went to press. But plans change rapidly these days, so 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

COMPASS CARTOON



Dear* Compass *Readers,

We hope you've enjoyed this May/June 2022 issue!

The last time we did a two-month issue was way back in the late 1990s, and we've done it again now to take time to haul the good ship Compass *out for a well-earned refit.*

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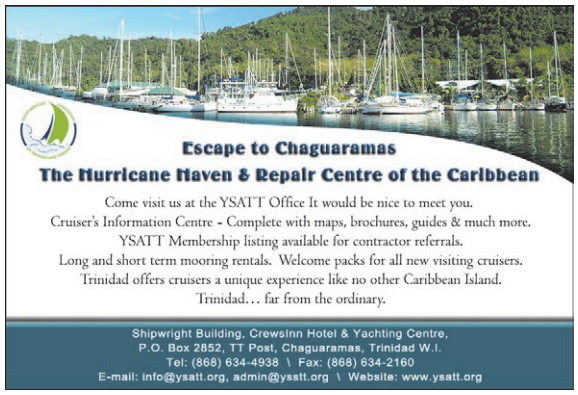
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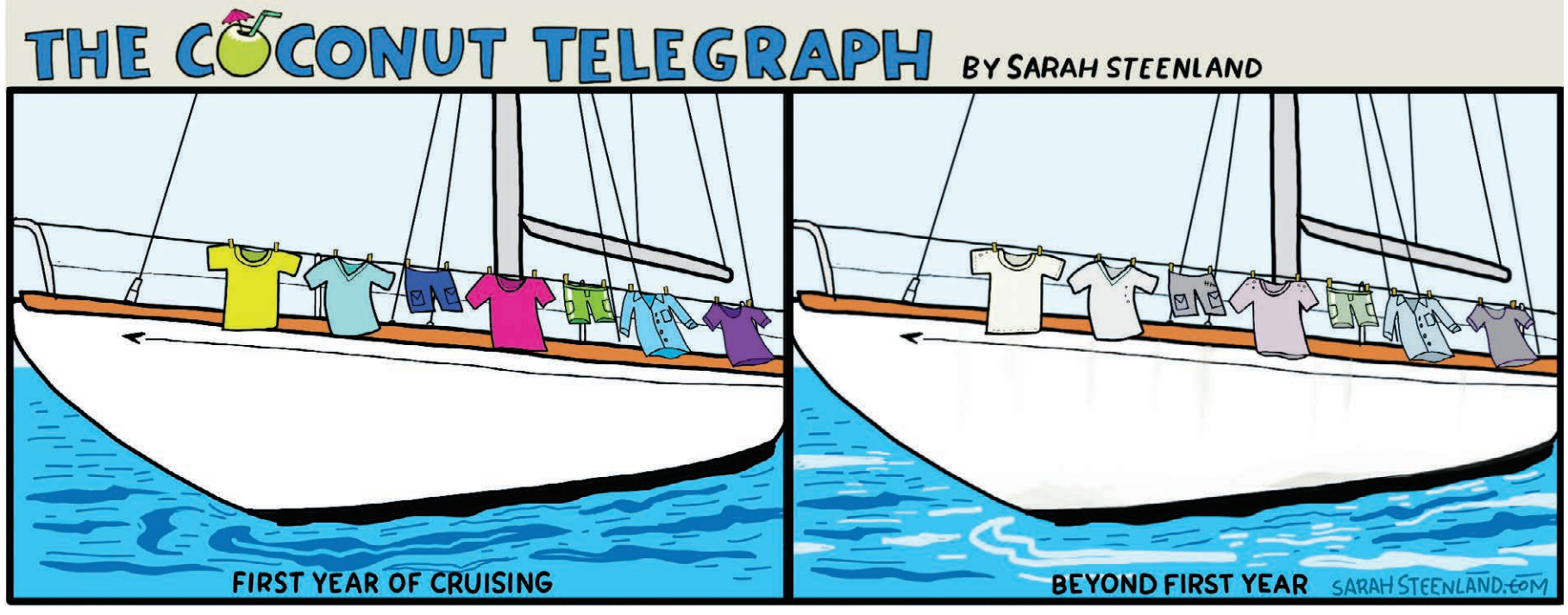
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