CARIBBEAN On-line
COMPASS
DECEMBER 2009 NO. 171 The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore



ARC embarks...







...for St. Lucia

WORLD CRUISING CLUB

See story on page 17



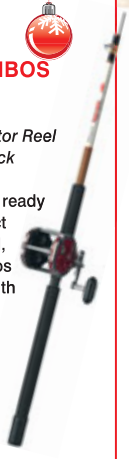
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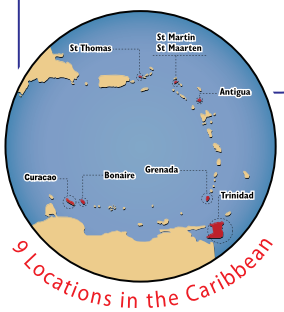
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CARIBBEAN COMPASS

The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

www.caribbeancompass.com

DECEMBER 2009 • NUMBER 171

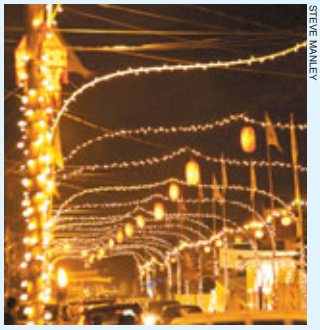

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Cover photo: The ARC embarks from the Canaries to St. Lucia — Photo: World Cruising Club



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

"I keep a boat in St. Lucia. When not on the boat, I try to stay in touch with activities in the Caribbean. "When I return to the boat, I always look for the latest issue of the Compass. Now, your new online format allows me to stay in touch even better. "Nice job, well done!"

— John Dupee

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

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Info & Updates

Port of Entry Status Re-established for Prickly Bay, Grenada

Anita Sutton reports: Since November 3rd, a Medical Officer has been stationed at Prickly Bay Marina Customs & Immigration Office, so yachts can once again clear in to Grenada at Prickly Bay. Yachts can also still clear in to Grenada at Hillsborough in Carriacou and at the Grenada Yacht Club in St. George's.

The Marine & Yachting Association of Grenada would like to thank the Ministry of Health and the Chief Medical Officer who worked with us to enable the clearance facilities at Prickly Bay to be restored, while ensuring Swine Flu precautions remain in place.

Clarifying Clearance in Aruba

Sander Vellinga reports: Aruba's yacht clearance procedure is somewhat different from that in many other islands in the Caribbean. As in most countries, all vessels are required to go to an official port of entry before going to another harbor or marina. Although both Oranjestad harbor and Barcadera harbor are ports of entry, due to the ISPS requirements the Aruba Ports Control will send yachts to Barcadera harbor. Here's where the difference comes in: at Barcadera, yachts are required go alongside the dock to clear in. There, the vessel will be cleared both by Customs and by Immigration.

Specific harbor entry information for Barcadera harbor, as well as the Customs and Immigration forms, can be found on the website of the Renaissance Marina (see page 15): www.renaissancemarina.com/clearance-procedures. There are no visa requirements for citizens of the USA, Canada or the EC. Other nationalities can find requirements at http//.brochures.aruba.com/entryreq/2007entryrequirements.pdf. While it is not up and running yet, Aruba is in the process of implementing the eSeaClear system in the near future.

***Compass* Contributor Wins SSCA Award**

Congratulations to *Caribbean Compass* contributor Ellen Sanpere and her husband Tony who recently won the Seven Seas Clean Wake Award. The award recognizes voyaging cruisers who exemplify by their behavior one of the main principles of the Seven Seas Cruising Association, "to leave a clean wake". Award recipients are those who show generosity and offer assistance to others, especially to people who live in the countries they are visiting, and/or those who involve themselves in activities of significant benefit to mankind and the environment.



Ellen Sanpere, who with her husband Tony won the SSCA's 2009 Clean Wake Award

Ellen and Tony have rescued fishermen adrift in the Caribbean Sea, volunteered with medical missions in Venezuela, and worked with a number of active environmental groups in the Caribbean region. Ellen is currently the press contact for the charitable St. Croix Hospice Regatta (see page 17). Tony is a well-known skipper on the Caribbean yacht racing circuit.

Other *Compass* contributors who have been honored by the SSCA in the past include Melodye and John Pompa, who received the association's 2002 Service Award for their efforts in alerting the cruising community to safety matters in the Caribbean; Suzanne Longacre, who with John Gideonse won a 2002 Transocean Award; Pauline Dolinski, who with her husband Voytek won a 2002 Transocean Award; Bruce Van Sant, who won a 2003 Camaraderie Award for his many years of guidance and advice to cruisers through his books; Devi Sharp, who with her husband, Hunter, won a 2006 Clean Wake Award; and Marcie Connelly-Lynn, who won a Recognition Award in 2007 for her efforts as the SSCA's first volunteer Cruising Station Coordinator. In 2002, *Compass* advertiser Don Stollmeyer (Power Boats) won a Service Award for his efforts on behalf of the visiting Trinidad sailing community, and in 2007 *Caribbean Compass's* Trinidad agent, Jack Dausend, won the Cruising Station of the Year Award for his tireless efforts welcoming cruisers to Trinidad, and helping to organize multiple cruiser events such as the annual SSCA New Year's Day Gam.

Congratulations to you all. We're proud to have you aboard!

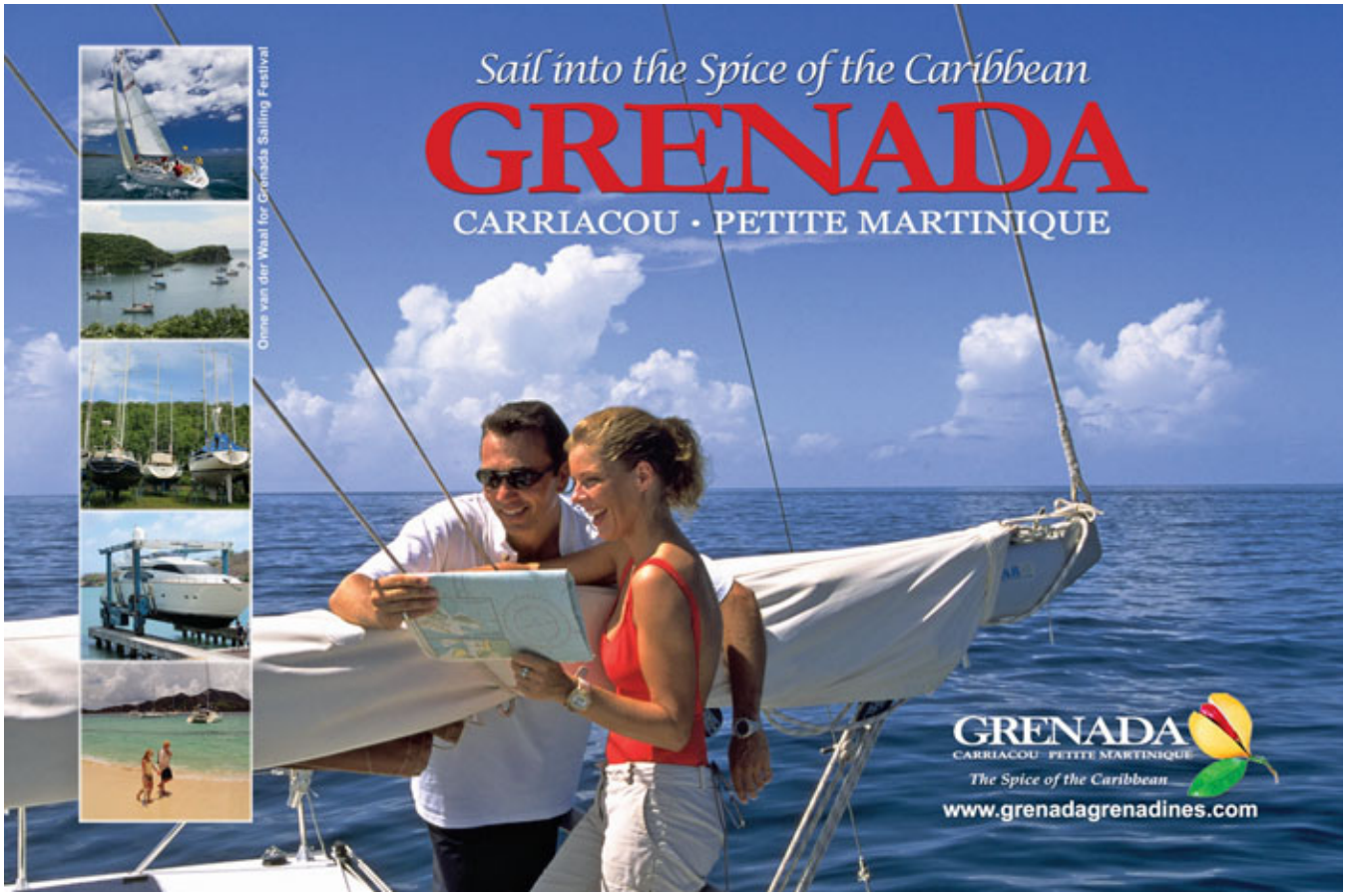
For more information visit www.ssca.org.

Eight Bells

CARRICOU WEBMASTER, JOHN INGRAM

John H. Ingram, 58, of Carriacou died on October 14th after falling downstairs and suffering a head injury. He was flown to the general hospital in Grenada where he passed away. A native of West Virginia, John spent 19 years in Carriacou. His popular website, www.grenadines.net, was "The Carriacou Caribbean Connection: Your Information Gateway to The Grenadine Islands". He was also proprietor of The Caribbean Computer Company Internet Café and Back Porch Bar in Hillsborough, where many cruisers and charter crew checked e-mail, got laptops repaired and had websites built. John also booked yacht charters and acted as an agent for holiday home rentals on the island. He will be missed.

—Continued on next page



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GAME FISHING CONSERVATION PIONEER, SID JOHNSON

Steven Valdez reports: The Trinidad & Tobago Game Fishing Association (TTGFA) lost founding member and former Secretary, Sid Johnson, on November 6th. Sid, a part of the TTGFA management committee from inception in October 1986 to 2007, was involved in many ways for the betterment of the sport in the Southern Caribbean region.

Sid advocated conservation efforts in the region and was concerned about the long-liners and industrial trawlers operating in Caribbean waters. He lobbied against these practices in the Gulf of Paria in Trinidad and was included as a member of the task force that produced a document presented to the Trinidad & Tobago Cabinet to assist in dealing with these matters. Sid's passion for conservation led him to take photographs of Taiwanese large-scale pelagic driftnet boats seen at National Fisheries in Sea Lots, Port of Spain, and send them to the International Game Fishing Association (IGFA). These photos were later published on the cover of the *New York Times;* the accompanying article was the first conservation story to be featured on that newspaper's front page. As a direct result, the United Nations banned large-scale pelagic drift net fishing and Sid received an individual Conservationist of the Year award from the IGFA.

The Billfish Foundation named him 1991 Individual of the Year. Sid will always be remembered as the Southern Caribbean pioneer of billfish tag-and-release fishing. He was also instrumental in having the Institute of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Division in Trinidad & Tobago take samples of fish caught in local tournaments. At the time of his passing Sid held a cabinet-appointed post on the National Monitoring Committee on Foreign Fishing and was a member of the Trade and Industry Fish and Fish Processing Team of the Trinidad & Tobago Prime Minister's Vision 2020 committee.

Sailor Still Missing

Kenneth Maurice Jackson, 45, was last heard from on March 23rd, 2009. He reportedly set sail from Charleston, South Carolina heading for Nassau in the Bahamas. His family has heard nothing of him since. Ken's boat is a 40-foot wooden ketch, thought to be called *Lily Ooh La La*. The name was not painted on the boat when he left Charleston, and it could be sailing under either a British or US flag. The boat has wooden spars, a white hull with dark green sheer stripe, and possibly a New Jersey registration number on the bow. It has no winches or windlass, no EPIRB and no autopilot, just a PVC self-steering mechanism. The boat did carry a GPS system (full size and hand-held back-up), a radar reflector, VHF radio, life jackets and fire extinguishers. British-born Ken is six feet tall, medium build, with curly bleached brown hair and hazel-brown eyes.





Since Ken's disappearance, boat watches have been conducted by the Boatwatch Net (www.boatwatchnet.org), Bahamas Air Sea Rescue Association (www.basra.org), Bahamas Immigration, and the US Coast Guard.

Anyone with any information is asked to contact daisyj@cwgsy.net or gardensofstyle.commercial@hotmail.co.uk.

Cruisers' Site-ings

• Frank Virgintino reports: The free *Cruising Guide to the Dominican Republic* is now available at its new website, **www.dominicanrepubliccruisingguide.com**. The site is interactive and users can leave comments, interact with Facebook and link to other popular cruisers' websites and to the Dominican Republic Marina Guerra (Coast Guard). The guide can be read on-line, or it can be downloaded as a PDF file at no charge. The costs of the guide and the site were underwritten by Rafael Baez, owner of Marina ZarPar (see page 26), located on the south coast of the Dominican Republic in Boca Chica.

The *Cruising Guide* addresses ports and harbors for the entire Dominican Republic, gives an overview of Dominican culture, and tells what to expect while cruising through this fabulous country, located on the second largest island in the Caribbean. The guide also covers clearance procedures, which in recent years have been simplified. Although entrance to most harbors has become straightforward, some, such as Luperon and Samana on the north and east coasts, are still plagued by port officials who have a history of asking for unauthorized payments. Suggestions on how to handle these requests are also covered in the *Guide*.

Most cruisers who have passed through the DR have found it to be extremely unspoiled and uncrowded. The costs for food and labor are relatively low, and thanks to a vigilant coast guard most cruisers have found cruising here very safe.

—*Continued on next page*

The Marina at Marigot Bay St. Lucia











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Christmas in Marigot Bay
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Hear What Our Customers Say About Us:
- "Best Marina we have been to in the Caribbean …"— *Black Pearl*
- "Excellent and friendly staff! Thanks you." — *Yacht Felina*
- "Marigot Bay is a great place to hang out … " — *Stampede*

The Marina at Marigot Bay

Contact Us for Details: **www.marigotbay.com** • marina@marigotbay.com • (758) 451-4275 • VHF Channel 12

—Continued from previous page

There have been incidents of theft in a few harbors, but there is no record of violent attacks against yacht owners. The number of boats cruising the DR, as compared to just passing through, has grown immensely over recent years.

• Robert the Wifi Guy reports: My website, **www.wifiguy.co.cc/info.html,** has up-to-date information for cruisers planning to visit Venezuela's Isla Margarita. It shows cruisers new to the area what to do, what to avoid, how to save money by making the most of the very favorable exchange rate, and how to stay safe. There is also a comprehensive weather information page — plus a whole lot more!

• Birgit Roethal reports: We've updated the St. Maarten/St. Martin portal, **www.mapsxm.com**, with YouTube videos, photos, flight info, movie times, weather, wikis and road maps. There is also information on neighboring islands, and mapsxm.com is a partner of the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta and the St. Maarten Marine Trades Organization. Recently added is a forum and ranking system where you can currently rank more than 450 businesses on the island; the list is steadily growing.

• Linda Hutchinson reports: We have just set up a new blog site for our cruise, **www.mytb.org/Sandcastle27**. It's pretty cool!

Carriacou Children's Education Fund 2009 Scholarships

John and Melodye Pompa report: The Carriacou Children's Education Fund (CCEF) has announced the recipients of its 2009 scholarships. Michelle Alexander and Nadia Edwards of Bishop's College and Codell Stafford of Hillsborough Secondary School have begun their studies at the Carriacou campus of TA Marryshow Community College, with full tuition and fees paid for two years and a contribution of EC$1,000 towards textbooks.



2009 scholarship recipients Michelle Alexander, Codell Stafford and Nadia Edwards, with Melodye Pompa of CCEF; Fleure Patrice, Director of the Carriacou campus of TAMCC; and Judy Evans of CCEF

These three students join Carnisha Charles (Hillsborough Secondary), Reann Martineau (Bishop's College), Tahera Paul (Bishop's College) and Marcia Scott (Hillsborough Secondary). The first two students benefiting from the Carriacou Children's Education Fund scholarships, Stacy Bain and Rena Noel, have completed their course of study and are working in positions in line with the goals they set for themselves.

Each student writes an essay of 1,000 words on the topic "How I will use my education to build a better Grenada". Stacy's primary goal, as stated in her essay in 2007, put teaching at the secondary school level at the top of her list, and she is already addressing that goal.

Rholda Quamina (Bishop's College) and Brian Lendore (Hillsborough Secondary), the principals of the two secondary schools in Carriacou, select the scholarship recipients based on CXC scores and financial need. Patrick Compton of the Grenada Union of Teachers and Cleopatra Lambert, Principal of Harvey Vale Government School, assist in the process every year, collecting and reviewing the essays.

Visiting yachts and local businesses continue to assist local students through the fundraising efforts of the Carriacou Children's Education Fund (CCEF). These three students bring the total amount of financial aid to nearly $14,000, and money has been allocated to assist 2010 graduates of Bishop's and Hillsborough Secondary.

The Carriacou Children's Education Fund consists of concerned local businesspeople and volunteers from visiting yachts. Since 2000, CCEF has conducted fundraising activities during the first week of August at the Carriacou Yacht Club, coinciding with the annual Carriacou Regatta Festival. During this time, CCEF has raised over $106,000 to provide uniforms, necessary school supplies and other educational assistance to the children of Carriacou. The mission is to help as many children as possible and to fill the gap between what is required for a child to receive a proper education and what their families can provide.

Since its inception, CCEF has provided assistance in more than 500 cases. Success is due primarily to the hard work and generosity of the visiting yachts and the local population who support CCEF, and is the yachtspeople's way of saying "thank you" to the people of Carriacou for the warm welcome always received. These scholarships at TAMCC are a natural extension of the assistance that CCEF has provided the primary and secondary school children of Carriacou in the past. CCEF is just one example of how Carriacou benefits from the presence of the yachts.

Welcome Aboard!

In this issue of *Compass* we welcome new advertisers Nelson's Pursuit Race of Antigua, page 17; Reef Gardens of Antigua, page 42; Reds Caribbean of Trinidad, page 36; Jean-Jacques Poette auctioneers of Martinique, page 48; and Townhouse Mega-Store of Antigua, page 50, plus Bluewater Sailing of Grenada; OnDeck Maritime Training of Antigua; Tilikum marine refrigeration and electronics of Martinique; and Mango Bay restaurant of Martinique — all in the Market Place section, pages 51 through 53. Good to have you with us!



BUSINESS BRIEFS

Budget Marine Launches Catalogue, Sponsors Kayak Marathon

Budget Marine launched its 2010 marine equipment catalog on October 28th. Each year Budget Marine



stages the official arrival of its first catalog. This year the story was that in light of the financial climate, the catalog was printed in-house by hardworking employees on a second-hand printing machine imported from Bangladesh. The overall-wearing printer is Coleen Lucas, who jumped out of the printing machine right after completing the first copy printing. This coincided with the annual Managers' Meeting and the introduction of Ben and Amnerys Rivera of the newest Budget Marine location, St. Croix. Group Manager Robbie Ferron enthusiastically expressed his optimism for the upcoming season and encouraged the crowd to expect the best.

In other Budget Marine news, the group will sponsor Ryan de Jongh, a Curaçao kayak specialist and nature activist, in attempting the marathon effort of paddling between St. Maarten and Curaçao. He will leave St. Maarten on December 5th and stop at two Budget Marine locations (Grenada and Bonaire) on his way to his final destination of Curaçao where a party will be ready for him, planned for December 27th. The total distance to be covered is just over 1,000 miles. The effort is intended to collect funds for the Carmabi Foundation, which manages nature reserves in Curaçao, as well as for a group that will provide 170 disabled children with a daily meal and education for a period of a year. The other gold sponsor of this effort is Insel Air and Ryan's kayak will be accompanied by the yacht *Monsoon* throughout the journey.

For more information on Budget Marine see ad on page 2.

New Manager for St. Lucia's Rodney Bay Marina

Ernie Seon reports: International Global Yachting (IGY) has announced the appointment of a new general manager at Rodney Bay Marina, St. Lucia. Australia-born Adam Foster says, "It's really great to have been given the opportunity to serve the company in this part of the world where there are both challenges and opportunities, given the fact that the company has undertaken a major investment in a period of economic uncertainty. Our operations in St. Lucia are still undergoing a physical transition and I am pleased to have been given the opportunity to guide the process, which will involve marketing and promoting the marina globally."



Adam has worked in the industry for the past 17 years in Australia, the South Pacific region and Europe. The early part of his career included diving instruction and equipment service, bridge and wharf construction, hospitality, commercial vessel operation, new boat marketing, sales and service. In 2000, Adam took his first position in marina management with Cronulla Marina on Port Hacking (New South Wales). He joined Australia's largest marina group, d'Albora Marinas, in 2005. In 2007 Adam was appointed Business Development Manager for the seven d'Albora marinas.

The new GM has trained marina staff throughout Australia and Asia for the Association of Marina Industries, a subsidiary of the International Marina Institute, and was awarded his Certified Marina Manager's designation in 2008. IGY Marinas employed Adam several months ago as Education Director where he wrote the IGY university training program and trained staff at all Caribbean locations. Once the training was complete, he was offered the position of General Manager of the Rodney Bay facility.

"I am looking forward to my stint in St. Lucia. I have received a warm response from the hardworking staff here and from St. Lucians in general, and we intend to continue to play our part in overall development of the yachting product in St. Lucia," he said.

For more information on Rodney Bay Marina see ad on page 55.

Dockwise Yacht Transport Record Load Bound for St. Thomas

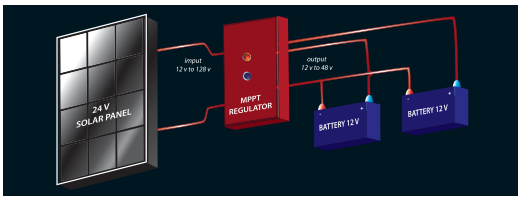
On November 3rd, when the 556-foot *Super Servant 4*, one of Dockwise Yacht Transport's (DYT) fleet of four semi-submersible ships, left Newport, Rhode Island, it was packed with a record load of 50 recreational cruising and racing boats, worth upward of US$41 million. The ship headed to Freeport, Bahamas, a newly added port of call for DYT, where it unloaded eight of the vessels (six motor yachts, one sport fishing boat and one sailboat), then carried on to St. Thomas, USVI, where the remaining vessels (17 motor boats and 25 sailboats) disembarked.



ONNE VAN DER WAL

—*Continued on next page*

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After Sale Service CATANA ALLIAURA MARINE JEANNEAU

—Continued from previous page
We are maxed out on this trip; not one inch of room to spare," said Ann Souder, DYT's sales agent for the East Coast and Caribbean, explaining that while the recession may have temporarily subdued demand, it has not reversed the long-term upward trend in yacht transportation between cruising destinations in which DYT specializes. The company's unique float-on/float-off method for yachts up to 200 feet in length is accommodated by its ships, such as the *Super Servant 4*, which partially "sink" to allow their cargoes of boats to load and unload under their own power rather than be lifted by cranes.

According to DYT President Clemens van der Werf, demand for yacht transportation services is mainly generated by yacht owners and charter companies seeking expansion of their cruising grounds to benefit from two seasons within one year (e.g., New England in the summer and the Caribbean in the winter). "The market is mainly driven by the increasing global fleet size, and the growing charter market along with the development of new yachting destinations around the world," said Van der Werf. Since its maiden voyage in 1987, the company has transported over 10,000 motor and sailing yachts to various destinations around the globe.

In addition to its conservation partnership with The Billfish Foundation, the only non-profit organization dedicated solely to conserving and enhancing billfish populations around the world, DYT is also partnered with the International SeaKeepers Society. Its newest ship, the 685.7-foot (209-metre) *Yacht Express*, is outfitted with the modular SeaKeeper 1000 ocean and meteorological monitoring system which samples, measures, records and transmits critical measures of ocean health — salinity, temperature, oxygen and pollution, among others — to various scientific and public communities across the globe.

For more information, see ad on page 9.

New Shop in Martinique for Diginav

Diginav is happy to let you know that its brand-new shop specializing in marine electronics is now open. At the new shop, located on first floor of Marina du Marin, Martinique, you will find all the major brands, including Furuno, Raymarine, Garmin, Superwind, Simrad and B&G. Jacques Fouquet, the owner, will be pleased to advise you on the best solutions to fit the needs of your boat. Diginav also assures you of the best after-sale service for all products sold in the shop.

For more information see ad on page 23.



The brand-new Diginav shop in Marin, Martinique is open and ready to serve you

Grenada's RYA Yachtmaster Success

Grenada Bluewater Sailing's first combined Coastal Skipper & Yachtmaster course was recently completed. Alex Johnstone, the principal, started off with the five-day Theory Course, added the First Aid and SRC VHF day courses, and then held a four-day Yachtmaster preparation. Martin Northey from the Iberian Sea School flew in as the external Yachtmaster examiner, and after two days of examinations all students passed.

A RYA Yachtmaster Certificate of Competence is often the aim of aspiring skippers, both professional and recreational. RYA qualifications, in particular the RYA Yachtmaster Offshore and Yachtmaster Ocean Certificates of Competence, are recognized around the world.

In most cases no formal qualifications are required for crew on commercial yachts up to 24 metres in length. However, many skippers prefer to hire crew who have undergone training to at least Day Skipper level. If you look for work through a crew placement agency, they will often recommend that you hold a Day Skipper certificate, preferably supported by training such as the Diesel Engine, First Aid and Radar courses.



Master class: Andell David, Selwyn Maxwell, Michael Nelson, Alex Johnstone, Victor Cox and Richard Watson

The qualifications required for skippering commercial yachts are determined by the area in which the yacht is operating. With a Coastal Skipper Certificate of Competence you can skipper yachts up to 24 metres operating up to 20 miles from a safe haven, while the Yachtmaster Offshore Certificate of Competence enables you to skipper yachts up to 200 gross tonnes, 150 miles from a safe haven. With the Yachtmaster Ocean Certificate of Competence you can work worldwide. Whichever area you are working in, you must hold the commercial endorsement, so a one-day sea survival course and medical fitness certificate are necessary.

Grenada Bluewater Sailing will hold further examination courses in the New Year.

For more information see ad in this issue's Market Place, pages 51 through 53.

Montserrat Ferry Service to Return this Month

The Government of Montserrat is pleased to announce the return of a ferry service between Antigua and Montserrat from early December. The service will provide Montserrat with two daily return trips on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

For more information contact the Montserrat Tourist Board at info@montserrattourism.ms.

New Caribbean CrewShow to Take Place in St. Maarten

Following this year's successful events in Antibes and Palma de Mallorca, CrewShow — the only trade exhibition focused exclusively on professional yacht crew — announces its first Caribbean event: CrewShow St. Maarten. The new show is scheduled for January 9th at Yacht Club at Isle de Sol, an Island Global Yachting (IGY) marina.

The Sacks Group Yachting Professionals will sponsor this inaugural event. CrewShow founder Celia Wagstaff will host the event together with Brian Deher, IGY Marina Manager for Yacht Club at Isle de Sol. Strategic support for CrewShow St. Maarten will also be provided by Ann E. McHorney, who heads TSGYP's Caribbean division and runs Select Yachts NV, another show sponsor. McHorney's office in Plaza del Lago, Simpson Bay, will be the headquarters of CrewShow St Maarten.

For more information visit www.crewshow.com.

New Megayacht Services in Guadeloupe

Guadeloupe Yacht Concierge.com is the new and only contact for megayachts cruising to Guadeloupe, the Saintes and Marie-Galante. With four years of experience on the island and more years at sea, the agency staff is the shore link for all a yacht's needs. With high-quality service in mind, they link the yachts with the best pros on the island.

The concierge services include Customs clearance, marina bookings, provisioning, airport transfers, and arrangements for day workers, services, repairs, parts ordering and haulout, as well as tailor-made recreational activities for guests or off-duty crew.

Guadeloupe Yacht Concierge has two convenient locations: in Deshaies right at the dinghy dock, and at the harbour office of Marina Bas-du-Fort in Pointe-a-Pitre.

For more information visit http://guadeloupeyachtconcierge.com.



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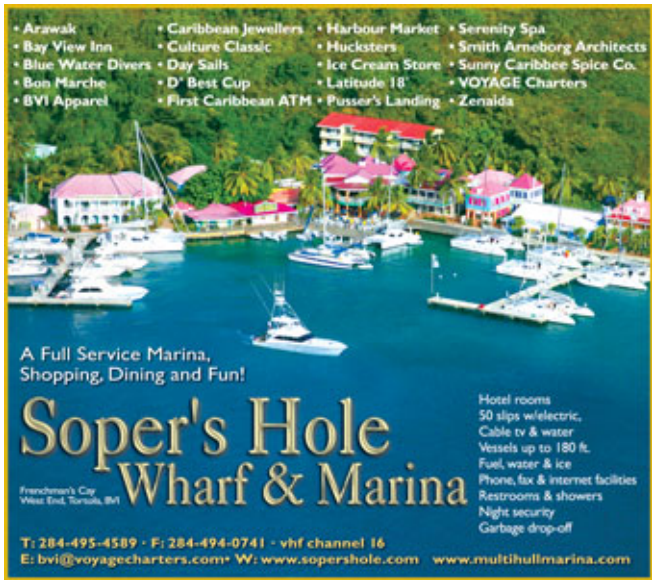
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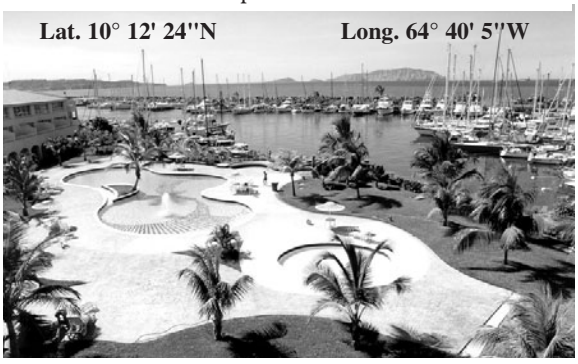
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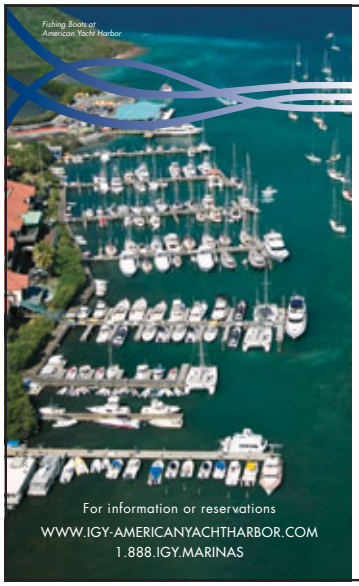
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Caribbean Eco-News

Bahamas Announce New Marine Parks

In October, The Bahamas' Prime Minister Hubert A. Ingraham announced "the orderly expansion of our national parks system to include up to ten percent of the terrestrial areas and 20 percent of the near-shore marine resources of the country."

The new parks encompass some of The Bahamas' most pristine lands and waters, and include:

- the establishment of the Fowl Cays Land and Sea Park in Abaco, located between Scotland and Man O' War Cay in the barrier islands of Great Abaco
- the expansion of the West Side National Park of Andros, including Williams Island and Billy Island, and
- the expansion of the Conception Island National Park.

In his announcement, Prime Minister Ingraham also noted, "We are mindful of the pressures of development in certain parts of The Bahamas, and equally mindful of our duty to protect the interest of our people and integrity of our resources."

The Bahamas continues to increase conservation momentum within the Caribbean. In addition to these new parks, the government recently extended legal protection to all species of sea turtles found within its waters. They may not be hunted, trapped or otherwise harmed or harassed.

Since 2008, The Bahamas has provided key leadership and support for the Caribbean Challenge. The goal of the Challenge — currently endorsed by five sovereign Caribbean nations — is to not only permanently establish a network of 20 million acres of marine parks across the territorial waters of at least ten countries, but also to ensure that once established, the protected areas also receive sufficient, permanent funding through sustainable financing tools.

For more information on the Caribbean Challenge visit www.nature.org/initiatives/protectedareas.

Caribbean Coral Got a Break This Year

Lower-than-feared sea temperatures this summer gave a break to fragile coral reefs across the Caribbean that were damaged in recent years. "We dodged a bullet this year. The good news is that temperatures didn't get quite warm enough for there to be a large-scale bleaching problem," C. Mark Eakin, coordinator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coral Reef Watch network, told the Associated Press. He was among scientists gathered in San Juan, Puerto Rico last month for a meeting of the US Coral Reef Task Force. The Coral Reef Watch program's satellite data provide current reef environmental conditions to quickly identify areas at risk for coral bleaching.


KAY WILSON / INDIGO DIVE

The worst coral bleaching in the region's recorded history occurred in 2005, when hot seas caused bleaching of as much as 90 percent of corals in the Eastern Caribbean, with more than half of that dying. In July, the Coral Reef Watch network warned that high temperatures this year might lead to severe coral problems because sea surface temperatures in parts of the Caribbean were unusually hot.

Eakin told the AP that the threat had passed for 2009, since temperatures are now cooling, but the problem could return. "We're seeing little signs of coral recovery in the Caribbean, where the damage has been like a ratchet wrench clicking down and staying there," Eakin said. "Temperatures could be severe enough next year."

Reef-building coral is a fragile organism, a tiny polyp-like animal that builds a calcium-carbonate shell around itself and survives in a symbiotic relationship with types of algae — each providing sustenance to the other. Even a one-degree Celsius (1.7-degree Fahrenheit) rise in normal maximum sea temperatures can disrupt that relationship. Bleaching can occur when sea temperatures rise just a few degrees above average in the warmest summer months. Bleaching that lasts more than a week can kill the organisms, since they rely on the algae for sustenance.

For more information visit coralreefwatch.noaa.gov.

Errol Flynn Marina Gains Third 'Blue Flag'

Dale Westin reports: For the third time, Errol Flynn Marina in Port Antonio, Jamaica, has been awarded the coveted "Blue Flag Marina" designation. The Blue Flag Campaign is an international voluntary certification scheme for beaches and marinas. The Blue Flag is an exclusive eco-label that so far has been awarded to 3,450 beaches and marinas in 41 countries across Europe, South Africa, New Zealand, Canada and the Caribbean. It has proven to be an effective environmental tool to enhance the health, safety and environmental quality of beaches and marinas. The Blue Flag has become a worldwide symbol for beach and marina environmental quality and is sought for the recognition received from visitors. Errol Flynn's Blue Flag program is monitored by the marina's Administrative Manager, Christine Downer.

For more information on the Blue Flag Program visit www.blueflag.org.

Lionfish Response Efforts in USVI

Lionfish are a non-native fish capable of devouring native Caribbean species and damaging reefs. They have begun to invade the Caribbean and have no known predators here. Their spines contain venom that can cause intense pain. Nine lionfish have been collected in St. Croix waters this year.

A USVI Lionfish Response Management Plan was drafted by the Lionfish Response Planning Committee, made up of a variety of stakeholders including the USVI Department of Planning and Natural Resources, the University of the Virgin Islands, The Nature Conservancy, the National Park Service, Coral World, the Reef Environmental Education Foundation, the St. Croix Environmental Association and the organizer of the USVI Lionfish Response Program (volunteer divers that search for lionfish). The Plan, located at http://fw.dpnr.gov.vi/Lionfish/09J30FinalPlan.pdf, is a working document and can be amended at any time. Your comments are welcome.

ESeaClear Update

by Aaron Smith

The February 2009 issue of *Caribbean Compass* reported on the implementation of eSeaClear, the Caribbean Pre-Arrival Notification system. This is an online service that provides yacht operators with the ability to submit electronic notifications of arrival to participating Customs administrations in the Caribbean. ESeaClear was developed by the Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council (CCLEC) as part of a Regional Clearance System set up to facilitate the processing of yachts traveling around the Caribbean.

ESeaClear is a voluntary system, based on a standardized Customs clearance form. It gives yacht skippers the option of filling out Customs clearance forms on-line in advance of arrival at a port of entry, rather than filling out forms by hand upon arrival. The on-line form, found at www.eSeaClear.com, asks for routine data similar to that on the various existing paper Customs forms. After the first data entry, subsequent uses are easy because all data is stored.

The eSeaClear-using skipper must still go to Customs to clear in. There, you give the Customs officer your pre-arrival notification (PAN) I.D. number provided by the on-line system. (Your name will also work, if you've forgotten your number.) The Customs officer will pull up your form on his or her computer and print it out for you to sign. Any fees will be paid as usual.

Since February, the implementation of the eSeaClear system has been continuous and the service is now available in 14 island nations and territories: Aruba, Antigua & Barbuda, Anguilla, Bonaire, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Maarten, and Saint Vincent & the Grenadines. Every port within each country may not yet be eSeaClear compliant. To address this, only ports that are currently able to handle eSeaClear are available in the drop-down list; users will not be able to submit notification to ports that are not yet ready.

CCLEC has received many valuable comments and recommendations from yacht skippers

Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago will soon be able to accept eSeaClear notifications. The Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council (CCLEC) is working with the remaining islands to implement the program sometime in the New Year.

CCLEC has received many valuable comments and recommendations from yacht skippers throughout the course of early site usage, and as a result we have made the following changes:

- Passport fields can now accept alphanumeric characters
- Vessel Dimensions input field can now accept decimal point notation
- Vessel Tonnage (weight) input field can now accept decimal points
- Motor Brands are now open text so you are now able to type in any brand as well as utilize a drop-down list
- The date picker has been updated to make date navigation and selection quick and simple

For added convenience, we have included a Help section that includes a full site manual and FAQ. The user manual deals with all aspects of site usage and is beneficial in familiarizing users with using the system and thereby improving the user experience. The manual is available in PDF format for immediate download.

The site is also equipped with a feedback option that can be used for support requests, making recommendations, or simply to share some insight on your experience while using the service.

In May, Keats Compton of the regional yacht trades' umbrella group, the Caribbean Marine Association (CMA), met with members of the CCLEC to discuss the system and it was agreed that CCLEC would improve cooperation with CMA through the signing of an MOU. Some additional recommendations were made for the improvement of the system, which CCLEC will take forward in the next phase of the project.

Future Development

By popular request, the system will be adapted so that users are able to make notifications for both parts of their voyage, i.e. Arrival and Departure. This means that vessel operators will be able to submit notifications of departure to Customs ahead of time and be facilitated in the same way arrivals are done.

The system was designed to help facilitate vessel operations with the process of Customs clearance in the region. Hassle-free movement between the islands is our goal and CCLEC has been working hard with Caribbean countries to standardize the clearance requirements, but getting all stakeholders on board can be a challenge. We will continue to work to streamline the clearance process, thereby making your visit in the region as seamless as possible.

If you have any questions or comments please contact us — we would be happy to hear from you. Our contact: eSeaClearSupport@cclec.net or cclec@candw.lc.

Aaron Smith is the Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council's ITC Officer. Visit the eSeaClear website at www.eSeaClear.com.



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MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

DECEMBER '09 - JANUARY '10

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. 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!

December

DATE	TIME
1	2327
2	0000 (full)
3	0030
4	0134
5	0235
6	0333
7	0427
8	0517
9	0605
10	0652
11	0740
12	0828
13	0918
14	1009
15	1102 (new)
16	1155
17	1246
18	1336
19	1422
20	1506
21	1548
22	1628
23	1709
24	1750
25	1833
26	1920
27	2011
28	2107
29	2208
30	2312
31	2344 (full)

January 2010

DATE	TIME
1	0016
2	0118
3	0216
4	0310
5	0400
6	0449
7	0537
8	0626
9	0715
10	0806
11	0858
12	0950
13	1042
14	1131
15	1219 (new)
16	1303
17	1346
18	1427
19	1507
20	1547
21	1629
22	1713
23	1800
24	1852
25	1949
26	2050
27	2153
28	2256
29	2356
30	2454 (full)
31	0054

REGATTA NEWS

Hot Pursuit! New Year's Eve Race, Antigua

On New Year's Eve, December 31st, out of English Harbour, Antigua, there will be a fun pursuit race to suit every vessel; yachts from 23 to 130 feet have participated in this annual event. This annual race commemorates Lord Nelson's heroic pursuit of the French across the Atlantic in 1805. No paperwork is involved!

For more information see ad on page 17.

World ARC to Start in St. Lucia

Yachts are "gearing up" to carry their crews on a world circumnavigation in the World ARC 2010/11, organized and run by World Cruising Club. World ARC is open to monohulls with a minimum length of 40 feet (12.19 metres), and multihulls between 40 and 60 feet (12.19 ad 18.29 metres.

The east-to-west circumnavigation will begin in St. Lucia on January 6th, 2010, and visit Panama, Ecuador, French Polynesia, the Cook Islands, Niue, Tonga, Fiji, Australia, Bali, Mauritius, Reunion Island and South Africa. In 2011, the rally crosses the South Atlantic via St. Helena to Brazil, then visits Grenada before arriving back in St. Lucia in March 2011, 15 months after the journey begins.

In this second edition of World ARC, there are yachts representing 19 nations and a greater number of nationalities within the crews of the 40 boats already registered. The largest contingent is from Germany with eight yachts entered, then the UK with seven. Yachts from other European nations, the USA, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia are also taking part. Some are crewed by couples who will take on extra crew for some passages, while others will be crewed by a larger number of family and friends. Some skippers are seeking crew to join them for particular legs of the voyage.

Around one third of the yachts sailing in World ARC will arrive in St. Lucia with ARC 2009. As with all World Cruising Club events, the programme for the World ARC start will include safety equipment checks, parties, activities and briefings.

Armchair adventurers can follow the World ARC fleet progress and the crews' experiences along the way via the boat logs and image galleries on the event website.

For more information visit www.worldcruising.com/worldarc2010.

Early Interest in St.Maarten-St.Martin Classic 2010

West Indies Events and the St.Maarten-St.Martin Classic Yacht Regatta Organization have announced that early registrations for the January 21st through 24th event are coming in at full speed.

Lone Fox, winner of 2008 and 2009 events, will battle Richard West's Anguillian yacht *Charm III* (which has also won the regatta twice) for the perpetual trophy. *Grote Meid*, owned by Paul Van Koelen, has undergone a complete refit in Curaçao and will sail back to St. Maarten together with the classic yacht *Alert* to participate in the regatta.



The lovely classic Grote Meid *will once again compete*

Several "new" classics, vintage and other yachts will appear during the event for the first time. Among these are Philip Walwyn's (owner of the well-known 12 Metre *Kate)* classic Philip Rhodes-designed yacht and the authentic 1910 Cornwall Crabber *Magnolia.*

For the first time the regatta will see a class for workboats, including the traditional wooden sloops from the Grenadines, built mainly in Carriacou. Laurie Gumbs from Anguilla, who helped out at all the previous regattas as mark layer, has acquired *Tradition* (*see story on page 34*) and will race her this year. The local Grand Case and Anguilla traditional boats have been absent for a few years, but organizers hope to see them again this January.

A "Spirit of Classic" class will give yacht owners a chance to participate with boats that are not qualified in Classic, Vintage, Spirit of Tradition or other existing classes. Owners of those look-alike classics are invited to contact the technical committee in order to submit their yacht for inspection and approval.

A "Star Regatta" charity fundraiser will be held on January 23rd with racing in Great Bay aboard the 12 Metre Challenge America's Cup boats. Local and international VIPs will join the public in this "regatta within a regatta" to support the Nature Foundation and the Sint Maarten Diabetes Foundation. Tickets start at US$100. Places aboard spectator vessels will also be available.

Holland House Beach Hotel in Philipsburg is the new headquarters for the regatta. Fort Louis Marina in Marigot will be the first race-day venue and arrival place on Friday, again offering complementary dock space for the classic yachts (subject to availability).

For more information visit www.ClassicRegatta.com.

Entries Strong for 2010 Grenada Sailing Festival

Some top racing and racing/cruising yachts are already booked for the 2010 Grenada Sailing Festival, presented by Port Louis and Camper & Nicholsons Marinas. The annual event, run in association with the Grenada Board of Tourism, will run from January 29th to February 2nd, 2010, and organisers report that they expect one of the most competitive fleets since the event began in 1994.

In the Racing Class, 2009 Festival winner James Dobbs with his Antigua-based J/122 *Lost Horizon* will challenge such prominent names in Caribbean sailing as Peter Peake with *Storm*, and Paul Solomon skippering *Enzyme*, both from Trinidad, plus well-known Festival competitors the Lewis brothers from Barbados in *Whistler.* Grenada's home-grown talent will also be in contention with Richard Szyjan in *Category 5*, David Cullen in *Pocket Rocket* and Justin and Peter "Champie" Evans in *Tanga Langa 3*. The event will also welcome back British skipper Hugh Pringle and his crack Cowes Week crew in *Lancelot*, and will say *bonjour* for the first time to visitors from Martinique in *Sonadio.*

The Cruising Class is looking just as strong, with early notice from *Jaguar, Wayward, Bloody Mary* and *Boxxer* that they will be competing. The J/24 fleet looks hot, too, with local boats *Die Hard, Blew by You* and *Tempest* taking on Steve Bushe's *Ambushe* from Trinidad, and Barbados J/24s *Paddington* and *Hawkeye*, skippered by Peter Hoad and Robert Povey.

The Charter Class, sponsored by long-term regatta supporters Boval, the Dutch insurance group, will include 49 sailors from The Netherlands who are chartering seven boats to take part.

—Continued on next page



—*Continued from previous page*

The good early response is attributed in part to the news that the 2010 Festival will offer some newly designed longer courses and will also extend the very popular South Coast Ocean Triangle. These changes were introduced to attract bigger yachts and the strongly competitive crews based in the region, and



provide an early sailing season 'tune-up' for the international yachts visiting the Caribbean.

The Grenada Sailing Festival Port Louis Racing Series is part of the Southern Caribbean Regatta Circuit 2010, which also includes the Carriacou Sailing Series, (January 13th through 16th) and the Tobago Carnival Regatta (February 18th through 21st).

For the second year running, yachts taking part in the annual Grenada Sailing Festival will all be able to dock at a 'Home Port' — Port Louis by Camper & Nicholsons Marinas, the island's newest international-class marina facility, which will have some 160 slips available for yachts of all sizes. Racing will start and finish from this base, with dockside 'Finish Line Limes', Happy Hours and a new calendar of After-Race Parties focusing on the Port Louis Marina and Victory Bar.

The event for 2010 will be run with presentation partners Port Louis and Camper & Nicholsons Marinas, in association with the Grenada Board of Tourism. The organisers also thank Work Boat Regatta sponsor Digicel, plus sponsors and supporters for 2010: American Airlines; British Airways; Colombian Emeralds; Mount Gay Rum; Heineken; ScotiaBank; United Insurance; Budget Marine; Boval and Spice Island Marine Services. Thanks also go to long-term supporters True Blue Bay Resort and Coca Cola.

For more information on the Grenada Sailing Festival see ad on page 12. For more information on Port Louis Marina see ad on page 16.

Budget Marine Annual Valentine's Regatta

The Budget Marine Annual Valentine's Regatta, hosted by Jolly Harbour Yacht Club in Antigua, takes place on February 13th and 14th, 2010. Regatta parties, barbecues, a live band, dancing and amusing prizegiving celebrations are all in store, and berths will be available free of charge (excluding utilities) for participants on the race days. Everyone is welcome to the festivities even if you are not sailing!

For more information visit www.jhycantigua.com.

St. Croix Yacht Club Hospice Regatta — A Different Experience

Ellen Sanpere reports: "The St. Croix Hospice Regatta is a different experience from the other Caribbean regattas, each of which has its own flavor," says Regatta Director Julie San Martin. She hopes the Cruzan flavor will appeal to many different kinds of racers during the regatta, February 19th and 20th, 2010, and highlights some of the factors that go into it:

The Site: Unique in the Caribbean, the St. Croix Yacht Club is located on six beachfront acres on Teague Bay, a residential neighborhood on St. Croix's east end. All shoreside activities are on the beach, as is the clubhouse and its 120-foot dock. In addition to 32 dock slips, the large mooring field, easily accessed inside a protective reef, can accommodate up to 100 boats. US Customs and Border Patrol attend on the Friday, so arriving visitors can conveniently complete their entry and exit documentation along with their regatta check-in. The Optimist sailors have their own clubhouse area in the event tent, as well as games on the beach and volleyball court.

The Sailing: Just about all sailing vessels are welcome at this regatta, from hi-tech racing machines to heavy-displacement cruisers, beach cats to live-aboard multihulls, 19-foot keelboats to Optimist dinghies. Teague Bay, the Buck Island Channel and the vast Caribbean provide perfect venues for one-design racing, windward-leeward courses and mid-distance racing. The Race Committee endeavors to give a start to any class that requests it.

The Volunteers: The entire Yacht Club membership is involved in the regatta, staffing the various committees and providing housing for visiting officials and Optimist sailors. This is our annual opportunity to host sailors from other islands, and we turn out for it. The visiting officials are also volunteers, and many have donated their time for decades. On-site first aid and handholding is provided daily by volunteers from the local hospice and medical communities.

The Activities: On shore, adults mix it up with the eight- to 16-year-old sailors. During the racing, the observers' favorite activity is liming on the beach watching the Optimists and one-designs race around the buoys. Food and beverages are available from the Club from dawn to dusk, and breakfast is free for competitors on Saturday and Sunday. In the interest of getting back on the water promptly, midday meal service is provided to the younger generation as part of the Opti entry fee. The rest of the time, they mix freely with the other competitors and Club volunteers.

On-site entertainment happens nightly, and the all-volunteer hospitality staff can recommend local restaurants and arrange transportation for those who would like to see a bit of our lovely, off-the-beaten-track island. Wild parties? You're as likely to see a five-year-old on the dance floor as a 20-, 40-, or 60-something!

Optimist prizegiving is first, featuring the winner on the giant scale for his or her weight in sports drink. Adults are encouraged to participate: the kids are high energy, full of surprises, and it's a great opportunity to recruit crew from the up-and-coming. Later, the adult awards are presented, and the CSA Spin-1 winner gets his/her weight in Cruzan Rum.

"Our goal is family sailing and family attendance in an atmosphere of a community get-together," says San Martin. "The Club volunteers attempt to welcome each competitor as if the regatta was held just for them. Extending the hospitality of St. Croix to visiting yachtsmen is part of our charter, and we take it seriously!"

—*Continued on next page*



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"Inspired by Competition — Enhanced with Compassion", the organizers aim to raise funds and



awareness for hospice care on St. Croix. Continuum Care, Inc. is a Medicare-certified USVI company providing hospice care in the US Virgin Islands. Fiscal non-profit sponsorship, provided by the St. Croix Foundation, offers donors 501(C)(3) tax-deductible sponsorship options at several levels.

For more information see ad on page 17.

February's Tobago Carnival Regatta: 'Radical!'

Niki Borde reports: "Awesome!" was one of the many words used to describe the Tobago Carnival Regatta 2009, as sailors and spectators alike witnessed spectacular performances put on by the latest inclusion: the Windsurfing and Kiteboarding competitors. Last year's successful re-branding of the regatta that has been held in Tobago for the last 25 years has sailors worldwide wondering what surprises lie in store for them in 2010 — and Regatta Promoters Limited have no intention of letting them down.

Two days after the world-famous Trinidad Carnival in 2010, Tobago will host a spectacular show of its own, the Tobago Carnival Regatta from February 19th through 21st at Heritage Park, Pigeon Point, Tobago.

With the continued support of the Tobago House of Assembly and the Tourism Development Company, next year's regatta promises plenty of sailing action for the traditional big-boat racers, and the bar has been raised for the Bum Boat, Windsurfer and Kiteboard sailors as well, with far more extreme races and freestyle courses. Last year's Bum Boat division attracted a crowd of more than 90 racers and their fans from Bequia, Grenada, Carriacou and St. Vincent. 2010 will see an added Treasure Hunt race that starts in Pigeon Point and ends in Buccoo Bay, culminating in a full day of festivities at the home of the famous "Sunday School" party.

One of the primary goals of Regatta Promoters Ltd is to expand the participation of the local population in the sport of sailing; as a result the Tobago Optimist race will play a major role in bringing young local sailors into the 2010 competition.

Dubbed a Festival of Wind, it is one of the most all-inclusive regattas in the region and will include one more surprise for the sailing enthusiasts and beach-goers alike, but Regatta Promoters are keeping mum about it! Those wanting to know will have to make their way to Tobago and continue their Carnival celebrations on the shores of Trinidad's sister isle.

For more information visit www.sailweek.com.

Stars Align for Second RORC Caribbean 600

Trish Jenkins reports: A star-studded fleet is lining up for the second annual RORC Caribbean 600. As the name suggests, this is a 605-mile race around the Caribbean islands. The 2010 race will start on February 22nd from Antigua, and is already amassing a fleet starring some of the best sailors from around the world.

The race record holder, the 100-foot super maxi *ICAP Leopard*, owned by London property millionaire Mike Slade, will be shipped from Sydney in January after sailing in the Rolex Sydney Hobart Race. Taking the same ship as *Leopard* will be the 2009 Rolex Fastnet Race winner, Niklas Zennstrom's JV72, *Rán*, which will also be attempting to win the Rolex Sydney Hobart.

Joining them will be 80-foot *Beau Geste*, whose owner Karl Kwok hails from Hong Kong and has a crew of professional sailors with lots of America's Cup experience.

From the US we can expect to see two very competitive boats: the STP 65 *Rosebud*, owned by Roger Sturgeon, who won the 2007 Rolex Sydney Hobart Race, and Tom Hill's brand-new Reichel Pugh 75 *Titan*.

Last year's overall winner, Adrian Lee's Cookson 50, *Lee Overlay Partners,* will be back to defend her title against opposition from her sister ship, *Privateer*, which is based on the US East Coast. From Italy, Danilo Salsi's Swan 90, *DSK Pioneer*, will also be back, and one can expect to see some of the Class 40s after their Atlantic crossing in the 'Solidaire du Chocolat' two-handed race from France to Mexico.

John Burnie, one of the founders of the race and a member of both RORC and Antigua Yacht Club (who support the race), says, "This race is destined to become one of the classic ocean races, ranked alongside the world-famous Rolex Fastnet and Rolex Sydney Hobart races. The quality of the competitors means that the world's media will be focused on Antigua and the Caribbean next February." John will be sailing *Region Guadeloupe*, the ORMA 60 trimaran that he chartered for the 2009 race.

For more information visit www.caribbean600.rorc.org.

South Grenada Regatta to Round Out February

The dates of the South Grenada Regatta 2010 are February 26th through 28th, 2010, the last weekend in the month. The event, based at Le Phare Bleu Marina, will feature somewhat shorter courses than last year (more time for fun ashore!) and a third race will be added. The Junior Sailing will be organized on the Saturday, and Sunday will be for relaxation, family and fun. One other significant change is the registration fee — now only US$50!

For more information see ad on page 17.

Inaugural BVI Kite Jam for March

March 1st through 5th, 2010, will see a unique kiteboarding experience presented by the BVI Tourist Board. BVI Kite Jam is aimed at building awareness of the BVI to the international kiteboarding community. The event will bring together amateurs and professionals with competitions, demonstrations, and technique clinics taking place in key locations including Necker Island, the North Sound, Virgin Gorda and Anegada. Sir Richard Branson, an avid kiteboarder, conceived the event after staging an impromptu race with friends between Necker Island and Anegada.

BVI Kite Jam will kick off on February 27th with a VIP Party at the Fat Virgin Café on Virgin Gorda. Additional events, competitions, parties and meals will be hosted at Necker Island, Bitter End Yacht Club, Anegada and Moskito Island. In addition, the event will support green and eco-friendly operations by obtaining a Sailors for the Sea Clean Regatta Certification in conjunction with BVI Kite Jam accommodation partner Sunsail Yachts. Clean Regattas is a third-party certification program that helps regattas, yacht clubs and sailing programs voluntarily achieve higher environmental standards.

For more information visit www.bvikitejam.com.

—*Continued on next page*



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—Continued from previous page

Gill New Title Sponsor for Commodore's Cup

Heather Tackling reports: The Steering Committee organizing the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta on behalf of the Sint Maarten Yacht Club is pleased to announce the introduction of a new title sponsor for the Commodore's Cup taking place March 4th, 2010. Gill is a worldwide leader in marine technical clothing. Through Budget Marine, Gill will offer on-site a Commodore's Cup clothing collection decorated with the Commodore's Cup Regatta branding.

The Commodore's Cup is a pre-event to the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, designed to give those crews an additional day of racing. It is only open to spinnaker and racing classes and focuses on the windward-leeward courses that are generally favored by the more serious racers. The one-day event provides racing off the south coast of Sint Maarten and the opportunity for the many international crews who are visiting from the wintry north to adapt themselves and their vessels to the Caribbean climate and conditions. The event is in its fourth year and has proven to be a highly regarded part of the formula of the overall regatta event. The Gill Commodore's Cup is scored separately from the main event but the parties and administration are integrated into the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta.

For more information visit www.heinekenregatta.com.

Earlier Dates for Third Annual Grenada Classic

The 2010 Grenada Classic Yacht Regatta dates have been moved forward to March 4th through 7th, 2010, to tie in with plans for a Virgin Islands to Grenada Challenge Race for yachts coming south to take part. All regatta courses will be in the waters off Grenada's scenic southeastern coast. Register early and get a break on fees!

For more information visit www.grenadaclassicregatta.gd.

BVI Spring Regatta Adds Windsurfing Championship for 2010

Linda Phillips reports: New for 2010, the BVI Spring Regatta will host the BVI Windsurfing Championship. This event will run concurrently with the 39th annual BVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival, March 29th through April 4th, 2010, sharing the resources, parties and prestige that the BVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival offers.

With the format of "one board and three sails", amateur and professional competitors may compete in either the Formula or Open Class. Classes will be further divided by age and sex. Although on most days competitors can expect two to three races per day with distance and courses varying throughout Sir Francis Drake Channel, there is at least one downwind long-haul planned as the boards race from the flat water of North Sound to regatta central, Nanny Cay.



The annual Grenada Classic Yacht Regatta enjoys optimum conditions on the island's south coast

Nanny Cay Resort and Marina, the presenting sponsor and host, is allowing those without other accommodations to camp on the premises. In North Sound, there will be facilities for rigging and 'limin' between races, group discounts on dinner and accommodations.

Owen Waters, local windsurfing champ, is working closely with the BVI Spring Regatta committee in the planning of the BVI Windsurfing Championship. "There are several events worldwide that encompass aspects of what we are trying to do. We want to create a scenario where it is all in one and the BVI Spring Regatta has created the arena."

Bob Phillips, Chairman of the BVI Spring Regatta has high expectations: "Following this inaugural event, we plan to apply to the Caribbean Sailing Association to hold the Caribbean Windsurfing Championship. We know that we can run a great regatta and we have a lot we can offer to the board sailors."

For more information on the BVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival visit www.bvispringregatta.org.

Date Change for Round Guadeloupe Race

The 2010 Round Guadeloupe Race will be held from the 1st to the 5th of April. The new dates are during the Easter holidays, when many boats are still cruising in the Caribbean, rather than in May. The Tourism Board of the Islands of Guadeloupe is now involved in promoting this popular event and organizers hope to attract even more boats than the 40 that raced around the island last year.

The course starts at the town of Gosier and includes legs to Saint-Louis in Marie Galante, St. François or Port Louis, Deshaies and Les Saintes before returning to Gosier. The Round Guadeloupe race offers nightly parties at each port, with Zouk music and *ti punch* — a great way to discover the Guadeloupe archipelago and its people and culture.

For more information see ad on page 13.

News from Antigua's Jolly Harbour Yacht Club

Carol Smith reports: Every Saturday afternoon JHYC offers sailing off Jolly Harbour and Five Islands Harbour in an "all comers" competitive sailing event for local and visiting yachts. And every Sunday afternoon we have up to 13 people racing Laser dinghies in a round-robin event with A and B finals. It is always a great social day with a barbecue on the beach. Many people come to watch the racing, join in the fun and lime.

Twelve members of JHYC's Youth Sailing Program graduated in the last session. This program offers free weekly dinghy sailing instruction to Antiguan children between the ages of eight and 18. We are in need of a safety boat so we are appealing for an RIB with an outboard or a Jet Boat (its engine does not have a propeller and is safe when the children are in the water).

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Any offers of assistance can contact Pippa Pettingell at (268) 722-8468 or pippapettingell@hotmail.com.

For more information visit www.jhycantigua.com.

Fishing Lines

TTGFA ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT

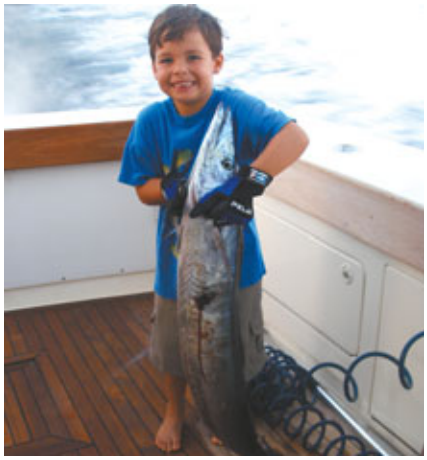
Steven Valdez reports: The Trinidad and Tobago Game Fishing Association (TTGFA) elected Richard De Verteuil as President at their 2009 Annual General Meeting, held at the Trinidad and Tobago Yacht Club on October 28th.

The newly elected TTGFA management committee team is comprised of several existing committee members including Vice President Marylin Sheppard, Secretary Alan Fitwilliam, Treasurer Alan Sheppard, Steven Valdez, Paul Wittet, Geoffrey Pollard, Reginald MacLean, Dominic Wallace and newly appointed Andre De Laparouse and Ian Bose. Outgoing President Chris Mouttet also remains on the committee.

LEVERICK BAY WITCH HUNT FISHING TOURNAMENT

Efraín Rivera reports: Thirty participants, including anglers and observers, signed up for the first edition of the Leverick Bay Witch Hunt Tournament in Virgin Gorda, BVI. Boats from St. Thomas and Puerto Rico joined those from the BVI. Registration, Immigration and fishing permits were organized at the Leverick Bay Marina. Tournament winners were: Best Boat and Best Catch, *Peje,* Best Angler, José Alvarez. The highlight of the late October tournament was when five-year-old angler Osvaldo "Tati" De León Jr. caught a 20-pound wahoo all by himself.

For more information visit the www.leverickbaymarina.com.



ST. CROIX'S DIAZ TOP ANGLER AT WAHOO WIND-UP

Carol Bareuther reports: None of the 114 anglers aboard 27 boats competing in the USVI's 2009 Toyota Wahoo Wind-Up managed to catch a 75-plus pound wahoo, which would have gained them a Toyota 4-wheel drive extended cab truck on November 1st. But that didn't mean there weren't some real whopper wahoos reeled in.



St. Croix's Curtis Diaz, fishing aboard the *Wild Cat,* caught the Largest Wahoo, a 51.5-pounder, and pocketed a US$1,000 cash prize. Eight-year-old Nathan Gatcliffe of St. Thomas, aboard *Double Header IV,* caught the second largest wahoo, a 47.4-pounder. Nathan's father, St. Thomas charter captain, Jonathan Gatcliffe, earned the Best Boat prize for St. Thomas with the catch of five wahoo weighing 173.07 pounds. St. Croix's *Big Bills* won Top Boat for St. Croix with the catch of three wahoo weighing 113.2-pounds. Each captain won $1,000 cash. A total of 28 wahoo, collectively weighing 934.7 pounds, were caught.

The event was hosted by the Virgin Islands Game Fishing Club on St. Thomas and Golden Hook Fishing Club on St. Croix. Personnel from the USVI Department of Planning & Natural Resource's Fish & Wildlife Department conducted the weigh-in.

41ST SPICE ISLAND BILLFISH TOURNAMENT

Gary Clifford reports: EC$100,000 prize money will be up for grabs at the 41st Spice Island Billfish Tournament, Grenada, January 24th through 28th 2010, for the first person to catch a Blue Marlin over 1,000 pounds. Since 2009 the tournament has allowed the use of 80-pound breaking strain line (the previous maximum was 50 pounds); this helps increase the chance of such a fish being landed.

Grenada is usually associated with large catches of blue marlin, white marlin and sailfish (104 were released during the 2009 event) — the capture of one or more of each of these species in a day constitutes a "Grand Slam" and Grenada is the only tournament where this is regularly achieved by at least one of the participating boats during the event (two boats achieved Grand Slams in 2009).

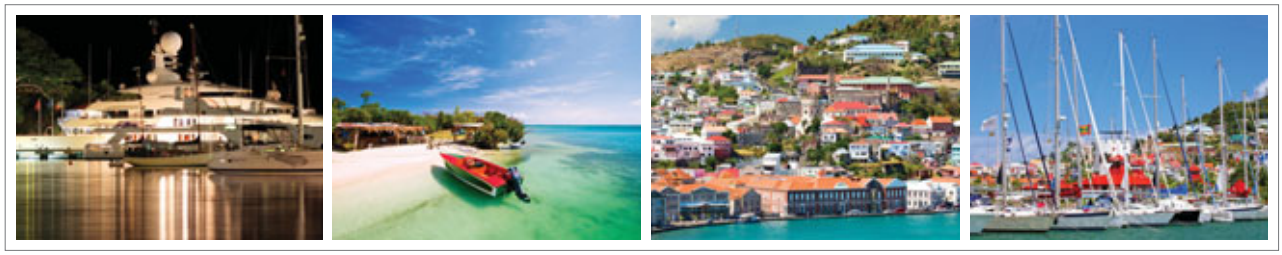
Also for 2010 is a new software system to improve the accuracy and speed of results calculation. We are switching to the use of digital cameras for catch-and-release recording. Only a few of the biggest fish (usually potential record breakers) are retained and weighed for points. Therefore all boats planning to enter this event must bring their own digital cameras.

SIBT is a qualifying tournament in the IGFA Offshore championship. It is also included in the new Southern Caribbean Billfish Circuit, which includes tournaments in Grenada, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, St. Lucia and Martinique.

For more information visit www.sibtgrenada.com.

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Strong Fleet, Light Airs as 24th ARC Embarks for St. Lucia

The 24th edition of the world-famous annual transatlantic yacht rally, the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC), defied the economic doom and gloom, and 209 yachts departed from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria on November 22nd en route to Rodney Bay, Saint Lucia. The largest is the US-registered Swan 112 *Highland Breeze*, at 34.34 metres. The smallest is *Zahara*, a British-registered Sadler 29 (8.67 metres).

Mostly sunny skies and eight to ten knots of northeasterly breeze provided a colourful display of spinnakers hoisted to help the yachts on their way. Winds were forecast to increase to 18 to 23 knots and crews expected moderate tradewind conditions for the first part of their crossing.

The 18 yachts competing in the Racing Divisions, run under the auspices of the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC), were first to start. The expected winds had not yet filled in, so it was a struggle to keep spinnakers flying in the awkward swell. The IOR Maxi *Umatalu* (Anthony Balme, UK) was early over the line, earning a three-hour penalty. The first clear starter, a Grand Soleil 50, *Katawa* (Andreas Costa, Italy), was closely followed by the Wally 80 *Bagheera* (Kemal Cingillioglu, Turkey) and the German JV53, *Auliana II*. Unfortunately, *Auliana II* was abandoned following the loss of the yacht's rudder some 36 hours after the start. The crew was safely evacuated.

Soon after the racing start, the cruising yachts set off. The wind had increased slightly by this time, and at ten to 12 knots, was enough to provide the gentle start most cruisers prefer. Gottfried Poessl's Bavaria 51 *Celox2* (Austria) was first across.



At the start, the dock was full of well-wishers in carnival mode, cheering and dancing. Yachts were bid farewell from Las Palmas via loud speakers around the port and Banda Guayadra, provided by the Ayuntamiento de Las Palmas (City Hall), marched around the marina serenading on every pontoon to add to the festival feel.

Boats had to identify themselves as they left the marina and headed through a "gate" before making their way to the start line. To the delight of the spectators, several crews got into the spirit of the event and dressed up for their departure. There were long blonde wigs aboard *Blonde Moment*; Irish leprechaun hats on *Liberty* and Mexican waves from the ten-man crew of Swan 62RS *Albatros*.

A record 32 nations are represented in this year's event, underlining the fact that the ARC is an international event and the most popular way to sail across the Atlantic. The ARC distinguishes itself by successfully combining racing and cruising yachts with a mix of older and younger participants, all of whom thoroughly enjoy the varied entertainment that is on offer for all ages at both the start and finish ports.

Since January 2006, the ARC has been run by the Cowes-based independent event management company World Cruising Club Ltd, which always tries to incorporate the most popular ideas and proposals put forward to improve the event. This year for the very first time, the yachts in the ARC Racing Divisions carry Yellowbrick satellite tracking devices. These provide automatic position reports uploading to the WCC website every six hours via the Iridium Network.

The 2,700-nautical mile passage on the Northeast Tradewind route takes the fleet, on average, between 14 and 21 days to reach the finish line. The bulk of this year's fleet is expected to arrive in St. Lucia, where a festive welcome awaits, during the week of December 7th.

News from the fleet can be found on the official ARC website where daily yacht position reports will be displayed and visitors can view individual route maps for each yacht. Crews will also contribute daily logs and images direct to www.worldcruising.com/arc.

For more information visit www.worldcruising.com.

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DESTINATIONS

Cruising Venezuela, Summer 2009

by John Burnie



Above: Indaba *alone at anchor — as usual. You can't complain that Venezuelan anchorages are overcrowded!*

Below: Fishing boats become water taxis at Mochima, a popular weekend spot for locals



MY partner, Ann Louise, and I both love sailing in Venezuela between Cumaná and Puerto La Cruz, with the area's plethora of wild and beautiful anchorages all within a few miles of each other. This year, however, after five previous visits, we are noticing a big change. The cruising fraternity seems to have abandoned this part of Venezuela altogether.

On our cruise down from Grenada in *Indaba* we did not see one other vessel sailing in company with us, at any time, anywhere. This is unusual, and a bit unnerving in an area with a reputation for dubious security.

In Los Testigos we were the only yacht moored in the bay adjacent to the *Guarda Costa*. In Porlamar, Isla Margarita, there were a few yachts, but so few compared to last year that it was remarkable. (One businessman who handles entry and other yacht services in Porlamar said he is not sure his business can survive.) And it was the same throughout the formerly popular cruising grounds of the Golfo de Cariaco and Mochima. Ours was the ONLY yacht wherever we went.

There were still a few yachts in the well-known marinas and places like Medregal Village. But the few cruisers who are still in Venezuela seem to have resigned themselves to being stuck in one place. Many have adopted a siege mentality. Few venture out to cruise and most remain in the secure marinas. Marinas that were brimming full just two years ago now have more spaces than yachts.

Regular cruising folk in Puerto La Cruz tell us that they are afraid to go out — unfortunately, probably with good cause. As of this writing, we are moored in company with a brave lady whose husband was murdered on their boat about a year ago when the couple anchored their yacht off Isla Borracho, in a bay once considered safe. Despite her courageous decision then to remain on the yacht based in Venezuela, this stoic individual has now resigned herself to going back to the USA. She feels she is now "always looking over my shoulder".

This dreadful incident, plus a recent attack on another well-known local character off the Peninsula de Paria, and an incident in Carenero harbour at about the same time, has radically changed everyone's opinion regarding the safety of cruising here. Few now consider it safe to spend a night at open anchor.

Times are very hard in Venezuela. Thieving and violence are not directed solely towards the cruising community. Local boaters, including fishermen, have also been attacked and robbed. Some fishermen have been attacked for their nets!

The very good deals of the past are mostly gone. Some prices, in fact, have nearly doubled in two years and are no different from those, say, in Grenada.

But we still love it here and as a cruising ground, especially one below the hurricane belt, you cannot find a better place. There are dolphins waiting to greet you at the harbour entrance and an abundance of sea life that is rare in the mid-Caribbean islands these days. The cultural differences are refreshing after a long season of the "same old songs" up-island. There are marvelous reefs and beaches on the offshore islands and there are very well organized "holiday beaches" with small restaurants and shaded picnic huts. It's all very clean and well run by the Mochima Parks Authority and quite popular with the Venezuelans on weekends.

The friendly and helpful officers of the Guarda Costa, which regularly patrols the area, told me that I was the first foreign tourist they had met at Chimana Grande all year. They said I was very welcome in Venezuela and said they would try to respond immediately should I ever need their assistance.

—Continued on next page

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—*Continued from previous page*

They gave me phone numbers and three radio channels to call them on. This team, together with local police launches, also patrols the Morro waterway in Puerto La Cruz, a large and attractive system of canals lined by beautiful waterside residences of every size and description. It is highly secure and very well run. The only change this year is the complete absence of visiting-cruiser canal traffic, which was so prevalent two years ago.

It's very strange — there are definitely safety and security problems here in Venezuela, but I personally feel less safe in so many other places. In fact, I actually find the island of St. Vincent much more alarming; I really watch my back there and never anchor in the remote areas. Experience in Guadeloupe also alerts me to the fact that certain parts can be as bad as anything in Venezuela. French sailors happily cruise West Africa for months at a time — surely that has to be as insecure an area as anything in the Caribbean.

It is abundantly clear to me that there is no organized, premeditated piracy on yachts in this part of Venezuela, despite what many would have you believe. The term "piracy" is often misused. Piracy, I feel, infers totally premeditated and highly organized crime against vessels on the high seas. In this area of the Caribbean, any attacks on yachts, however shocking and violent they are, in reality remain that — random, disorganized crimes.

Many fishing boats in Venezuela carry guns, as much to protect the fishermen themselves against attacks as anything else. Those guns could be used to rob a cruising yacht, however, if the opportunity arises and the fishing is not going well. I have also read of boats being targeted in port and followed out to sea. But I still believe this is highly random. Until there are heavily armed vessels engaged solely in the business of hunting down and robbing cruising vessels, the term "piracy" seems inappropriate.

There are very poor people in Venezuela, living under such hard circumstances that desperate acts of survival might be inevitable. In better circumstances, these people would be disinclined to engage in opportunist robbery and attacks on yachts, because so many of them see visiting vessels as important contributors to the local revenue.

Most attackers only want money or something they can sell for easy money. This may explain why some so-called "pirates" seem inept and haphazard, nervous and afraid. Inexperienced at robbing, unaccustomed to modern yachts and the "different" personnel aboard, the robbers irrationally "trash" the vessel, a classic response resulting from an anxiety of not actually being sure what to steal or do. Incidents can deteriorate into violence because both the attackers and victims lose any sense of rationale or communication that might defuse the situation.

Most attacks happen because an opportunity presents itself. Available circumstances meet potential perpetrators, often without premeditation. Experience indicates that potential attackers may "go away to think about it", leaving a window of opportunity for alert travellers to leave the area if they have noticed the danger.

We do cruise here on high alert and we take a number of precautionary measures. We have very bright floodlights that we can switch on all over the yacht. We have security "screamers" and pepper sprays. I have a very powerful flare gun; not much against an AK 47 perhaps, but there are few instances of that firepower in this area, despite its reputation as a "pirate" hotspot. We have never actually needed to use any of our safety measures. But we have moved on from anchorages where we felt suddenly wary, especially after boats approached us that we did not feel comfortable about. A keen awareness, particularly of every passing boat, and an innate sense of what is risky, may be our best protection.

The largest portion of the Venezuelan population living near the coast between Caracas and Cumana/Golfo de Cariaco seems friendly and quite "normal" (if there is such a thing). We were visiting the Arapos islands just off mainland Venezuela on Columbus Day, a local holiday, which many locals celebrated with picnics on the beach. Hundreds of fishing-boat "taxis" passed us throughout the weekend. As the only yacht anywhere around, we could not have been more obviously alone and vulnerable. Yet all we felt was that we were an object of curiosity, and — according to the smiles and friendly waves — one that was very welcome.



In Puerto La Cruz is a system of canals lined by beautiful residences

Local people tell me that those who get a taste for robbing often quickly get caught in Venezuela — the deep-rooted Spanish-Catholic culture disapproves of theft as a way of life. As explained to me, very poor people can ill afford to lose any of their meager possessions to theft, so many of them have a curious morality regarding stealing. Even when they are engaged in it themselves against richer people, they don't approve of the principle.

Nonetheless, street crime in the large towns seems to have increased. In Puerto La Cruz, just outside the well-known Bahia Redonda Marina there is a *barrio* with three good fish restaurants. In daylight, cruiser folk still visit them. But the hundred-metre walk is now considered too risky at night. One friendly taxi driver, lamenting the huge loss of visiting tourists, explained that we were two of a mere handful of visitors he had carried in recent months. Five years ago, he said, there was a thriving tourist trade with visitors from all over the world.

Despite an enjoyable summer's cruise, increasingly the evidence accumulates that these once-idyllic coastal cruising grounds of mainland Venezuela are currently to be avoided. Ann Louise and I prefer not to be so security conscious all the time. Nor do we intend to be marina bound. So shortly we will be off to Tortuga and Los Roques. The off-lying islands still feel safe enough to permit proper and enjoyable Caribbean cruising — e.g. one is able to be at anchor without having to monitor every hatch and sound throughout the night.

In truth, this is probably our last visit here and I cannot conceal my disappointment about that. Despite everything, I just love the area. The people are interesting, the culture and the climate are wonderful. What a waste to have to leave because of security fears! But unless things change immediately, which is unlikely, our luck may run out if we continue to try to cruise here with any modicum of normality.

My abiding fear is that this proud and beautiful land is slipping into decline, in such an unnecessary way, and despite the good-natured will of most of its people. Certainly the "normal" Venezuelan people we have met seem genuinely appalled by all the incidents. All want something done.

One painful truth is that the official response to attacks on visiting yachts in Venezuela has been unacceptably indifferent. It is astonishing how government officials fail to see the damage their lack of response does to the country, its tourism and its wider economy. Because of a lethargic response to crimes and the apparent lack of control by authorities and security services, individuals come to believe they can get away with attacks on foreign cruising yachts with impunity. Thus, potential participants in this sort of crime become emboldened.

If the matter of violent crime against visitors is not fully addressed, the sophisticated visitor/cruiser markets, already in severe decline, could collapse. The politicians alone have the control and resources to correct these matters. So far, they offer only lip service, not remedial action. But unless they act soon they will be failing the people of Venezuela. History will condemn them for their lamentable lack of action where it was so vitally necessary. The businesses and the travellers will already be gone.



ANGEL FALLS — VIA THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

ill Roberts

ONE September morning in 2009, Anne of *Freya of Clyde* enquired on the Chaguaramas, Trinidad cruisers' radio net if anyone would be interested in exploring the world's highest waterfall: Angel Falls in Venezuela. My wife Leona and I were among those who replied "yes"!

Our group eventually expanded to six couples from as many boats, with three from the United Kingdom (*Freya*, *Beez Neez* and *El Lobo*), *Blue Song* from Austria/ Germany, *Tashtego* from the USA, and our *Voyageur C* from Canada.

Many cruisers have made the trip from Isla Margarita, Caracas or Puerto La Cruz to Angel Falls, but to our knowledge, no one had done the trip from Trinidad before — especially with our budget objective of US$1,000 per head — and there was a lot of interest from other cruisers. Our timing was dictated by the ferry to Venezuela: it only runs once a week, on Wednesdays. Anne did all the "legwork", coordinating with travel agents Branko and Betty (of Turistico SurAmericaTravel) in Venezuela, and hosting our weekly planning meetings. Yellow fever shots and anti-malaria prescriptions were required and baggage limit would be one backpack per person, plus a carryon.

Although many people have never heard of the Guayana Highlands, that part of Venezuela is the home of Angel Falls — the world's tallest waterfall with an overall height of 979 metres (3,212 feet) and a clear drop of 807 metres (2,647 feet). The area also hosts the Orinoco River and the *tepuis* — huge sandstone mesas that rise thousands of feet above the Gran Sabana, a vast grassland.

On Wednesday, October 7th, we checked in at Pier One at 7:00AM for the 9:00AM departure of the ferry to Guiria, the Venezuelan port of entry on the Gulf of Paria. After a smooth three-and-a-half hour crossing we pulled into the harbour at Guiria. After we waited in the harbour for nearly two hours, the medical officer boarded to check us for swine flu. When the ferry finally pulled up to the dock, Anne was delighted to see Branko and Betty waiting for us.

We celebrated our arrival in Guiria with local beer (3.5 Bf per bottle) and Cacique rum (35 Bf for a 750ml bottle) and dined on excellent Syrian shawarma (18 Bf) while sitting at a table on the street wedged between the gutter and the traffic. To put the prices in perspective, you can buy five Bolivar Fuerte (Bf) for ONE US dollar — at the unofficial rate.

After our overnight stay at the Hotel Plaza in Guiria we took a 12-hour bus ride to Ciudad Bolivar, founded in 1764 as Angostura. (Angostura bitters now come from Trinidad, but that is another story.) Our bus, ably piloted by Carlos, was basically an extended air-conditioned van with little legroom and fixed seats, so the occasional stops were greatly appreciated. Filling up the diesel van was an eye opener — the price was equivalent to one cent per liter! Gasoline is twice as expensive.

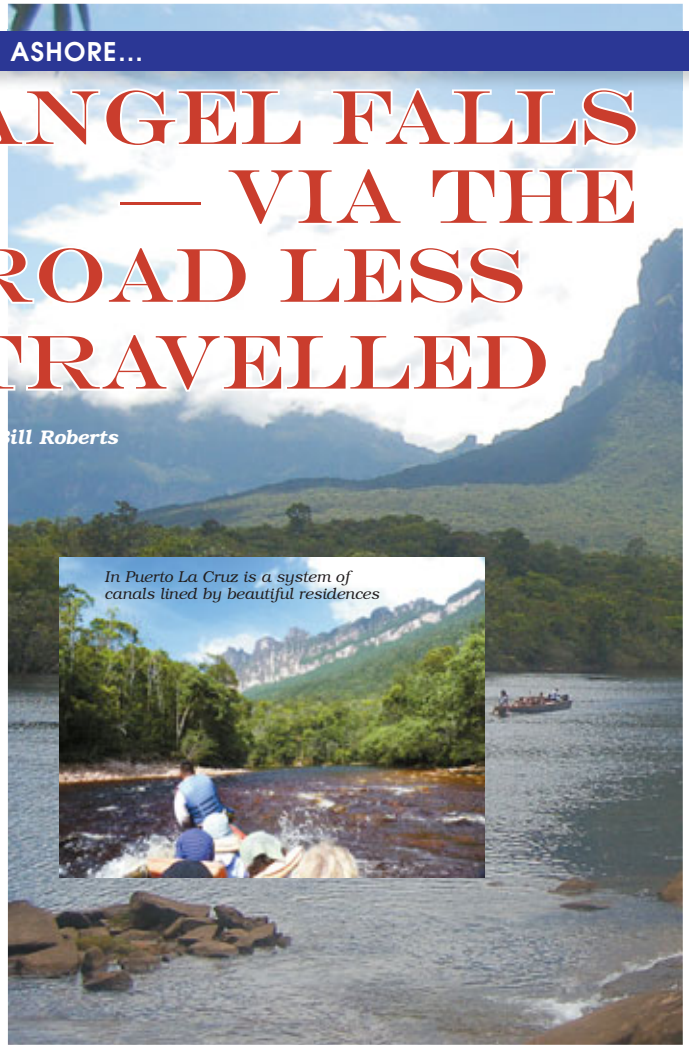
The trip took us through a surprising variety of topography from mountains to plains with grazing cattle. We crossed the Orinoco at dusk on one of only two bridges across this river in Venezuela. We stayed at the Da Gino hotel (a cut above the Plaza) beside the airport and dined on pizza and beer at the hotel restaurant.

Friday morning we went to the airport and met the representative from Sapito Tours (www.sapitotours.com) who had made the arrangements for our group to enter Canaima National Park. The one-and-a-half hour flight to Canaima was made in six-seater aircraft, so everyone had a window seat. Flying at a maximum of 6,500 feet over the 119 miles we had great views of the tepuis and waterfalls as we approached Canaima. Canaima sits on one side of Canaima Lagoon, which is fed by four spectacular waterfalls on the Rio Carrao.

After landing, we walked a short way and were then transported by canoe to Camp Bernal (www.bernaltours.com) on Isla Anatoliy, which is situated in the lagoon between two of the waterfalls. On arrival we were given refreshments and presented with bead bracelets and necklaces. Native people here are the Pemon (who operate the park) and guides must be native. We met our river guide, Danielle, at the camp. Danielle spoke English like a first language — all of the guides here must speak English. The guides we met displayed grace, dignity and excellent knowledge of the local flora and fauna.

We had the balance of the day at the camp so we wandered off to see Salto Hacha (Axe Falls), which featured a lengthy path beneath a rock overhang directly under the falls. It's slippery, so socks are better than shoes or bare feet. Also, you are walking through serious downpours here — ladies, hang onto the tops of your bathing suits!

Later Danielle took us to a lovely sand beach (Playita) just below the Salto El Sapo (Frog Falls sounds less exciting) where we had a swim. Then we crossed through a path behind these falls — quite slippery with water dripping everywhere and very tunnel-like with water on one side and rock on the other three sides. It was impossible to hear anything over the roar of the water a couple of feet away! At the other side of the falls we climbed up and walked back across the top of the falls. Despite the torrents going over the falls, we could walk across the top with dry feet because most of the water flowed through channels cut into and under the rock.



In Puerto La Cruz is a system of canals lined by beautiful residences

We had opted for cabins (four people to a room) with private baths, but the rooms were very hot so some of us slept in hammocks under mosquito nets in the main lodge — basically a roof with no walls.

On the Saturday morning we sorted through our stuff, stored what we would not need at the upper camp and took the canoe to Canaima, then walked through town and up around the falls to Port Ucaima — the *curiara* landing.

A word about the curiara. Our open boat held a party of 17, including the boat driver, a guide and a bowman, with the other 14 of us seated two abreast and our luggage stored under tarpaulins between us and the driver. This presented a full load, especially since river depths were dropping as the rainy season came to an end. The curiara is powered by a 48- or 72-horsepower Yamaha and might draw about six inches.

—*Continued on next page*

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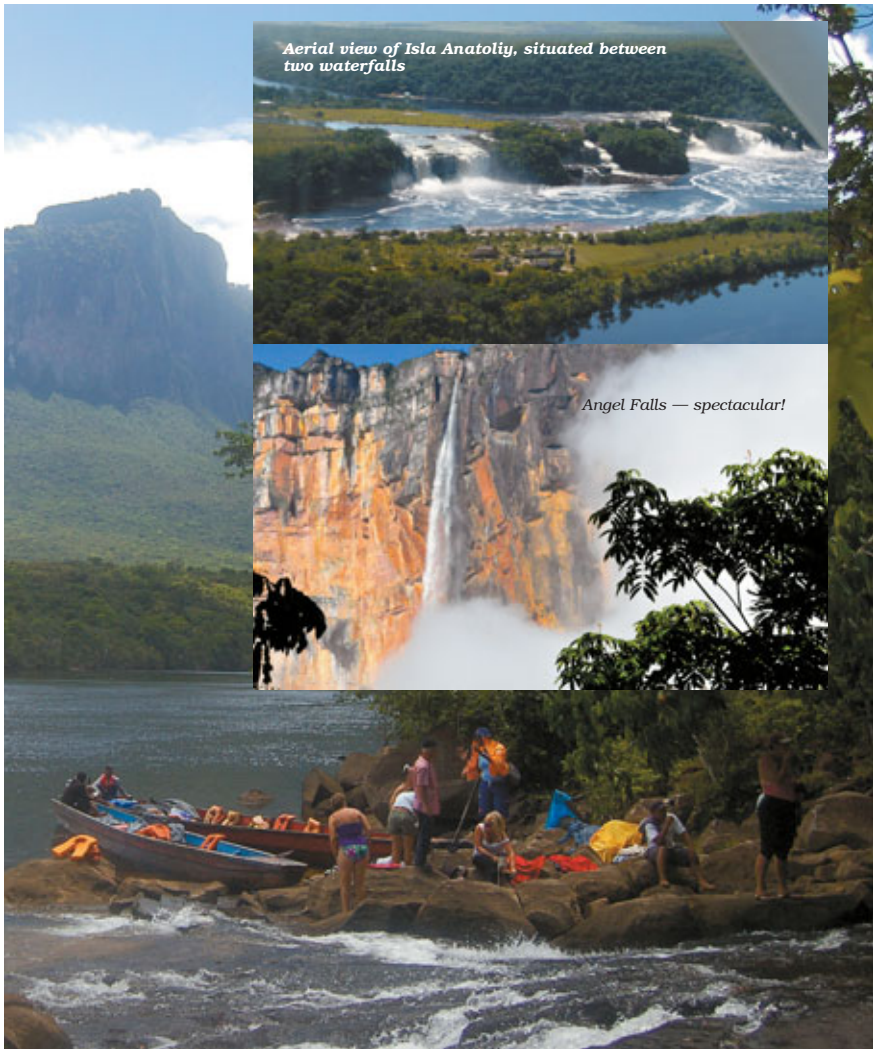
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Aerial view of Isla Anatoliy, situated between two waterfalls

Angel Falls — spectacular!

Stopping for lunch along the riverbank

—Continued from previous page

The boats are massively built of wood with pitch caulking, which is a good thing considering the number of rocks we bounced off or over on the river. They change the propeller and put on the "rock prop" when they leave the main river. In the rapids, the stern man is continuously tilting the motor up and down and side to side to balance propulsion, direction and draft, while the bowman calls the course and wields a large paddle of the Warao pattern to steer the boat. Any cross wind and the bow wave is in your face, and water often slops over the side in the rapids. Getting wet is guaranteed — even if it doesn't rain, which it did for an hour or so.

The curiara trip took us 24 miles up Rio Carrao and then 20 miles up Rio Churun to Refugio Rustico on Isla Raton, base camp for the hike to Angel Falls. About ten miles up the Rio Carrao we all had to get out and walk across the Mayupa Savannah while the curiara ran the rapids. Five miles further upriver we stopped for a box lunch at a waterfall where we enjoyed the rock pool and the natural shower. From there we entered the spectacular land of the tepuis with steep mountains, forested lowlands and waterfalls around every corner.

While there are only a couple of rapids on Rio Carrao, the run up Rio Churun in particular involves miles of rapids and shallow spots and the water levels change rapidly with the weather. A couple of times a few of us had to walk around some of the rapids and once on the way up Devil's Gorge we all had to fend the boat off while passing between humungous rocks in mid-channel — on our first attempt we drifted backwards downriver.

Overall, the upriver trip took seven hours including stops, and we arrived at Isla Raton around 5:00PM. Refugio Rustico is an appropriate name — hammocks enclosed in mosquito nets slung over a dirt floor under a thatched roof with benches for dining and relaxing. No running water or electricity, but the food was abundant and excellent, especially the wood-fired barbecued chicken! Bonus: This is the only camp that has a view of the falls — great morning light!

On the Sunday morning we crossed the river and hiked for an hour toward Auyun Tepui (Evil Mountain), the home of Angel Falls. The trail is well marked with easy going for the first half but the second half is quite steep up to the Mirador Laime viewpoint elevation at 2,300 feet. The view of the falls is spectacular. We lucked into a perfectly clear and sunny day. After lounging on the rocks at the viewpoint we descended a very steep trail to the pool at the bottom of the falls. Here we enjoyed a long swim, washing off the trail grime and sweat.

There you have it — four days and 24 hours of travel to reach the falls!

We returned to Isla Raton, had lunch and embarked on the downriver trip. The water level had dropped so there were a couple more portages. At one point the boat was doing over 20 miles per hour down the rapids. However, the trip was slower than the guides had planned, so we made the Mayupa portage in twilight and the last ten miles on the river in the dark — a tad unnerving, but we were past all the rapids. We docked at the upper end of Isla Anatoliy and then hiked down to Camp Bernal in the dark, thankful for our Petzl headlamps and Danielle's knowledge of the trails. The trip downriver was faster by two hours, but 12 hours over two days sitting on a wooden plank screams for a cushion on which to sit. The river trips are the most exciting segment of the trip!

Monday morning we walked back to Salto Hacha, crossed under the waterfall overhang and climbed across a headland to swim in the pool under the adjacent falls, Salto Wadaima. Then back to camp for lunch where we were royally entertained by the Canaima children's choir in native costume singing in Spanish and Pemon. Afterwards we rushed to the airport to catch the plane to Ciudad Bolivar.

On the bus on Tuesday, we enjoyed a daylight view of the three-year-old Orinoquia Bridge across the three-kilometre wide Orinoco River and stopped to shop at the Warao camp at Rio Morichal Largo. They would sell a small monkey for 500 Bf and also had a couple of agouti in cages for sale, as well as the usual baskets and beadwork. Along the way, we passed another person with an armadillo for sale.

We said goodbye to Betty and Branko in Carupano and arrived back in Guiria around 9:00PM — yet another 12-hour bus trip.

The next morning we found the shipping agency (Acosta y Asociados) where we paid our 80 Bf departure tax and got our names on the ferry's manifest. We found a wonderful bakery for breakfast, and then checked in at the ferry around 2:00PM and we were back in Chaguaramas at 7:30PM.

Our complex arrangements all worked flawlessly with no glitches. All agreed we had a truly wonderful week — on time and on budget.

Bill and Leona Roberts left Halifax, Canada aboard their Island Packet 35 Voyageur C *in September 2007 and have been cruising the Eastern Caribbean for the past two years.*



CARIBBEAN CELEBRATIONS

'MAROONED' ON UNION ISLAND

by Ann Vanderhoof



ALL PHOTOS: STEVE MANLEY

"*Carpe diem*," the lyric poet Horace wrote more than 2,000 years ago. And when you're a cruiser, seizing the day wherever you drop the hook invariably reinforces how very right Horace was.

When the yachts *Receta* and *Tusen Takk II* arrived in Union Island's Chatham Bay early last June, it would have been oh-so-easy to spend a couple of days just hanging out in that lovely Grenadines anchorage. But Chuck on *Tusen Takk II* had a plan, and *Receta*'s crew seized it with a vengeance: Walk from Chatham Bay to the town of Ashton, where we could catch a bus to the town of Clifton, and from there climb to the top of the Pinnacle, an aptly named, steep-sided, high-rising chunk of rock, reportedly one of the island's toughest and most spectacular hikes. ("You need to have a good head for heights," Chris Doyle writes in his guide, describing the Pinnacle's "dramatic 360-degree precipitous view.")

Chuck, Barb, Steve, and I set off early the next morning, scrabbling up the hill behind Chatham Bay's beach (a modest warm-up for the hike to come) and then following the road from (more or less) the middle of the west side of the island around to Ashton in (more or less) the middle of the south side, rewarded by expansive views of turquoise-green water broken by patches of frothing reef. As we descended into Ashton, the second-largest village on this friendly island of about 3,000 residents, and stopped in a shop for a cold drink before the next leg of our adventure, we were greeted with: "Have you come for the Maroon?"

The Maroon — an annual celebration that gives thanks for last year's harvest and marks the start of the planting season (and the rainy season) — is one of Union Island's most important cultural activities. The main Maroon, spearheaded by the Roots Connection Culture Club, takes place in Clifton each May, three days before or after the full moon. But this year, Ashton was also holding a Maroon, and only serendipitous good luck (and a belief in *carpe diem*) has brought us here on the very day of this traditional event. Its roots stretch back to West African harvest rites, which came to the Caribbean with slavery. Escaped slaves, who joined together in communities on Union and other islands, were called Maroons; from this grew the Maroon festival, which celebrates not just the start of the planting season, but also the unity of people coming together.

The celebration includes singing, drumming, dancing, and communal cooking. "The cooking is already starting," one of the villagers tells us, pointing to a cleared area…

—Continued on next page

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—*Continued from previous page*

…down the road, where we can see smoke rising from wood fires and women in long red-and-white dresses with matching headscarves "seasoning up" mutton and goat, and lugging big blackened pots — cauldrons, actually — to the fires, where they are supported on tripods of rocks.

Red and white are the colors of the St. John Spiritual Baptist Church, which is behind the Ashton Maroon, Masani DeFreitas tells us. "It took us a while to get our finances in order," she explains, which is why Ashton's Maroon is being held two days before June's full moon. (Going back to their beginnings, Maroons were scheduled



Main photo: The communal cooking starts early in the day. Everything is cooked outdoors over wood fires
Inset: 'One of our hosts positioned herself on an upturned crate with a drum clutched between her knees'
Above: The drumming, singing, and dancing in the afternoon gave us a taste of the Big Drum Dance to come that evening
Right: Building an appetite: Chuck Shipley of Tusen Takk II *starts to descend the Pinnacle*

around the full moon so there would be light for the festivities, which extend long into the night.)

We hatch a revised plan: After we conquer the Pinnacle, we'll return to Ashton to catch the Maroon in full swing. "How long will the cooking go on?" Chuck asks. "Until everyone on the island has something to eat," Masani replies. She's not exaggerating: Maroons are all-island feasts, and everyone from schoolkids to their parents to our quartet of cruisers will be given a groaning plateful, without charge. Donations are welcome, though, and we leave Masani with a contribution and a promise that she'll see us again later in the day.

Fast forward four hours or so. The bus from Clifton deposits four very tired, very sweaty cruisers back in Ashton. Despite the absence of anything resembling a marked trail, we'd made it to the top of the Pinnacle; Chuck climbed to the very highest rock, while the rest of us were content to enjoy the view (as spectacular as advertised) from a slightly lower perch. "A good head for heights" was indeed an asset — as was a willingness to cling goatlike to narrow ledges and boost each other over boulders. Having a helpful bus driver who circled around until he got us to the most advantageous starting point (by the radio mast) didn't hurt either.

Sleepy Ashton has come alive in the time we've been away — it's now filled with music, people, and mouthwatering smells. We are immediately offered cold drinks (*very* welcome, after the Pinnacle), followed by heaping plates of food. The rich sauce from the meaty stew is absorbed by mounds of rice and balls of coo-coo (West Indian cornmeal polenta), with provision and salad on the side. After we eat, Chuck and I wander over to where several women are making dumplings, and we're immediately invited to pinch off pieces from a mammoth mound of dough and try our hands. The Union ladies shape smooth, perfect disks; Chuck and I produce ragged, irregular splats. More practice is clearly needed.



Meanwhile, one of our hosts has positioned herself on an upturned crate with a drum clutched between her knees and is beating out a rhythm. Other women start to sing and dance to traditional folksongs that clearly have African ancestry. Bodies twirl, skirts swirl, and hands clap to the rhythm. But this is just the start.

"The Big Drum Dance come this evening," a young woman next to me says. "Tonight, there will be many *many* drums, and many *many* people singing and dancing. You're coming back tonight, aren't you?" Unfortunately not. Though we happily seized the day, it's just too difficult to seize the night from our Chatham Bay anchorage.

"Back in time," the ancestors of the people gathered here called on the god or goddess of rain to open the heavens for planting season. This aspect of the Maroon, however, has long disappeared.

Still. Let the record show it poured the next day.

For information about the 2010 Maroons on Union Island, call the Roots Connection Culture Club, (784) 527-0207.

Ann Vanderhoof is the author of An Embarrassment of Mangoes. *Her new book,* The Spice Necklace, *will be published in January.*

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CARIBBEAN CELEBRATIONS

Barbuda Birthday

CHRIS DOYLE



Ryan Weaver

July 20th, 2009 was one special day.

65 years ago — Bomb almost assassinated Hitler.

40 years ago — First bootprint mashed into lunar dust.

30 years ago — I was born.

Thirtieth birthdays are vulnerable to insults, I discovered. My younger sisters looked with persistence for symptoms of my new old age: hair loss and gain in all the wrong places, wrinkles, a limp, liver spots, incontinence, etcetera.

My parents sympathized by whisking me away to Barbuda. It wasn't a very far whisking because we were already in Antigua. Still, an escape from an escape ought to keep my newly old disposition refreshed and cheerful.

The *Barbuda Express* ferry parking lot was empty except for a beer label fluttering across the pavement. When I mentioned our reservations to the ticket lady she looked at her paperwork and cranked an eyebrow up a good half-inch.

"Says here you en't have no tour," she said.

"We prefer to do our own thing."

"Ooo-kay."

Courtesy of recent atmospheric temper tantrums, the ferry crossing was adventuresome. We performed levitation tricks each time the catamaran went freefalling down the backside of a swell. Mom tried to enhance the thrill of this phenomenon by hopping but accidentally launched her head into the roof and was forced into retirement.

Despite earnest effort we made only a splashy, millimetric progress. It was not hard to believe that the Apocalypse would arrive before Barbuda.

We weren't able to sight the island until it was right in front of us, because it's flat. This was news to me. I suddenly came to the realization that I knew nothing about Barbuda. Nothing, that is, except what the perpetual ad-campaign in my travel magazines claimed: that Barbuda was all beauty and charm, riches and exclusivity — just the type of snooty island one deserved on one's 30th birthday.

But the port wasn't snooty. In fact I could identify nothing resembling a port. Instead, Captain Greg seemed to be deliberately pointing our bow at an eyesore of a shipwreck. The shipwreck consisted of rusty iron ribs drooping into a shallow sea.

Beyond the shipwreck lay a milky lagoon and a wharf where some battered boats rollicked. Ashore, two busted vans awaited arriving locals. That was it. No taxis; no buildings; nothing. Nearby an elevator dumped sand atop an industrial-sized pile that grew no bigger because the wind whipped it all off and carried it along the road and flung it into our faces.

"Happy Birthday, Ryan!" Mom shouted.

Ha, ha, ha!

I assured my bewildered party that if we walked out past the chain-link fence with the faded plywood welcome sign we'd surely hit a town soon. No island whose bloodline was tourism, I assured them, would dare maroon their tourists in this rubble pit.

But the view stretching far down River Road (there are no rivers on Barbuda, by the way) consisted of nothing but potholes and palm trees. We trudged back and knocked on the window of the only vehicle left at the ferry landing. The driver seemed baffled when we said we wanted to go to town.

"To rent a car," I explained.

This put the driver in a state of noggin-scratching pontification. He scrolled through his phone contacts and dialed the proprietor of (let's call it) Acme Rentals:

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Acme agreed to help us out and I found myself charmed once again by the Caribbean work ethic: why waste time holding regular hours at your rental car agency when you could take the day off until someone phoned? It's sound logic.

The island passing us by looked parched, thorny and scrubby, the type of place you'd expect to see cattle bones half buried in the dirt. The road was poor.

—Continued on next page

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Codrington Village (where most of the 1,500 residents live) was poor, too. A wild-looking old man in shorts and rubber boots strolled by twirling a machete. Somebody was cooking barbecue in an oil drum. The driver pulled over suddenly and we looked around in alarm. Had we lost our tailpipe? Run out of transmission fluid?

"I think we're looking at Acme Rentals," Pops whispered.

Before us lay humble dilapidation. A barbed-wire fence enclosing a small property shipwrecked in weeds. House of paneled plywood, roof of tin. Rags fluttering in the open windows, small faces peeking out. Three punished-looking automobiles in front representing the rental car fleet of Barbuda.

It was becoming increasingly clear why an eyebrow would raise at paperwork saying "no tour".

Acme herself looked at us from the stoop. Caught unawares, she hadn't found time to clean the car. It smelled peculiar and could have doubled as a preschool sandbox. Also, she said, it was running on fumes and we'd better hurry to the petrol station because it closed at noon.

TIME OUT, I thought as we raced for gas. REFOCUS. Clearly we weren't going to get what we *thought* we paid for in Barbuda, and unmet expectations can lead to regret. Better come up with new expectations, for adaptation is crucial to happy travel.



Above: Guided by a saint, Yllithia captures a sunbeam in Indian Cave

Below: 'We passed nothing but donkeys and shrubs and puddles for miles…'



We filled up and were some way down the road when Pops jerked to the shoulder bellowing "Flat tire!" The tires were more or less inflated, however. We tried to push on but it sounded like a World War II battle was being reenacted in our left axle. I got out and watched the tire going jabberwocky — three lugs hanging by a thread and one missing.

"No biggie!" I reported. "Our tire almost just fell off, that's all."

Ha, ha, ha!

Fortunately, this was a quick fix. We proceeded to crunch over long dirt roads until everyone was convinced we were lost and without hope of survival. Then a sign said Two Foot Bay, which I recognized from a pamphlet as being a good place to be. Pops pulled over at a thick stone ruin and somebody in a truck pulled up alongside to inquire how we were getting along. He never introduced himself; we will call him Saint.

Saint guided our hike to Indian Cave. Indians favored the cave, he explained, because of a ghoulish face in the rock. Apparently the horror of it inspired them. Only two petroglyphs remain, and although they were right under our noses we never would've found them without Saint pointing.

It was a huge cave full of sunspots and dazzling color. Pink. Green. Blue. White. This is where I'd come to survive a hurricane or throw a good party, I thought.

Before parting ways I asked Saint for directions to famous Darby Cave, and he drew me a mental map to the geocentric middle of nowhere and advised me not to try it without a guide or only the buzzards would find us.

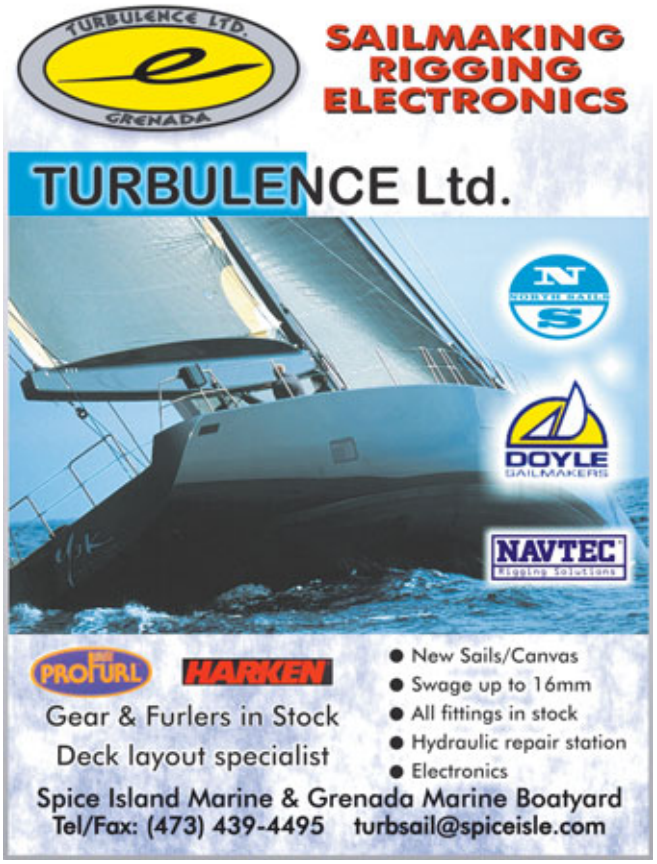
So we got lost looking for the pink sand beaches instead. There are 17 miles of pink sand beach on Barbuda and no access. Not that *we* could find, anyway. We fishtailed upon dozens of soft sandy trails only to hit their cul-de-sac ends. We passed nothing but donkeys and shrubs and puddles for miles. In the end it took me climbing a sand dune to get something like a compass bearing for us to find the true End of the Road.

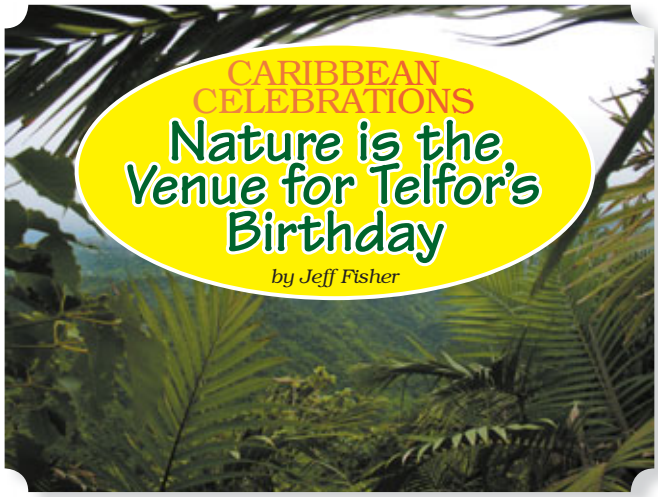
And there it was. Blazing white sand with pink sprinkles as far as one could see.

Nothing "ha, ha, ha" about this beach. This was *by far* the most exquisite beach any of us had ever seen. I took off running with my girlfriend, Yllithia. Swam with Mom and went shell collecting with Pops. Wrote "Happy Birthday" to myself in the soft pink sand. Laid back and looked up.

TIME OUT, I thought. SAVOR. This feeling now, this is why you travel the Caribbean. This feeling can be translated into the only wisdom I've gleaned from 30 years, the only advice I can share with complete confidence: seek out the places that fill you with the profound satisfaction of being alive… and linger.







CARIBBEAN CELEBRATIONS

Nature is the Venue for Telfor's Birthday

by Jeff Fisher

Windsurfer, rower, folklorist and hiking guide Telfor Bedeau is unique. He is the first person to have climbed Grenada's highest mountain, Mount Saint Catherine, 100 times (the record hundredth time at age 60), and has circumnavigated his home island of Grenada by windsurfer (self-taught, in his 60s), by rowboat (twice — once in each direction) and on foot (to raise funds for charity in the name of his late daughter).

Telfor Bedeau was born in Grenada on October 15th, 1939, just about the time the Second World War started. He grew up on the island's coast on the outskirts of the town of Grenville. He became a seaman, sailing the old cargo schooners up and down the island chain. He built his first rowing boat and called her *Sea Hiker*. He rowed his boat up and down the coast, visiting the outlying islands and exploring the seashore. He was also a land surveyor for a few years, giving him the opportunity to explore many places in Grenada. He is now a full-time hiking and walking guide to all parts of Grenada and knows the interior better than anyone else.

A week before his 70th birthday this year he invited me to join him on a commemorative boat ride around Grenada to celebrate his last rowing circumnavigation, which was 12 years ago in *Sea Hiker II*. Four of us took off from the fishing village of Soubise on Grenada's east coast at seven in the morning, in a fast open fishing boat. The sea was calm, the weather fine: a perfect day. Heading north, we passed by Sandy, Green and Sugarloaf islands, London Bridge, Isle de Caille and Isle de Ronde, fishing all the way with no luck. We stopped in the lee of Isle de Ronde and cracked a bottle of champagne before heading down the west coast of Grenada.

Reaching the capital, St. George's, we pulled in to Port Louis Marina for another drink, Telfor trying out the quality of their margaritas. Our next stop was True Blue Bay on the south coast, again for margaritas. Last stop was Clarke's Court Bay Marina, and then we sped up the east coast and arrived back in Soubise by late afternoon. (Rowing around Grenada had taken Telfor two days, with in a net rowing time of 20 hours.)

But the boat ride wasn't the only birthday activity; Telfor celebrated his 70th for the whole month of October. On the 15th, his actual birthday, he wanted to climb Mount Saint Catherine with friends. This would be his 158th ascent of the 2,750-foot (845-metre) mountain, more than a hundred of which he did as a guide for hikers. About 20 of us met in Grenville at eight in the morning, took a bus to Mount Horn and started hiking. The first couple of hours were relatively easy; there was a road many years ago so the trail is well defined and not too steep. The last part is a steep incline, a narrow, muddy and slippery trail. Fortunately the vegetation offers good handholds, otherwise it would be an impossible task. The views when the clouds parted were spectacular. The top portion was misted over, appearing and disappearing in the fast-moving clouds. It was this last section that Telfor wanted to time himself on. His fastest time was 30 minutes, set years ago, and now he wanted to see how much slower Father Time had made him. It made him 15 minutes slower; he made it in 45.

At the top, three bottles of champagne materialized and we all toasted Telfor's health and made jokes about the next time we would all climb up again.

Telfor Bedeau can be reached for hikes in Grenada at (473) 442-6200.



Above: Telfor and friends ascending Grenada's tallest mountain on his 70th birthday

Inset: His love of exploring the land and sea keeps Telfor Bedeau young

Below: A champagne toast in the lee of Isla de Ronde





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CARIBBEAN CELEBRATIONS

A Million Little Lights — Divali in Trinidad

by Devi Sharp

The small village of Felicity twinkled with hundreds of tiny fires burning in small clay pots. Mouthwatering smells of curry wafted from kitchens and Indian music drifted from houses as people walked through the streets admiring the lights and chatting with families who were sitting outside their houses in this traditional East Indian village in western Trinidad.

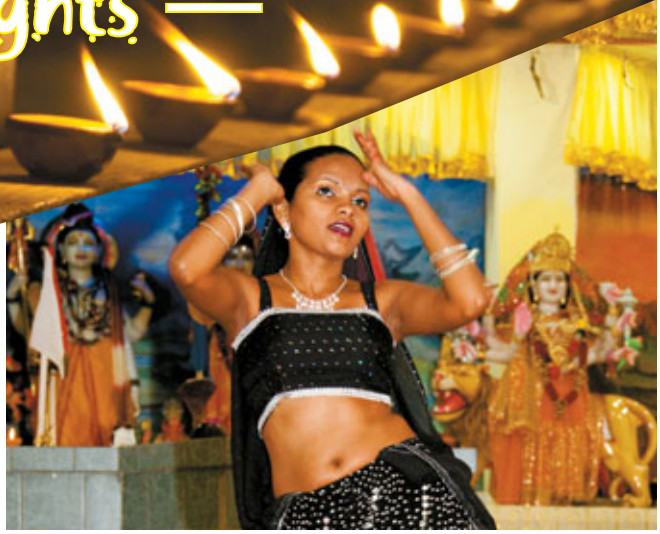
For several years my husband, Hunter, and I have heard rave reviews from other cruisers of their visits to an East Indian village during the Divali festival. This year we were in Trinidad at the right time, so on October 17th we joined a group of fellow cruisers on a trip organized by Jesse James of Members Only taxi service. We were welcomed to the Hindu temple by a priest in a long robe and instructed to remove our shoes before entering the temple. Inside we were free to look at the altar and take photos. At first I was a bit uncomfortable taking photos inside a temple, but we were encouraged to use our cameras. The altar was ringed by statues called murti, sacred images of deities that provide a point of devotional and meditational focus. The priest welcomed us and told us about the murti and some of the traditions associated with



'A small but energetic band of Tassa drummers played for us'

Divali. We were spellbound by the graceful young woman in traditional garb who danced to Indian music. I am sure some eyes were glued to her bare muscular midriff, but clearly her hands and body told a story. A small but energetic band of Tassa drummers played for us. These traditional Indo-Caribbean drums are hung around the neck. We were told that the two drummers and one cymbal player were a much-abbreviated version of their band.

Divali (sometimes spelled Diwali) is a Hindu festival that symbolizes the lifting of spiritual darkness and spiritual and social renewal. The actual date varies from year to year, and is keyed to the day of the new moon in October. The word Divali means an array of lamps (*deep*: lamp; *vali*: array) and is celebrated by Hindus around the world with the lighting of the small clay pots, called diyas, which contain oil and a cotton wick that is lit. Although Divali is a Hindu festival, in Trinidad's multicultural and multi-religious society, it is a national holiday observed by people of all denominations. East Indians represent 44 percent of the total population of Trinidad and of that group 24 percent are Hindus, but everyone gets a day off work and many



'We were spellbound by the graceful young woman who danced to Indian music'

people dress in traditional Indian garb and light diyas at work or around their table in the days leading up to Divali.

The actual celebration of Divali lasts for five days. The climax is the lighting of the diyas after sundown on the last day. Diyas are lit by the thousands in yards, open spaces, staircases, roundabouts and porches. They are usually placed on bamboo stalks bent into fantastic shapes and designs.

If you have ever taken a trip with Jesse you know there will be food, good food, and plenty of it. We reclaimed our shoes (I did have thoughts of upgrading my footwear) and were ushered into a small dining hall. There was a large piece of palm leaf at each place. The *soharie* leaf was at each place, and not as a placemat — it would be our plate. We loaded up our leaves with traditional Indian foods: pumpkin, channa (curried chick peas); mango, curried chataigne, kuchila and roti skin. The roti was used to pinch up the other food on the plate. It was delicious and we were not allowed to leave until we were showing signs of being really well fed.



ALL PHOTOS: STEVE MANLEY

Well fortified, we walked around town as the sun went down. Women in colorful saris and men in robes, as well as those in western clothing, lit the diyas around their houses. A young boy had arranged diyas around his bike. Families were sitting out on patios eating, drinking (non- alcoholic beverages) and chatting. Small fireworks punctuated the Indian music and the soft lights of the diyas.

Cruisers were not the only visitors wandering around the town of Felicity. Many Trinis had travelled to enjoy the lights, sights and sounds of this traditional festival. And we were glad we came.

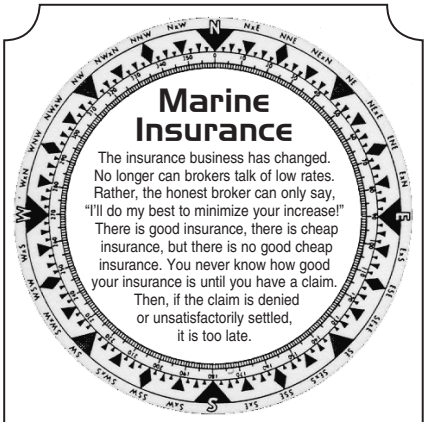


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WILFRED DEDERER



The Caribbean is synonymous with good times. Of course, every regatta is a party, but there are loads of non-sailing celebrations that are just as much fun. From the multi-sensory explosion of Carnival season to the low-key pleasures of an afternoon's beach or river 'cook-up', the region is awash with boat-accessible events large and small that visitors are encouraged to join in and enjoy.

Here are just a few upcoming highlights:

New Year's Eve/Old Year's Night

Fort-de-France, Martinique, traditionally celebrates this holiday a day before most — the "Boucans de la Baie" festival, with a fireworks display over the harbor and special late opening hours of museums and restaurants in the town on the evening of December 30th.

On December 31st, English Harbour, Antigua, offers the strictly-for-fun annual Nelson's Pursuit yacht race, while Admiralty Bay, Bequia, is a favored place for a waterfront pub-crawl and midnight fireworks show.

Music Festivals

The 17th Annual Barbados Jazz Festival, January 11th through 17th, will feature international acts ranging from Motown icon Smokey Robinson to the Cuban Classics, performing at a range of venues.

The St. Barts Music Festival, January 11th through 20th gives you a chance to enjoy classical music with the chic set.

One of the stars of the St. Thomas USVI Blues Festival on January 22nd is its great open-air amphitheatre venue at the University of the Virgin Islands campus.

The 15th Annual Mustique Blues Festival, January 27th through February 10th, stars British blues diva Dana Gillespie and her London Blues Band.

WILFRED DEDERER



Opposite page: Jake Zaitz and Ian Siegal at the Bequia Music Fest 2009

The eclectic Bequia Music Fest, January 28th through 31st, will host the Mustique Blues Festival on one night and on other nights will showcase regional musicians including Bequia's own international reggae star Papa Winnie, plus the Mount Gay Blues Band from Barbados with special guest Toby Armstrong.

Moonsplash 2010's "Family Reunion", March 25th through 28th, is a four-day reggae party in Anguilla hosted by Bankie Banx.

The 4th International Aruba Piano Festival, April 17th through 24th, is not for pianists only, and has recitals, matinees and master classes.

—Continued on next page

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Entertainers at St. Lucia Jazz Festival 2010, May 1st through 9th, will include Jean-Luc Ponty, Maxi Priest, Steel Pulse and Foreigner. Visitors to the island at that time will be in for a two-for-one treat as Saint Lucia will be one of the host nations for the International Cricket Council's World Twenty20 Tournament. The two Group Stage matches will take place before the main stage shows of Saint Lucia Jazz Festival. The Semi Final matches take place in the week following Jazz.

The BVI Music Festival, May 24th through 31st, boasts a nice seaside location at Cane Garden Bay.

Martinique's Fête de la Musique, June 21st, is a celebration of Martinique's rich musical tradition with free concerts performed in the streets throughout the island.

The World Creole Music Festival is held in Dominica during the last weekend in October, showcasing various forms of musical fusion from the countries of the Creole-speaking world.

And, if you are a singer or musician, listen to the cruisers' radio nets, talk to locals and ask around at Happy Hour to find out about jam sessions that you can join — or just start playing in your own cockpit and see who turns up!

Carnivals

Virtually every island has its carnival, and while some celebrate on the traditional dates of the Monday and Tuesday before Lent, others are spread throughout the year — and they are all different. Here are a few that demonstrate that diversity:

Not content with a two-day event, the St. Croix Christmas Festival kicks off on December 5th with an Old Time Traditional Parade, and runs through January 3rd when there will be boat races. Similarly, Montserrat's Christmas Festival Celebrations extend until a street parade on New Year's Day.



STEVE MANLEY

Famous for "bikinis and beads" street parades and stupendous Carnival Queen costumes, Trinidad Carnival will climax on February 15th and 16th.

These are also the dates for traditional carnival in Carriacou, which is quite different: don't miss Shakespeare Mas, when masqueraders compete by commenting on the happenings of the day in verse.

Each year as revelers in other Carnival hot spots wind down with the close of Shrove Tuesday, the party in Martinique keeps going, reaching a decadent climax on one of the most solemn days on the Christian calendar, Ash Wednesday. The fitting theme for Martinique's "bonus" day of revelry is "Rejoice Today, Repent Tomorrow!"

Other Happenings

The International Cinema Festival of Guadeloupe, January 29th to February 6th, will take place in the city of Le Lamentin. The film festival's theme for 2010 is "From the West Indies to Asia".

The Caribbean Arts & Crafts Festival runs from March 5th through 10th at Trellis Bay, Tortola. Trellis Bay also features monthly Fireball Full Moon Parties.

"May in Saint Pierre", Martinique, commemorates the anniversary of the cataclysmic 1902 eruption of Mount Pelée that annihilated the town. There will be a series of lectures, presentations and guided tours offering greater insight into this historic event.

See more events for December and January in the calendar on page 50. We'll give you a complete annual Calendar of Events for 2010, including regattas and much more, in next month's issue of *Caribbean Compass*, and bring you news of more events as they arise.



LUCIE ROLLAND

Above: Beauty, bikinis and beads at Trinidad Carnival 2008

Right: Cruisers get in the spirit at Grenada Carnival 2009



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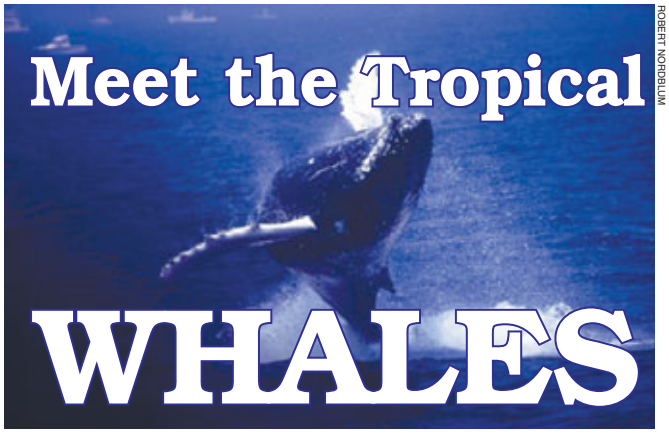




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ROBERT NORDBLUM

by Nathalie Ward

Here is an introduction to some of the whales you might see in the Caribbean.

Humpback Whale

From a distance, a group of humpbacks swimming in single file appears to be the rippling coils of a gigantic sea serpent as they arch and submerge simultaneously. Perhaps the most familiar of the great whales, the humpback whale gets its common name from the hump on the forward part of the dorsal fin and from the way the back flexes, or "humps", before a deep dive. Its long white flippers make it virtually unmistakable at close range and also give this whale its scientific name, *Megaptera novaeangliae*, which translates to "big wing of New England".

Humpbacks tend to favor shallow areas, often quite close to shore. They are among the most sociable of the great whales and the most active at the surface, which makes them among the easiest to observe. As a result, we know more about this species than any other large whale.

Humpback whales have been recorded at nearly all islands in the Eastern Caribbean. The largest breeding concentrations occur in the waters of the Dominican Republic on Silver and Navidad Banks and Samana Bay. Additional wintering populations are found on Virgin Bank, Mouchoir Bank, and in the Mona Passage, Puerto Rico, with smaller concentrations reported throughout the Lesser Antilles including Antigua, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Grenada, Trinidad & Tobago and along the Venezuela coast.

They are not exactly gentle giants. Loud "*wamps*" and "*whumps*" are typical sounds as one male humpback collides with another on the breeding grounds. Dorsal fins and snouts are bloodied as the barnacles that grow on humpbacks turn a low-level shove into a serious scrape. Males are aggressive as they jockey for position near a cow (a female whale). They lunge along the surface with their heads lifted and gulp water to swell their massive throats in an attempt to make themselves appear larger, much as land mammals do by raising their hackles or manes. They blast their rivals with disorienting clouds of bubbles, fending them off by extending their pectoral fins and lashing at one another with their tail flukes.

Their breeding system is complex. Males compete for females with lunges, tail slashes, blocks, and charges. Competitive groups may consist of two to more than 20 males around a single female, vying for the best positions, and these groups last for hours.

When a big whale dives, currents set in motion by the passage of so many tons of flesh come eddying up in a column that smoothes the surface of the sea. This flat, waveless patch on the surface of the water, known as a flukeprint, is the telltale giveaway that a whale is beneath the surface.

Bryde's Whale

The best means to distinguish the Bryde's whale (pronounced *BROO-dus*) at sea is to look for the three prominent ridges that run longitudinally down the top of the head. The three ridges run from just behind the tip of the snout to right in front of the blowholes and are composed of one central ridge and two lateral sub-ridges.

Bryde's whales are most easily confused with sei and fin whales in lower latitudes. Sei and fin whales are usually larger, with only one rostral ridge (rather than three) and are less likely to arch the back during a dive. On the belly, the throat grooves ("ventral pleats") extend to or beyond the navel, whereas the throat grooves of the sei do not reach the navel. Fin whales have a distinctive right lower jaw (in Bryde's whales, both jaws are dark gray, although they may both be white in the "pygmy" form) and a more variably shaped dorsal fin that appears at the surface after the blowholes. Minke whales are much smaller and rarely have a visible blow. The humpback whale is darker and stockier, usually with a less prominent and less sickle-shaped dorsal fin, and frequently raises its flukes while diving.



MARSLYN LEWIS-ADAMS

Above: Three ridges on the head identify a Bryde's whale

In general, Bryde's whales are identified by their grey body, sometimes mottled, and prominent, sickle-shaped dorsal fin. Adults may reach 13 to 15.5 metres (43 to 51 feet) and up to 30 tons; at birth approximately 3.4 metres (11 feet), and one ton. It is now accepted that there are at least two forms of the species, which may vary in size and migratory habits.

Bryde's whales are seen singly or in small groups of two to six individuals, although larger concentrations may be found in areas of food abundance. They feed largely on schooling fishes, anchovies and juvenile tuna but also eat cephalopods and pelagic crustaceans. Bryde's whales are believed to spend all of their time in warm water. Presumably, they are able to forage throughout the year in their tropical habitat, rather than fasting in winter, as many baleen species do.

They usually surface steeply;w like other baleen whales. The blow is three to four metres high. They seldom fluke-up before diving. It is generally believed that they usually move at two to seven kilometers per hour, but can swim as fast as 20 to 25 kilometers per hour and dive up to 300 metres.

Unlike other large whales, it appears to lack a distinct breeding season, apparently calving at any time of the year. Calves are probably weaned at about six months of age. Bryde's whales have a two-year reproductive cycle composed of an 11- to 12-month gestation period, six months of lactation, and six months of resting. Calves are weaned at about seven metres in body length. The age of sexual maturity is eight to 11 years, when females are approximately 12 metres (39.4 feet) in length and males are 11 metres (39 feet) long.

—Continued on next page

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Bryde's whales have been recorded throughout the Eastern Caribbean island chain and have been reported year-round in the Gulf of Mexico and off the coast of Venezuela. In 1983, a Bryde's whale was stranded for some days in the Tobago Cays, and in 2005 a Bryde's whale was taken in the Bequia fishery. This past August, a young Bryde's whale stranded at Union Island, also in the Grenadines (see *Caribbean Compass* October 2009 "A Whale Visits Union Island"). Scientists wonder if the species is extending its range due to global warming.

Occasional Visitors

BLUE WHALE

What words can do justice to the colossal blue whale, the giant among giants, the largest animal ever to have lived on Earth. With mottled blue-grey bodies typically 24 metres (80 feet) long and weighing more than 100 tons, they out-measure a Boeing 737. What's more, blues have big babies. At birth calves measure seven

RICH SEARS



Big blue whales are infrequent visitors

metres (23 feet) long and weigh 2.5 tons. When weaned eight months later, they can weigh up to 50,000 pounds and be 15 metres (50 feet) long.

Reports of blue whales in the Caribbean are rare, with only two reliable reports of strandings in the Gulf of Mexico. Their blue-grey mottling pattern is highly variable and is so unique that it can be used to identify individuals. Often a yellowish sheen of diatoms coats the body and is most visible on the whale's underside.

FIN WHALE

Known as the "greyhound of the sea," the fin whale appears as a slender, silver-streaked form, barely disturbing the water as it surfaces to breathe. Its tremendous speed and massive size make the fin whale one of the most impressive of all whales. The double band of almost metallic silver, called a "chevron", which loops from the lower jaw up to the side just behind the blowhole, makes it possible to recognize individuals. The species has a unique coloration — the right lower jaw is white, whereas the left lower jaw is dark grey. This distinctive asymmetry, which is rare in mammals, may be related to feeding strategies or social cues. Occasional sightings in the Gulf of Mexico indicate that the species is not a frequent visitor but some may winter in the region.

WILLIAM ROSSITER



Fin whales can be confused with Bryde's or sei whales

SEI WHALE

The sei (pronounced "say") whale looks like a scaled-down version of the fin whale with a single rostral ridge and without white on the right side. The underside and the flanks of the sei whale often carry small, pitted, oval scars that are characteristic of this species, presumably the bites of lampreys or cookie-cutter sharks.

Together the sei and fin whales are arguably the fastest of the great whales, capable of swimming at up to 25 knots for short distances. In Caribbean waters, sei whales have been reported traveling alone or in small groups off the coasts of Puerto Rico and Dominica.

R.ASMUTIS-SILVA/WDCS



COMMON MINKE WHALE

The common minke whale is the smallest of the "great whales". It has the dubious distinction of bearing the brunt of current commercial whaling hunts for the simple reason that most of the larger and more valuable species were recklessly overexploited.

The species may segregate depending on age, sex and reproductive condition in different geographic areas of their range. Very little is known about the reproductive and breeding habits of the minke whale. A few mother-and-calf sightings and recordings of minke whale sounds suggest that some calving grounds may be in tropical waters. Usually seen alone or in small groups, the minke has been reported on Anguilla Bank and the Anegada Passage, as well as off the coasts of Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Dominica.

Above: The sei whale looks like a small version of the fin whale

Right: Minke whales are usually seen alone or in small groups

NATHALIE WARD/SCCN

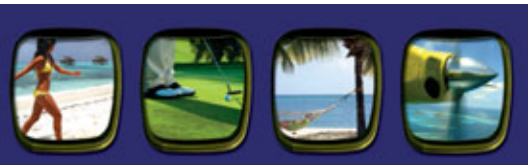


Dr. Nathalie Ward, PhD is a consultant for the United Nations Environment Programme's Caribbean Marine Mammal Programme, and while in the United States works for the US Marine Sanctuary Program.

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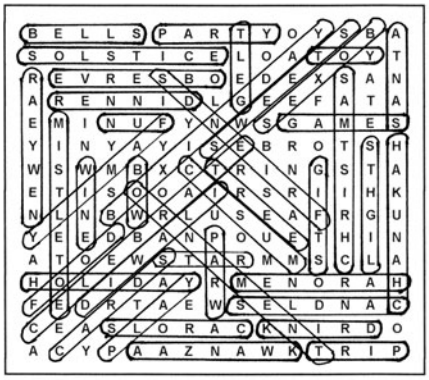


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The R.O.A.D.

The R.O.A.D. is a 40-foot sloop with an Angelo Lavernos-designed hull, one of five made. Purchased as a hull and deck, the boat took Taffy and Shirley four years to complete. Her name, *The R.O.A.D.*, is a concession to Taffy's Welsh heritage, this crew's seemingly bottomless sense of humor and the product of a boat naming party that I'm sorry I missed. It is actually an abbreviation for The Royal Order of Ancient Druids, the abbreviation being far easier on a radio call. *The R.O.A.D.* was launched in 1991, in South Africa.



Taffy took up sailing at the age of 40 when he realized that cricket and rugby were best left to younger men. After learning to sail on smaller boats on inland waters of South Africa, Taffy earned his "captain's ticket", allowing him to begin the cruising life and his search for "something different".

Shirley's interest in sailing started when she met Taffy. Her first voyage out of sight of land was from Cape Town bound for St. Helena and on to Brazil in 2000, the beginning of their cruising odyssey. She made the transition from neophyte to Admiral quickly and naturally. The crew is completed by a 12-year-old African Grey parrot, Rubbish, apparently named for his ability to "trash talk".

The R.O.A.D.'s journey started in April of 2000, bringing them across to Brazil, up past French Guiana and Guyana to Tobago, Trinidad and the ABCs.

Cruising, like any other part of life, has its adversities. Near the end of 2002, while sailing from Margarita to Martinique, despite numerous attempts to contact and avoid the oncoming vessel, *The R.O.A.D.* was run down by a large fishing vessel in the middle of the night. The damage to the smaller vessel was extensive. The larger boat's outriggers shredded her sails, the deck was separated from the hull, the impact disabled engine and generator, stanchions and lifelines were ripped off... *The R.O.A.D.* was dead in the water. The fishing vessel crew cut themselves free, turned off their lights and left *The R.O.A.D.* disabled in the open sea. Taffy and Shirley were able to jury-rig the sails enough to get underway, and *The R.O.A.D.* limped back to Margarita.

They were met by an armada of dinghies manned by fellow cruisers who had been monitoring their progress via VHF. In the finest cruiser tradition, their friends helped them through the next days, but the damage was so severe that the boat was eventually brought back to Trinidad and put on the hard for two years while Taffy went back to his profession as a project manager to earn the money to repair her. *The R.O.A.D.* was launched, again, in July of 2005, restarting the cruising journey.



Above: Shirley and Taffy like meeting a variety of people

Left: The R.O.A.D. *is ready to head west*

Aside from the encounter with the fishing vessel, Taffy and Shirley have enjoyed cruising in the Eastern Caribbean. Shirley is a superb cook and really likes learning the use of the local ingredients and styles of cooking. Taffy is still an avid cricket fan and has officiated in some local matches. They enjoy interaction with local folks on the islands as well as with other cruisers. When asked what they enjoy most about the cruising life, the response is, "The people we meet. Sitting in one place all your life, you would never meet the variety of people we've met out here."

Back in prime condition, *The R.O.A.D.* is ready to head west from Trinidad, through the ABCs and Colombia, through the Panama Canal to the Galápagos, through the Pacific islands and, in 18 to 24 months, back to South Africa. For this journey, friends Barry and Colin have signed on as crew, sharing the work of this long voyage and what promises to be a continuing great adventure.

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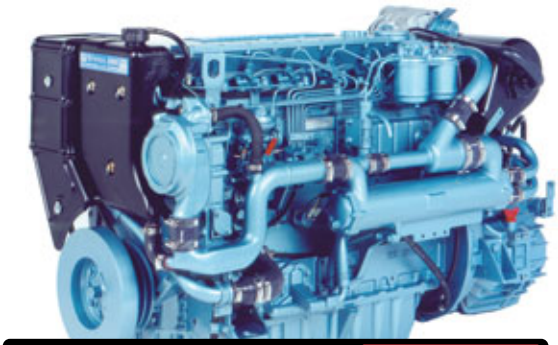
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'Many hands are needed to push 20 tons of boat over rollers into the water'



Eddie fashioning Tradition's *tiller*

by Frank Pearce

During a visit to Carriacou in April 2008 I saw, hauled onto the land, a large red Carriacou sloop hull. I was struck by her beautiful lines, and after a few weeks' dithering I agreed to buy her. She was named Tradition. *I had a vision of her, rigged as she had been when built some 30 years before. Thus began a restoration project with the shipwrights of Windward, Carriacou.*

In the past two issues of Compass *I described replacing the coachroof, fitting new aft deck beams, making a telephone pole into a mast, organizing the rigging and a boom, making a new rudder, and much more. The end of the project was in sight!*

It was now October. While I was in the UK, searching for an engine, someone suggested I look on eBay. To my surprise, one advertiser had a completely rebuilt 115BHP 6-cylinder Ford engine and gearbox, with all new marinizing parts from Lancing Marine in Sussex, who were then really helpful in supplying control panel, loom, alternator and ongoing good service. This engine would fit perfectly on the existing engine beds, and with 2-to-1 reduction and running at 2000rpm max, it promised a low-down torque — just what *Tradition* needed. The seller put it on a pallet, shrink-wrapped it and delivered it to Geest Shipping who shipped it to St. Vincent for £250. What a deal!

Arriving back in Grenada, I found that the mainsail made by Turbulence Sails was completed, but it took two people to lift it! I did a mega-shop in Island Water World and Budget Marine, hoping to get all the final bits and pieces *Tradition* would need.

Upon arrival in Carriacou I assembled the team again: Gordon Patrice and Fitzroy "Nero" McLaren to do the rigging with Leonard McLaren to assist them; Verrol Compton fitting the new fuel tanks; Bernard Compton finishing the cabin, fitting sampson posts and bowsprit, making the deadeyes and bulls' eyes; Bernard's son Eddie to cut a suitably grained tree and make the tiller; Benny as painter and assistant shipwright, and a few others who came to help from time to time.

The rigging team set up under the palm trees and proceeded to splice the soft eyes to go around the mast hounds, and parcel and serve the lower eight feet of the standing rigging wire where it would pass over the deadeyes and be seized in place. The soft eye and deadeye length would be served with tarred marlin, using a proper serving mallet, then wrapped in Hessian heavily greased, then served with tarred marlin again, and lastly covered in a tight tube of canvas intricately hand stitched, ultimately to be painted white. A work of art to my eyes.

By the end of October, we were ready to launch. There is no question of paying for the task of launching itself, but many hands are needed to push 20 tons of boat over rollers into the water and everyone gets a good meal and a fill of beverage. I asked Norman Roberts, the previous owner of *Tradition*, what cost would be involved. His response was, "Well, Frank, do you want a Big Launching or a Likkle Launching?" I am not sure what we had, but think it was a pretty Big Launching. *Tradition* was ashore in Norman's compound, and here he set up huge cast iron pots of bubbling stewed goat, chicken and "oildown" over wood fires. There were coolers of beer, and cases of jack iron rum and the much-favoured Johnny Walker Red Label.

Tradition, not being a new boat, had been hauled up the beach bow first, whereas a new boat is built facing the sea. This meant that launching the 50-foot boat would be more difficult, especially as she had been fitted with a skeg. The process started early in the day, with large rollers being dug in under the keel and arranged down the beach. Shortage of rollers at the last minute resulted in the demise of a couple of old palm trees. Two 20-foot, six-inch by two-inch planks were then nailed under the bilge on the turn of the bilge — into my new planking!

—Continued on next page

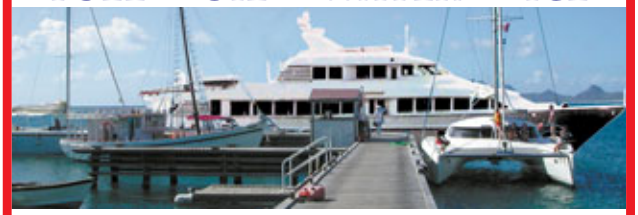
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—Continued from previous page

Next, rough-cut, inverted U-shaped blocks were nailed to the topsides on one side of the hull — ouch again! Light posts, about four inches in diameter, were placed with one end buried in the sand and the top end lodged in the U of the block.

But before "cutting down" began, certain formalities had to be completed. The priest gathered his church choir around the bow, then clambered up onto *Tradition*'s foredeck and gave her his blessing.

I arranged for Benny McLaren to be godfather of the boat. Benny went to sea at an early age, at the time when Urbin "Robbie" Roberts (Norman's father) was building *Tradition*. Robbie had previously owned the larger and beautiful *Yankee Girl*. *Tradition* was to be a smaller version. Robbie was an unusually particular and thorough man, a proper seaman; he had a serious reputation for keeping his vessels like yachts, even if they were hauling cargo. So Benny had the best training available. He has been a good godfather to *Tradition* and takes his role seriously.

I had been warned about the necessity of spilling chicken blood on the samson post as a sacrifice — and there on the foredeck was a suspiciously stirring sack. By now a great crowd had surrounded the boat and it had to be done. I grabbed a knife, put the poor chicken's neck on a wooden pad and hacked away. Island style, the knife handle broke off. Someone quickly gave me another knife. Blood was sprinkled, the crowd had another beer.

Those of us on deck clambered down. The crowd assembled on the side of the boat opposite to the cutting-down poles and pushed *Tradition* over until she was lightly resting on the poles. Then four guys, each with a sharp machete, began hacking away at the bottoms of the poles, which of course got shorter and shorter and the boat heeled over more and more and they hacked faster and faster until eventually, with a brutal bump, she fell over, with the two previously nailed-on bilge boards resting on the rollers.



The church choir graces the launching with song



Above: The poor chicken



Once the 'jumbie chicken' was disposed of, Tradition *slid more easily into the sea*

All hands (except the ones who just came for the food and booze) gathered around *Tradition* and started pushing. Norman had laid a heavy anchor offshore and to this was attached a four-fold block and tackle attached to a rope going right around *Tradition*'s hull. About 20 people lay onto the fall of the block and tackle and started heaving. *Tradition* started to move, an emotional moment. Then she stuck and the anchor pulled out. The anchor was reset; more rum was consumed.

Some began pulling on the tackle again, others were on the bow, others were pulling down on the bowsprit. The bowsprit bent, the covering board creaked. It was brutal. Should I stop it or let them do it their way? An old guy tapped me on the shoulder. "Dat fowl be jumbie; that why she no move." He really, really meant it. I reached up onto the foredeck and tossed the chicken's carcass into the scrub. Sure enough, the boat started to move again, bit by bit, roller by roller. She entered the water, got some buoyancy, moved a bit more, and then Norman backed in his workboat. We attached a line to *Tradition*'s bow and, with everyone up to their waists in water, she was swung around, eventually to glide into deeper water. She was afloat.

The next day, Norman towed *Tradition*, with the mast floating behind, from Windward to Tyrell Bay Yacht Haulout. There had been some repairs needed to the underside of the keel prior to launching and now a bit more scuffing where she'd ground on the rollers. Tim Sudell and his crew lifted *Tradition* and blocked her, and then laid the mast where we could dress it. The engine was there, too, ready to be lifted in. Bernard set about cutting out the damaged wood on the base of the keel and scarfing in a length of purpleheart.



After sailing to Antigua, we enlarged the rudder

The yard crane (a vintage 22RB) does not reach out over the water, and so after the mast was fitted with the standing and running rigging it was necessary to first lift it with the crane, then position *Tradition* under the mast in the travel hoist, and then lower the mast into the boat. The same process was done for the engine. *Tradition* was then re-launched and taken to a mooring. I found it amazing that she didn't leak, even after the brutal beach launching. Well, I exaggerate — but half a bucketful a week is not bad for a 30-year-old working wooden boat.

The standing rigging was then seized to the deadeyes Bernard had made out of a log of grape wood, beautifully fashioned and coated with linseed oil. Then the lanyards were set up and the mainsail was bent on.

For ballast I had bought a length of lead, about 16 feet long and six inches on each side. This Nero cut into manageable lengths using a chainsaw. But we needed more.

—Continued on page 37





An Antifouling PAINT Test 2008-2009

by Chris Doyle

I've been doing antifouling paint tests on my boat for nearly a decade. One of the conditions I make when testing paints is that before the test, the paint supplier must decide whether or not to let me publish the results. In other words, the supplier cannot decide to let me publish if the result is favorable but ask me to keep quiet if the test comes out bad.

The last antifouling report I published in *Caribbean Compass* was in 2005. In the last couple of years I have tested more paints, but the paint suppliers opted not to publish. I don't blame them, because looking back over my reports, I notice that paints that work and compare really well one year do not always do as well another year. There is a lot of variability and results are not always consistent.

Last year, Echo Marine in Trinidad invited me to test Jotun Sea Quantum Ultra red on my cruising catamaran, *Ti Kanot*, and publish the results. I used Micron 66 red as the comparison test paint.

I put my more detailed report at the bottom of this, but in brief, on the basis of this test, they both worked as I have found good self-polishing antifouling paints do these days.

First, Some General Observations

I am going to take the opportunity to make some general observations about antifouling paints that I have noticed over the last few years, with paints that no longer contain TBT. These are impressions rather than a careful analysis of all the results, so may not be all that accurate.

Every paint I have tested has stayed completely clean for a month. But between two and three months, good quality self-polishing products, like most of the paints I have tested and including those tested this time, have all managed to sprout a good number of barnacles. This is less true for the only other paint I have often used, the Jotun Sea Queen, which tends to stay cleaner longer in the initial phases. My tests only last six or seven months (my in-the-water time each year), and for that period an inexpensive paint like Jotun Sea Queen often works as well as anything, and would probably be my paint of choice. But towards the end of that time, the higher-end paints are often beginning to perform a little better than the Sea Queen, which is also very soft, so that by the end of six or seven months it is beginning to wear off in high-wear areas. For this reason, if you want paint for long-term protection, a premium self-polishing paint is probably the best choice.

It is also my guess that all the paints I have tested would probably give better performance on a monohull than a multihull. I say this because the vast majority of the fouling my boat gets is usually on the insides of the hulls, where there is shade from the bridge deck.

I think it is important to monitor the bottom during the second and third month after painting, and remove any barnacles that grow as soon as possible — when they are very small and preferably before they leave a white mark. If they grow big, the white mark that is left has no protection against the growth of weed, which is a pain.

Barnacle Counts

I think almost no paint manufacturer still offers guarantees to yachts. But where paints are warranted on large ships it is usually guaranteed to be 90- or 95-percent effective. That means only between five and ten percent your hull will be covered with barnacles. That sounds, and is, quite good. But if a yacht's hull had barnacles covering five or ten percent of its total area, most of us would consider that a lot. Keep in mind that even if you have a heavy batch of barnacles in one area, there is still barnacle-free hull between each barnacle, so a horrible coverage might only be 50 percent. In any of the tests I have done, if you actually measure square millimeters of barnacle versus square millimeters of bare hull, I doubt it would be as much as five or ten percent. I mention this because I think with today's paints you do have to expect to do some maintenance, and that does not mean the paint is no good.

Every paint I have tested, with the exception of one (which you are most unlikely to buy as it is not on offer in most stores), has afforded excellent protection against weed. All eventually get some scum, which wipes off easily, and some get a bit of light weed that also wipes off fairly easily. The hard-to-scrub, heavy, long green weed, which is prevalent wherever there is no antifouling, seems to be completely protected against. This means the main fouling we see today is barnacles.

Where you choose to anchor makes a huge difference to your barnacle count. Clean, clear water, like in the Grenadines, is the best for avoiding barnacles. The worst fouling is in nutrient-rich lagoons like Rodney Bay Lagoon and Simpson Bay Lagoon, or pretty much any land-enclosed lagoon. Being anchored in the lee of big islands can also be quite fouling. I have even noticed that fouling in the same bay can vary significantly from the outer part to the inner part.

After three months, the performance of high quality self-polishing paints often seems to improve. They continue to get a few barnacles but don't show the hundreds that have arrived earlier. Often in the last couple of months they will outperform the less expensive paint, whereas in the first months it is often the other way round.

Seeing Red

In general I have noticed with all the paints I have tested, red antifouling seems to work better than other colors. I used to compare different color paints, but since noticing that red seems to work best, I switched to comparing the same color of two different paints in any one test. Now, comparing paints between years is dodgy. Nonetheless, having tried various colors over the years I have gained such a strong impression of this that I would always personally choose red. There is also a rationale behind this. Copper is usually a major ingredient and it happens to be red. This means to overcome it and have a bright blue, or black or some other color, additives will have to be blended into the paint that are unlikely to be adding to its effectiveness and may detract somewhat.

Some paints come in two parts, which you mix before application. This is an added complication to the painting process. If you just mix up two cans as they come, this is simple enough. If it has to be done in smaller proportionate batches due to shelf life, then it does leave room for error, especially if you are delegating the job.

Some people offer additives to paint. It is something I tried way back in the past, with zero effect. It is my impression that paint formulation is complex, as is the action of the paint, and anything you add is unlikely to help. If what you add is TBT, not only is it unlikely to keep your hull clean, but it certainly will get out into the marine environment where it has been implicated in damaging dolphins and whales.

In addition to the paints mentioned in this article, another paint that worked well on a past test was Seajet Red (single part).

The Latest Test Results

In Trinidad Jotun Sea Quantum Ultra red was painted on *Ti Kanot's* port hull; Micron 66 red was painted on the starboard hull. We launched in early November 2008.

December 10th 2008 - No barnacles or fouling, having sailed from Trinidad to St. Lucia.

December 28th 2008 - Stuck in Rodney Bay for two weeks due to engine problem. Hundreds of small barnacles on both sides, particularly the bow and stern (the middle was much cleaner). Port hull (Jotun) had about 20 percent more barnacles than starboard hull. Scraped clean except for keels.

January 14th 2009 - Sailed to St. Martin and spent a week inside the lagoon, which is generally a heavy barnacle area. Areas on both sides had hundreds of barnacles, particularly under the hulls from the keel to the stern and on the keels with other patches here and there. The rest of the boat was clean. No obvious barnacle-fouling difference between the sides. However the port side (Jotun) had some green scummy weed, mainly within a foot of the waterline, which was absent from the starboard side. This was not scrubbed at this time. All barnacles removed.

January 23rd - A quick look after another week in the lagoon. A few dozen barnacles removed from each side. No real difference. (Notice here that I am not getting the massive influx of barnacles evident earlier, despite being in a bad fouling area, and this will continue to the end of the test.)

February 28th - Sailing around Antigua and Barbuda, including being stuck for about ten days in English Harbour owing to an engine problem. A few barnacles, not many, removed from each hull; no difference. Some scummy weed build-up noticed more on the port side (Jotun). Still not removed.

March 30th - Sailing around Guadeloupe and its islands, including a week in the Marina Bas-du-Fort (in a lagoon at Pointe-a-Pitre). Just a handful of barnacles on each side; no real difference with some slime and weed on both sides, a little more on port than starboard. Barnacles were removed and this time the hulls rubbed to remove weed.

April 28th – Sailed to Dominica, St. Lucia and Bequia. Mainly anchored off. A few dozen barnacles on each side, no apparent difference between them, not much slime or weed.

May 25th - Hauled boat in Trinidad after spending some time in Grenada. Only a handful of barnacles on each side.

Conclusion

There did not seem to be a significant difference between these paints. Both had a significant influx of barnacle growth between one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half months. I find this typical for the high quality ablative paints, and it pays to do some maintenance at this time. After cleaning a couple of times, both paints performed well for the rest of the test, with very little subsequent barnacle growth. The Jotun did seem to grow a little more scummy weed at one point, which I left on for some time, but by the time I got round to scrubbing the hulls there was not much difference between sides and it all came off easily and showed no signs of being a persistent problem. At the end of the period, both hulls looked very similar.

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—*Continued from page 35*

Leonard had the lead keel of a yacht that had been wrecked some years ago at Windward, so it, too, was chain-sawed into manageable chunks. We loaded in the lead. She looked about right with the two-and-a-half tons of lead in her, but a bit light by the head, so we got about 20 flour sacks and Benny filled them with black sand, which was duly loaded on board.

Jorge fitted the engine, moving it from the hold onto the engine beds with chain hoists, and connecting it up. The first run-up of the engine was satisfying. Engine trials proved her to have "plenty powa, man" — eight knots at 1200 RPM, very comfortable, quiet and free of vibration.

Then the big day, trials under sail. I had been worrying about the weight of the mast and the heavy mainsail, about how much more ballast she might need, and whether the modified steel rudder would control her. The mainsail looked huge when hoisted, but nicely cut exactly as I had wanted. The headsails, which came from the destroyed Fife ketch *Moonshine*, were an exact fit.

With a bunch of friends to assist, we set off. No bravado here: I motored away from the anchorage to set the main in clear water. It takes two strong people to hoist the main. With the main hoisted but sheets not slacked off, *Tradition* was away but almost uncontrollable, the long boom pushing her up into the wind. We set the large Yankee jib on the bowsprit and then she balanced beautifully.

Benny, who had sailed *Tradition* up and down the islands for years, thought she was "a likkle tender, Uncle." (I was always Uncle to Benny.) Personally, I like a boat to be a bit tender, initially anyway; it's much easier on the gear and gives one a better feeling for the wind. *Tradition*, with slack bilges but firm buttocks (lovely thought), will lie over initially and then stiffen up.

Mark, a robust Trini, was anxious to add his considerable weight to the crew, so Benny, Mark and I set off for Bequia.

I found myself feeling sad to be leaving Carriacou. It is such a friendly place, with the common interest in boats overriding any superficial differences in wealth, gender or race. *Tradition* was a special common bond, of course: she had been built there



Underway at last...

and worked from there for so many years. It was not unusual for me to be in Hillsborough and a passerby or bus driver would shout, "How it going with *Tradition*, man; when de launching gon' be?" I was going to miss the easy familiarity between the Carriacou people and myself, the visiting skinny-leg white guy!

The wind was a bit south of east and we were able to lay Bequia close-hauled. What a huge relief to find that *Tradition* was able, close-winded, fast and very comfortable. We got ashore to the Frangipani in time for an aperitif, or two or three.

Alexis Andrews joined us in Bequia and we spent the following day making adjustments to the rig. The four of us set off early the next morning and, with a cracking easterly wind, were off Deshaies, Guadeloupe, in 36 hours — an average speed of over seven knots. A meal for the crew, a good night's sleep and off in the morning for a day sail to Falmouth Harbour, Antigua.

In Antigua we entered *Tradition* in the Classic Yacht Regatta. I had fitted her out without using yacht gear, winches, windlass and so on, the result being a pretty pure Carriacou boat of her era, but also a very labour-intensive boat if one wished to "race around the cans". Fortunately I did have lots of volunteer crew, some with experience of this sort of rig, others who had to learn the virtues of the "handy billy" and rolling hitch. With her 33-foot main boom, *Tradition* is very sensitive to mainsail trim, and in a good breeze it took two strong guys and a trimmer just to look after the mainsheet. The steel rudder that had caused me some anguish back in Carriacou was clearly not powerful enough when she was pressed, and we found that gybing was almost unachievable when the wind was strong. We resorted to "wearing ship" at the gybing mark. To avoid confusion with the other boats we reached off away from the mark, did our tack and then got back in line, losing surprisingly little ground.

Tradition won the Concours d'Elegance. This was a surprise because we had not stowed the sails properly or washed up the dishes — in fact, we had not even entered the competition. With all the great efforts other crews had made, I was somewhat embarrassed. We also came second in class overall.

After Classics, we went around to Jolly Harbor where *Tradition* was hauled and the steel rudder was sheathed with purpleheart, extending it back and upwards to increase the area and block the flow of water over the top of the rudder. This greatly improved the handling and made me wonder why I had not had the courage of my convictions back in Carriacou when I suspected the rudder was too small.

Then we sailed to St. Barths for the West Indies Regatta of Caribbean working boats (see *Caribbean Compass*, July 2009) and back to Antigua to lay up for the hurricane season.

Having partially laid *Tradition* up in the mangroves, I was approached by Laurance (Laurie) Gumbs of Anguilla, asking if I might sell *Tradition* to him. His intention was to use her for his youth training program and also to make her available for longer-distance passages, giving clients the chance to sail on a traditional Caribbean trading vessel. Laurie's father, Sir Emile Gumbs, had owned and captained the much larger trading schooner *Warspite*, and so the family has a history of involvement in such vessels. For me to pass *Tradition* on to such an experienced and enthusiastic family was ideal. With her refit completed, Antigua Classics a success, and the wonderful West Indies Regatta experienced, I bowed out a satisfied man.

On June 6th, 2009, *Tradition* sailed with her new owner and enthusiastic crew, bound for Anguilla.

Frank Pearce is a yachtsman, tugboat captain and Vice-Commodore of the Antigua Yacht Club.

PRODUCT POSTINGS

Here are a couple of neat, new little stocking-stuffers for the special sailor on your list!

A First — The Sailing GPS

The Sailing GPS represents a watershed in the history of navigational devices. For the first time, sailors will be able to determine the optimum tacking angle to arrive at their destination in the shortest possible time.

For cruisers, this means a dramatic increase in the ability to plan routes, and accurately forecast Tacking Time to Destination. For racers, The Sailing GPS provides an unmatched competitive advantage in determining the fastest line to mark — the result of a continuous computation of the ideal balance between distance and speed.

Dr. Craig Summers, inventor of The Sailing GPS, says, "The Sailing GPS is the only device in the world that accounts for tacking when calculating distances, time of arrival, and optimal routes. The Sailing GPS does this automatically. Moreover, it includes an algorithm that learns your boat's unique speed characteristics, which is far more accurate when determining actual Tacking Time to Destination than using generic polar plot specifications from manufacturers or simulated models."

The Sailing GPS is Bluetooth wireless enabled, for sharing GPS data with existing PC-based chart-plotters.

For more information visit www.TheSailingGPS.com.

New Floating VHFs

Cobra Marine, a division of Cobra Electronics, introduces its Floating Line of VHF handheld radios, the MR HH330 FLT EU and the Bluetooth®-equipped MR HH475 FLT BT EU. With a bright, orange core, these unique handhelds can be easily spotted in the water, if they end up afloat. Incredibly compact for a floating radio, these units fit nicely in one's hand and have easy-to-operate controls and large LCD screens for easy viewing. Operating with 6 Watts of power, Cobra's most powerful handheld radios, they easily enable long-range communication while a noise-canceling microphone blocks background noise for clearer conversations. The unique "BURP" feature vibrates water out of the speaker grill to improve performance in extreme conditions. These radios can also scan three channels simultaneously, including channel 16 and two user-selected channels.



For more information visit www.cobra.com.





DECEMBER 2009

♈ ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)
Romance is in the holiday air, but don't forget to save some energy for those ingenious boat projects. Also, ignore the business glitch during the first week — it will sort itself out.

♉ TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)
Don't let communication difficulties hold you back. Try not to be pedantic if people don't seem to understand what you are trying to tell them. Your low tide will be around the 21st.

♊ GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)
Squalls of bickering will be the weather of the month with lovers and crew. It might hamper your creative progress, but you'll enjoy the holidays nonetheless.

CANCER ♋ (22 Jun - 23 Jul)
It will seem that you have to repeat yourself endlessly to get anything done. Boat business matters will be in irons in the first week, but then everything's fine sailing.

♌ LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)
You will find yourself wandering off course and then feeling like you're drifting backwards. Spend time with loved ones doing creative things until this aspect passes and Santa slides down the hatch.

♍ VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)
Contrary currents for you, with romance interfering with interesting boat projects. Make the best of it all and just have fun during the festive season.

♎ LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)
The first week will offer good business opportunities so hoist all your sails and do your best. Your patience and balance will serve you well.

♏ SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)
Your energy will be in the doldrums, especially around the 21st. Best to just chill out with a good book — at least until the holiday parties start.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)
Your love life will be an asset to your cruising creativity. Just don't take on too much, and be sure to finish any uncompleted boat chores before the 26th. Boxing Day will be fun.

♑ CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)
Use your verbal talents to good effect in marine-related business during the first week. Complete any boat maintenance or racing arrangements before the end of the month, then pop that champagne!

♒ AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)
Your cruising kitty may suffer indigestion in the first week. This is followed by a lack of enthusiasm that will linger till the end of the year. A good time to swing on the hook and just kick back for Christmas.

♓ PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)
You will experience some choppy seas in your love life from the second week till the 26th. You will also find your cruising creativity in the doldrums. Don't worry; Santa will bring smooth seas of romance and sailing inspiration.

Crossword Solution

ACROSS
4) YAWL
6) SHEET
8) WIND
11) AT
13) CROSS
14) UPWIND
17) PUT
18) SURGES
20) WEATHER
21) TIE
22) SET
24) ASK
25) PLAN
26) YES
28) SLOW
30) WATER
32) AROUND
35) LINER
37) DOCK
38) LONG
39) RUDDER
40) SOS
41) EASE

DOWN
1) OLD
2) WET
3) JIBS
5) ABOUT
7) HARD
9) DEGREES
10) COMPASS
12) ROUGH
13) COURSE
15) WHEEL
16) NO TILLER
18) SEA
19) STRAIN
23) TOE
25) PLOT
27) SWINGS
28) STEERS
29) OR
31) AN
32) AFTER
33) DECKS
34) HELM
36) ADD

Island Poets

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

'Twas the night before Christmas, I swung on the hook
Flaked out on the settee, asleep with my book
When up on the deck I heard footsteps and stuff
"I've been boarded!" I thought, and I tried to be tough.

Then down the companionway hatch came a dude,
He was dressed like a nut and I thought, "I'm so screwed,"
But he laughed and he hummed as he surveyed my junk
So I figured he must be the resident drunk.

His eyes were lit up like a junkie on speed
But he gave me a whole bunch of stuff that I need
Like rum and cigars and new charts and a dinghy
And some kind of fancy electrical thingy.

I thought it was stolen but I wasn't telling,
I hoped he was giving and wasn't just selling
And I poured him a grog which he downed with a wink
Then I poured one for me (I sure needed a drink!).

Then he staggered above to the dark tropic night;
As I peeked I beheld an incredible sight –
Eight tiny dolphins and a beautiful sleigh
And the dude hopped aboard and prepared to make way.

The dolphins were ready to power the sled
But the guy raised a genny and mains'l instead.
With a burp and a chuckle he gathered the breeze
And called to the dolphins, now swimming with ease:

"On Fatty and Foxy and Old Barracuda!
On Teva and Mountgay, Antigua, Barbuda!
Or whatever your names are, you cute little fishes,
Here's to every last sailor, my best Christmas wishes!"

As he sailed away leaving a wobbly wake
I hoped he had not many stops left to make.
He got close to shore and he soon was aground
But the dolphins proceeded to pull him around

And I heard him exclaim as he sailed out of sight
"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a goodnight!"

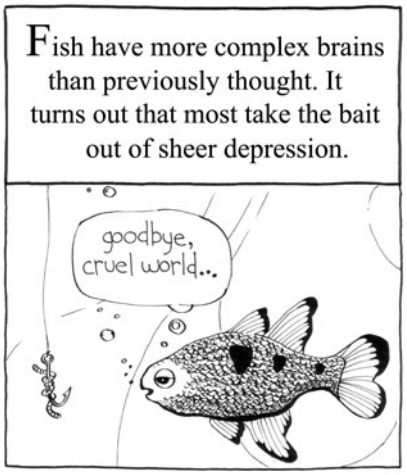
— *Cruiser Claus*

Editor's note: We don't know who originally wrote this poem that's been doing the rounds anonymously for a while, but we published it last year and it's back by popular demand!

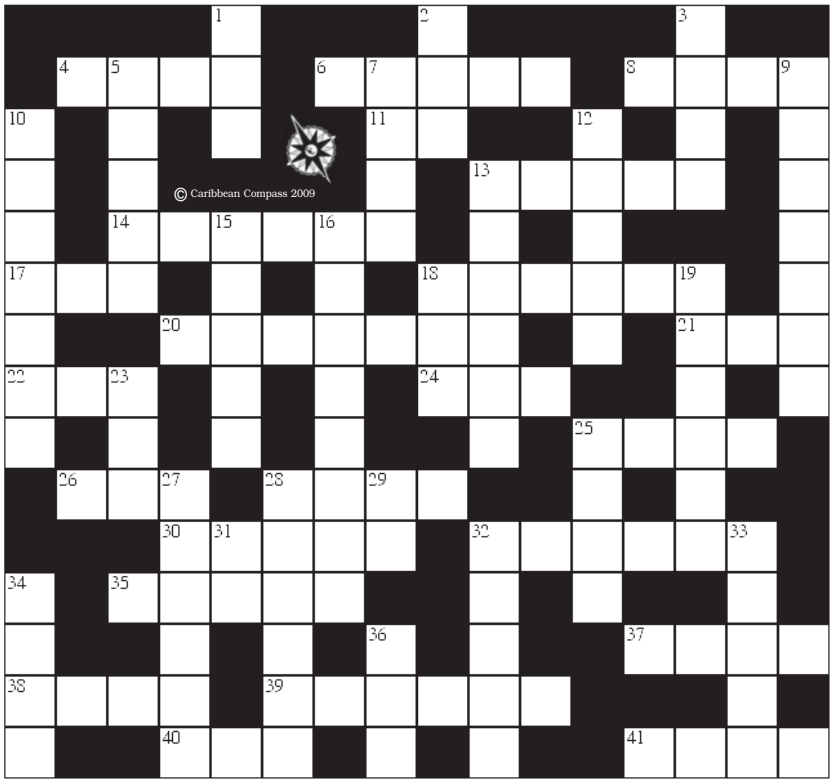
parlumps marooned



FACT-OIDS



Compass Cruising Crossword



'HELM'

ACROSS

4) Rig with mizzenmast abaft the rudderpost
6) Rope controlling a sail
8) Breeze
11) __ the 34 Down: in control
13) To sail over another boat's course
14) Sailing _____: sailing into the 18 Across
17) To tack, ___ the 34 Down over
18) 13 Across seas can be caused by storm _____
20) Heavy _____: 12 Down conditions
21) To secure, as with a knot
22) To raise, as with sails
24) Inquire
25) File a "float ___"
26) Aye, aye!
28) Not fast
30) H_2O
32) Gybe _____ the windward mark
35) Some ocean _____s have a joystick for a 34 Down
37) Have an experienced person at the 34 Down when coming alongside this
38) Set up a watch system for this type of voyage
39) A tiller connects directly to it
40) Morse distress signal
41) To let 6 Across out gradually

DOWN

1) Ancient
2) Covered in 30 Across
3) Back these to help the boat come 5 Down
5) To come _____, put the 34 Down 7 Down over
7) Not soft
9) Units of measurement on a 10 Down
10) Direction indicator
12) Not smooth
13) Path
15) Steering device that's not a tiller
16) A boat with a 15 Down has __ _____ (2 words)
18) A ship 17 Acrosses to ___
19) Stress
23) Below the lifelines is the ___ rail
25) ____ the 13 Down on the chart
27) An adjustor _____ the 10 Down
28) The person at the 34 Down does this
29) To tack __ not to tack, that is the question!
31) Harold LaBorde's book "__ Ocean to Ourselves"
32) The 34 Down is usually in the _____ part of a yacht
33) Poop, fore and tween are some of them
34) Subject of this puzzle
36) Not subtract

Crossword Solution on page 38

HERE'S A GIFT FOR ALL OUR READERS FROM WORD PUZZLE MAKER PAULINE DOLINISKI — A SPECIAL PUZZLE FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON!

Word Search Puzzle by Pauline Dolinski

HAPPY HOLIDAYS PUZZLE

B	E	L	L	S	P	A	R	T	Y	O	Y	S	B	A
S	O	L	S	T	I	C	E	L	O	A	T	O	Y	T
R	E	V	R	E	S	B	O	E	D	E	X	S	A	N
A	R	E	N	N	I	D	L	G	E	E	F	A	T	A
E	M	I	N	U	F	Y	N	W	S	G	A	M	E	S
Y	I	N	Y	A	Y	I	S	E	B	R	O	T	S	H
W	S	W	M	B	X	C	T	R	I	N	G	S	T	A
E	T	I	S	O	O	A	I	R	S	R	I	I	H	K
N	L	N	B	W	R	L	U	S	E	A	F	R	G	U
Y	E	E	D	B	A	N	P	O	U	E	T	H	I	N
A	T	O	E	W	S	T	A	R	M	M	S	C	L	A
H	O	L	I	D	A	Y	R	M	E	N	O	R	A	H
F	E	D	R	T	A	E	W	S	E	L	D	N	A	C
C	E	A	S	L	O	R	A	C	K	N	I	R	D	O
A	C	Y	P	A	A	Z	N	A	W	K	T	R	I	P

BELLS
BOW
BOXES
BOXING DAY

CANDLES
CARDS
CAROLS
CELEBRATE
CHANUKAH
CHRISTMAS

DINNER
DIWALI
DRINK

FAMILY
FOOD
FRIENDS
FUN
GAMES
GELT
GIFTS

HOLIDAY
KWANZAA
LIGHTS
MENORAH
MISTLETOE
MUSIC
NEW YEAR

OBSERVE
ORNAMENT
PARTY
PLAY

SANTA
SOLSTICE
STAR
SWEETS

TOY
TREE
TRIP
WINE
WRAP

Word Search Puzzle solution on page 32

The Fishes' Christmas Good Deeds

by Lee Kessell

Set like an emerald in the sapphire blue of the lower Caribbean is the island of St. Lucia and every year the whole fish and sea-creature community of Cutie Cove celebrates Christmas. One particular year a pretty little Angel Fish had a new idea that she thought would make Christmas better than ever, so she said to her friends, "We all look forward to having fun at Christmas, but I've been thinking of all those fish families who have no Christmas fun at all and so I think we should bring Christmas to the needy."

This suggestion sounded like a good idea but Betty, the yellow Butterfly Fish, asked the all-important question: "That's all well and good Angel, but how can we find the needy? We don't have any in Cutie Cove so where do we find them?"

Everyone fluttered about nervously and Genny the small Grunt plucked up the courage to say, "I guess we'll have to look outside the bay."

"And we're too small to do that!" wailed a black and red Blennie.

"I suppose we'll just have to ask our parents for help," Angel replied.

"No," spoke up Simon the Sergeant Major in a loud voice. "My dad, the chief of the Sergeant Majors, says that we kids should be able to stand on our own feet — er, fins — and I agree with him. If we want to do good deeds then we're responsible, not our mums and dads."

"But we don't know how!" Baby the Damselfish quavered in her squeaky voice.

"Leave it up to me and by tomorrow I'll have a plan!" And with that Simon swam off.

The next day everyone was ready to hear what Simon had to say. He had it all figured out. "I'll dispatch our Flying Fish friends to the bay to the south of us to find the needy fish there, then early on Christmas morning I'll get the Dog Snappers to pick them up and bring them here."

The young fish friends, who included the Grunts, the Scads, the Chromis, the Glassy Sweepers, the Gobies and so on, thought this was a very good plan and they agreed to take care of the needy fish when they arrived.

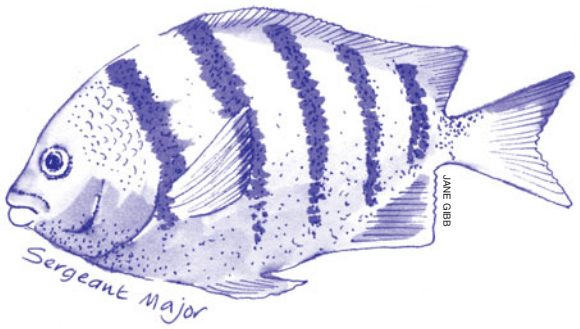
"And make sure that the needy fish are mothers with their children," said Angel, once more sure of herself.

"Yes," spoke up a pert little Fairy Jaw Fish, "and how about sharing our gifts with the needy children?"

Suddenly everyone wanted a say and when the crowd had quieted down, Simon gave his orders to the Flying Fish to find the poorest fish mothers and their little ones in the desolate bay to the south where he had heard that the big and fierce fish ate any defenseless neighbours.

So it was that on Christmas morning, the ferocious-looking but docile young Dog Snappers picked up the needy fish mothers and their little ones and took them to Cutie Cove where all the young fish greeted them with happy shouts. The Cutie Cove mothers, seeing their children welcoming a strange group of fish carried on the backs of the young Dog Snappers, hurried over to see what was going on. When Simon explained the mothers agreed it was a very good idea.

Well, in no time at all, the children were playing together, filling their bellies with food and having a wonderful time. Meanwhile, the mothers were enjoying themselves, too. What came as a great surprise to the fish visitors was meeting the different sea creatures of the cove such as the Sea Stars, the Sea Urchins, the Eels and the Sea Anemones who usually stayed well apart.



Now as the day was ending and the setting sun was turning the sea world to gold, it was time for the new friends to return home, the children hugging their precious gifts, the first they had ever received. It had been a day to remember and one they hoped to repeat. In the meantime, the mothers went home determined to change things for the better. It would take time they knew, but here was the chance to make a happier life for everyone, the fishes and sea creatures alike. Yes they promised themselves, one day they WOULD change their world!

Thank you little Angel and your friends for spreading Christmas cheer where it was needed most.

THE END



DOLLY'S DEEP SECRETS

by Elaine Ollivierre

Last month, we looked at coral bleaching and the devastating effects it can have on the marine life of the coral reef. Bleaching is not the only peril threatening the existence of coral reefs. Scientists have found that the seas and oceans of the world are becoming more acidic. If this continues, the effect on coral will be disastrous. **Why is this happening?**

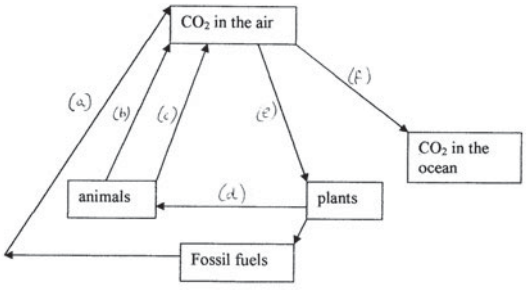
To understand why the water on our planet is much more acidic now than it was 300 years ago, we need to look first at the carbon cycle. The carbon cycle shows how all the carbon atoms in the world are recycled in different forms and in different places.

Carbon dioxide (CO_2) in the air is used up by plants in photosynthesis, forming sugars containing carbon. The plants are eaten by animals which give carbon dioxide back to the atmosphere in respiration. Many plants die and decay, also releasing carbon dioxide, as well as methane gas (CH_4), into the air. The remains of plants from millions of years ago are now found as coal and oil. When these are burned, they also put carbon dioxide back into the air where it can once more be used in photosynthesis.

The oceans also absorb a lot of the carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide can combine with water to make carbonic acid and this is where the problem arises for coral reefs. Coral reefs are made of calcium carbonate, which dissolves in acid. If more carbon dioxide is pumped into the air from respiration (more people and animals) and from combustion (more industry, factories, cars, etcetera), then more carbon dioxide is absorbed in the sea and more acid is formed to dissolve more coral.

Here's a diagram of the carbon cycle. See if you can give the names of the processes labelled (a) to (f).

— Answers on page 47



ELAINE OLLIVIERRE 2008 ©

The Sky in December

by Scott Welty

The Planets in December

MERCURY – This planet's farthest separation from the sun occurs on the 16th. With a clear western horizon you might catch a glimpse of Mercury just after sundown.

VENUS – She's being shy this month and staying close to the sun. Venus rises around 6:00AM in the lighted sky early in the month and later as the month wears on.

EARTH - Open 'till 10:00PM all month long for your holiday shopping convenience!

MARS - Rising between 10:00 and 11:00 all month, sitting right between Cancer and Leo.

JUPITER - Look for bright Jupiter in the southwest after dark. Setting around 10:30 early in the month and about 8:30 by the end of the month.

SATURN - Rising between 1:00 and 2:00AM all month and setting after sunrise.

Sky Events This Month

December 2nd - Full moon ("Blue moon"; see the 31st)

December 6th - Mars and the moon rise together around 10:30PM

December 16th - New moon

December 21st - Winter solstice (see below); crescent moon and Jupiter ride together through the night sky

December 31 - Full Moon again! That makes the one on the 2nd a BLUE moon. There's normally only one full moon in a month but since the moon's cycle doesn't exactly coincide with our yearly cycle, you end up with 11 leftover days after having 12 full moons. That means that you're going to get two full moons in a month every two or three years and, yes, it is the early one that is called the blue moon.

The Winter Solstice

December 21st marks the winter solstice. This is the day of the year with the longest night and the shortest daylight. The sun will rise and set the farthest to the south on this day and take its lowest possible path through the southern sky (for those of us in the northern hemisphere). It marks the first day of winter.

In the Roman calendar from 46 BC that Julius Caesar (of salad fame) devised, the solstice occurred on December 25th. He had devised a 365 1/2 day year, which is pretty good, but not exact, so that since that time the solstice has shifted to December 21st. Interestingly, there is no mention of the exact date of the birth of Jesus (the Savior, not the Alou brother who played for the Giants) in the Bible. It seems that around the time of the conversion of the emperor Constantine (272 - 337 AD) the early Christians "borrowed" what had already been a long-standing party celebrating the return of the sun and designated the 25th as the official day to celebrate the birth of Jesus.



DAVID MALIN/ANGLO-AUSTRALIAN OBSERVATORY

Looking east on December 15th at 2200 hours

And what of the star of Bethlehem, you say? Other than the reports in the book of Matthew (written sometime in the 1st century AD and probably not by Matt himself) of the star that drew the three wise guys to Bethlehem, there are no other observations by the Chinese (good keepers of astronomical events) or any other civilization of any special astronomical event around December 25th, Year 1. Of course, since there is no definitive date of the birth of Jesus himself, perhaps there was an astronomical event at some other time of the year. Most scholars put the birth of Jesus between 6 and 2 BC. There was a very nice conjunction of Venus and Saturn in June of the year 2 BC that would have made the two planets appear to be one star. So, IF there really was something in the sky back then, and not just fancy writing way after the birth itself, perhaps this conjunction was it.

Orion and Friends

The onset of winter means the return of some of my favorite things to see in the sky. Orion returns and is the easiest constellation to spot in the sky. Bonus if you can focus your Steiners on Orion's sword: in there is the beautiful Orion Nebula, or M42 to astronomers. It's a gaseous region with some lively star formation going on and a favorite of amateur astronomers and pros alike. Orion is accompanied by the Gemini twins — Castor and Pollox. Castor is 30 seconds older. Finally we have the brightest star in the whole night sky, Sirius (the dog star) keeping us company for the winter. Enjoy your winter viewing!

To Contemplate While Having a Glass of Wine on Deck

What was once a field is now a shopping center. Where a building stood is now a parking lot. An interstate runs through the park you played in as a kid. Nothing lasts... But the sky you see is exactly the same as the sky that the Mayans, the Caribs, the Egyptians, the Romans, Galileo, Newton, and Einstein saw. Perhaps it is the single constant that goes from era to era.

Scott Welty is the author of The Why Book of Sailing, *Burford Books, © 2007.*

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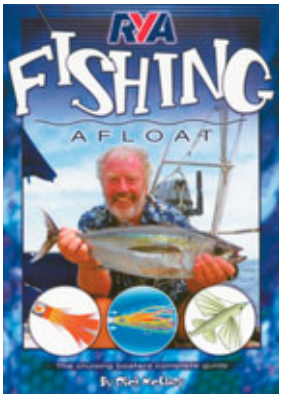
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A Cruising Sailor's Christmas Bookshelf

Give the gifts that keep on giving — books! (Or ask Santa to bring them to you.) Here are books for some of the various cruisers in your life.

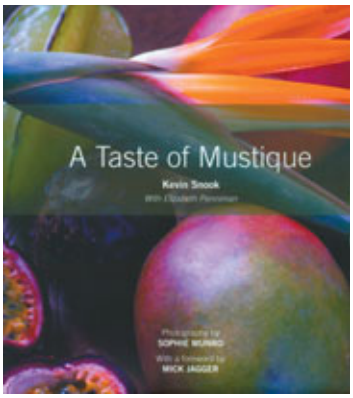


RYA Fishing Afloat, *by Dick McClary © 2009, The Royal Yachting Association. Soft cover, 112 pages, color photos and illustrations. ISBN 978-1906-435-028.*

For the yachting fisherman (or fisherman wannabe), *RYA Fishing Afloat* is the perfect catch. Dick spends several months a year sailing and fishing in the Caribbean aboard the 38-foot sloop *Alacazam*. The instructive material in this book is drawn from the author's experience gained fishing in Europe, the Mediterranean, and Atlantic crossing and the Caribbean. As the book's Introduction points out, the basic principles have almost universal application. For example, the same tackle might catch a mackerel in the UK, a gilthead bream off Greece or a mahi-mahi in the West Indies. "It's not where you do it but how you do it that's the real secret."

This is one of the (UK) Royal Yachting Association's series of how-to books. It covers every aspect of fishing from a sailing yacht underway, adrift or at anchor. Abundant photos, diagrams and illustrations make the methods and principles described in the text easy to digest. It tells you about the gear you'll be working with, too — reels, hooks, swivels, knots and crimped connections — so you can set it all up properly by yourself. The author even gives the all-important instructions on preparing your catch for the table — after all, a cruiser's main purpose in fishing is to eat. And if you follow the advice in this excellent introduction to reeling in your own dinner, written especially for the sailing fisherman (or is that the fishing sailor?), you stand a good chance of joining the "regular catchers" club.

This book is available at bookstores or from www.rya.org.uk/shop (order code G72).



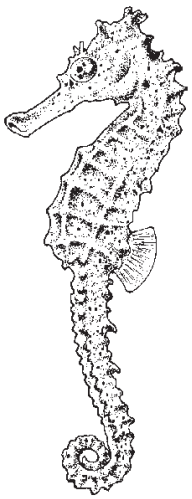
A Taste of Mustique, *by Kevin Snook with Elizabeth Penniman © 2007, Macmillan Caribbean. Hard cover, 194 pages, color photos. ISBN 978-1-4050-9906-6.*

This book of recipes from "the island of the rich and famous" will be uplifting for any galley slave. No, it's not all champagne and caviar. Many recipes highlight a variety of readily available local ingredients that are often given a sophisticated twist. Included are Caribbean favorites such as roti, boiled and conch fritters, plus as some totally foreign, but good, recipes such as a roasted artichoke and buffalo mozzarella pizza. (If *Fishing Afloat* helps you catch a yellowfin, there are a couple of seared tuna recipes here you'll want to try.)

—Continued on next page



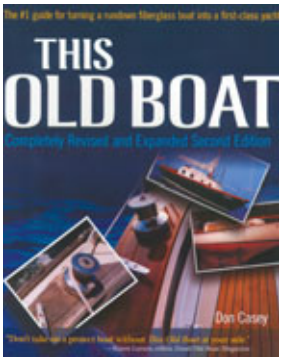
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—Continued from previous page

Many of the recipes are by the author, a noted chef, and these are interspersed with recipes selected from local chefs working on the island (aside from the restaurants, virtually every private home on Mustique has its own chef). The chapters are organized by scenarios, including a beach lime, themed parties, and a midnight rendezvous. Also included are anecdotes about life on Mustique from various residents and visitors. These range from enlightening through entertaining to wince-making, and are probably of greatest interest to the Mustique denizens themselves. But the recipes are solid and every cook will find inspiration.



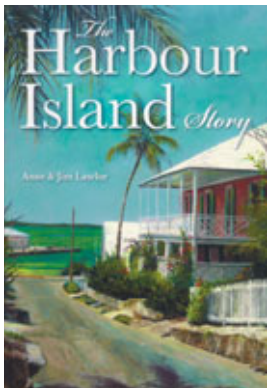
This book is available at shops on Mustique or from www.macmillan-caribbean.com.

This Old Boat *by Don Casey, second edition © 2009, International Marine. Hard cover, 548 pages, black-and-white photos and illustrations.*

For the owner who wants to turn a run-down fiberglass boat into a first-class yacht, this is the Bible. The first edition, published in 1991, became a classic, and this revised and expanded edition is better yet — and timely. It's a great time to find a deal on "pre-owned" plastic boats, and with a bit of time, money and acquired skills you can refurbish a good old design into an admirable bluewater cruising machine.

As the author notes, "if you are looking at four-color brochures of a $400,000 boat, you can probably buy an equally capable boat on the used market for 20 percent of that amount, perhaps less." He also notes that well-built fiberglass boats have proven to be nearly immortal and a resuscitated 20- to 40-year-old boat can deliver performance, comfort and safety equal to or better than a new boat.

This soup-to-nuts tome takes you through a logical, orderly process of bringing an "oldie but goodie" to progressively better condition. Most of the text is devoted to showing how to make desired changes, repairs and enhancements. It tells you what tools and materials to use and how to use them.



Don Casey writes, "Whether you will give your old boat a new life or it will give you one is hard to say."

Available at bookstores and chandleries or from www.internationalmarine.com.

The Harbour Island Story*, by Anne and Jim Lawlor, © 2008, Macmillan Caribbean. Soft cover, black-and-white photos, 320 pages. ISBN 978-0-333-97051-5.*

If you plan to head to the Bahamas, this book will enhance your understanding of its people and their history. Anne Lawlor was born on Harbour Island and is a professor of English at the College of the Bahamas. Her father was acclaimed historian Paul Albury.

Harbour Island has been at the forefront of Bahamian history since the first settlers arrived. Its harbor encouraged trade and fishing while also sheltering privateers and wreckers. Seafaring and shipbuilding were life, and the list of boats built on the island from 1796 to 1843 is impressive. Eventually tourism took over from shipping, and today Harbour Island is the habitat of millionaires. How this two-square-mile island evolved from a place on which an early Dutch explorer found "nothing worth noting" (the Lucayan people had died out a century before) to a hot spot for celebrities is quite a story, and the Lawlors tell it thoroughly.

This book is available from www.macmillan-caribbean.com.

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Sorrel Makes Me Think of Christmas

by Devi Sharp

My first encounter with sorrel was in St. Croix at Christmas time. My husband, Hunter, and I were touring around the island in a rented car and stopped by a small roadside fruit stand. I love to stop at roadside stands because there is always more to be had than the items for sale. We bought a few bananas and papayas and while chatting with the ladies we noticed a heap of wine-colored flowers in a rolled-down feed sack. Being the ever-curious naturalist and cook, I asked about the flowers and what to do with them. I just love to ask ladies at the market what to do with fruits and vegetables — it opens a door of giving that almost always ends with new ideas and good cheer.

The red-colored flowers of sorrel should not be confused with wood sorrel, a small plant with three leaves that grows in temperate forests that has a tangy astringent taste. The scientific name of the sorrel used in the Caribbean is *Hibiscus sabdariffa* and this name shows a relationship to the hibiscus flower bush, also a very popular plant for teas and beverages. In the Caribbean, sorrel (also called roselle) is used for beverages, sauces, salads, soups, chutneys, pickles, tarts, puddings and syrups, and as a substitute for cranberry sauce.

The "flower" that we had in hand was actually what is left over after the petals of the flower dry and fall off, leaving the red sepals (the structure outside of the flower). The sepals of most flowers are green and not very conspicuous. As a collective unit the sepals form a calyx, and it is the calyx that you use for making your sorrel tea or other dishes. In the inside of the calyx there is a large seed, which you can leave in if you are not steeping the



brew overnight. For all other uses you will need to remove the seed. I have since seen sorrel sold in bags with the seed removed, and dried sorrel in the grocery store.

Our new friend gave us a recipe for sorrel drink that I have tinkered with for years and with the help of testers have hit the level of spices that taste good to me. Let this basic recipe be a starting point for your favorite sorrel drink. I use a pressure cooker because it is a big pot that I can cover and let the tea steep in overnight without fear of contamination. The amount of water you use does not need to be exact because you are making a concentrate and you can dilute the concentrate to your taste.

Rinse the sorrel and remove the calyx. You can cut around the seed with a small knife, or just pull the sepals off the seedpod. This is a bit of a chore and will make you think twice about paying the bit extra to purchase your sorrel deseeded.

Sorrel Drink

4 quarts of water
2 pounds of washed and deseeded sorrel
2 cinnamon sticks
3 whole allspice
5 whole cloves
1 one-inch piece of ginger, peeled and cut into four pieces
2 pieces of orange peel about 1 inch each
1 Cup sugar

Add cinnamon, allspice, cloves, ginger and orange peel to the water and bring to a boil. Add sorrel and sugar to boiling water and boil for a minute. Cover the pot and let steep overnight. Strain the leaves and spices out from the liquid and refrigerate the sorrel concentrate. You can add water or club soda to dilute the concentrate. You can then also add rum for a refreshing cocktail. You may need to add more sugar, but start on the light side with the sugar and you can always sweeten it as you use it.

After making my first batch of sorrel drink I chatted with a Trinidadian friend and she asked what I did with the "leaves" (calyx). I told her that I tossed them. "Oh no, you use them for jam!" You can use the leftover calyx to make jam or a mock cranberry sauce. If you plan to do this you may want to put the spices in a bag of cheesecloth or net so you can easily remove them after brewing the sorrel tea. Sorrel has a lot of natural pectin, so to make the jam you just add more sugar, heat to boiling and put the jam in clean containers and store in the refrigerator. Yes, you eat the calyx, but they are soft and chewy.

Here is the recipe for Sorrel Jam starting with fresh calyx:

Sorrel Jam

1 pound sorrel
1/2 Cup water
1 pound granulated sugar
1 small piece cinnamon or other spices to taste

Remove the seed from the calyx and rinse. Place sorrel in a deep pot and cover with water; bring to the boil and cook until tender (about 10 minutes). Measure sorrel and add 1 Cup sugar for every cup of fruit and juice. Return to heat and bring to the boil; cook until jelly stage (about 15 minutes). Pour into hot sterilized bottles. Refrigerate the jam or use a hot bath to seal the jars.

To make "cranberry sauce" use the recipe for jam and add orange peel, cinnamon and whatever spices you choose.

If you do not feel like making your own, be sure to sample some of the holiday sorrel drinks and treats that the islands have to offer at Christmas time.

Tide's Table

FRUITCAKE TIME IS HERE!

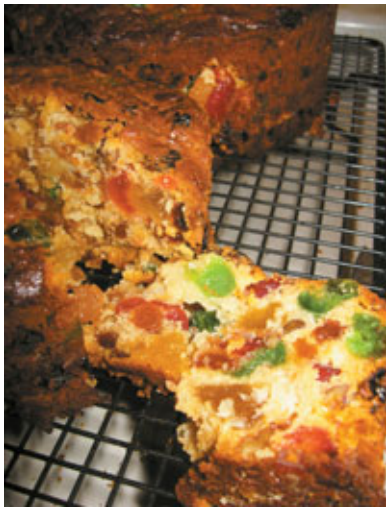
by Ross Mavis



It's definitely time to bake your Christmas fruitcake, if you have not already done so. These cakes, heavy with preserved fruit and having less flour than most cakes their size, age well and in doing so bring out their rich flavour and moistness.

In my home, preparing fruitcake was a tradition involving all members of the family. That wasn't too difficult an organizational task for my mother as I am an only child. But she made a point of having both my father and me assist in the preparation. Mum always said it was good luck to have everyone in the family help make the cake. Little effort was needed to have us participate in its consumption some weeks later.

Usually on a weekend morning, Mum would take down the largest pottery, grip-stand mixing bowl we had. Then from hiding places in the recesses of cupboards would come wonderful packages of fruits. These specialty items were normally not readily available or seen in our house at other times of the year — candied cherries and pineapple slices red, green and yellow; large dark sticky raisins and strange pale-white raisins; small firm currants, crystallized ginger and citron or candied citrus peel. The very sight of these fruit gems was magical. Many of them seemed to glisten from a light source within.



During this time of year, there were many exotic fruits available to us. I can remember when Japanese oranges, packed in small wooden crates, arrived by boat. These were a special delicacy for us as kids. Strange fruits such as pomegranates and litchi nuts also became part of our Christmas. The Chinese vegetable man who delivered fresh vegetables to our door always gave my Mum a box of candied ginger as a gift.

Dad wasn't a fan of walnuts, so almonds or hazelnuts were the only ones Mum would include in the fruitcake. In reality, most of the fruit or nuts, if unavailable or not desired, could be substituted for others. Dad's help was sought once the ingredients had been combined and it was time to stir the heavy batter. I can still see him stirring the dense mixture. I was sure the cake would not be successful unless he had used his brawn to mix the ingredients. Mum would then spoon the batter into round, deep cake tins that had removable bottoms.

Once baked and cooled, Mum ran a kitchen knife around the inside of the pan, loosening the cake's edge and making removal easy. Then by simply pushing up on the bottom of the pan, the cake and pan-bottom would easily lift out. The metal piece would be taken from the bottom of the cake and she would be wrap the cake in two layers of black-rum-soaked cheesecloth and waxed paper and place it in the back of the refrigerator to age.

As Christmas came closer, Mum would check the cakes for moistness. A layer of almond paste or marzipan was sometimes patted on the top of the cake and a white frosting applied over that. Wow, was that decadent or what? When Christmas rolled around, opening the fruitcake was almost as exciting as opening presents.

We've baked our cake already this year. If you haven't, I recommend you try this delicious white fruitcake recipe from my mother-in-law, Nana. My wife, Willa, prefers it to the darker cake my Mum always made.

Nana's White Fruitcake

Willa's mum and dad were married in 1929 exactly six months before the stock market crashed. Sadly, before their first Christmas, the economy had taken a downturn from which they never fully recovered. But Willa has always had this White Fruitcake recipe and many precious holiday memories from years ago.

1/2 Cup (125 mL) butter
1 Cup (250 mL) sugar
3 eggs
1/2 Cup (125 mL) milk
2 Cups (500 mL) flour
2 teaspoons (10 mL) baking powder
1/2 pound (225 g) candied cherries (red and green)
1/4 pound (115 g) candied citron, finely cut
1/4 pound (115 g) candied pineapple chunks
1/2 pound (225 g) coconut
1/4 pound (115 g) almonds or pecans, sliced or chopped
1 pound (450 g) white raisins
vanilla and lemon flavouring
Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C).

In a large bowl, with an electric mixer, blend butter, sugar and eggs. Alternately add milk, flour and baking powder, mixing well. Stir in fruit and nuts, mix until well combined. Pour in well greased loaf or tube pan, packing down well.

Bake for 2 to 2 1/2 hours or until tester comes out clean. Cool and wrap well in rum-soaked cheesecloth and plastic wrap and keep in a cake tin. If refrigerated, cake will last for many months.

Happy Holidays.

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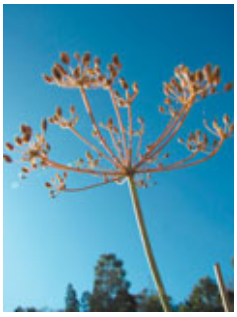
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Dill: Not for Pickles Only!

Dill isn't a traditional seasoning in Caribbean cuisine, but it grows well here and is delicious with a number of tropical and cruiser-staple foods.



Dill weed's wispy leaves are used fresh as an herb, while dill seed is considered a spice. Dill leaves have a crisp clean taste that enhances the flavor of many vegetables, especially potatoes and cucumbers. Dill seeds have a much more potent flavor, like a blend of anise and celery. Both seeds and leaves are used for pickling.

Yes, it is actually called a weed and it can grow that easily — perfect for a cockpit herb garden. Dill requires full sun, good drainage, and rich soil. Spread the seed over well-worked soil and cover with a half-inch of damp sand (not beach sand, which will contain salt). Sprouts emerge in about two weeks, and should be thinned to six inches apart. Keep weeded, occasionally water, and it will mature in about two months.

Snip the leaves you need with scissors, and leave the rest of the plant to keep growing. Dill seed is harvested by snipping off the flat, yellow flower head as it ripens. Put the flowers in a paper bag and dry in the sun. Shake the bag a few times to separate the seeds. Store in a cool dark shelf, or refrigerate. These seeds can be used whole, or crushed in a mill or coffee grinder. The seed heads can be used in breads, stews, and rice dishes, as well as in dill pickles.

Fresh or dried, dill's leaves and seeds are great additions to fish, lamb, new potatoes and pea or bean dishes. I keep four stalks growing and use it fresh when cooking fish fillets. Always add dill at the end of cooking, otherwise the heat will destroy most of its flavor. Use it sparingly or it will overwhelm other flavors.

Dilled Fish in Foil
1 pound fresh fish fillets, (salmon or grouper preferred)
1 Tablespoon butter
1/4 Cup lemon juice
1 Tablespoon fresh chopped parsley
1 teaspoon fresh dill weed leaves, crushed
1 teaspoon salt
1 medium onion, chopped very small
Divide fish into four portions. Smear butter on four squares of heavy-duty aluminum foil, and then put a portion of fish on each piece of foil. Melt remaining butter in a small sauté pan and add lemon juice, parsley, dill weed, and salt. Pour over fish. Top with onion. Fold foil so it doesn't leak and put the four pieces in a baking dish. Bake at 350°F for 20 minutes (or longer, depending on the thickness of the fillets).

Plenty Beans Stew
1/2 Cup of each of the following beans: pinto, kidney, black and lentils
1 large onion, chopped
2 cloves of garlic, chopped
1 Tablespoon olive or canola oil
2 stalks of celery, chopped
1 Cup chopped carrots
2 Cups chopped potatoes
1 bay leaf
1 teaspoon fresh dill leaves, crushed
1 teaspoon salt
Soak beans several hours or overnight. Discard soaking water. Sauté onion and garlic in oil. Combine all ingredients except dill and salt in a large slow cooker, crockpot, or heavy covered pot. Add water to cover, bring to boil and simmer for about 4 hours. Check occasionally and add more liquid if necessary. Add dill and salt near the end of cooking time.



Cheesy Dill Biscuit Bread
2 Cups baker's flour
2 Tablespoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
6 Tablespoons COLD butter, chopped
3/4 Cup cheddar cheese grated
1 1/2 Tablespoon chopped fresh dill
1/3 Cup whole milk
3/4 Cup plain yogurt
In a suitable bowl whisk together all dry ingredients. Add cold butter pieces and continue to blend until the mixture is coarse. Add cheese and dill. Combine yogurt and milk into the flour-cheese mixture.

On an ungreased cookie sheet, divide dough into 1/4 Cup mounds about two inches apart. Bake at 400°F for about 15 minutes, or until pale golden brown. (Best to use the middle oven rack to keep bottoms from over hardening and burning.)

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Dear *Compass*,

We "swallowed the anchor" of *S/Y Mystique* in January 2006 and have recently returned to Carriacou as tourists. We read recent editions of *Caribbean Compass* and were interested in the wonderful poem "Carriacou Regatta" by Nan Hatch in the August 2009 issue.

In July 1967, we travelled down the islands from St. Vincent to Grenada, on a schooner as far as Union Island and on a converted MTB from there to Grenada. We overnighted on Union and on Carriacou, where we stayed at the Mermaid Tavern, owned and run by Linton Rigg of Carriacou Regatta fame. The floors had just been varnished so the whole place was rather sticky and rather tricky to navigate. All guests sat together at the same table for meals, with Linton Rigg presiding. As far as we recall, he monopolized the conversation and was an extremely interesting "mine host". There aren't many people who remember him, so we count ourselves as especially privileged.

We based *Mystique* at the Tyrell Bay Yacht Haulout from 2001 to 2006 and have nothing but happy memories of those days, too, which included a fair of amount of hard work in the best yard in the world (we're biased!).

Having worked in Barbados (1966 and 1967) and Guyana (1967 to 1969), carried out occasional voluntary work in Barbados (between 1999 and 2004), and kept our yacht in Carriacou, we decided to see if being land-based would work, hence our recent trip. We're happy to report on a successful trip, which included the decision to buy a modest house on Carriacou which we will call *Mystique*. The views are spectacular to the north and northwest, so we'll see yachts on passage crossing Hillsborough Bay, and enjoy magnificent views across to Union and up the islands as well. It seems a fitting way to continue the journey we started as a newly married couple all those years ago in Barbados. And all because someone told me years ago that, if I wanted to see the world (and poor eyesight had disqualified me for the Navy in those days), become an accountant! Weird, but it has certainly worked for us.

We used to see Linton Rigg's former Carriacou sloop, *Mermaid of Carriacou*, in Tyrell Bay and the fact that John Smith has kept that unique vessel afloat is another reminder of an amazing man to whom racing yachtsmen of the Caribbean should raise their glasses each Carriacou Regatta. [*Editor's note: As this issue of* Compass *goes to press, John Smith is sailing* Mermaid *from Aruba to Panama.*]

Wishing all yachties fair winds this winter season, and hoping we'll be able to see old friends at Mystique on Carriacou from February 2010.

Sincerely,
Christine and Paul Burnett
UK

Dear *Compass*,

In the October issue of *Compass*, there was an excellent article on "Coming to the Caribbean from the US East Coast" by Don Street.

For the past 35 years, I have read virtually everything that Don Street has written. To me, he is the Dean of Caribbean Cruising and to not heed his advice is to lose the advantage that is gained by understanding what a man of his experience has to say.

Notwithstanding my admiration for Don, it appears to me that either the article contains an oversight or else the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico are not part of the Caribbean. There is no question that if one wants to go directly to the Virgin Islands, everything that Don indicates in his article is the wisdom of the ages. However, going south to the Caribbean can include the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico as well. Moreover, if such a route were taken, one could avoid the slog to windward in the Atlantic Ocean to get to the destination.

Using Don's map (see www.caribbeancompass.com/online/october09compass_online.pdf, page 28), if one were to take Route VI, or any approximation of it regardless of one's jump-off point, one could take the Windward Passage between Cuba and Hispaniola. The route is safe and most often the wind is favorable for sailing vessels. The south coast of the Dominican Republic is a wonderful cruising ground with numerous stops and, instead of working to windward in the Atlantic, you can work to windward in the lee of the second largest island in the Caribbean, Hispaniola. Most anchorages going east are within 30 miles of each other and all are well sheltered.

Once to the east end of the DR, you are south of the Mona Passage, and can make for the west end of Puerto Rico. The south shore of PR is another fine cruising area, with many wonderful anchorages and interesting stops.

It seems to me if you are in the US and heading directly to the Virgin Islands to get to the Caribbean, you must be in a rush to get somewhere for you are bypassing a part of the Caribbean that is often overlooked, and so very worthwhile and interesting.

You can find complete information on all of the Dominican Republic in the free cruising guide to the Dominican Republic at www.dominicanrepubliccruisingguide.com. [*See related news item on page 6.*]

Based on Don's charts we can call this route, "Route VIa, Coming to the Caribbean from the US East Coast", or if such a route is not seen as plausible, then perhaps we should have the title of the last article changed to "Coming to the Virgin Islands from the US East Coast".

Good cruising,
Frank Virgintino, Author
Dominican Republic Cruising Guide

Dear Frank,

You are right that the article was mis-titled, and that's my fault. It should have been called "Coming to the Lesser Antilles from the US East Coast". (Don has always said that he considers St. Thomas to be the best landfall for those coming from the north and intending to cruise the Lesser Antilles.) We hope that Compass *readers will check out your guide and consider the very interesting option of cruising the Dominican Republic, whether via "Route VIa" or coming from any other direction.*

Sally

Dear *Compass*,

I want to advise you that on October 18th my girlfriend and I were robbed by four armed men while anchored at Chateaubelair, St. Vincent, in the northern part of the bay. We had broken the autopilot and we wanted to rest there before sailing onward to Martinique. They had time in the afternoon to see that we were only two on board and robbing us would be easy. At 9:00 in the dark night they came on board. One of them got a pistol on me, another one held a cutlass on my girlfriend, another one stayed outside in a little boat with paddles, and another one searched inside the boat.

They left when I gave all the money that we had, plus a Breitling watch and a telephone. It was quickly done; my girlfriend received a cut with the cutlass. The VHF was out of order, so we didn't report the incident until we reached Martinique, where we were told that we were the fourth boat in two years to be the victim of an armed robbery in the same place! Strange that no cruising guide warns about that place.

Anyway, we wanted to advise you about this incident if it can help others.

Thanks and regards,
Emmanuel
Yacht Soca Girl

Dear Emmanuel,

Please tell other sailors in Martinique that reports of crimes against yachts throughout the Caribbean, including the incidents at Chateaubelair, are collected at www.safetyandsecuritynet.com. After your incident was reported, www.safetyandsecuritynet.com posted the following: "At this point, Chateaubelair goes back on our watch list: seven incidents confirmed in less than 2 years, with another four probable, and eight in the 18 months prior to that period. Yachts should not anchor at Chateaubelair and should tell everyone they know of the dangers there." Reports about Chateubelair can also be found at www.noonsite.com, and in his current edition of the Sailor's Guide to the Windward Islands *Chris Doyle suggests avoiding overnighting there. (Chris's website also contains updates and feedback from cruisers; visit www.doyleguides.com.) We realize these are all English-language sources, but hope that you and our other French-speaking friends will make use of them.*

Meanwhile, authorities in St. Vincent including the Minister of Tourism, Hon. Glen Beache, and the Parliamentary Representative for North Leeward, Hon. Dr. Jerrold Thompson, have spoken recently about the increasingly critical need for yacht security on this part of the St. Vincent coast. We hope to be able to report positive developments soon.

CC

—Continued on page 49

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(e) photosynthesis
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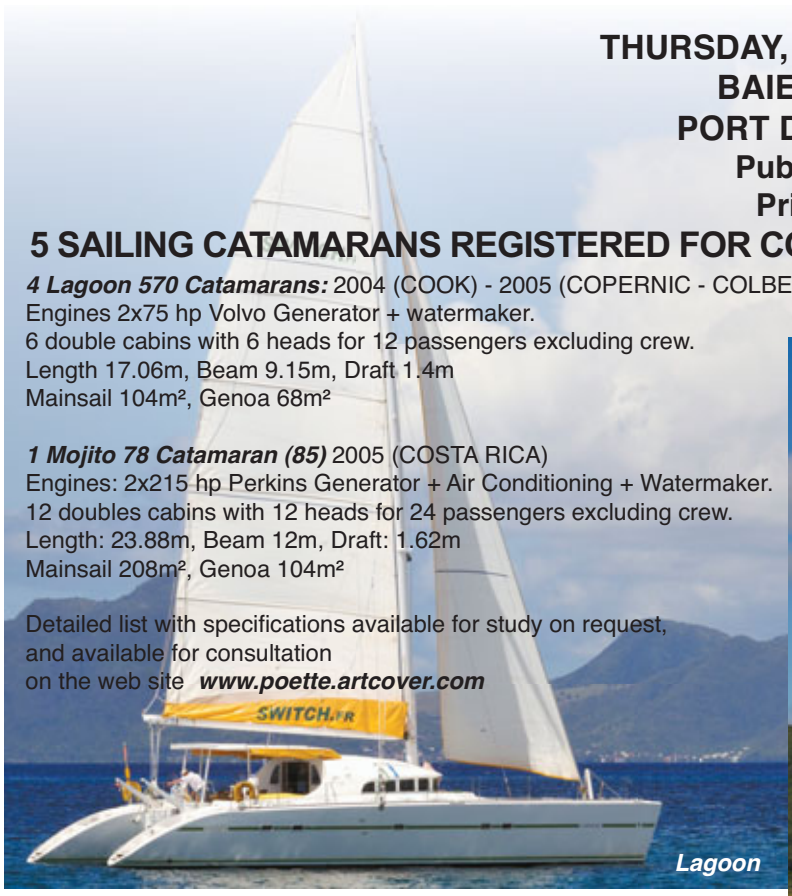
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—Continued from page 47 *...Readers' Forum*

Dear *Compass*,

We recently had the St Lucia BMW J/24 Sail-Off, to get two teams qualified for the St. Lucia BMW Invitational Championship 2009.

When we realized we did not have one single piece of paper on board the committee boat to write down the results, we were so happy that we *always* have a copy of the *Compass*! Thank you.

Cheers,
Danielle DeRouck, Social Secretary
St. Lucia Yacht Club

Dear* Compass *Readers,

We want to hear from YOU!

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

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

Send your letters to:
sally@caribbeancompass.com or Compass Publishing Ltd. Readers' Forum
Box 175BQ, Bequia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear *Compass*,

Reading the story of the loss of the *Helen Mary G* in the July issue of *Compass* has got me thinking about bilge pumps. The yacht, a Sovereign 470, sank offshore on a passage between the BVI and St. Kitts after striking a submerged object.

After 47 years in the insurance business, I know the most easily preventable claim is a sinking caused by inadequate bilge pumps. Do you have hand pumps that could save your boat if the electric bilge pump(s) stopped working?

Many yachts carry one or two Whale Gusher 10s. Pumps of this size are useless as emergency pumps on a cruising boat of 40 feet or more. A cruising boat that does any serious offshore sailing should have at least one 25-gallon-per-minute (or more) hand pump.

There are only two I know of on the market, the Whale Gusher 30 and the Edson. My preference is the Edson, a single-acting pump with one 2 1/2-inch intake and one 2 1/2-inch discharge valve. The valves are so big all sorts of small crud can get sucked through and blown over the side — to the extent that on an Edson a strum box is not needed. Instead, two eighth-inch bronze or stainless rods should be fastened through the intake line at a right angle. The small stuff will suck through, and the X made by the rods will stop the big stuff.

Install a five-foot-long handle and you can pump forever. My wooden yawl *Iolaire's* Edson has such a long handle that in years gone by (when she leaked a bit, to say the least) the early morning job of my children, starting at about age six, was to pump the bilge. I can honestly say that if it were not for Edson pumps, *Iolaire* would have sunk at least half a dozen times.

If you do not want to permanently install a pump, you can buy an Edson pump mounted on a board. It has two hoses, one long enough to reach to the deep part of the bilge, the other to reach over the side. But when you order it tell them you do not want the fancy varnished mahogany mounting board (it will slip and slide along and your foot will slide on the varnished surface). Rather, ask for the pump to be mounted on a plain fir plywood board and the bottom of the board to be covered with indoor/outdoor carpeting.

In addition, all boats should have the ability to use the engine's saltwater pump as a bilge pump. A T or Y valve should be installed on the intake line, one end led to the normal saltwater intake line, the other into the bilge to a good strum box.

Some rough figures are supplied in the following table:

Intake diameter (in inches)	Gallons per minute
1	20
1 1/4	30
1 1/2	45
2	80

These are serious amounts of water and, most important, the pump will keep on going as long as the main engine has air.

Many years ago there was a very resourceful skipper who was having trouble with leaks he could not keep up with, even after he rigged the engine saltwater intake as a bilge pump having made a strum box out of a coffee can. He had called the Coast Guard and they were on the way with pumps, but he was losing it — the water level had reached the engine. He was really resourceful, as he found a spare exhaust hose, pulled off the air intake, and fastened the exhaust hose onto the air intake. By the time the Coast Guard arrived the engine was underwater but still had air and was still running. With the aid of the Coast Guard's pumps, the boat was saved.

Don Street, *Iolaire*

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CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2009

2	FULL MOON
3	Saba Day. Public holiday in Saba
6 - 7	Gustav Wilmerding 19th Annual Memorial Challenge, BVI. West End Yacht Club (WEYC), Tortola, BVI, tel (284) 495-1002, fax (284) 495-4184, mvh@surfbvi.com, www.weyc.net
6 - 9	St. Maarten Charter Yacht Exhibition. www.mybacaribbeanshow.com
7 - 11	48th Antigua Charter Yacht Meeting. www.antiguayachtshow.com
9	National Heroes Day. Public holiday in Antigua & Barbuda
11 – 14	Sir John Compton Memorial Trophy 2009, race from St. Lucia to Martinique and return. St. Lucia Yacht Club (SLYC), tel (758) 452-8350, secretary@stluciayachtclub.com, www.stluciayachtclub.com
12 - 19	Chanukah
13	National Day. Public holiday in St. Lucia
16	Lionel Richie live at Pierre Aliker Stadium, Martinique. www.bienglace.com/LIONEL-RICHIE-EN-CONCERT-EN.html
16 – 24	Nine Mornings Festival, St. Vincent & the Grenadines
15	Kingdom Day. Public holiday in St. Maarten
15	ARC Children's Christmas Party, St. Lucia. SLYC
18	Lionel Richie live at Baie-Mahault Stadium, Guadeloupe. www.bienglace.com/LIONEL-RICHIE-EN-CONCERT-EN.html
19	Separation Day. Public holiday in Anguilla
20	St. Lucia Yacht Club Fun Day. SLYC
21	Winter Solstice
22	Carols Afloat and Christmas Party, Rodney Bay Marina, St. Lucia. SLYC
25	Christmas Day. Public holiday in many places
26 – 30	Coupe de Nwel Regatta, Guadeloupe. gerard.csbf-guadeloupe@orange.fr
26	Boxing Day. Public holiday in many places
31	FULL MOON. Festival Day, Public holiday in Montserrat
31	Nelson's Pursuit Race, Antigua. AYC. *See ad on page 17.*

JANUARY 2010

1	New Year's Day. Public holiday or "recovery day" in many places. Junkanoo parade in Abaco, Bahamas
2	Public holiday in Cuba (Victory of Armed Forces Day), Haiti (Founding Fathers Day), St Kitts & Nevis (Carnival Day), St. Lucia and Grenada (Second New Year's Day)
2 – 3	St. Croix Christmas Festival Parades. www.stxfestival.com
6	Three Kings Day. Public holiday in many places
6	World ARC 2010/11 starts in St. Lucia. www.worldcruising.com/worldarc2010
11 – 17	17th Annual Barbados Jazz Festival. www.barbadosjazzfestival.com
11 – 20	St. Barts Music Festival. www.stbartsmusicfestival.org
13 – 16	Carriacou Sailing Series. www.sailingcarriacou.com
18	Martin Luther King Day. Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI
21	Errol Barrow Day. Public holiday in Barbados
21 – 24	St.Maarten-St.Martin Classic Yacht Regatta. www.ClassicRegatta.com
22	St. Thomas USVI Blues Festival. http://stevesimonpresents.com
23 – 24	Around Antigua Race. Antigua Yacht Club (AYC), tel/fax (268) 460-1799, yachtclub@candw.ag, www.antiguayachtclub.com
24 – 28	41st Spice Island Billfish Tournament, Grenada. www.sibtgrenada.com
24 – 30	Jamaica Jazz & Blues Festival, Montego Bay. www.airjamaicajazzandblues.com
27 – 30	Antigua Superyacht Cup. AYC
27 – 10 Feb	15th Annual Mustique Blues Festival. www.basilsbar.com
28 – 31	Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest. *See ad on page 53.*
29 – 2 Feb	Grenada Sailing Festival. *See ad on page 12.*
30	FULL MOON
30 – 31	Budget Marine Women's Caribbean Championships, St. Maarten. www.smyc.com

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

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WHAT'S ON MY MIND

Moorings

by Jim Hutchinson

"No," I called to the catamaran. "You can't pick up that mooring."
"Why?"
"Because you will be right on top of me."

They were about to pick up a big red mooring ball about 30 metres ahead of us. That was all that was said. They saw that what I said was true (or didn't want to be near me) and went elsewhere.

If I anchor too close to a mooring for it to be used and someone picks it up anyway, and hits me, who is at fault? Is a person allowed to reserve a piece of unused anchorage to the exclusion of others? If I fill a bay with moorings, do you have to pay me to be there?

But there is more than meets the eye in this particular case. We've been anchored in this spot for some weeks. The mooring was put there yesterday — without a word.

Thirty metres ahead may sound okay, presumably what they first thought. But the slack in the mooring plus the length of their bridle would put their bow five or ten metres behind where the ball is now, and their boat is 12 metres long. That would put them way too close, especially if they like running their engine — diesel exhaust. But another interesting aspect was seen when I snorkeled the mooring. The sand screw was about ten metres in front of our anchor, with its heavy chain laid out across the wind. The chain would have fouled our anchor if it had been laid out downwind. Whether the installers gave any thought to what would happen the first time a boat picked it up and pulled it straight is something to wonder.

I could have been a good sport and moved, of course. But many of you will see that there is at least one matter of principle here. I told the mooring's operator that I was there first, and nobody was going to occupy the mooring until I left. And I stayed as long as I wanted.

The mooring in question is one of many rental moorings in the bay. There are also many private moorings. Some yachts have moorings in several bays. And I sometimes leave our dinghy on a mooring when I do a daysail. There are other excuses for moorings, too.

There are places where moorings are mandatory for alleged environmental reasons. One island owned by the super-rich declared all of its surrounding waters ecologically sensitive and prohibits all anchoring — and installed mandatory moorings with big fees in a sand-bottom bay that has been an anchorage for centuries. As environmentally chic as that may sound, this same island has been caught dumping its trash in the sea.

There are now so many yachts, and so many captains that know or care little where their anchors fall, that there is a good case for protecting corals, grass, and sponges from us. Sigh.

Here's another problem with moorings. In general, I don't trust them. I've had a high rate of failure on the few I've picked up, and I've read and heard many mooring horror stories over the years. Even diving a mooring isn't a guarantee. Backing up a mooring with your own anchor is sometimes a good idea. How do you know? Ask the guy wanting to rent the mooring to you? (Or, sometimes, the next guy collecting on the same mooring?)

The real and irresistible inevitability of moorings is convenience. The argument that they are more secure will become increasingly true as yachts come to know less and less about anchoring. And the more yachts there are, many oblivious to where they are dropping their anchors, the greater the environmental justification.

And there is this. In many places where moorings are mandatory, high fees effectively say "rich people only". And of more moderate mooring fees, some of us say, "that is almost (or more than) my entire budget!"



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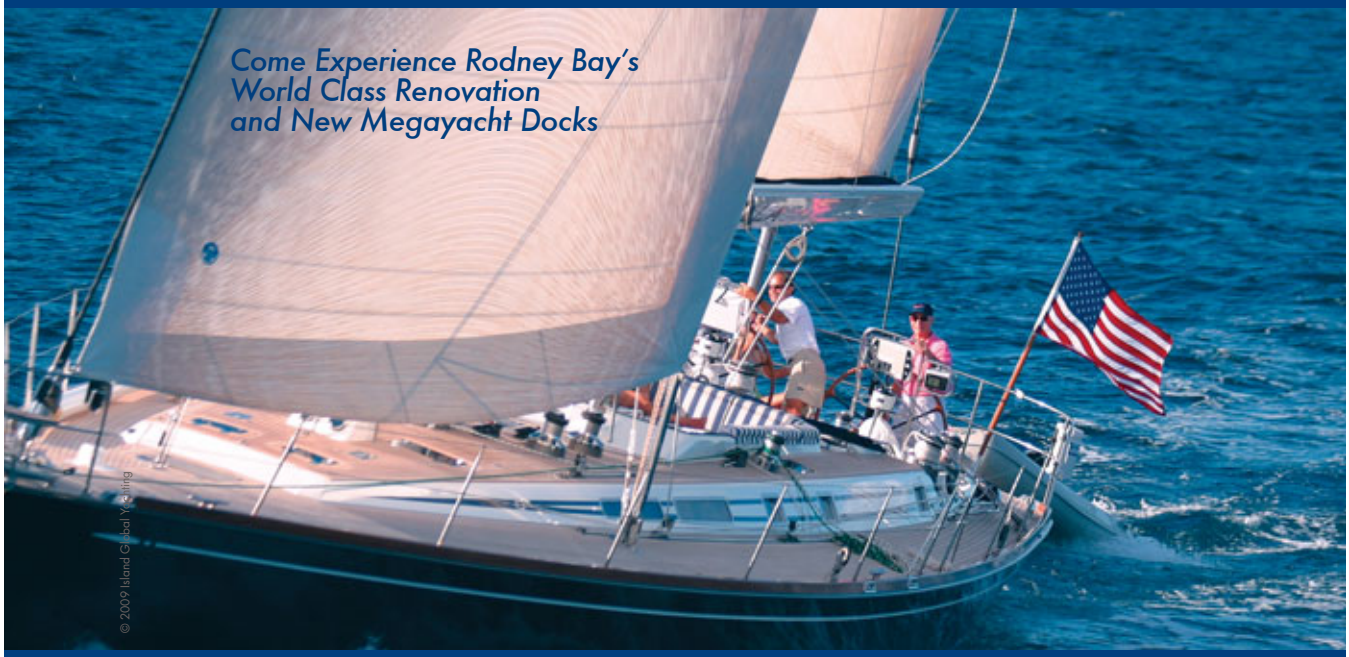
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Grenadines Sails	Bequia	31
GRPro-Clean	Martinique	MP
Iolaire Enterprises	UK	28/47
Island Water World	Sint Maarten	56
Island Water World	Sint Maarten	MP
Johnson Hardware	St. Lucia	27
Jones Maritime	St. Croix	28
KNJ Marine	Trinidad	MP
KP Marine	St. Vincent	19
L'Auberge des Grenadines	Bequia	45
Le Phare Bleu	Grenada	17
Lulley's Tackle	Bequia	31
Mango Bay	Martinique	MP
Maranne's Ice Cream	Bequia	44
Marc One Marine	Trinidad	MP
Marina Zar-Par	Dominican Rep	26
McIntyre Bros. Ltd	Grenada	28
Mid Atlantic Yacht Services	Azores	MP
Navimca	Venezuela	32
Northern Lights Generators	Tortola	32
On Deck	Antigua	MP
Perkins Engines	Tortola	33
Petit St. Vincent	PSV	40
Porthole Restaurant	Bequia	MP
Power Boats	Trinidad	MP
Quantum Sails	Tortola	23
Reef Gardens	Antigua	42
Reds Caribbean	Trinidad	36
Renaissance Marina	Aruba	15
Rodney Bay Marina	St. Lucia	55
Santa Barbara Resorts	Curaçao	14
Savon De Mer	Caribbean	MP
Sea Services	Martinique	21
Silver Diving	Carriacou	MP
Soper's Hole Marina	Tortola	10
Spice Island Marine	Grenada	25
St. Croix Regatta	St. Croix	17
St. Thomas Yacht Sales	St. Thomas	49
Superwind	Germany	35
SVG Air	St. Vincent	32
SVG Tourism	St. Vincent	7
SVV Poette		48
Technick	Grenada	MP
Ti' Ponton	Martinique	42
Tikal Arts & Crafts	Grenada	MP
Tilikum	Martinique	MP
Townhouse Mega Store	Antigua	50
Trade Winds Cruising	Bequia	41
Transcaraibes Rally	Guadeloupe	MP
Triskell Cup Regatta	Guadeloupe	13
Turbulence Sails	Grenada	25
Turbulence Sails	Grenada	MP
Tyrrel Bay Yacht Haulout	Carriacou	34
Vemasca	Venezuela	22
Voiles Assistance	Martinique	MP
Wallace & Co	Bequia	30
Wallilabou Anchorage	St. Vincent	41
WIND	Martinique	MP
WIND	Martinique	MP
Xanadu Marine	Venezuela	22
YES	Martinique	MP

MP = Market Place pages 51 to 53

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