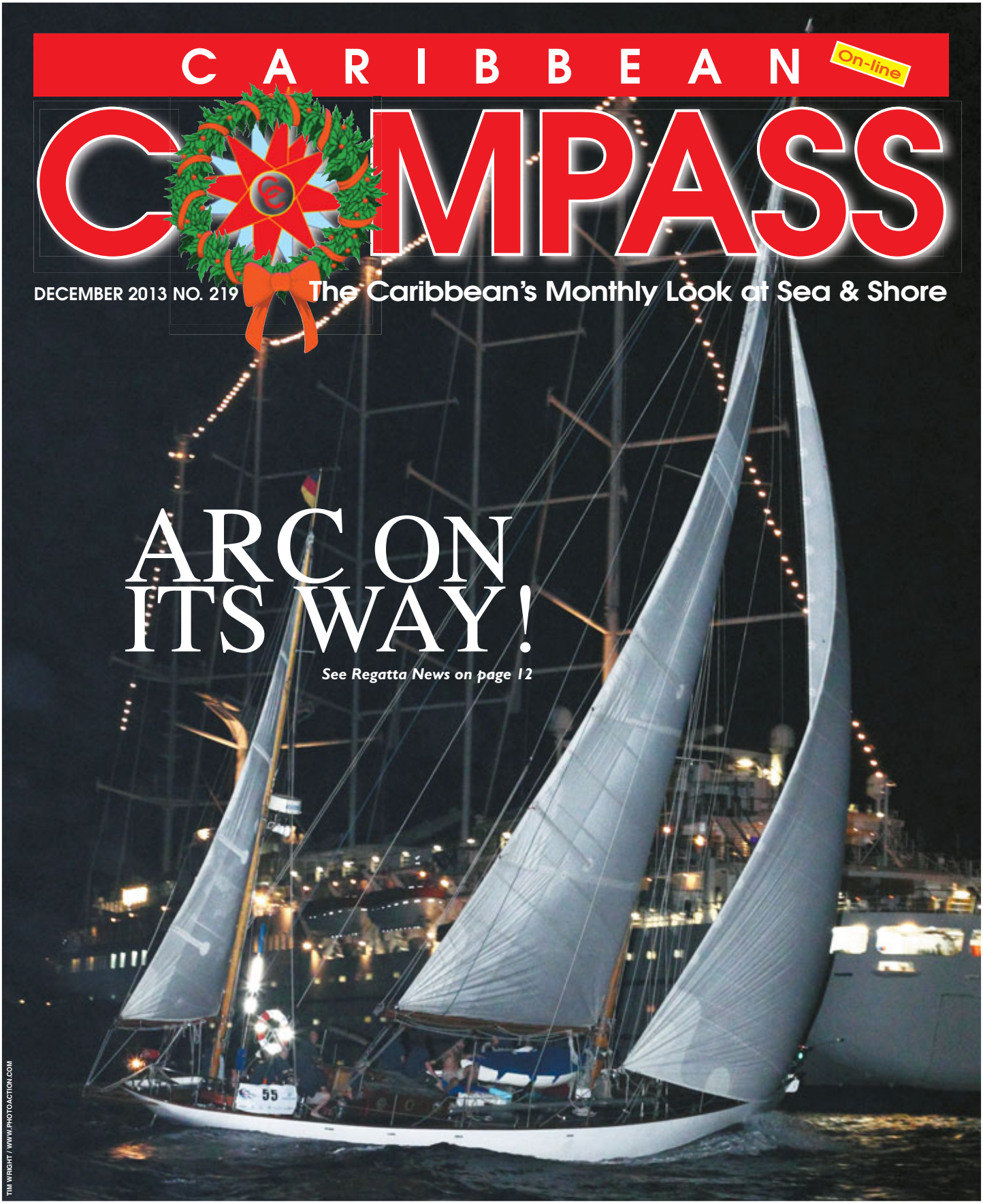
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See Regatta News on page 12



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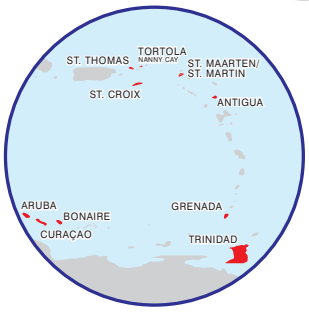


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Cover photo: A Tim Wright shot of the classic yawl Peter von Seestermühe *crossing the finish line in St. Lucia at last year's Atlantic Rally for Cruisers. She'll be back this month, along with nearly 300 more boats in ARC 2013 and the new ARC+*



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Info & Updates

Dominica Joins the Caribbean Marine Association

At a meeting of the Yachting Committee of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) held in Grenada on November 8th, the Dominica Marine Association signed up for membership of the Caribbean Marine Association (CMA), bringing the total number of countries now actively participating in the CMA to ten.



HUBERT WINSTON

President of the newly formed Dominica Marine Association, Hubert Winston, was welcomed into the CMA by the CMA President, John Duffy, who was also attending the OECS Yachting Committee meeting. Dominica is a useful addition to the ranks of the CMA as they are already operating the new pre-arrival notification system for yachts known as SailClear, which is gradually being rolled out across the Eastern Caribbean.

Dominica is one of the Caribbean's yachting destinations that has been well known to family cruisers for many years for its unspoiled nature.

Other islands with embryonic or developing yachting sectors which are being encouraged to form marine associations and join the CMA are Anguilla, Montserrat, Nevis and St. Kitts. Also, with Martinique and St. Maarten already being CMA members, closer ties are being developed with the French and Dutch islands in the hope that more of them will join the CMA.

The Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council's (CCLEC) SailClear pre-arrival notification system for yachts, which is already in use in some islands, is one of the products that is unifying the Caribbean islands, particularly those of the OECS. SailClear is a result of co-operation between the public and private sectors within the yachting and marine industries and could not have evolved without the active participation of marine associations and the CMA.

For further information contact John Duffy at info@caribbeanmarineassociation.com or (268) 562-6611.

Six SVG Police Stations Get VHF Radios



The installation of more VHF radios aims to improve communications between boaters and police

In an effort to enhance the safety of fishermen, pleasure-boat owners and the visiting yachting community in the waters of St. Vincent & the Grenadines, the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) has placed VHF marine radios at the police stations in the coastal communities of Chateaubelair, Rose Hall, Barrouallie and Owia on St. Vincent; Paget Farm on Bequia; and Ashton on Union Island.

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page

The NTRC teamed up with the Rainbow Radio League Inc. (RRL) to install and test the VHF radios. The RRL was also assisted by members of the Telecoms Unit of the Royal St. Vincent & the Grenadines Police Force and a seasoned tower climber.

The installation of these radios will complement a larger Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) that is already in place and functioning. The GMDSS is a modern maritime alert system that allows users when in imminent danger to press a button on their VHF radio to send their position acquired from GPS satellites, so that rescue personnel can quickly locate the vessel and persons in distress. The international GMDSS system should be fully operational by 2015. All new VHF marine radios will now have the GMDSS feature as a standard safety function.

The addition of these new VHF radios serves to cover areas in St. Vincent & the Grenadines not formerly accessible by the local GMDSS project. A VHF base radio is already in service from the temporary RRL headquarters in Bequia, monitoring maritime traffic 24/7. Radio amateurs in St. Vincent & the Grenadines often monitor the maritime frequencies and have been instrumental in organizing search and rescue missions with the assistance of the Coast Guard, local fishermen, pleasure boat and aeronautical mobile community.

Thanks to Donald De Riggs for information in this report.

Eight Bells

Sailors familiar with Grenada in the 1970s will recall Isaac Henry "Hank" Strauss aboard the ketch, *Doki*. Hank died on October 19th.

According to his obituary in Scuttlebutt Sailing News (www.sailingscuttlebutt.com), Hank was a "racing and cruising sailor, adventurer, musician, artist, World War Two superhero" (the obituary is well worth reading to find out why), "Academy Award nominated film maker, husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather" as well as a member of Noroton Yacht Club, New York Yacht Club, the Cruising Club of America — he was Commodore of the CCA New York Station at the age of 90 — and the Ischoda Yacht Club.

Hank was married in 1940 to Joan Strauss and they took their honeymoon on a 20-foot centerboard sloop, not unlike a Lightning. Don Street (who insists that *Doki* was a Whitby 42, not a Morgan 41 as generally reported), tells a story about Hank and Joan:

"One December, when Joan flew down to Antigua to join Hank on the boat for the winter, she announced, 'We have done it all, we have nothing to prove, we are not making any inter-island passages when it is blowing over 20.'

"Later in that windy season I said to Hank, 'You must have spent a lot of time waiting for a break in the weather.'

"To which Hank replied, 'Not at all. She doesn't realize that I can adjust the wind gauge. It has not blown over 20 all winter!'"

In the years of the IOR, Hank owned a 40-foot S&S sloop with three partners. They raced often and well in all the East Coast events, including the Bermuda race, a transatlantic race and the Fastnet. Hank owned a home on Grenada and cruised *Doki* back and forth to the US East Coast, fall and spring, for many years.

Frigate Island Incident Updates

Christina Curtin, who with her partner, Mark Beiser, was injured on October 3rd in an attack aboard their yacht, *Rainbow*, while anchored at Frigate Island, an islet off Union Island in the Grenadines, provides us with updates:

"Three teenage boys, 15, 16 and 17 years old, have been arrested. The oldest has turned Crown Witness. As of this writing (November 10th), the 15-year-old is in custody at police headquarters in St. Vincent, and the 16-year-old is in jail. They are being charged with bodily harm against Mark and grievous bodily harm to me. The government of St. Vincent & the Grenadines flew us from Grenada to St. Vincent for a Preliminary Inquiry on October 18th, and provided us with accommodation, meals, transportation and protection. (The two boys in custody will return to the Serious



The St. Vincent & the Grenadines Commissioner of Police, a Union Island restaurateur, an SVG Coast Guard representative and the Director of Grenadines Affairs were among those who met on November 12th on Union Island to chart the way forward for visitor safety

Offences Court on January 29th, 2014 for continuation of the Preliminary Inquiry.) We have been told we will need to come back to SVG for the trial and arrangements for us will be similar.

"As safety precautions on the boat, we have installed five LED lights in the cockpit, a large halogen light for the aft deck, an aluminum gate for the companionway, bars for the hatches, plus horns and whistles. I am also furthering my sailing knowledge, so if I need to captain the boat (e.g. if something happens to Mark) I can.

"We cleared back into Union Island in November, to be greeted with open arms and hearts. The local people were VERY apologetic and were so happy to see us back visiting. We were invited to a Union Island tourism board meeting on November 5th and did attend, sharing our ideas about better safety procedures and communication with visiting boaters. Teroy Wilson, from Big Citi Grill in Clifton, made us a beautiful lunch and we enjoyed the afternoon visiting with kitesurfers Jeremy Tronet and Zoe.

"Regarding my medical future, there is no structural damage, but I do have nerve damage, which hopefully will heal within a year. Because of scar tissue on the jaw muscle, I cannot open my mouth all the way. No hamburgers for this girl! The doctor says that should come around also, eventually.

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page

I am hoping soon, because there are some broken teeth that need to be fixed, but no dentist is getting into my mouth as of now. Mark is in need of medical attention on his shoulder, which, when we get back to St. Croix, we will follow up.

"We will keep the *Caribbean Compass* posted on any future happenings."

Paper Charts for PR, USVI Will Still Be Available

The US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Coast Survey, which creates and maintains the nation's suite of over a thousand nautical charts of US coastal waters, has announced major changes ahead for mariners and others who use nautical charts. Starting April 13th, 2014, the federal government will no longer print traditional lithographic (paper) nautical charts. But sailors in USVI and Puerto Rican waters will be glad to know that NOAA will continue to provide other forms of nautical charts, including Print-on-Demand paper charts as well as electronic and digital formats.

Since 1862, those lithographic nautical charts — available in marine shops and other stores — have been printed by the US government and sold to the public by commercial vendors. The decision to stop production is based on several factors: the declining demand for lithographic charts, the increasing use of digital and electronic charts, and federal budget realities.

NOAA will continue to create and maintain other forms of nautical charts, including the increasingly popular Print-on-Demand charts: updated paper charts available from NOAA-certified printers. NOAA electronic navigational charts (NOAA ENC®) and raster navigational charts (NOAA RNC®), used in a variety of electronic charting systems, are also updated weekly and are available for free download from the Coast Survey website. NOAA announced a new product as well: full-scale PDF nautical charts, available for download on a trial basis.

For more information visit www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/staff/news/2013/papercharts.html.

Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest in January

Top quality acts with broad-based appeal for all musical tastes, consistently excellent organization and presentation, and outstanding support from sponsors have all led to Bequia's unique musical event proudly reaching its 11th anniversary this year. The Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest 2014 will take place January 23rd through 26th.

Built around the hugely popular annual "one-night-only" Bequia performance of Basil Charles' Mustique Blues Festival, showcasing Dana Gillespie and her London Blues Band with stellar guest artistes, the Bequia Tourism Association's Bequia Music Fest has been earning rave reviews over the last ten years.

The event, held over four days at the end of January, is well established as a major fixture on the season's calendar, with a loyal following who are delighted by the informal, up-close-and-personal atmosphere and the range of music. Yachtsmen put it on their itineraries, visitors book their holidays to catch it, and residents of Bequia and St. Vincent can't wait for January to come around.

The main venue for Bequia Music Fest is at De Reef, right on the beach at Lower Bay, with performances there on the Friday and Saturday nights and all afternoon on Sunday.

Other venues showcase artistes on a more intimate scale throughout the weekend, including opening night with a steel pan orchestra at the Frangipani Hotel on the Thursday and a Saturday-afternoon "Blues and Jazz Jam and Lime" by the beach at Bequia Beach Hotel in Friendship Bay.

Last year, the Caribbean's legendary Spice and Company, plus the award-winning young group Nexcyx from Barbados, drew huge crowds to Saturday night's six-hour show, keeping the audience on their feet till after 2:00AM.

You can be sure that Bequia's 11th anniversary Music Fest, January 23rd through 26th, will be another winning formula, with old and new friends coming together to create a very special weekend of great music, great performances and great vibes!

For more information see ad on page 45.

Sailors' & Landlubbers' Auction in Bequia

The Bequia Sunshine School is a non-profit organization for children with special needs. The annual Sailors' & Landlubbers' Auction has become a significant source of income for the school — and a huge source of fun for all who attend. The 2014 auction will be held at the Gingerbread Restaurant on the waterfront in Belmont, Bequia on Sunday, February 16th. Viewing starts at 12:00 noon and the auction at 1:00PM sharp. Donated food and drink will be on sale, with all proceeds going directly to the school.

Lend your support by donating items for the auction such as boat gear, art and handicrafts, unwanted gifts, household goods, jewelry and other new or gently used items (donations can be dropped off at the school during regular school hours, or at Wallace & Co. Chandlery and Fishing Supplies next to the Porthole Restaurant in Port Elizabeth), or by attending the auction itself and bidding for that rare gem that you just can't resist!

For more information visit www.bequiasunshineschool.org or call Suzanne at (784) 528-7444.

Department of Corrections

Denise Simpson has let us know that the article "A Day in the Life of a Net Controller" in last month's *Compass*, which bore her by-line, was written by her partner, Jan Cluistra.

Also regarding that article, Lynn Kaak and Ken Gooding have provided the following clarifications: "Leroy Baptiste has not donated any radio or repeater equipment to cruisers, fishermen or Grenada Fisheries. He fully owns and maintains the VHF Channel 66 repeater facility, which has been installed on a Fisheries radio tower for free use by cruisers. Mr. Baptiste resides in Grenada and does not live in the USA.

"There is no 'Channel 66i'. The correct term is VHF Channel 66 on the International Band Plan.

"Repeaters are not exclusively for Amateur Radio use, as was quoted from Wikipedia. They are also in government, commercial and private use worldwide. For instance, the campus security department of Grenada's St. George's University uses a repeater to coordinate their mobile activities."

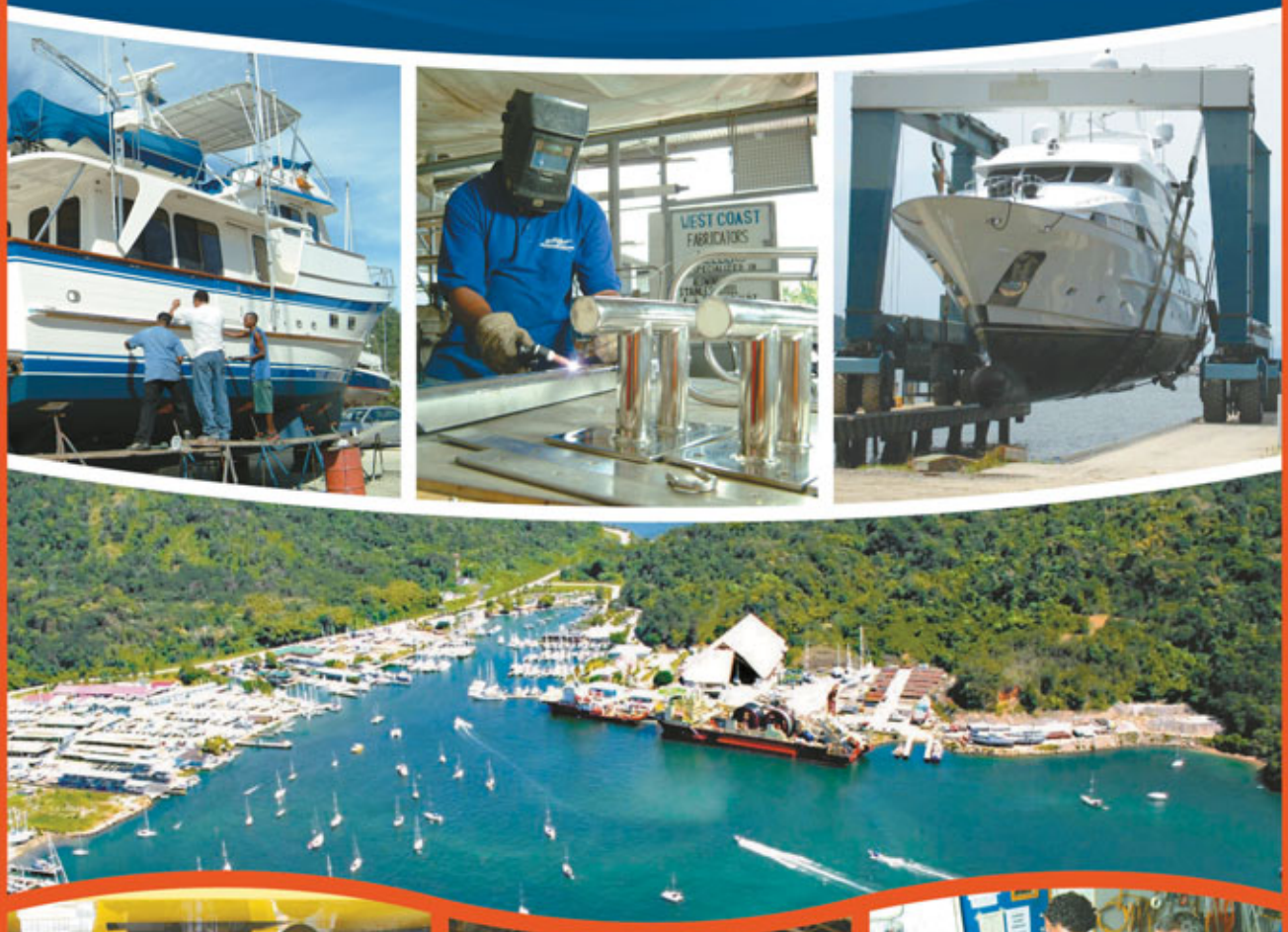
Thanks to Denise, Lynn and Ken for these clarifications.

Welcome Aboard!

In this issue of *Caribbean Compass,* we welcome new advertisers Jolly Harbour Marina of Antigua, on page 23; St. Martin Marine Diesel of St. Martin, on page 21. Good to have you with us!



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The new catalogue informs IWW customers about all IWW stores, including phone numbers, opening times, etcetera. Furthermore it features IWW's sponsorship activities, the new Advantage card, Amazon-style e-commerce, shipping information and much more.

For more information on Island Water World see ads on page 9 and 48.

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Parts & Power is your Perkins dealer in the Caribbean.

For more information on Parts & Power see ad on page 20.

Bountiful Beverages in Bequia

Vintages Bequia retail store, located downstairs the Gingerbread Hotel, is open for business from 8:00AM to 6:00PM weekdays, 9:00AM to 6:00PM Saturdays, and 9:00AM to noon on Sundays, with a wide selection of wines, spirits, beer, soft drinks and bottled water.

Bequia customers should be aware that in addition to an elegant retail store, Vintages offers wholesale services and special discounts for villa owners and anyone looking to order in bulk or a minimum of five assorted cases. Credit accounts, payable monthly, are available.

Free delivery in Bequia right to your door! The Gingerbread Hotel dinghy dock is convenient for yachting customers.

For more information on Vintages see ad on page 35.

Grenada Marine Talent Aids Local School

Laura Fletcher reports: Grenada Marine Staff & Friends Talent Search Night was a blast. The recent event attempted to find any hidden talent in our staff, clients and neighbours, showcase it in a positive way and have some good clean fun at the same time. We were completely successful.



School supplies were donated thanks to Talent Search Night

An early Happy Hour helped get the ball rolling and provided some "Dutch courage", I'm sure, for several of the performers. Resident rigger Kimon Burris, also known as DJ Bumpy, demonstrated his love of music by selecting appropriate songs while really exciting the gathering. Julien Lewis from the woodworking department sang his heart out to Maxi Priest. Numerous other people sang, rapped and danced (the Mitchell Boyz in particular brought smiles and cheers). Sherlon Mitchell from the Grenada Marine welding department displayed his paintings, and many were impressed at the level of detail. Beautiful seed jewelry was displayed by one of our sailing guests. One of the highlights was from our composite specialist, Roland James, with his magic tricks. Appreciation goes out to Jenny, The Dog Lady, who demonstrated "How to train your man… er, dog!"

Proceeds from the night were used to purchase educational items for the Corinth Government School. Vernel Liquorish, a parent of a child at the school and valued member of the Grenada Marine team, presented the items to the Principal, Vice Principal and other hard-working teachers at the school.

Grenada Marine would like to thank everyone who participated in making the event one that was so enjoyable it has people asking, "When is the next one?"

For more information on Grenada Marine see ad on page 22.

Seaborne Launches New Flights to DR & St. Kitts

Seaborne Airlines will be introducing service from San Juan to La Romana International Airport in the Dominican Republic, beginning December 12th. The service will initially operate Thursdays and Sundays, with daily service launching on March 15th, 2014.

Seaborne Airlines will also launch a new route between San Juan and St Kitts, with continuous service to Nevis, beginning January 15th. The flights will operate daily.

Seaborne serves San Juan, Vieques, St. Thomas, St. Croix, Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Dominica, Martinique and Guadeloupe, with La Romana, Dominican Republic in December and St. Kitts & Nevis in January, 2014.

For more information visit www.seaborneairlines.com.

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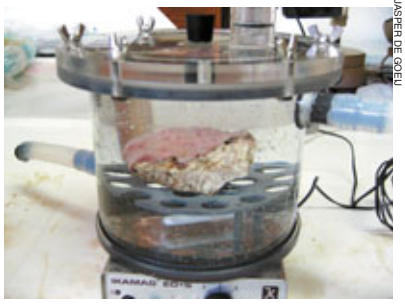


For more information contact Noel Pauw at caribdiesel@sr.net.

Caribbean ECO-News

Curaçao Study Highlights Critical Role of Sponges

In a study in the waters of Curaçao, an aquatic ecologist at the University of Amsterdam and his team found that sponges keep the reef alive — by recycling vast amounts of organic matter to feed snails, crabs and other creatures.



JASPER DE GOEIJ

Halisarca caerulea *busily shedding cells in the lab*

As reported by BBC News on October 7th, Jasper de Goeij and his team studied four common species of sponges, first in laboratory aquariums, then on a natural reef where the scientists sealed off a cavity.

They fed the sponges with labelled sugars and traced these molecules on their journey. First the sugars were absorbed from the water by the sponges, then quickly shed in dead filter cells that fell to the seabed. Within two days, the same molecules were present in snails and other creatures feeding on the sediment containing sponge waste. These snails are in turn eaten by larger animals, and so the cycle continues.

It was not only the speed, but the sheer volume of food turnover which took the authors by surprise — about ten times more than bacteria recycle. The sponge *Halisarca caerulea* for example takes up two-thirds of its body weight in dissolved carbon each day, but it barely grows in size because old cells are shed to the seabed.

In total, the Dutch team estimated this "sponge loop" produced nearly as many nutrients as all the primary producers (corals and algae) in an entire tropical reef. By recognizing sponges as the unheralded heroes of the reef they hope to aid conservation efforts in these fragile havens.

Watch a related video with Jasper de Goeij at http://porifarma.com/news.

Court: US Government Must Protect PR, VI Reefs

The October 17th issue of the Puerto Rico-based magazine *La Regata* reported that a US federal district court has ruled that the National Marine Fisheries Service violated the law by allowing fishing for depleted parrotfish and other algae-eating reef fish species without properly monitoring the fishery's impacts on rare corals that depend on healthy fish populations. The decision came in response to an Endangered Species Act suit filed in January 2012 by Earthjustice on behalf of two conservation groups (CORALations and the Center for Biological Diversity), and Mary Adele Donnelly. Local counsel for Earthjustice on this case was Miguel Sarriera, who has represented a number of groups battling for environmental protection throughout Puerto Rico.

The court determined the Fisheries Service must do a better job monitoring the effects of commercial fishing on elkhorn and staghorn coral in the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. These coral species are protected by the Endangered Species Act and serve as essential habitat for fish and other marine species. Parrotfish protect these corals by grazing on algae that otherwise would smother the reef; removing the fish allows the algae to dominate reef systems and deny corals the space needed to grow.

Parrotfish eat algae that can otherwise smother coral habitat. US Caribbean reefs already suffer from excessive algae cover, a situation exacerbated by overfishing the grazing fish necessary to hold back algal growth. This situation leads to what scientists call a death spiral, in which the removal of algae-eaters like parrotfish leads to increased algae and decreased coral, which in turn results in fewer fish and other reef creatures.

For more information on coral reef conservation in Puerto Rico visit www.coralations.org.

Glass Recycling Wins at BVI's Interline Regatta

For the third consecutive year, Sol teamed up with the Moorings Interline Regatta to present the Green Award to the winners of a glass recycling challenge promoted during the 32nd edition of this annual sailing event. The regatta, hosted in the British Virgin Islands for airline employees, family and friends, took place October 15th through 24th with 22 Moorings boats participating in daily races.



This year the Green Award went to sailors on *Wild Irish Rose* for collecting the most empty glass bottles in a "Drinking Responsibly" recycling challenge. The initiative required teams to collect their empty glass bottles and present them at weigh points during the course of the regatta. The members of the winning team with the most weight in glass each took home a sail-shaped, recycled glass trophy specially made for Sol by the Green VI Glass Studio in Cane Garden Bay, Tortola.

In 2009, Sol, the largest petroleum company in the BVI, had partnered with Green VI to support a glass-blowing studio to facilitate the removal of glass from the BVI's waste stream and the incineration process. Sol currently supplies the LPG required to fire the furnaces of the studio.

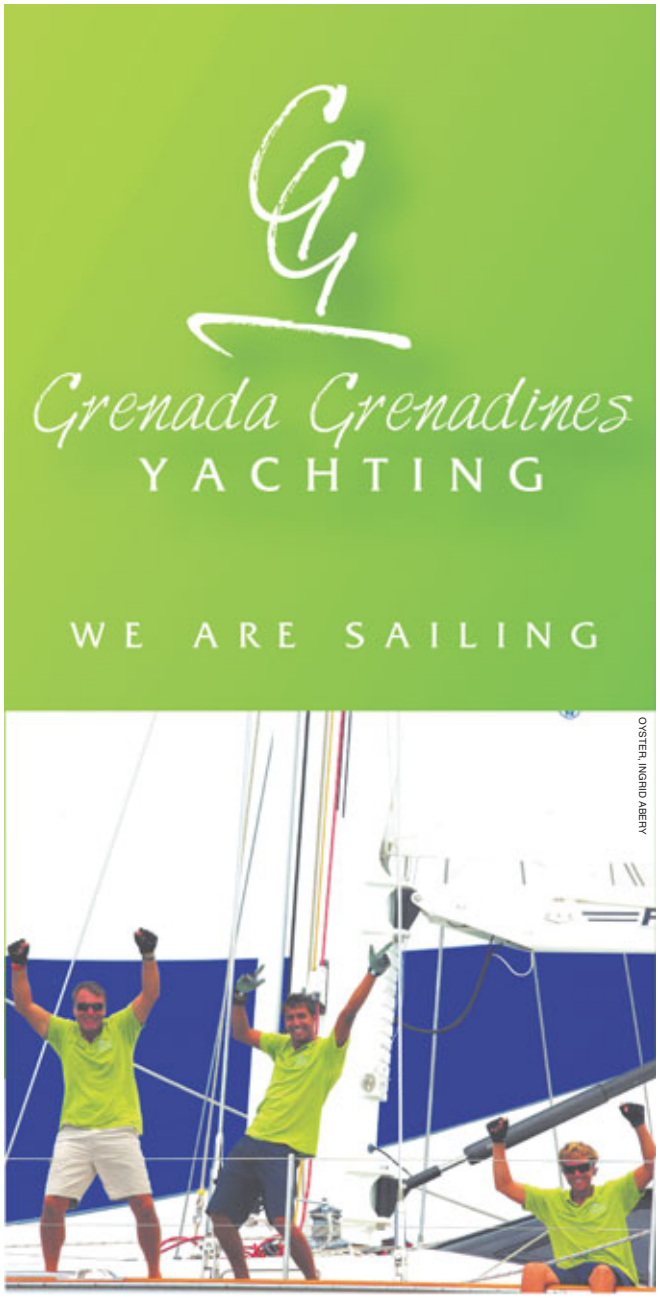
Event organizers presented crystal trophies to Interline Regatta racing category winners, which included Team Finn Air in Interline Class A, Team Grossmann Jetservice in Interline Class B, and Team SAS in Interline Class C.

Full results of the Moorings Interline Regatta are available at www.yachtscoring.com.

For more information on Green VI visit www.facebook.com/greenvi.

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Grenadine MPAs Focus on Mooring Maintenance

During the October low season, representatives of Tobago Cays Marine Park, Carriacou's Sandy Island/Oyster Bed Marine Protected Area and St. Vincent's South Coast Marine Conservation Area visited the Mustique Marine Conservation Area to learn about standard operating procedures for the maintenance of fixed moorings.

The exchange visit was an initiative of the Grenadines Network of Marine Protected Areas and was the second formal site visit for park staff to meet and work with their counterparts on other islands. The Mustique Marine Conservation Area has years of experience in working with different types of fixed mooring systems and has high standards and good practices in mooring maintenance to share with the other members of the network. During the exchange, the visitors worked side-by-side with Mustique's Harbourmaster, both above and below water, to inspect and repair existing moorings and to install new mooring equipment in Britannia Bay.

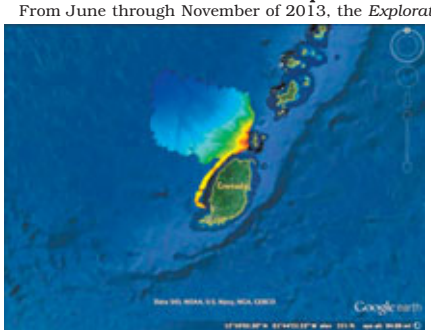
"By encouraging regular inspections and by building capacity for timely, high quality maintenance of fixed moorings we hope to see the marine protected areas of the Grenadines build a good reputation for the reliability of moorings and so increase levels of usage by visiting yachts in preference to anchoring, which can threaten coral reefs and associated habitat," explained Martin Barriteau, Director of the Sustainable Grenadines Inc. (SusGren) non-profit organization.

In the spirit of sharing knowledge, the visitors in return assisted Mustique with several lionfish capture dives and held a well-attended demonstration of lionfish handling and cleaning techniques for local fishers and chefs. This was followed by a fish fry for all.

For more information contact susgrenpm@vincysurf.com.

Grenada's Submarine Volcanoes Explored

From June through November of 2013, the *Exploration Vessel Nautilus* explored the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, mapping the geological, biological, archaeological and chemical aspects of these regions to depths of approximately 2,000 metres. During the expedition, researchers shared discoveries live on the web via telepresence technology.



The seafloor around the Caribbean's only active submarine volcano was mapped during one leg of Nautilus's *exploration*

In November, using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV), the team explored the crater of Kick 'em Jenny submarine volcano off the coast of Grenada. This is the only active submarine volcano in the Caribbean. There have been 12 eruptive episodes of Kick 'em Jenny since the volcano was first recognized in 1939; it last erupted in 2001. Kick'em Jenny lies about nine kilometres off the northern coast of Grenada among a cluster of at least four other small submarine volcanoes, and the ROV also captured never before seen images of a lesser-known underwater volcano, Kick 'em Jack. Scientist Steve Carey and his science team investigated the slope of the volcanoes, biodiversity, avalanche debris, and lava outcrops. The teams' underwater videos of the flora and fauna living in this unique habitat are outstanding.

To view the underwater videos taken by ROV and for more information visit www.nautiluslive.org.

Turtles Tracked from Bonaire

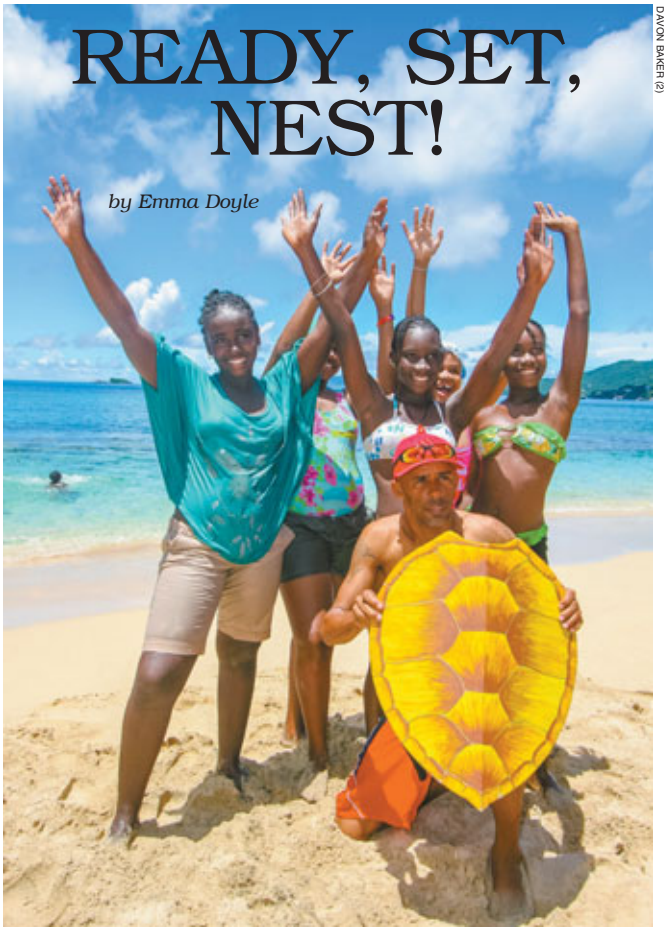
Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire is a non-governmental research and conservation organization that has been protecting sea turtles since 1991. Their mission is to ensure the protection and recovery of Bonaire's sea turtle populations throughout their range. One of their signature efforts is the satellite tracking of endangered sea turtles. Sea turtles are migratory. Throughout their lives, adult sea turtles migrate between their foraging grounds and nesting sites. Bonaire's breeding turtles return to Bonaire — their place of birth — every two to three years for a period of two to four months. Each nesting season STCB fit a number of turtles with small satellite transmitters in order to track their movements. They attach a small, non-intrusive satellite transmitter to a sea turtle's carapace (shell). Every time the turtle surfaces to breathe, the transmitter recognizes that it is out of the water and sends data about the turtle's location to NOAA satellites. The information received from the transmitters provides valuable insight into the turtles' foraging and breeding habits. Turtles protected on Bonaire may continue to be protected, or they may become vulnerable when they migrate, depending upon the degree of protection afforded by their migration and destination range states. All current and previously tracked turtles are displayed in a map on their website.

For more information visit www.bonaireturtles.org.



READY, SET, NEST!

by Emma Doyle



DAVON BAKER (2)

The job of a marine park ranger is part boat captain, part marine biologist, part police officer, part teacher and part ambassador. There's no school for park rangers, so the staff of six marine protected areas from the islands of the Grenadines, as well as the Grenada and St. Vincent mainlands, meet regularly for training activities, to share experiences and to plan joint efforts. Sustainable Grenadines Inc, together with a host of partner organizations, help to make this possible each year.

At the last meeting of the Grenadines Network of Marine Protected Areas in Carriacou we spent a morning giving the park rangers some background, ideas and experience in how to fulfill their role as teachers. This doesn't mean replacing the local geography or science teacher. It does mean bringing children outdoors, inspiring them to know and understand the marine environment, to respect the role of the park ranger, to act responsibly and to tread lightly as they enjoy their local marine protected area, knowing that it is home to important wildlife and habitats.

Handling a group of 20 kids between ten and 12 years of age is no mean feat, and we had an important message to get across by the end of the morning. So we started with an activity developed by WIDECAST, the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network, for a sea turtle nesting relay race (see www.widecast.org). The race was great fun and got everyone warmed up and working in teams.

We had three teams representing the three most common sea turtle species that nest in Carriacou — the leatherback, hawksbill and green sea turtles. Each team wore their respective painted cardboard turtle carapace or shell (the fantastic artwork is thanks to Marina Fastigi at KIDO Foundation) — the shell served as the baton that the racers had to hand over during the relay race. We first did a briefing about sea turtles and the challenges they face in nesting successfully, their status as endangered or threatened species, and the importance of marine protected areas for nesting and foraging. The staff members did a demonstration of the different parts of a sea turtle crawl: nesting, covering the nest, hiding the nest, down on their bellies and with sand spraying all around, much to the delight of the kids.

Then the race! The first "turtle" in each team started in the water and had to swim to tag their teammate who was waiting on the water's edge wearing the team shell. This next turtle had to crawl up the beach on their belly and give the shell to another teammate, who then had to dig a nest hole with their feet and count to one hundred as they "laid the eggs". They gave the shell to the next teammate who had to cover the nest with sand, using their feet, and crawl back down the beach to the finish line at the water's edge. Needless to say, it was noisy, sandy, and funny and everyone finished up in the water!



Above: As part of a fun relay race, team members emulated sea turtles coming ashore to nest

Left: Everyone was a winner. Carriacou school children leaned about marine wildlife and the work of marine park rangers, and MPA staff gained educational tools

We then rotated the teams through three other activities. The leatherbacks, winners of the relay race, were the first to learn to snorkel with the marine biologist and dive masters. They had a briefing about some sample sea creatures and why we protect them within a special area. We talked about any fears or preconceptions they might have about the water and sea creatures, and then they went to the water for a lesson from the dive masters in how to properly use a mask and snorkel. They teamed up in buddy pairs and, together with the marine biologist, looked at urchins, starfish and even found a lionfish, so they learned a little about the hot topic of invasive marine species.

The second team meanwhile learned to use binoculars to look for seabirds. They had a briefing about the different birds found in the area, about how many of them migrate long distances, and how important safe nesting areas are to them. They first looked at photos and bird identification cards to help learn the details that distinguish the birds from each other. We were right on the doorstep of Sandy Island/Oyster Bed Marine Protected Area, so they were then able to practice training their lenses upon passing seabirds.

The third group meanwhile settled at the picnic tables in the shade at Sandy Lane. There they interviewed the park rangers about their jobs, filling out a worksheet with questions about where they work, what their duties are, what they like about their jobs. They also got to learn about the rangers' uniforms and to draw the park logo. The girls were especially excited to meet one of Grenada's female park rangers and ask her all about her job.

All learning was focused on the importance of the marine environment, so at the end of the activities, the kids read out loud a pledge: to behave responsibly when visiting a protected area and to act as ambassadors for their local marine protected area. Then they all raced back into the water to play!

There was an excellent spirit of collaboration between Sandy Island/Oyster Bed Marine Protected Area, KIDO Foundation and Sustainable Grenadines Inc. (www.susgren.com), and the opportunity to run the activity came about thanks to support from the Organization of American States and the Ocean Foundation. Local dive operators Deefer Dive and Arawak Divers helped with kid-size snorkel gear. The Carriacou 'Kids with Cameras' were on hand to capture pictures and video of the event, and even made a first foray into underwater photography with a borrowed camera.

Importantly, the staff of the marine protected areas of the Grenadines now have new skills, a basic repertoire of education activities, and the confidence to run them. When next faced with a group of school children, they can turn an otherwise daunting prospect into a valuable opportunity for marine environmental education.



Regatta News

Holmberg Re-Elected Regional Sailing Assn. President

In late October, Caribbean regatta directors, members of national sailing authorities, Group O and ISAF representatives, measurers and race officers congregated in Puerto Rico at the Caribbean Sailing Association (CSA) Annual General Meeting and Regatta Organizers Conference. Representatives from Barbados, St. Maarten,



BENITO PINTO-RODRIGUEZ / LA REGATA

The new CSA board: Jaime Torres, Judy Petz, Amanda Maffessanti, Peter Holmberg, Dick Stoute, Alison Sly-Adams, Alfred Koolen and Kathy Lammers

Antigua, St. Barths, St. Thomas, St. Croix, the British Virgin Islands, mainland USA, Puerto Rico, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic attended.

Renowned world-class sailor Peter Holmberg was unanimously re-elected for a second term as president. He says "I look forward to serving a second term in the role of President of the CSA… Our goal is to strengthen the regional positioning of Caribbean racing on the world stage and ultimately generate positive economic benefit throughout the islands… We also intend to revive our mission of helping to develop and promote small boat sailing throughout the islands."

Other CSA officers elected include Jaime Torres of Puerto Rico, Alison Sly-Adams and Kathy Lammers of Antigua, Judy Petz of Tortola, Dick Stoute of Barbados and Amanda Maffesanti of Jamaica.

Following the AGM, presentations and discussions about key developments in sailing, regattas, technology and many related topics were delivered.

The next edition of the conference will take place October 24th through 26th, 2014. Visit www.caribbean-sailing.com for next year's venue, updates on regattas, sailing development and the CSA Rating Rule. Interested in becoming a member of the CSA or attending the conference in 2014? E-mail news@caribbean-sailing.com.

Early Start, Finish for US-to-Caribbean Rally

For the second year, good weather allowed America's longest running sailboat rally to depart early. Rally organizers World Cruising Club took the decision for this year's ARC Caribbean 1500 to start from Virginia to the British Virgin Islands a day ahead of schedule. On November 2nd, the rally left Portsmouth, Virginia, on a light northwesterly wind. Eighteen yachts hit the starting line of the competitive Cruising Division, with nearly a dozen more following in the Open Division.

Thanks to the early departure and a particularly fast passage this year, the ARC Caribbean 1500 prizegiving celebration happened a day early, on November 14th at Peg Leg's on the beach, Tortola. Following the presentation of "fun awards" such as Best Bruise and Last Boat, prizes were given to winners after close racing in the Cruising Division's Class A and B, and the Multihull Division. In Class B, the J/42 *Keep It Simple* won for the second straight year, despite leaving some 18 hours after the fleet and battling through stronger weather in the Gulf Stream. In Class A, the Hylas 54 *Wings* took first place and Line Honors. *Ryana* took first in the Multihull Division. *Wings* was also honored with the Steve Black Trophy for the Overall Winner in the Cruising Division, narrowly edging out last year's winner, *Keep It Simple*.

For more information visit www.worldcruising.com/carib1500.

First Ever ARC+ Sets Sail, Followed by 'Traditional ARC'

For the first time, the famous Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) will have two starts, bringing nearly 300 yachts in total across the Atlantic to St. Lucia.

On November 10th, 43 yachts carrying 183 people crossed the start line of the first-ever Atlantic Rally for Cruisers Plus (ARC+), bound from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria for Mindelo in the Cape Verde Islands. A brisk northeasterly wind provided a swift departure for Leg One of their Atlantic crossing. Boats were from 14 countries, including Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, the UK, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the USA. As this issue of *Compass* goes to press, the ARC+ fleet is scheduled to head off on Leg Two across the Atlantic on November 20th, bound for Rodney Bay, St. Lucia, following a three- to five-day stopover in Mindelo.

Meanwhile, the traditional ARC fleet, sailing directly from Las Palmas to St. Lucia, is scheduled to depart on November 24th. The pre-departure programme for crews of the 250 boats in this fleet included social activities, safety inspections and seminars covering useful topics for ocean sailing including provisioning, communications, weather and sailing techniques. A festive Caribbean welcome is guaranteed in December on arrival at Rodney Bay, St. Lucia.

ARC 2013 is sponsored by the Tourist Board of Gran Canaria, the Port Authority of Las Palmas and the Saint Lucia Tourist Board, and is run in association with *Yachting World* magazine. We'll have a full report in next month's *Compass*!

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

Spice It Up at Grenada Sailing Week!

New courses, party venues, lay day fun activities — from January 30th through February 4th, Grenada Sailing Week will introduce sailors to the very best that Grenada has to offer! Island Water World will be the event's title sponsor in 2014.

Participants will receive a warm welcome at Camper and Nicholsons Port Louis Marina with easy registration plus the Skippers' Briefing and Welcome Party on the Thursday evening. On Friday the 31st, racing starts on the sheltered waters off Grand Anse and ends with a party at the popular Victory Bar and Restaurant.

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Racing on Saturday takes the yachts around Point Saline to Le Phare Bleu Marina, the setting for a Pirate Party. On Sunday's Lay Day, there will be Hobie Cat Match Racing organized by the Petite Calivigny Yacht Club and a dinghy concert out in the bay with live music and a bar on a barge. On Monday the 3rd and Tuesday the 4th the yachts will race off the challenging south coast, ending at Prickly Bay Marina. Organizers promise great entertainment each evening, with a gala awards dinner and party on the final night.

Skippers planning to "spice it up in Grenada" are reminded to take advantage of the low early registration fee of US$80, valid until Decemember 31st, and also to ensure their dock space or moorings at the host marinas by booking as soon as possible.

For more information see ad on page 11.

'Fun for All': South Grenada Regatta 2014

The 6th Annual South Grenada Regatta (SGR) is shaping up to be another spectacular racing event for serious racers and competitive cruisers.

Taking place at Le Phare Bleu Marina from March 5th through 9th, the regatta will be launched with one of Le Phare Bleu's signature Dinghy Concerts (www.dinghy-concert.com). Following registration, Skippers' Briefing and Countdown Party, the racing format will again include two days of competitive fleet racing for four title cups, and will introduce exciting new race courses along Grenada's south coast.

Match racing returns on the lay day, and, as SGR provides the match race boats, even those who don't own a yacht, or don't want to race theirs in the fleet category, can participate in the SGR by registering a team in the Match Races. Spectators can cheer from the comfort of SGR's start-line floating bar, made easily accessible by complimentary water shuttle service.

The Deck Restaurant at Le Phare Bleu Marina will be the "go to" place for daytime food and drink, and later for the best party atmosphere, with nightly prizegiving celebrations with live entertainment showcasing both local and international talent. Thanks to the continued support of SGR's big-name sponsors, the parties and prizes promise to be better than ever.

Additional water and shore activities: a day of junior sailing, powerboat tours, live music concerts, and a Pirate's Trail for the kids, will ensure that there's something for everyone during this regatta, the "fun regatta for all".

For more information see ad on page 12.

Antigua Classics in April

Back in the '60s, the captains of classic yachts that were gathered in English Harbour, Antigua, challenged each other to a race to Guadeloupe and back to celebrate the end of the charter season. From this informal race, Antigua Race Week was formalized in 1967. Over time, the classic yachts were outnumbered by modern racing yachts. By 1987, the Classic Class was abandoned and that year seven classic yachts were placed in Cruising Class 3 with the bareboats — downright dangerous! So, in 1988, the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta was born.

"The Classics" has evolved with the help of a long-standing committee. In 1996 organizers created the Spirit of Tradition Class, now accepted worldwide, which gives the "new classics", built along the lines of the old, a chance to race. In 1999 the event celebrated the first race among the iconic J Class yachts in 60 years. Mount Gay Rum has sponsored the regatta for many years, and Officine Panerai was recently added as Platinum Sponsor.

The Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta annually hosts between 50 and 60 yachts, including traditional island craft, classic ketches, sloops, schooners, and yawls, together with the Spirit of Tradition yachts, J Class yachts, and Tall Ships. The sailing — combined with Antiguan hospitality, rum, sunshine, and great camaraderie —



places the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta in a class of its own.

The 2014 event will be held April 17th through 22nd, 2014.

For more information see ad on this page.

Plan Ahead for Antigua Sailing Week 2014!

Antigua Sailing Week 2014 will be held from April 26th through May 2nd. Online entries and payments are now open.

All boats must have a valid CSA rating certificate. CSA measurement can be done in advance in most islands throughout the Caribbean. For more information visit www.caribbean-sailing.com. Multihulls should complete the online multihull information form as soon as possible in advance of the Regatta, so the Regatta Measurer can calculate an accurate rating. Information can be e-mailed to roc@sailingweek.com.

Visiting yachts must clear Customs and Immigration upon arrival and departure from Antigua. Clearance facilities are located in English Harbour, at St. John's Deepwater Harbour and at Jolly Harbour Marina. Customs and Immigration authorities stand by on VHF Channel 16. You can also clear online with eSeaClear (www.eseaclear.com) to speed up the process upon arrival.

Visitors arriving by air must have a valid return airline ticket, or a letter from the captain of a yacht if planning to leave Antigua by sea.

A variety of courses will be offered to all classes for each race. Several course options for each race can be chosen by the Race Officer immediately prior to the race, depending on the size of boats in the class and current weather conditions. The objective is to have every boat racing for approximately three, but maximum four hours each day, even with two races a day. Antigua Sailing Week 2014 will be posted in the near future.

For more information see ad on this page.







Visit Your Favorite Anchorage... and See It for the Very First Time

by Frank Virgintino

If you think you've been there, done that and seen it all already, open your eyes wider and take a new look

Cruising is an art, a large part of which is the adventure of making landfall and discovering new places. However, as time goes by, what was once wondrous becomes rote and the unknown becomes the "beaten track". Many of us take our landfalls and our anchorages for granted. In many respects, they are much like relationships: familiarity breeds contempt. Cruisers who are new to the Caribbean are filled with awe and the excitement that one finds in children as Christmas approaches. However, those of us who have sailed for a number of years often overlook what is right under our noses or more precisely, right in front of our anchor and chain.

In speaking with seasoned cruisers, in response to a question like, "Have you been to Bequia (or Marigot Bay, or any of the other popular anchorages along the beaten track)?", the answer most often is, "Yes we have done that." The "doing that" means that they have been there and seen it — done it, like in a checklist. Landfalls, islands and countries are not checklists; they are dynamic and they constantly change. While they may look the same, they most often do not remain the same. Furthermore, change notwithstanding, the more often we visit or drop anchor in a given place, the less of it we see. Most auto accidents take place within five miles of home for the same reason: we are driving, but we do not see what is right in front of our faces because we take it for granted.

What can be done to renew our landfalls so as to make them as exciting as the first time we dropped anchor there?

It requires a little imagination and a great deal of willingness to invest the time to see what we do not see at first glance or what we dismiss as something we have already seen.

Recently I anchored in Bequia, an island that I have visited many, many times over many years. I love Bequia and always feel a sense of excitement when we enter Admiralty Bay. I remember that when the kids were young, they would run up the Bequian flag at the yardarm, the white flag with the black whale. The island is part of St. Vincent & the Grenadines and the flag of St. Vincent & the Grenadines is the official flag, but Bequia's own unique flag commemorates the whaling history of the island.

For some reason, I always go first to the bookstore. It is quaint and as you look around it and through it, it reflects so well the history of the island. The bookstore always seems to have some obscure book that you have never heard of with a title that is compelling. In my mind no electronic book or Border's bookstore will ever measure up to the Bequia Bookshop. From the bookstore, I walk north towards the building that houses Immigration and Customs. Along the way, I stop and chat with whoever is in the mood to talk and answer a few questions. Most locals are very sociable.

Ada has always been a special stop for me. She and her sister make limejuice and marmalades and live on the same property where they sell their products. I have always purchased from her but never took the time to be anything more than social. I had overlooked the opportunity to understand who she is and what she does. The products are sold on a wooden table at the sidewalk of Front Street and the house is set back. This time I asked her if I could see her kitchen, where she does her cooking, and she was delighted to ask me in. I am of the mind that detail means a great deal in what we do. Her kitchen was a work of art. It is the opposite of high tech but it is well organized and immaculately clean in every nook and cranny. We sat and chatted and I learned much of the history of Bequia and much of Ada and her family.

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She is a genuine Bequian and this gracious jewel of the Caribbean with her wonderful smile is a part of Bequia that should not be missed. To be fair, there are others who sell the same products and you can sample their wares as well.



Left: 'Seeing Ada to purchase limejuice and marmalade had always been a stop for me, but this time we sat and really chatted'

I had not visited Fort Hamilton for many years and had forgotten the wonderful views that it affords. I took a taxi to the hilltop, a relatively short ride or a reasonably long walk from the head of the harbor; either way that you reach the summit, you will be rewarded with views that are spectacular. Notwithstanding the history of the fort, all you need to do is sit and look out at a panorama that is so breathtaking, you will lose all sense of time. The panorama changes constantly as the clouds pass by. The view into Admiralty Bay is a genuine Walter Mitty moment. My "moment" took over an hour. In that hour I saw views that give rise to the imagination and that renew the spirit. It is amazing what you can see when you really look!

There is a turtle sanctuary on Bequia called the Old Hegg Turtle Sanctuary. Any of the taxi drivers would be happy to take you there. The turtles are cared for in so many ways and the word sanctuary is in no way an overstatement. It is not possible to look at these Hawksbill turtles and not realize how delicate a balance nature really is. A retired fisherman, Orton King, wanted to make a difference and the sanctuary is the result. We all can make a difference in many different ways and a visit to the sanctuary will get you thinking.

Below: 'A visit to the turtle sanctuary will get you thinking'



I stopped at Doris' Fresh Food market on the way back from Immigration. I love speaking with this dedicated woman who works so hard to maintain this wonderful store. She loves to cater to cruising boats and I cannot imagine a Bequia without a Doris. From imported teas to imported chocolates, she has worked hard over the years to cater to the palates of those whose larders need to be replenished.

No trip to Bequia could be complete without a visit to *Caribbean Compass* to visit Sally and Tom. They celebrated their 200th edition last year. The monthly free newspaper that they are the creators of is the common thread that addresses the entire Caribbean in all its facets. Sally and Tom are very busy people but never too busy to spend a bit of time with those who come to say hello. Just as we come to take our favorite harbors for granted, many of us take this incredible monthly for granted as well. No matter what, each month, a new edition pops up. Imagine doing this over 200 times with all that it entails.

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It takes a great deal of commitment to do it all in the space of a month. Sally and Tom are experts and their modest facilities are consistent with their approach to publishing; work very hard and make it look easy. They represent the very best of the support that cruisers can find in the Caribbean. [*Editor's note: Blush!*]

If you visit Bequia this cruising season, as you enter Admiralty Bay, look around and look far beyond the formalities of Immigration and Customs and the many moorings scattered to and fro. (If you pick up a mooring, do not pay for it unless you receive a signed receipt.) The harbor is reasonably safe but there has been burglary from moored and anchored boats from time to time. My preference in Bequia, as in most harbors, is to leave someone onboard. Whenever I have not been able to do so, I have always sought the help of a local to "sit" on the boat, figuring that the cost is small insurance to arrest my anxiety.

You can repeatedly see Bequia "for the very first time", but to do so, you must walk Front Street and you must walk the back streets and the byways. You need to say hello and speak to the locals about their interests, desires and concerns. If you want to speed the process up, taxi drivers are a great resource. They know just about everything there is about what is going on. If you are going to use a taxi to go to the turtle sanctuary, query the driver about the island; ask him about the people and how they get along. Ask him about education and employment and work to get a sense of what life on Bequia is like. The more you ask, the more you will learn. If you want Bequia to be more than just a stop where you can clear in or out, and more than just a place where you can pick up some fruits and vegetables, you will have to make an effort and expend the energy. Your reward will be that no matter how many times you have visited Bequia, you will see Bequia for the first time… and fall in love all over again.

Frank Virgintino is the author of Free Cruising Guides (www.freecruisingguide.com).

Left: 'Doris loves to cater to visiting yachts' and always has something new'

Below: 'For some reason, I always go first to the Bequia Bookshop'







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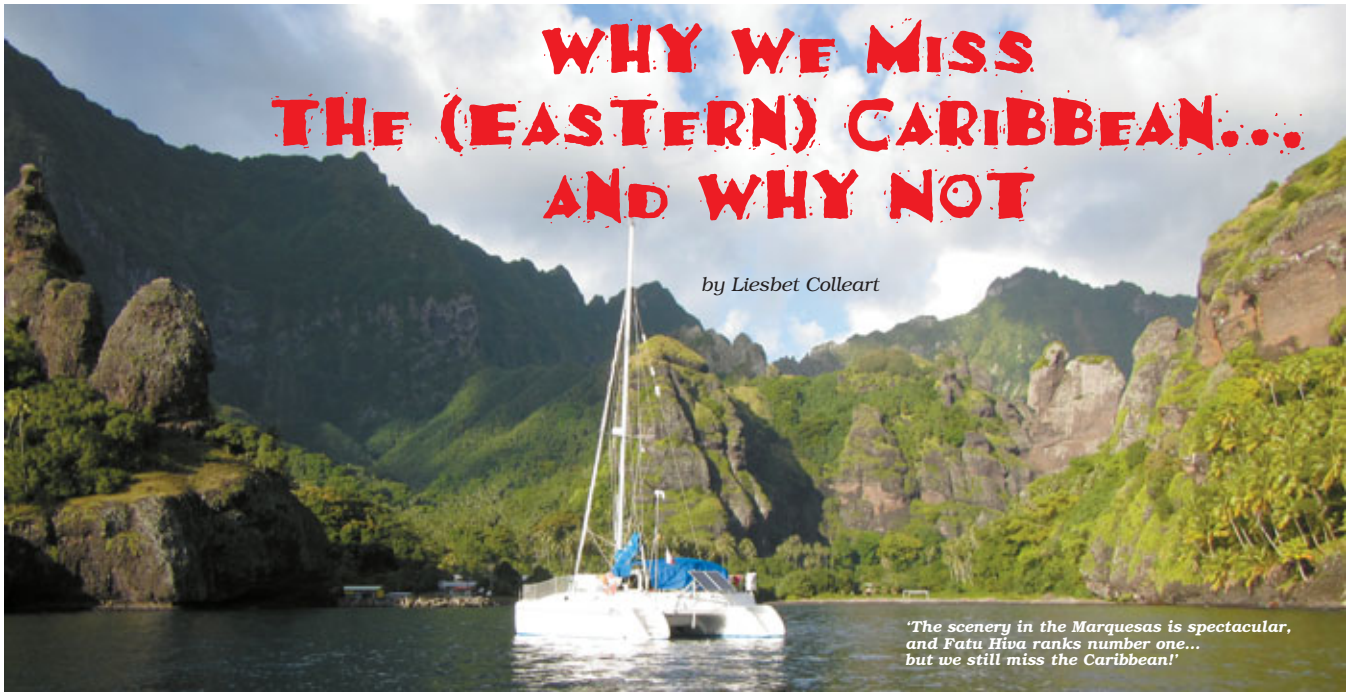
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WHY WE MISS THE (EASTERN) CARIBBEAN... AND WHY NOT

by Liesbet Colleart



'The scenery in the Marquesas is spectacular, and Fatu Hiva ranks number one... but we still miss the Caribbean!'

"You guys should come this way. You will really like it!" wrote our cruising friends, sailing from one intriguing, exotic island in the Pacific to another.

"The Caribbean is great and everything is so easy here," our dearest friends loving the Eastern Caribbean and spending their time indefinitely in these islands uttered.

Before the idea of switching oceans was even a nanosecond of a thought, Mark and I decided to dip *Irie's* hulls into the Western Caribbean — mainly the San Blas islands in Panama – for a while. We had been cruising up and down the eastern island chain for three years and were ready for something different. After another year of living the good life in the marvelous islands of Kuna Yala, the idea popped up of possibly transiting the Panama Canal and heading further west. *Should we stay or should we go now?* Always open to new experiences and expanding our horizons, we went.

Venturing into the South Pacific had never been our plan or our "dream" — on the contrary — so we were a bit apprehensive about this new challenge and adventure. Initially, we missed the familiar Caribbean Sea, islands and life a lot and even after ten months of floating in the midst of the biggest ocean in the world, spending most of our time in French Polynesia, we think back about our four happy years there with a smile and a hint of regret. Here's why...

Availability of goods and services

We might not have realized as much back then, but cruising in the Caribbean is made easy by the availability of almost everything a boater needs. Finding a modern, well-stocked supermarket is trivial; vegetable markets, chandleries, hardware stores and fuel stations abound (compared to the Pacific); haul-out facilities are within reach when needed. When systems fail or parts break, you don't have to add creativity and jerry rigging to your expansive repertoire of boat skills. Your propane tank can get filled on nearly every island and you are able to use self-serve washing machines. It is also possible to go out for a drink or a meal... and afford it! A doctor, dentist, or even a hospital is never far away and public transport can bring you to different parts of the islands. For Europeans and North Americans, the logistics for you to fly back "home" or for friends and family to come for a visit are manageable. These are all things we took for granted in the Caribbean, but that are absent, impossible or hard to come by in the South Pacific.

Cost of living

"Cruising in the Pacific is expensive!" Everyone seems to agree on this one. There are ways around spending a lot of money in this part of the world when you plan accordingly (before the crossing most people are able to stock up on enough cans, alcohol and favorite items for the duration of the trip), adjust your eating habits to the local scene (free fruit is abundant, basic items in French Polynesia are subsidized by the French government) and realize that life becomes cheaper farther west, in Tonga and Fiji. But, there is no doubt that most products and services in the Caribbean are more affordable on top of being available, especially alcoholic drinks. Mark and I have resorted to making our own now. Being so far away from everything, flying to Europe or the US is out of the question, unless you have thousands of dollars to spare. What we miss most is taking a break from the daily cooking and dishes by going out for a cheap meal or a happy hour drink. And that brings us to...

Social scene

Believe it or not, there is a serious lack of restaurants and especially bars in French Polynesia. Alcohol is extremely expensive, even in the stores, so owners of establishments have to charge a fortune when selling beer, wine, or mixed drinks. Without the usual Caribbean bar scene and happy hour delights, socializing is done on each other's boats or an insect-infested beach. During the high season (the non-cyclone months of April to November) there are more "parties" and get-togethers, because of the greater number of boats being on the same schedule, but during the summer we have to make do with a relaxed dinner invitation here and there. It is harder to meet new people this way, and to stay awake past 9:00PM.

Tradewinds

It might sound like a funny thing to miss, but the truth is that in the Caribbean, tradewinds played a bigger part in our lives than we realized. Not only are these winds we could count on during sails between islands or during longer voyages, but our boat, like many others, is set up for easterly trades. Not pointing our bows to the east when at anchor means less sun on our solar panels, in turn providing us with less electricity. Not having wind at all makes the wind generator useless.

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Tying the dinghy behind our catamaran was never an issue in the Caribbean, but because of the fluky winds and opposing wind gusts, is impossible now. The result would be a line tangled around the rudder or prop with heaps of expensive bottom paint getting removed, or a dinghy straying between the two hulls or under the bridge deck, while the outboard happily bangs against the fiberglass. A lack of tradewinds causes different boats to do different things at anchor, so you need to count on a lot of swinging room and a 360-degree radius.

Comfortable anchorages

Gone are the days in which we enter a harbor, drop the hook in relatively shallow water with a sandy bottom, float peacefully and flatly on a calm sea and stay just as long as we wish to. Of course, not all Caribbean anchorages provide such comforts, but many do, compared to the Pacific. Especially outside of the mellower South Pacific summer season (i.e. Caribbean winter), the main reason we move anchorages is because they become uncomfortable or even treacherous because of the weather. When the swell is high, many anchorages in the Marquesas become unusable. The islands mountainous geography creates unpredictable winds, fluky and adverse, accelerated along the land or bluntly onshore. And who likes to be on a lee shore?





Counterclockwise from above: Beach bars, like the ones on Jost Van Dyke in the BVI, are non-existent in French Polynesia
Reliable tradewinds, unknown in the South Pacific, provide easy sailing along the Eastern Caribbean island chain
The Pacific does provide some unique experiences, though, such as socializing with sea lions in the Galapagos

Rolly anchorages also mean difficult dinghy landings. Floating docks are non-existent; concrete docks are sometimes inaccessible because of the tides, always tricky to jump or climb onto, and usually require a stern anchor for the dinghy. If there is a dock. If not, you either find a way to land the dinghy on a rocky shore, time it right through the surf of a sandy beach, or anchor the dinghy off and swim in (this is called "the Marquesan way"). Other options are to forget about shore activities, wait until calm conditions arrive or move anchorages. Some bays have breakwaters or are famed for their comfortableness. Anchorages are generally deeper than we are used to in the Caribbean, contain (dead) coral and rocks, and in the Marquesas are often murky.

Shorter distances

It doesn't come as a surprise that the distances to get from one place to another are far greater in the Pacific than in the Caribbean. You'd better enjoy sailing once you swap oceans! Long passages are exhausting and challenging: the boat and the crew are pushed throughout different stages of wind speed, wind direction, sea state, weather systems, discomfort, tiredness, sail trim and times of the day. Stuff will break more often on extensive trips. Weather forecasts are less reliable the longer the journey.

Positives about the Pacific

That being said, there is no reason to burst the bubble of all those cruisers dreaming (and talking) about sailing the South Pacific. Mark and I are enjoying the great things this area has to offer and that lure and have lured sailors from all over the world. The wildlife is amazing, the fishing is great (after the gear has been reinforced), the lagoons offer amazing snorkeling and diving, the locals are very friendly and hospitable, the scenery is often spectacular, and the hiking rewarding. Not that we felt unsafe in the Caribbean, but safety is a non-issue in French Polynesia. No need to lock your dinghy when going ashore or to lift it up at night. The presence of a strong Polynesian identity and intriguing culture is a bonus and the absence of "the crowds" is one of the reasons we came this way, at this time of the year. Spending weeks on end in remote anchorages all by yourself is easier to do in the vast Pacifc than the increasingly popular Caribbean.



Personal conclusion

As I mentioned before, Mark and I have only been cruising in the South Pacific for ten months, "barely" making any progress west and only covering a small region so far. Our experiences are based on time spent in the Galapagos, the Gambier and the Marquesan islands, which we explored extensively. The journey has been unique and gratifying in many ways and we can see experienced and/or adventurous cruisers make the jump as well, in search of authentic cruising grounds or exotic and varied stopovers on a tour around the world. But, when it comes to long-term cruising and a convenient, social, comfortable, and easy life aboard in the tropics, the Caribbean cannot be beaten!

Follow Liesbet's adventures at www.itsirie.com.

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SECURITY:
Everyone's Concern, Everyone's Responsibility

by Kim White

Bad Things Really Happen

Recently, several serious security events have occurred in the Caribbean: in Venezuela, Tobago and St. Vincent & the Grenadines. These events — unfortunate, scary, and in one case even fatal — have brought security issues to the front of most cruisers' minds. When these events occur, we all want to know exactly what happened, how, when, where and why it happened, all the while hoping that we can prevent the same from happening to us. Getting timely, accurate information about incidents is the critical first step in the process, and makes it possible to assess and evaluate (and perhaps change) our own behavior and preparedness. This is not a new phenomenon.

Manage Risk

The Caribbean Safety and Security Net (CSSN) was started by dedicated, volunteer cruisers (back in 1996!), as a daily high-frequency (voice) radio net to share accurate and timely information about security issues — at that time primarily dinghy thefts. Although technology has changed much about the way we communicate, the basic need for timely, accurate information is unchanged, and it is why CSSN continues to this day. What CSSN hopes to achieve is to keep cruisers advised, allowing them to be better prepared, making informed decisions while they enjoy safer cruising. We accomplish this in two distinct ways:

- On the radio, Harm Brink on *S/V Horta* hosts a daily high-frequency radio (HF) voice net on 8104 KHz USB at 0815 AST with a weekly summary every Sunday,
- On the internet, at the CSSN website (www.safetyandsecuritynet.com) where the reported incident data is available to everyone, and where there are other safety and security resources of interest to cruisers.



WWW.SV-ZANSHIN.COM

CSSN Just Got Better

As a result of our 2013 User Survey, the CSSN team has made many important changes, and many more are planned. We are working hard to make CSSN and its resources more visible, more relevant and timely, and easier to use. Take a minute and explore the CSSN site, www.safetyandsecurity.com, where you can

- access recently updated general precautions and passage checklists, developed with input from cruisers — those who have been there, and (in some cases unfortunately) done that.
- access current and several years of historic incident data which are now updated in near real time on the Island Reports page, where you will also find a new sort tool, making it easy to get the information you need.

REPORT! REPORT! REPORT!

The CSSN team is working hard to help all cruisers, from crusty old salts who have visited every island and every anchorage, to those new to the region, even short timers on charter. We strive to help cruisers make informed decisions. We can't do it by ourselves; there is a shared responsibility within the cruising community, and everyone must help.

If everyone helps, and accepts the personal responsibility for reporting events to CSSN, accurate and timely information will be gathered, retained and shared widely. CSSN maintains strict confidentiality of the names (boats and people) of those involved or reporting incidents, but we must utilize them to ensure there are no duplicates.

You can support our efforts by ensuring incidents are reported — first person is always best, so if you are a victim, make a report. When you hear an incident reported on a local net, ask if it has been reported, and where. Encourage and support the victims. There are several ways/places to "report". You can complain and gossip at happy hour or on the VHF; it feels good, but does it make a difference and have a lasting impact? Maybe, but probably not. You can send a report to *Compass*; it will be widely read in the Caribbean. You can submit a first-person report to Noonsite's piracy page, www.noonsite.com, which has a worldwide audience, is archived, and where first-person narratives often contain valuable lessons learned. You can post it to your blog or Facebook, and reach that audience immediately, but likely not in an enduring or lasting way, and the information is not accessible or known to most people planning to visit or new to the region.

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To reach a broad audience, and preserve the knowledge and learning, submit reports to CSSN. It is the only comprehensive, archived, centralized information source, updated in near real time and it's easily accessible to all. Call us on the daily HF voice net (8104 KHz USB at 0815 AST), or use this link to report: safetyandsecuritynet@gmail.com. The HF voice net and the website are in English, but you can also make voice or e-mail reports in Dutch, German or French.

It is Worse Than We Thought

Recently, CSSN has noticed a disturbing pattern. Several reports were received with the comment that, when the incident was reported locally (usually on the VHF net, or in discussion with other cruisers in the area), it was learned that the same type of event (e.g. nighttime boarding, attempted theft) had happened to another boat in the same anchorage a week earlier, or there were six other dinghies stolen the previous month — and the prior incidents had not been reported.

This is a problem that you can help solve. Would it have made a difference if the earlier incidents had been reported? We will never know, but it might have — so make the effort to report to CSSN. It's easy (visit the CSSN site for a reporting link on the Contact Us page with helpful questions to answer) and e-mail reports to us; we will follow up with you. The CSSN team is working hard to make this even easier in the future with a prompted online form to complete. So it's easy, and soon to be even easier, as we progress through our planned website improvements.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!

So, what should you be doing? Use the available resources: read *Caribbean Compass* (www.caribbeancompass.com), review Noonsite (www.noonsite.com), register at the Caribbean Security Index (http://freecruisingguides.com), see updates on Chris Doyle's website (www.doyleguides.com) and, most important, *utilize the CSSN website resources* (news, incident database and precautions checklists) to *know before you go!* Decide actively with your crew how you will manage risk — develop good security habits, limit your exposure by avoiding certain areas or anchorages, by taking special precautions against location-specific risks, and by understanding the nature of previous crimes where you are and elsewhere in the Caribbean region.

Because Bad Things Still Happen

Unfortunately, bad things can happen anywhere, but you can substantially mitigate the risks by staying well informed and prepared. When you arrive at a new anchorage, ask on the VHF if there have been any recent incidents, and if you are a Facebook user, ask if there is a local Facebook cruisers' page. Use the resources available, being careful to understand the purpose and limitations of each.

Do your part for the larger cruising community — if you are a victim, make a report. Report it to the authorities, report it on your local VHF net, post information on Facebook, etcetera, but please *ALWAYS report to CSSN*. CSSN acts as an information feed to all the sites mentioned above. Information is willingly shared with all. All we ask is that you credit CSSN as a source when you use information from our site.

If you hear an incident reported on a local VHF net ask if, and where, it has been reported. Encourage and support victims and remind them of the value and importance of their experience to other cruisers who follow in their wake. A few minutes of your time can be of great benefit to many other cruisers. It's our community; let's all do our part to make it safer while we enjoy our cruising lifestyle. Your report will make the way safer for those who follow.

For more information visit www.safetyandsecuritynet.com.

Read in Next Month's *Compass*:

Big Pullout Calendar of 2014 Caribbean Events!
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Why Trinidad Carnival is on Cruisers' Bucket List
... and much more!

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Myth Busting, Cruiser Style

by Lynn Kaak and Ken Goodings



Myth busted! Despite the dramatic 'smoking gun', the plug just bounced off the flare-test dummy

WHEN the discussion of self-defense on cruising vessels arises, the option of shooting a flare at the boarder invariably comes up. A couple of years ago, during one of the security discussions that usually occurs after a boarding or two, an expert on the subject stated that shooting a flare gun at a person would not work, and that it would just bounce off. This comment intrigued us.

Fast forward to October 2013, and, after a particularly nasty boarding incident on the cruising yacht *Rainbow*, safety and security discussions abounded again. Our minds went back to the flare scenario, and we decided to try it out for ourselves. For the target, we wanted something that had a reasonable density comparable with the human body, so we sacrificed an old pillow and a sweatshirt to the cause. We used cardboard as a stiffener and a method to prop up the "test dummy". This dummy may have been a tad softer than most human torsos, so that should have given the flare(s) an even better chance to pierce and damage the target.

We took our target out to a beach with rocks and water in the background, no flammables close by, and all spectators well back for safety. The sweatshirt-clad pillow was propped up on the sand with a rock to keep it upright. We stood approximately 20 feet or so away and prepared to fire. We had already notified staff and security of the marina near the beach of what we were intending to do.

The first thing that we discovered was that flare guns are not easy to aim. They are made for firing flares into the air without much concern for accuracy. The first shot went quite high and didn't hit the target at all. This may be a consideration for the budding marksmen in the crowd — hitting your intended target may not be as easy as you might suppose. Getting a second chance is going to be difficult, as it takes time to discharge the spent shell and load a new flare.

Eventually, the actual "dummy" was hit. The flares bounced off the sweatshirt and landed on the sand. The sweatshirt was unmarked and unscathed; therefore we believe that it's reasonable to assume that a person would not be harmed. The flare itself is a light aluminum plug, is not designed to puncture, and loaded only with enough propellant to launch a light projectile into the air.

Another consideration is that flares do not spark into flame immediately. They will ignite after a brief interval, but not immediately (this prevents setting fire to a vessel using it in an emergency). Our flares spurted flames for a few seconds after bouncing off the dummy and landing on the beach. This refutes the belief that you may be able to make the assailant's clothing catch fire. In our view it would most likely be your boat's interior or cockpit that suffers from the flames.

Substituting a 12-gauge shotgun shell for a signal flare in a flare gun seems like a suicidal thing to do. These plastic guns aren't designed for that kind of force, and the kickback would, at the least, probably break your thumb. There's a good reason that shotguns are made of metal, and have the stock for sitting against your shoulder. Most proponents of the shotgun shell have perhaps never fired a shotgun in real life.

To sum up:

- Flare guns are not easy to aim, and are slow to reload.
- The flares bounce off bodies, and probably will not cause physical damage to a person.

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• Flares do not flame immediately, so the off chance of igniting the assailant's clothing seems very unlikely.
• Flare guns are not designed for regular 12-gauge shotgun shells.





Left: In the last of several tests, Lynn was so confident of the results that she used a shirt that she intended to wear again and — Ken's pillow! After hitting the shirt six times, the pillow was completely unscathed and the shirt will be wearable after washing
Right: These hollow, lightweight aluminum flare plugs did no damage, just bounced away and flared only after a few moments' delay

As an aside, we did a second round of "testing" to get better pictures for this article. Two out of the five flares did not fire, and one blew the barrel open but didn't do anything else (thankfully). These flares were only a year past their expiry date. Another caveat when using them as a weapon, or possibly in an emergency situation for their intended use: they may not fire when you need it. We also realized that a two-handed grip made aiming easier, and of course, being about ten feet or closer to the target makes a big difference.

During these separate occasions of flare gun versus the "dummy" testing, twice the sweatshirt and pillow did burn somewhat. The flare pellet either went down the neck of the sweatshirt or bounced and lay still in a fold of material, giving the pyrotechnics a chance to work. Our inanimate dummy just sat there and took it, while a real person would probably present a much livelier target.

As they say on the TV show, "Myth Busted"!

Lynn Kaak and Ken Goodings have been cruising on S/V Silverheels III *for the past five years.*

MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

DECEMBER - JANUARY 2013/14

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

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

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

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

December 2013		21	0244	10	1957
DATE	TIME	22	0328	11	2046
1	1021	23	0411	12	2134
2	1120	24	0454	13	2222
3	1223 (new moon)	25	0538	14	2310
4	1323	26	0624	15	2357
5	1424	27	0712	16	0000 (full moon)
6	1523	28	0804	17	0042
7	1618	29	0900	18	0126
8	1710	30	0959	19	0210
9	1800	31	1101	20	0253
10	1848			21	0336
11	1936	**January 2014**		22	0420
12	2023	1	1204	23	0506
13	2111	2	1306	24	0555
14	2200	3	1405	25	0627
15	2249	4	1501	26	0742
16	2337	5	1554	27	0841
17	0000 (full moon)	6	1644	28	0942
18	0026	7	1733	29	1044
19	0113	8	1821	30	1144 (new moon)
20	0159	9	1904	31	1243



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Mediterranean Mooring for Caribbean Cruisers or, 'You Want Me To Put My Boat Where?'

by Maurice Howland

NORTH American boat drivers do not get much practice with med mooring before coming to the Caribbean. The term "med mooring" is derived from Mediterranean mooring, a technique for securing a vessel to a pier by attaching the bow to a temporary or permanent anchor then backing perpendicular to the pier before securing the stern lines. Marinas with cost and space constraints find med mooring advantageous because they can accommodate many more boats when the dock space is only occupied by the width of the boat rather than the length. Usually you end up only a fender's width from your neighbor's boat, creating what my first mate calls the "marina ghetto" feel. Fellow cruisers found that their two dogs did not understand that visiting the neighbor's boat was not considered good manners. "Hey, if I can merely step to the next boat, they must be dog lovers!"





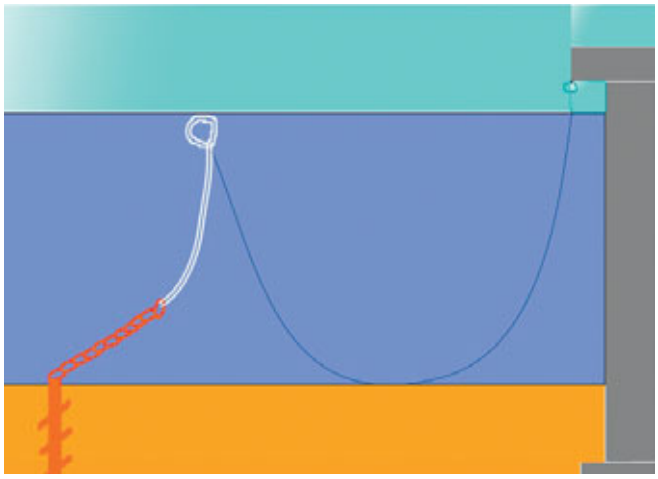
Above: With 'pre-stretched' lines at Port Louis, we could step from the boat to the dock and during the next three-plus months there were minimal line adjustments

At Nelson's Dockyard in Antigua, you are expected to strategically drop your anchor and then back between two expensive pieces of fiberglass, ensuring that when the maneuver is completed your anchor line is taut and so are your stern lines. After watching *Motivator's* feeble attempt, they let us side tie. It was at the end of the season and I guess they had seen enough "marina shows".

Other marinas such as Marina Bas-du-Fort in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe and Port Louis Marina in St. George's, Grenada have a permanent anchor arrangement for the bow attachment. In both locations the marina dispatches a staff member in a dinghy to attach lines from the bow of the boat to the pennant extending from the permanent anchor. *Motivator's* crew has had better luck with this configuration. Still, however I thought it might be prudent to seek advice from the pros who daily assist boaters with the med mooring.

My first question was, "What does the fixed gear under the water look like?" Port Louis Marina, like most marinas, has installed hefty screw piles with chain and rope pennants attached. Many marinas use a buoy to float the pennant, but some use a lazy line attached to the dock.

Whether the marina uses a float or a lazy line, the pros point out that it is important for the skipper to give the marina staff in the dinghy sufficient time to locate and prepare the pennant for attaching the bow lines with a bowline knot. And of course, the prudent mariner is always prepared prior to approaching any docking situation: mooring lines are made ready and fenders are deployed or readied for deployment.



Below: A permanent anchor usually consists of screw pile, chain pennant, and a method to retrieve the pennant for attaching the bow lines

In a med mooring situation you will need at least two long sturdy lines for attaching the bow to the pennant. The length of line required is determined by how far the pennant is from the dock and your boat length. The marina staff can advise you as to how long a line you will need to ready. *Motivator* carries two 75-foot-long, one-inch polypropylene lines just for med mooring. I have found that while the polypropylene line is not as easy to handle, it is easier to clean after being dipped in seawater for a prolonged period of time.

—Continued on next page

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The pros say that communication is the key to a successful med mooring. While you may be the best boat handler in the world, med mooring is a team sport. The skipper must be able to handle the boat and take input from his line handler(s) and the marina staff operating the dinghy. The pros say that most "marina shows" occur when the skipper is unwilling to take direction from the people who do it every day.

The wind is the second biggest inducer of "marina shows" while med mooring. The



One of the pros, Derrick at Port Louis Marina

pros say that, as in all docking situations, the prudent skipper must account for the wind when attempting to med moor. On my very first attempt to med moor at Port Louis Marina I was more concerned about giving the expensive-looking windward boat room rather than the fact that the wind was going to shove me out of alignment leeward.

Another trick the pros taught me was to stretch the lines. After the bow lines were secured and the stern was approximately four feet from the dock, the pros had *Motivator's* skipper use the engines in reverse to stretch the bow lines before securely attaching the stern lines. The net result was that we could step from the boat to the dock and during the next three-plus months there were minimal line adjustments.

On our first couple of attempts at med mooring, I noticed *Motivator's* first mate was busy doing the 50-foot dash between the bow and stern, and was never where the skipper thought she should be. As previously mentioned, med mooring is a team sport and you need to empty the bench. On our last trip into Port Louis Marina I requested an extra line handler to assist the first mate. The marina was happy to comply. The dinghy dispatched to attach our bow lines met us and a marina staff member came onboard and took charge of the bow lines. The first mate was then left to socialize and toss the stern lines to waiting friends and marina staff. New Rule: *Motivator* requests a second line handler onboard when med mooring.

Departing a med mooring situation can be just as daunting and result in the dreaded "marina show" if not done correctly. Here again I sought advice from the pros. Their prescribed method is to leave the stern line firmly attached while the marina staff in a dinghy unties the bow lines from the pennant. Watch out for well-meaning helpers on the dock loosening the lines before you are ready. To keep the boat in position, the captain should use the engine(s) to apply forward pressure on the stern lines. Once the bow lines are retrieved and the dinghy is clear, the stern lines are cast off and you are free to depart. On our last departure there was a significant crosswind, so I asked the dinghy to stand by as a bow thruster until I was clear of the other expensive fiberglass.

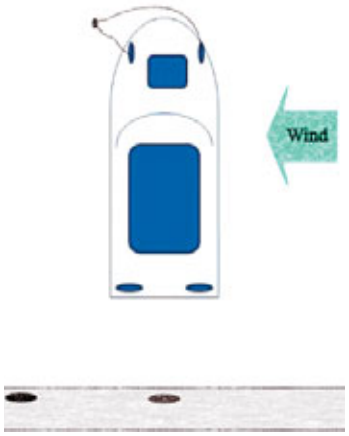
Port Louis Marina is quick to point out that they have side ties available for skippers who are reluctant to med moor. We, however, like the quay and the power available on the med mooring dock. With a little forethought, and willingness to communicate and work as a team, anyone can med moor.



Joel and Jamal pulling up the lazy line to find the pennant



Mission accomplished — taut bow and stern lines hold boat in place



Above: Work with the wind and current when med mooring



Boats med moored in Guadeloupe



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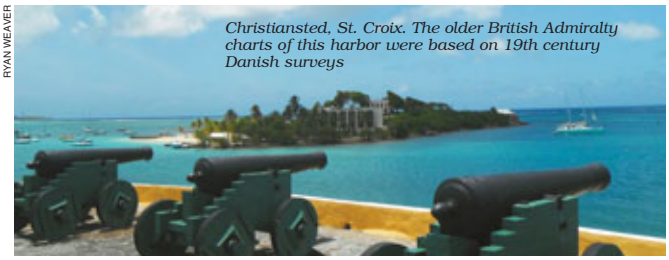
Insider's Chart Chat

by Don Street

Although most sailors do not realize it, despite the fact that they do not have Imray Iolaire charts on board they are sailing on Imray Iolaire charts. The raster charts of the Eastern Caribbean and the Atlantic islands produced by Garmin, Navionics, Jepperson and the French company Map Media are all based on the Imray Iolaire charts. These companies pay Imray royalties for the use of the information.

In 1979 I entered into an agreement with Imray (full name Imray Laurie Norie and Wilson, an amalgamation of companies that trace their lineage back to the 1690s) to do privately printed charts of the Eastern Caribbean, and I believe that these are the most accurate, up to date, and easily corrected charts in the world. The corrections are a combination of corrections supplied by the British Admiralty and corrections supplied by myself.

RYAN WEAVER



Christiansted, St. Croix. The older British Admiralty charts of this harbor were based on 19th century Danish surveys

Charts of the Past

Today's sailors are blessed with an abundance of chart options, both paper and electronic, but when I first arrived in 1956 it was almost impossible to buy charts in the Eastern Caribbean. It was a case of contacting chart agents (in the States, the UK or France, depending on which charts you needed) via air mail or telegram, then waiting for their reply, then ordering the desired charts and organizing payment, and finally hoping the postal system would not lose the charts. This was a time-consuming, expensive and frustrating operation.



A detailed 1831 chart of Martinique. During WWII, even more extensive surveying was done, making this one of the best-charted islands in the Caribbean

The charts in those days, with few exceptions, were based on mid-nineteenth century surveys that had not been updated. For example, in the late 1970s the British Admiralty (BA) chart of St. Thomas Harbour showed Ballast Island existing just east of Frenchtown. Ballast Island, however, had been dredged out by the US Navy shortly after the US purchased the Virgin Islands in 1917!

The charts in those days were also often poorly laid out. The BA chart of the Grenadines ended one mile south of the south side of Bequia. The next scale chart covered the whole Caribbean, a scale too small to use to lay out a course between the Tobago Cays or Canouan and Bequia. The solution was to glue a small piece of paper on the top of the Grenadines chart and plot in an X for the west end of Bequia. The US was not innocent either: their chart of the northern Virgin Islands cut Gorda Sound in the British Virgin Islands in half, so that the northern end of Virgin Gorda, Eustatia Sound and Anegada were *terra incognita*.

The charts of Martinique were another story. During World War II, when France fell to Germany in 1940, the gold for the Bank of France was en route to Canada on board the French heavy cruiser *Jeanne d'Arc*, escorted by a carrier, a light cruiser and four or six destroyers. They were re-routed to Martinique, where they were blockaded by the US Navy. To keep the young naval officers from going stir crazy, the French Admiral Robert set them to work charting Martinique. Thus it was the best-charted island in the entire Caribbean, and covered by a dozen charts. (But when the survey crew arrived at Trois Islet they must have spent their time in the pub, as it is the only area in Martinique where I found the French charts inaccurate. Visiting there on *Li'l Iolaire*, I promptly "parked" when trying to use the eastern entrance.)

Making Charts for Today's Boaters

Through the years I ordered new charts to see if corrections I had sent to the BA and to the US Coast and Geodetic Survey (the forerunner of NOAA) had been implemented. I discovered that errors had not been corrected. So, at the London boat show one year, I met with the late Tom Wilson (father of Willie Wilson, the present head of Imray) and proposed that Imray expand their privately printed chart portfolio to the Caribbean. Tom said that Imray had done charts of the Caribbean — back in the 1760 to 1810 era — but had sold all the charts and rights to the British Admiralty in 1840. He thought that trying to start a new series of Caribbean charts was an interesting idea. His wife, Ettie, said, "It sounds like a nice little project that will produce enough money to provide us with whiskey at the boat show!" Little did she realize how big the operation would become.

The first step was to break the present charts up into areas that were practical for a sailor to use. The second step was to place on the chart of each island insets for the harbors on the island rather than, as the US and BA chart offices did, making a separate chart for each individual harbor.

Doing the Work

We started by producing charts of the most popular areas. Then we expanded westward from the Virgin Islands to the western end of Puerto Rico. I discovered the hard way that, although the Spanish Virgins had been surveyed by the US Navy between 1901 and 1911, no updates had been done since then, except around major commercial harbors. We were sailing into Esperanza Harbor via the western entrance between Vieques and the offshore island of Isla Real.

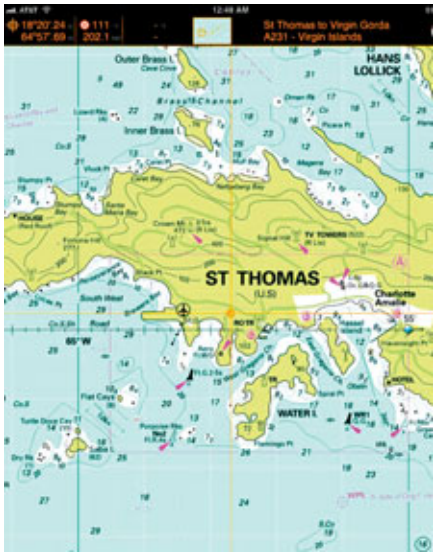
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The chart showed ten feet across the bar; *Iolaire*, heeled over, drew no more than seven feet. But my Grenadian mate, the late Alston Blackett, said, "Skip, I don't care what the chart says — the water getting t'in!" Suddenly we slid to a stop. "Parked" again! A friendly sport fisherman with two powerful outboard engines on his boat helped us off, and we chartered his boat the next day to explore every nook and cranny on the south coast of Vieques. The sport fisherman, who had lived on the island for years, served as our pilot.

Imray also did a detailed chart (A234) of the north coast of St. Croix from Christiansted eastward, based on information from an unpublished NOAA survey from 1986, plus a dredge company's survey of Christiansted Harbor — which, when checking via *Iolaire's* dinghy and a long sounding pole, I discovered to be wrong. There was more water on the eastern side of the harbor than the survey showed. It seems they dredged out the eastern side of the harbor as a place to keep their spare barges and pipes, but not having EPA permission to dredge in the area, they did not show their dredging of the area on the survey they filed with the harbormaster and NOAA. Needless to say I was very proud of this operation, especially so when the BA replaced *their* St. Croix chart, which was based on a Danish survey from the 1800s, with a new chart based on NOAA's 1938 survey!

When Crabb's boatyard opened in Parham, Antigua, and Sun Yachts based themselves there as well, they said they would grubstake me to go to Barbuda to re-do the chart. My



A long way from the old days: Navigator App Chart Navigation for the iPhone, iPod and iPad is based on Imray charts and includes waypoint management, routes, a compass overlay, distance and bearings from any point, inte and in some cases even aerial photographs. But can you spill coffee on it?

two Grenadian crew, Les Duncan and Randy Baptiste, and I spent a week sailing in and out of reefs. Les and Randy sailed the boat, while I stood on the lower spreaders with hockey puck compass in hand, and shouting down notes for Les to write up.

On both the British and American charts there was an approach line, a bearing on the highlands noted as 231 feet, but everyone complained you could not see the highlands so the bearing was useless. However I could see the highlands clearly from the lower spreaders and could use the bearing, which was dead accurate. One evening at the chart table, I pulled out the topographic map of Barbuda done by aerial survey by the British department of overseas surveys in 1954. The topo map showed the highlands as only about 120 feet high — versus over 230 feet on the BA and US Defense Mapping Agency (DMA) charts. No wonder they were invisible from deck level!

There are so many coral heads in and around Barbuda that it is impossible to chart them all. I have worked out ranges/transits and bearings for safe passages between the coral heads and shoals. My Barbuda explorations were backed up by a quick aerial survey. I bought a round-trip ticket on a flight to Barbuda, sat in the co-pilot's seat, and the pilot kindly did a few unscheduled zigs and zags to allow me to double check what I had found from standing on the spreaders.

No longer actively sailing in the islands, I currently obtain corrections through friends in the Caribbean, plus information from other reputable sources. Reports in the Caribbean boating publications give me the leads to chase down marina managers, harbormasters and real estate developers for updates. Please e-mail me with any comments or observations, giving specific information regarding a chart, at streetiolaire@hotmail.com or contact Imray directly at ilnw@imray.com.

Finding Your Corrections

I recommend going to the Imray website and chasing down the corrections to the areas you are cruising or intending to cruise. An outline of the coverage of each Imray Iolaire chart is shown at www.imray.com. Click on the island you are interested in, the chart number will come up, go to corrections, click in your chart number and there you will find all the latest corrections. The corrections to that island that are applicable to all charts — Imray Iolaire, the BA, US National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (formerly DMA), NV, Chart Kit and C Map, plus all electronic charts.

Imray Iolaire charts are also available on a memory stick from enquiries@mridin-chartware.co.uk, in the vector format, an exact representation of the relevant Imray Iolaire charts. This memory stick is a wonderful planning tool. Look at Chart 1, the entire Eastern Caribbean, pick the area you wish to cruise, look at the individual charts of the area, then select the ones you want to buy for actual use.

Electronic charts are wonderful navigational tools, but they are not the be all and end all. All inshore navigation should be backed up by paper charts and eyeball navigation.

A Final Word to the Wise

Considering that almost all of the islands in the Eastern Caribbean have been recharted in the last 40 years, and the charts have been corrected to WGS 84 with the modern accurate GPS navigation equipment, one would expect insurance claims for inadvertent unexpected expensive groundings would cease. Having been in the marine insurance business for over 50 years I can tell you this is not so. Very expensive groundings still happen. In most cases the navigator was relying on electronic navigation and chart plotter when he (or she) should have been using eyeball navigation and common sense.

Visit Don Street's website at www.street-iolaire.com.

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Reprinted from the December 2013 issue of *Cruising World* magazine:

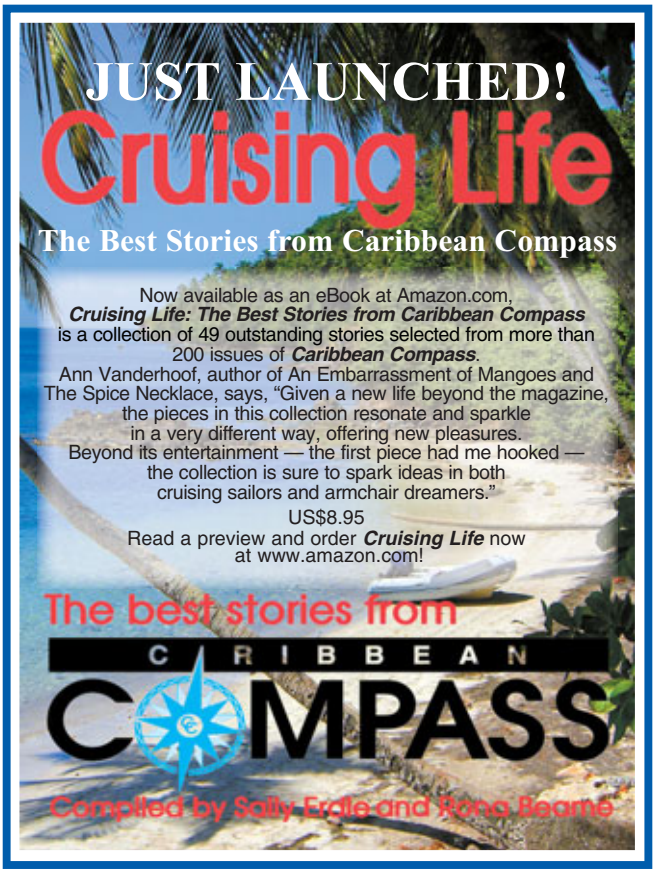
***Cruising Life: The Best Stories from Caribbean Compass**, edited by Sally Erdle and Rona Beame (2013; Compass Publishing Ltd.;$9).*

We've long admired the folks who produce the monthly *Caribbean Compass* from the tiny island of Bequia, in the Windward Islands. Theirs is an unfailing devotion, begun with the first issue in March 1995, to spread valuable news for and by tropical sailors in print and online. The *CC* team has effected real change in the lower Caribbean and has had a direct hand in improving the relationship between sailors and the island communities they encounter when they clear in and come ashore.

If you've cruised the Caribbean and have somehow missed this invaluable gem, here's your chance to make up for it. The self-published book, sold through Amazon, contains dozens of the editors' favorite adventure, humor and travel stories, as well as poems and recipes, that were published over the years. It's an authentic compendium of the vibrant Caribbean cruising lifestyle for sailors and wannabes alike.

— Elaine Lembo

For more information on the e-book Cruising Life: The Best Stories from Caribbean Compass, *see ad on page 26.*



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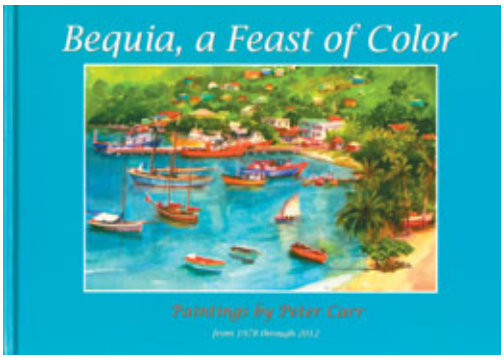


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BOOK REVIEW BY PAT MITCHELL

AFTER A TIME

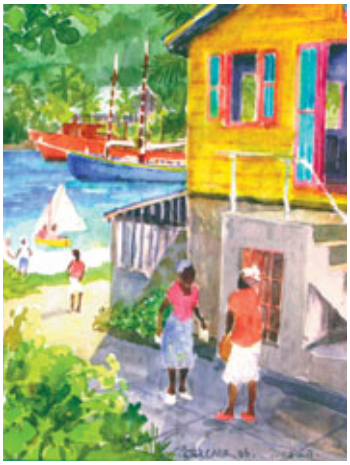


...after a time, I just started to be in Bequia.
— Peter Carr

Bequia, A Feast of Color: paintings by Peter Carr from 1978 through 2012, *edited by Julie Savage Lea, ©2013. Ozone Zone Books. Hard cover, 64 pages, color throughout. ISBN 978-0-9813279-3-8.*

The collection of paintings by Australian native Peter Carr, recently published under the title *Bequia, A Feast of Color*, is a must-have for any Caribbean connoisseur. Bequia-lovers will pounce on it whether they know the island "long time", or whether they are amongst the surprising number who, from that first rounding of the ferry into yacht-dotted Admiralty Bay, or, alternatively, from that wake-up swerve of the small plane into Bequia airport, just know that this island is somehow part of their destiny.

The editor, Julie Savage Lea, has put together over 60 watercolors, oils, and pen-and-ink sketches enabling us, in one miraculous space, to share Peter Carr's unique personal vision of a place that we, also, have experienced — hey I recognize that road, yes that's a house I've seen before, and that person there — I never noticed it but he does walk just so, doesn't he?



Peter treasures the physical geography of the island — the reassuring backbone of green hills, the arcs of white surf endlessly sidling into Friendship Bay, the disparate ever-mobile skies. Particularly in his watercolours, he is able to evoke the landscape with just a few brush-strokes.

But the essence of his gift lies in the empathy he obviously feels for her people. Human beings are integral to his vision. Almost all the paintings feature a human figure, or several, or a local vessel sailing in the distance. He is attracted to the old-style occupations that kept Bequia alive for so many years: building and sailing boats, catching and cleaning fish, tending to a coal pit, carrying laundry on the head. He sees beauty in the way people move. He picks up on telling details, capturing the nature of a person simply going about his work, or lingering in the shade of a shop-front, or chatting in the road, or dawdling on the bayside. Old or young, chubby or scrawny, awkward or graceful, his people are individuals; but, at the same time, each is a generalization for a particular style of life, a style perhaps that is fading fast. Like any true artist Peter makes us see more, and better.

Of great value are the extended captions and comments by Nolly Simmons and Bob Berlinghof. We learn, for example, that the *Iron Duke*, the original Bequia whaleboat bought from an American whaling ship, was rebuilt dozens of times and was the pattern for the Bequia double-enders which sustained the crucial whaling and fishing industries that kept Bequians alive over years of relative isolation, and are now built sometimes just for the pleasure of racing. And we learn that Industry Beach was named for the sugar and indigo plantations that used to thrive on adjacent lands.

The editor has included five of Peter's early pen-and-ink drawings, which give us an enticing historical record of Admiralty Bay in the late seventies. We see schooners tethered to shore (including the *Friendship Rose* in her original form without a bowsprit), local dinghies, a little boy with his toy boat, a woman carrying her fish on a string from the market, shops with gingerbread trim, and a charming old-style wooden house. Artistically these are among Peter's best Bequia works.

In the introduction Bob Berlinghof provides an intriguing summary of Peter Carr's itinerant life (now there would be a book!) and his travels through the Far East, Africa and South America. He describes him as "a wandering spirit, a world traveler, and an artist who happens to be a plumber, carpenter, sailor...."

We are lucky that in those travels he happened on Bequia.

This book is available in Bequia at outlets including the Bequia Bookshop, Gingerbread Hotel office, Maranne's Ice Cream, Sugar Reef and Mango Art Studio. In the US, phone Janelle Hawes at (402) 333-4146.

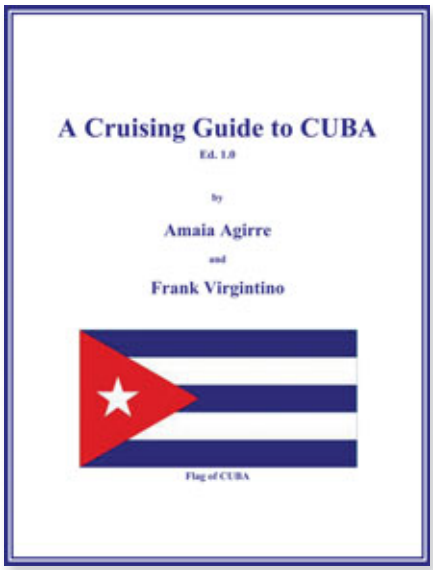
BOOK REVIEW BY SALLY ERDLE

Taking Cuba from 'No Go' to 'Must Do'

***A Cruising Guide to Cuba, Edition 1.0**, by Amaia Agirre and Frank Virgintino. Published by Free Cruising Guides, ©2013 by Frank Virgintino. PDF or e-book, 524 pages, color images throughout. PDF is a free download; e-book* (Kindle version) US$11.99.

It's one of those Caribbean curiosities that the largest island in the entire region — actually a vast archipelago including dozens of islands and cays — is among the least visited by cruisers.

Lack of information about Cuba as a cruising destination is no longer an excuse to avoid visiting this distinctive country, now that Amaia Agirre and Frank Virgintino have published *A Cruising Guide to Cuba*. At over 500 abundantly illustrated pages and reflecting more than two years of work, this is the first complete yachting guide written about Cuba in a decade. The book is available as a free download (PDF file) or as an e-book. The content is the same in both versions, but aside from more sophisticated formatting the e-book also offers an interactive Table of Contents and Table of Figures, adding an extra layer of e-reader user-friendliness.



As Sue Richards, editor of the popular cruisers' resource Noonsite (www.noonsite.com) has written, "The detail, explanation, pictorial guide, background and insight into Cuban culture contained in this guide, means that Cuba can now be added to the 'must-do' list for many. Through better understanding of the sheer size of this country, the wealth of cruising possibilities and the Cuban rules for visiting yachts, all spelt out in this guide, all cruisers will be encouraged to dip their toes into Cuban waters."

In the introduction, various sailing approaches to Cuba are outlined. Frank Virgintino says that he hopes the book will benefit the Caribbean "by bringing in more cruising boats; especially through the Windward Passage. I think that by now you must be tired of hearing me say that the Windward Passage is the safest and quickest way for North American cruising boats to enter into the Caribbean. While I am all in favor of them visiting the Lesser Antilles, coming in via the Greater Antilles is a logic that cannot be denied." The approaches from the north make a good case for Cuba being a first Caribbean port of call for boats coming from ports on the east coast of North America or the Gulf of Mexico, despite a caveat for US citizens regarding visiting Cuba (i.e. "trading with the enemy").

In addition to the information on approaches, the book gives a wealth of information on weather and currents, ports of entry and clearance procedures, harbors and anchorages, history, food, culture and things to do and see ashore, and even includes an extensive annotated bibliography. It's worth knowing before you arrive (or before you make a mistake) many of the little things that the authors reveal, such as, for example, the facts that provisioning opportunities are quite limited, that you must get permission from the Coast Guard before inviting a Cuban friend aboard, and that citizens of many countries are given a one-month visa on arrival but Canadians automatically get three.

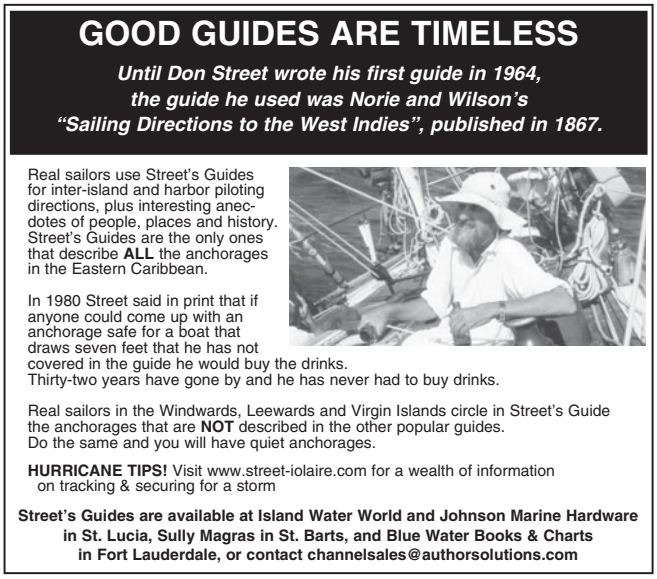
The details about Cuba's multitude of harbors and anchorages are logically organized into four sections: the south coast, the west coast, the north coast, and the east coast. Chartlets and waypoints will be of use, of course, as will the authors' more personal first-hand observations, and photos give a sense of place. While a stop at the well-known Marina Hemingway just outside Havana is on virtually every Cuba cruiser's itinerary, the authors are equally enthusiastic about the historic and picturesque south coast cities of Cienfuegos and Trinidad, declaring them "not to be missed!"

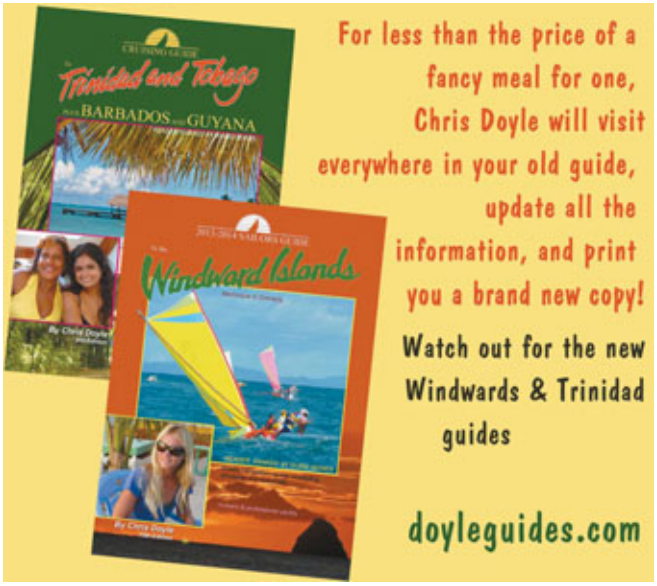
The book, while replete with the specific, concrete information you'd expect from a cruising guide, also offers introductory context in the form of poems, artwork and vintage postcards, heaps of photos, quotations from travelogues, a discourse on the history of US-Cuban relations, and even a recipe for Cuba's national dish, *ropa vieja*. In a heartfelt postscript, the authors (one a US citizen and one Spanish) are not shy about stating their negative opinion of the US trade embargo against Cuba. The postscript includes the lengthy text of a speech by Daniel Griswold of the Cato Institute, an American think tank, lambasting the embargo, as well as a list by year of the United Nations votes consistently against the embargo. One can't help but guess that if — or when — the embargo is lifted, a revised edition of this comprehensive book will be in order.

It's impressive that this much information is offered for US$11.99 (for the Kindle edition), never mind absolutely free as a PDF. Get a copy and start planning your trip to Cuba.

Download the PDF for free at www.freecruisingguides.com or find it in e-book format at Amazon.com or your favorite e-book store.









DECEMBER 2013

♈ ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)
There will be a lot of verbal anchor hoisting with a creative landfall as your goal — but it will be hard to really get underway. If you can leave port and find a productive course, try to take advantage of it before the 21st as there will be many distractions around Christmas time.

♉ TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)
Choppy seas and stormy skies in business communications will change to a smooth ride after the first week and will turn onto a productive heading by the last week. Romance will be in the doldrums until the New Year.

♊ GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)
This month will be filled with a plethora of creative false starts and garbled communications with crew or cruising pals. Just keep your thoughts to yourself and wait this aspect out.

CANCER ♋ (22 Jun - 23 Jul)
If you have difficulty keeping your love life on an even keel, hoist your sense of humor. It might have little wind in its sails but you can use it to keep yourself balanced.

♌ LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)
You will have so much creative energy aboard you will have a challenge to find what to use it for. Make a course decision before the 22nd when this aspect will dissipate.

♍ VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)
There will be light but fair breezes in your love life, enough to make some headway through bumpy seas in inventions and verbal interactions.

♎ LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)
This is a good time for you to work on projects on board that have been neglected too long. Don't let a cold front in your love life cool your passion, as things will warm up again soon.

♏ SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)
Boat business will get new breezes in its sails and exciting opportunities are on the way. This will be the start of a period of accomplishment for you, which will last for several months and pay off big time.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)
Your verbal abilities will be a real asset to your inventiveness for the middle two weeks. There's nothing on the horizon to force you to alter course, so make the most of it.

♑ CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)
The tide of romance will be ebbing, and on some levels you might be happy to see it go. Attempts to address the situation with humor will sink like a winch handle.

♒ AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)
Energy will be high onboard in the last two weeks, so ignore any fading breeze in boat business and put all those fair winds of enthusiasm to work for you.

♓ PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)
Rough weather in managing the details of your boating life will humbug you in the first two weeks, but at the same time financial matters will get a favorable wind in their sails. Don't let a short period of slack breezes in communications and creativity affect your speed over the ground.

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Island Poets

'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!"

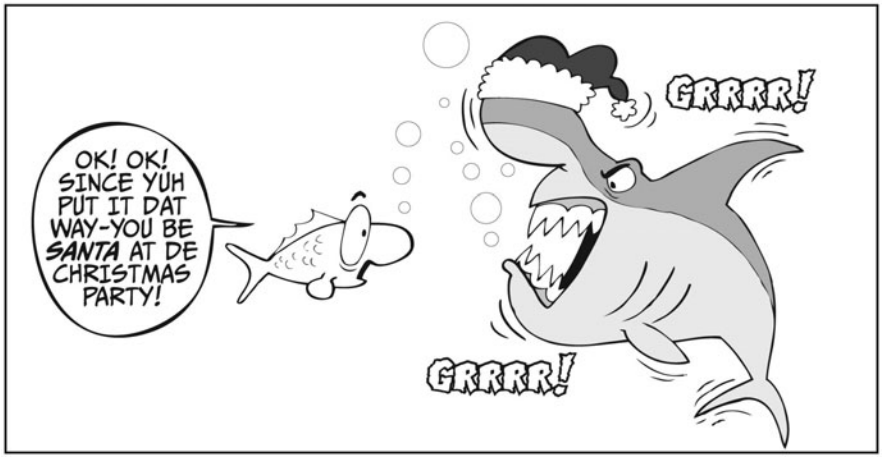


— *Cruiser Claus*

Editor's note: We don't know who originally wrote this poem that's been doing the rounds anonymously for quite a while, but we've published it before — and by popular demand it's become a tradition!

seaweed

KEN DYER





Shape-Shifters:
THE SEA CUCUMBER

What reef animal comes in a rainbow of crazy colors, can throw out its innards to immobilize predators, then creep away and re-grow a brand-new stomach?

It's the humble sea cucumber, prized as a gastronomic delight by some cultures and beginning to yield some of its secrets to scientists. The sea cucumber sits like a log on the sea floor and may resemble its namesake from the garden, but this creature is far from a lackadaisical lump; it is endowed with some very special abilities.

Spineless — YES. Helpless — NO!

Sea cucumbers are real life shape-shifters: when threatened by predators, they can morph their skin from hard and lumpy to something a bit less appetizing, akin to a



FLORENT'S GUIDE TO THE CARIBBEAN

The Conical Sea Cucumber, Eostichopus arnesoni, *one of several types of sea cucumber found in the Caribbean. Where sea cucumbers are abundant they play an important role in promoting water quality*

gelatinous slime. When danger looms they literally turn to mush!

They have very effective and disgusting means to deter animals that molest them. Some sea cucumbers discharge sticky spaghetti-like threads to ensnare their enemies. Others can mutilate their own bodies as a defense mechanism. They violently contract their muscles and jettison (*eviscerate*) some of their internal organs out of their anus, expelling their insides as a decoy or trap. A *predator* may become entangled in the slimy mass or be distracted long enough for the sea cucumber to slowly crawl away.

Amazing — not only does the sea cucumber survive, but in just three to five weeks the missing internal body parts are quickly *regenerated.*

Food

How about a nice dinner of braised sea cucumber or a side order stir-fried in black pepper sauce? The fermented *viscera* of sea cucumbers, a.k.a. pickled gonads and intestines, is considered a delicacy in Japan. Economically, sea cucumbers are important as an industry that processes the body wall for sale as *beche-de-mer* or *trepang.* As a gourmet food item in the orient, they form the basis of a multimillion-dollar industry.

Hidden Talents to Effect Human Health — What is the Evidence?

Considered both a culinary delicacy and a homeopathic panacea, sea cucumbers are proving useful in biomedical research. Some species produce toxins that are of interest to pharmaceutical firms seeking to learn their medical value. Some compounds isolated to date exhibit antimicrobial activity or act as anti-inflammatory agents and anticoagulants. Scientific studies have shown that a protein found in sea cucumbers may be an effective tool to inhibit the development of the malaria parasite.

Other research suggests the use of sea cucumber extracts to fight colon or pancreatic cancer. Compounds called *triterpenoids* have shown some promise in laboratory studies in slowing cancer cell growth and in stopping the formation of new blood vessels that tumors need to grow. In another early laboratory study, a fatty acid (12-MTA) that came from a sea cucumber was found to slow the growth of prostate cancer cells. No studies testing these compounds in animals or humans have been reported as of yet in available scientific publications. Results of such studies are needed to find out whether these compounds are useful against cancer in living organisms. It is important to note also that extracted chemicals or substances are different from supplements made of the whole sea cucumber and would not be expected to produce the same results.

Though scientifically unproven, compounds from sea cucumbers are also promoted in dietary supplements as a treatment for arthritis. There are several other studies being conducted with the sea cucumber. A patent has been submitted for the process of centrifuging collagen from sea-cucumber flesh into layers to be used in artificial corneal transplants, and the connective tissue of sea cucumbers might be perfect as replacements for torn tendons in humans. Even certain cells, believed to be responsible for the regenerative healing process of the sea cucumber, are being isolated and tested to see if they can help speed up our own healing.

One only has to wonder about how they *regenerate* their internal organs to ponder what other medical applications sea cucumbers may one day provide.

Details, Details

Sea cucumbers are part of a group known as *echinoderms*, which also includes starfish and sea urchins. There are over 1,250 species of sea cucumbers around the world, all of which reside in the ocean or beneath the ocean floor. The Caribbean region contains six different species of sea cucumbers.

Sea cucumbers are tube-shaped and come in various colors such as tan, green or black, with bumpy, leathery skin, growing to a typical length of about 15 to 25 centimeters (six to ten inches). They may be dressed in psychedelic hues of electric blue, vivid purple and shocking red, and sport spikes or frills or appear almost furry.

Why They Matter

As scavengers, sea cucumbers are part of the ocean's cleanup crew — the vacuum cleaners of the reef. They tidy up the water and the sediments. Where filtering sea cucumbers are abundant, they play an especially important role in promoting water clarity and quality.

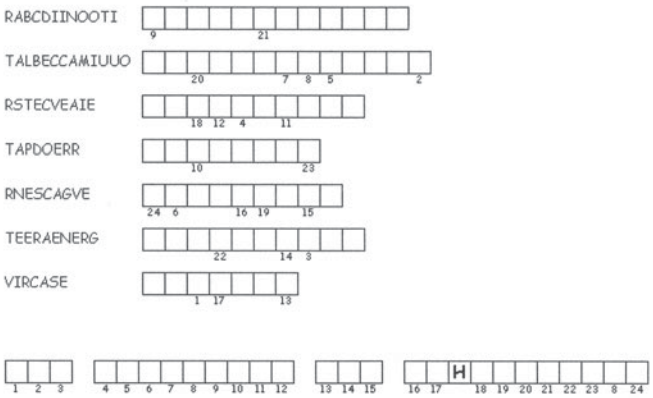
Metals, such as copper, nickel, lead and zinc associated with coastal pollution, can *bioaccumulate* within its tissues. Therefore, the "donkey dung" sea cucumber (*Holothuria mexicana)* has been suggested as a biological indicator (*bioindicator*) for these metals.

Sea Cucumber Quiz

The words matching the definitions below can be found in the *italicized* text.

1) A species that can be used to monitor the health of the environment.
2) Refers to the accumulation of substances, such as pesticides, or other organic chemicals in an organism.
3) To remove the entrails of; disembowel.
4) An animal that naturally preys on others.
5) Animals that feed on dead or decaying matter.
6) To re-grow or replace lost tissue.
7) Soft internal organs of the body.
8) Sea cucumbers are marine invertebrates, also cousins to sea urchins and starfish, known as _____.

SEA CUCUMBER SCRAMBLE PUZZLE



Unscramble each of the clue words.

Copy the letters in the numbered cells to other cells with the same number.

Answers to Quiz and Word Scramble on page 41.

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CRUISING KIDS' CORNER

ANGIE THE ANGELFISH GOES TO BETHLEHEM

by Lee Kessell

Angie the Angelfish had always wanted to see where Jesus was born, but Bethlehem was so far away that she knew it was just a dream. How could a little reef fish, just five inches long, who dwelt in the sunny waters of St. Lucia in the West Indies, ever swim across the world?

Angie was a young Queen Angelfish so she hadn't come into her full, beautiful adult colours, but her baby colours were even prettier. She had a yellow tail, yellow lips and a yellow belly and her broad fins were outlined in neon blue, the same as the four stripes that crossed her body. She glowed as if set alight by the sun.

Now, Christmas was well on the way, and Angie woke one morning and said to herself, "No use waiting for miracles, I'll swim as far as I can and that is all I can do." So Angie began her perilous journey.



'She hadn't come into her beautiful adult colours, but her baby colours were even prettier. She glowed as if set alight by the sun'

Angie had spent her life in the shallow, protected waters of the reef, and as an adult she would be three times as big and would venture down as far as 80 feet, deep enough for any reef fish! So Angie confidently swam away from the reef until she was in the strange blue deep of the outer reef. Like all fish, Angie had an inbuilt sense of direction, so she went north, heading for her first stop, Martinique.

She managed to swim right up to the very north of St. Lucia without being eaten by some bigger fish, but now she faced the deep currents of the channel. Fortunately the current was flowing north and Angie was swept along with the water growing ever darker and more terrifying. Suddenly out of the deep a shark with its horrible sharp teeth in its massive open jaws appeared right in front of her and was about to swallow the little fish with one gulp! But Angie, being young and agile, flicked herself beneath the jaws, and passed under the rough belly of the shark. Angie trembled and almost turned around, but that was impossible so she pressed on.

Angie was just recovering when a huge whale who was on his way south flapped his broad tail against the water and she was swirled about by the shock of the impact. She lost all sense of where she was and panic seized her but she fought for her life in the dark water and when the sea settled itself Angie was swept again north. A pod of friendly dolphins wanted to play with the pretty little fish and they tossed her about from snout to snout, but growing tired of the game they left, flinging themselves out of the water in graceful curves.

The open ocean was a dangerous place for a young little fish. Angie felt that she might never get to Bethlehem and might never get back home to the reef, either, and she sighed — but after all, she had done her best.

Do miracles happen? Yes, they do. Angie suddenly found herself floating in a clear pool of water formed in the cupped hands of a gentle Angel. The Angel had wings of soft blue with each feather tipped with pink and gold and her bright red hair, like burnished copper, was curled and braided and held in place with a circlet of silver.

"Do not be afraid, Angie," whispered the Angel. "For your courage I will fly you to Bethlehem to see the birthplace of the baby Jesus." The beautiful Angel, invisible to all the people visiting the holy places of the town, flew silently above them and showed the little fish where Jesus had been born in a humble stable where his mother, Mary, cradled him in her arms and the Three Wise Men had followed the star to the east.

Angie was so happy that she fell asleep in the Angel's hands and when she woke there she was, at home in the safety of the reef. Angie's dream had come true.

THE END



Christmas at Sea

by Grace Cheasley

"Help! There's no chimney aboard; how will Santa deliver all my presents? I have been so good this year!"

I live on a boat and three Christmases ago we were sailing toward the Caribbean on the Atlantic Ocean when it was Christmas and I wondered how Santa would find us. It is always dark when Santa comes, but there are streetlights at home and none at sea: it will be *really* dark. The next problem is that my boat, *Oumâ*, is moving all the time and there is a big sail up so where will his reindeers land? Also, my parents have to steer the boat at night and I know Santa won't come if anyone is awake but one of my parents will be awake all through the night. Oh, help me! I have no idea how Santa will give us our presents.

How I solved the problem — because Santa did come, of course.



'For our Christmas at sea we wore our silly hats, and when we reached the Cape Verdes my Mum made a Christmas cake'



First I wrote Santa a letter and threw it in the sea for the mermaids to take to him at the North Pole. I said, "Dear Santa, This year we will be at sea for Christmas and my mother or father will be sailing all night but please still come. Love, Grace. P.S. I don't mind what present I get."

The night before Christmas we sprinkled glitter on the deck so Santa could see my moving boat from the sky. (The colour of the glitter was green and gold, sparkling from the moon and stars.) Then we put a carrot and some biscuits on a plate. The carrot was for Rudolph and the biscuits were for Santa. We couldn't pour a glass of milk because the boat was moving and it might spill. We hung our stockings on the bar in front of our oven. Then we went to bed.

In the morning when I woke up the stockings were full and I was so, so happy. I had stickers and beads and braid and a book. These were really good presents because I could occupy myself at sea with no friends. I made lots of bracelets with the braid and beads and read the book with Mummy.

We wore our silly Christmas hats and sat on deck and took photos. Mummy made a special meal. It was curry, a Caribbean curry, with papaya and mango but my brother and I didn't like it. It meant there was more for Mummy and Daddy.

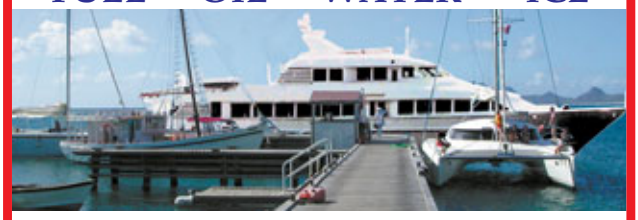
When we reached the Cape Verdes we had a second Christmas with more presents in the morning. My little brother got a scooter, his first one. He didn't get it while we were sailing because he couldn't use it and it would be a shame to give it to him at sea! I got face paints and I used them. I decorated my friend's face with the face paints. We enjoyed it a lot. It was very messy and I like getting messy.

Mid-afternoon we had a little party with our friends that we met in Turkey. They were very good friends. My Mum made a Christmas cake and we had crackers and champagne and after dinner we lit sparklers that our friends brought and had a lot of fun. Christmas is all about high spirits, a nice dinner, eating lots of cake until you feel sick, and having a jolly good party!

I was six then, and it was the best Christmas I had ever had. The best part of that year was having two Christmases and Santa still coming even though we were sailing.

I hope you have a good Christmas this year and if you are sailing this Christmas, put glitter on your decks and Santa will come.

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Tide's Table

BY ROSS MAVIS

Get Cheesy for the Holidays!

Remember the commercial that said, "If you want the kids to leave home, don't serve cheese"? With the holidays soon here, it's a time when we look forward to friends and family spending time with us, so bring on the cheese!

Cheese has the unique quality of being both familiar and festive at the same time. The wonderfully sharp cheddar included in a deliciously common Mac and Cheese dish can also grace any sophisticated table. "Fancier" cheeses — such as Brie, Roquefort, Stilton, Munster, Parmesan, Gruyere, Edam, Gouda, Limburger, Pecorino, Romano, Colby, Jack and Emmental — allow a host or hostess to be incredibly creative. A cheese board with a few specialty cheeses along with some fresh fruit provides a simple but perfect way to end a meal.

A holiday cocktail party for a few friends is the ideal time to provide some cheesy appetizers that not only satisfy but also entertain by showing your inventiveness. Remember, it's an intelligent host who with a little effort can provide great snacks, bringing raves from guests.

Some tips to remember when serving cheese onboard:

The ideal temperature for storing cheese before serving is between 55°F and 60° F (12° to 15°C). Whereas your fridge in the galley might be too cold, check that small compartment below the waterline that may yield the temperature you are looking for. Serve cheese at room temperature unless it's above 80°F (26°C). Loosely wrap cheese being stored. Don`t use plastic film as it can impart impurities into the cheese. Waxed paper works well.

Cheese shares many of the nutritional advantages of milk and some of its disadvantages. The benefits of protein, calcium and energy can sometimes be offset by its saturated fat, tending to raise cholesterol levels and possible risk of heart disease. Consuming heart-protective vegetables, fruits and wine may well offset any cheese disadvantages when including cheese as a part of a balanced healthy diet.

Here are some easy and unique ways to serve cheese on board during the holidays.

Blue Cheese Truffles

A delicious way to serve festive cheese snacks.
VINAIGRETTE
1 Tablespoon cider vinegar
1 Tablespoon apple juice
1 Tablespoon olive or walnut oil
Salt and pepper to taste
TRUFFLES
2 medium tart green apples
6 ounces Blue Cheese
1 Tablespoon dried chives or parsley
2 Tablespoons crushed toasted walnuts
6 medium wooden skewers

In a small bowl, combine vinegar, apple juice and oil. Whisk well and add a pinch of salt and pepper to taste. Set dressing aside.

Core, peel and cut apples into cubes to yield about 12 cubes in total. Toss lightly in vinaigrette and reserve.

In a medium bowl, crumble blue cheese and mix with finely diced herbs. Shape each Tablespoon of the cheese mixture into a one-inch round ball, using your hands. Roll balls into toasted crushed walnut pieces to coat. Using wooden skewers, thread cheese balls, alternating with apple cubes, onto six wooden skewers.

Delicious as an appetizer when served with apple cider or light beer.

Festive Cheese Snowman



8 ounces cream cheese, softened
8 ounces cheddar cheese, shredded
1/4 Cup finely diced chives
1/4 Cup slivered almonds, toasted
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/4 Cup grated parmesan cheese
Whole peppercorns
Small carrot
Crackers or pretzel sticks

Mix cream cheese, cheddar, chives, sliced toasted almonds and cayenne pepper until well blended. Form into three balls (one large, one medium and one small). Roll these in parmesan cheese to coat well. Arrange balls on a rectangular serving plate to resemble a reclining snowman. Chill until ready to serve.

Use peppercorns for eyes, teeth and buttons on the snowman. Carve a small piece of carrot for a nose. Serve the snowman on a plate with crackers or pretzel sticks.

This unique cheese tray is best served with a chilled white wine.

What better way to enjoy the festive season than moored in Caribbean sunshine while having friends on board for a beverage and delicious cheese appetizers?

Joyous Noel!

A VENEZUELAN CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

Sweet and savory, a light snack or a meal in itself, this Venezuelan holiday treat has it all. Our friend at Xanadu Marine in Puerto La Cruz, Patty Tomasik, first gave us the recipe for *pan de jamon*. Made jellyroll style, the presentation of its spiral slices is as festive as the flavor is delicious. Serve *pan de jamon* at your next holiday get-together or bring it to the cruisers' Christmas potluck and you'll be a star! And *if* there's any left over, Boxing Day's breakfast toast will never be the same.

According to Venezuelan food writer Adriana Lopez, "Pan de jamon is a special dish eaten in Venezuela only during the holiday season in December. It originated back in 1905, in Caracas, at the Ramella Bakery; it is a 100-percent original and exclusive Venezuelan recipe. It was created as a way of using bits and pieces of leftover holiday ham (imported from Spain at the time) sold to customers. These pieces were marinated in spices (wine, cinnamon, pineapples, cloves, sugar cane), rolled in a soft dough, and baked. Later on olives and raisins were added. Nowadays people add bacon instead of ham, or use other fillings such as salmon or turkey. But the traditional recipe is ham (the higher the quality, the better the result), raisins and olives, with a sugarcane glaze to give it a shiny finish and sweet touch."

Here's Patty's version.



Pan de Jamon

FOR THE FILLING YOU WILL NEED:
- Ham, thinly sliced
- Bacon, lightly fried (save the drippings)
- Whole stuffed green olives
- Capers
- Raisins (plump them ahead of time in Venezuelan Rum)

TO MAKE THE BREAD:

Mix together in a large bowl:
- 1 1/2 Cups flour
- 1/3 Cup sugar
- 2 packets yeast
- 1 teaspoon salt

Heat in a saucepan to 105°F to 115°F:
- 3/4 Cup milk
- 1/2 Cup water
- 1/3 Cup that is half butter and half bacon drippings (i.e. 1/6 Cup butter plus 1/6 Cup bacon drippings — yeah, grease)

Add liquid ingredients to dry ingredients, and beat with a mixer at medium speed for two minutes.

Add 2 eggs that are room temperature.

Add 1/2 Cup flour.

Beat two minutes with mixer at high speed.

Stir in approximately 2 1/2 Cups of flour or enough to make a stiff batter.

Knead six minutes, and then form dough into a ball. Grease lightly with oil, place in bowl, cover, place in a draft-free place and allow to rise until double in size.

Punch down. Then with a rolling pin, roll out dough into a rectangle 14 by 19 inches.

Cover with sliced ham, and sprinkle on olives, raisins, capers and some strips of lightly fried bacon. Roll up like a jellyroll and fold the ends under to seal. It will be 14 inches long.

Place your pan de jamon on a greased cookie sheet and bake at 400°F for 12 minutes. Brush with beaten egg, lower heat to 350°F and bake for 30 minutes more. Cool before slicing.

Enjoy your Venezuelan pan de jamon.

Feliz Navidad and happy holiday baking!





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The Sky in December 2013

by Scott Welty

The Planets in December 2013

MERCURY - Rising around 0400 hours early in the month and diving east toward the Sun thereafter.

VENUS - Setting around 1900 hours early and then ever earlier as it too moves toward the Sun.

EARTH - Once got 400 billion tons of coal for Christmas.

MARS - Rising near midnight all month and riding in Virgo.

JUPITER - Rising between 1900 hours (December 1st) and 1730 hours (December 31st) in Gemini.

SATURN - Rising between 0330 hours and then 0200 hours at the end of the month in Libra.

Sky Events This Month

2nd - New Moon

- Saturn and Mercury with new moon in the morning (Figure 1)

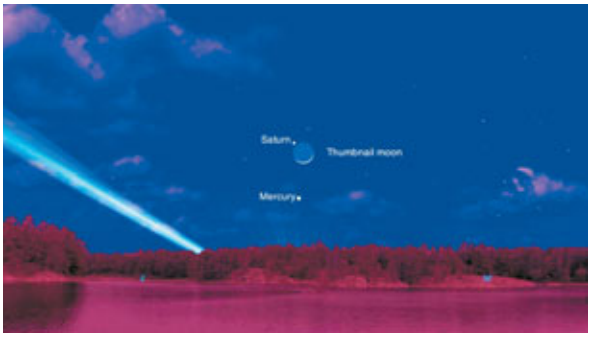


FIGURE 1

Figure 1: December 2nd, 0500 hours, looking east. A pretty morning sight with Mercury, Saturn and the New Moon. The streak is the possible comet tail — looks a little optimistic to me!

17th - Full Moon

21st - Winter Solstice (see below)

25th - Newton's birthday

28th - Saturn and the moon... again! (Figure 2)

31st - Busy sky... HAPPY NEW YEAR! (see below)

Winter Solstice

Time once again for the celebratory time of year when the Sun begins to climb back north. Just another day of near-perfect weather in the Caribbean, but of course up north it gives hope that one day we will be warm once again! When you have no idea how anything works (and I'm not talking about Republicans... but I could!) you can give yourself the idea that the rituals that you perform in hopes of making the Sun return north are actually working. That makes it very hard to stop performing such rituals. If it ain't broke... KEEP DANCING! Now we do know how things work such as the Earth going around the Sun, the Earth being round and spinning, etcetera, but, the festivals remain and that is why to this day nearly every culture or religion has some sort of festivities on or near the winter solstice.

Busy Sky

I love the December sky because so many interesting things are high in the nighttime sky and at a convenient hour. Figure 3 shows the sky nearly overhead around 2130 hours on the 31st. In your field of view you can see good old Orion. Do put your Steiners on his sword (yes, that's his sword!) in which lie some very pretty nebulae. We see Taurus the Bull and the Gemini twins, Castor and Pollux, who are joined by Jupiter. Also for your enjoyment are the Pleiades. Your Steiners will show you there are many more stars in this cluster than the "Seven Sisters" you can see with the naked eye.



Figure 2: December 28th, 0430 hours, looking east. Saturn and the moon make another morning visit. The bright star below the moon is Zubenelgenubi... which I just wanted to identify as a pronunciation challenge

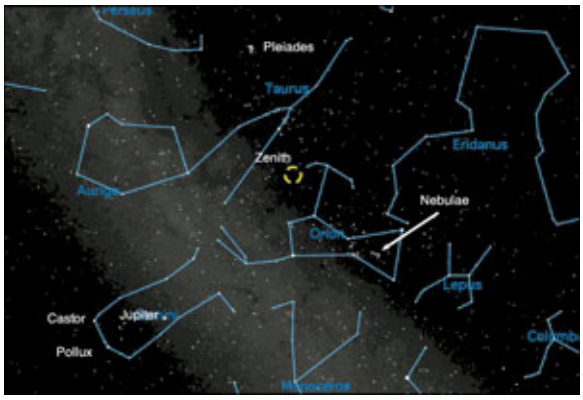


Figure 3: December 31st, 2130 hours, looking straight up. Lots to see on New Year's Eve!

To Contemplate While Having a Glass of Wine on Deck

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all my friends and readers in the Caribbean. I've been writing this piece for going on five years now and I feel it's time to pass this on to the fresher eyeballs of Jim Ulik. Thanks for the kind notes over the years (both of them!). Fair winds and safe passages to all.

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





DON'T GO 'BOOM!'

Dear *Compass*,

If Sean Fuller ("The Plans They Are A-Changing", *Caribbean Compass*, May 2013) had had a proper main boom preventer, he would not have had as many problems and would not have had to have his boom repaired.

About 50 years ago I rigged on *Iolaire* an inexpensive, easily connected, and easily disconnected main boom preventer. A wire about one foot shorter than the length of the boom was secured to the mainsheet bail at the end of the boom; the other end was secured to the gooseneck with a light lashing line. Two spinnaker pole foreguys that were permanently rigged led through blocks on the bowsprit; both ends were secured to the lifeline stanchion alongside the mast.

Whenever the boom was eased far enough out that there was the slightest chance of a jibe, the wire was disconnected from the gooseneck, and the lee foreguy disconnected from the stanchion and connected to the wire. The foreguy tensioned by taking it to a cleat or winch. The light lashing line that secures the foreguy to the gooseneck when in the stowed position is secured to the lifeline as a retrieving line when the preventer has to be unrigged to either trim the main or jibe.

The main boom preventer was rigged without anyone going on the foredeck, or having to trim the main boom to attach a preventer to the end of the main boom.

Since the installation of the above rig, *Iolaire* has never had an inadvertent jibe. If every boat installed this rig it would save lives and prevent injury.

In every lecture I give on "Preparing for Offshore", this rig is described and also has been described through the years in various yachting magazines. This description and a drawing illustrating the above are going on the back of Imray Iolaire charts of the Caribbean whenever they are updated and re-printed. This rig has also appeared in my latest book, *Street's Guide to the Cape Verdes*, in Chapter 10: Preparing for Tradewind Crossing.

Don Street
Glandore, Ireland

FRANKLY SPEAKING…

Dear *Compass*,

Recently returned to the Antilles after a short jaunt to the Med, I note that little has changed, particularly in your August organ. Here we go again with old Frank Virgintino banging on about crime and cruisers, cruisers' safety, places to avoid, graphs and death statistics to be studied, cruising routes to be planned etcetera, etcetera, ad infinitum. Here he is again arguing with Don Street who, regardless of his opinions on the chance of death in the Caribbean, happened, with breathtaking irresponsibility and a near criminally cavalier attitude, to sail his boat everywhere without an engine for years, thus endangering himself and all those around him. Whatever next!

Of course everything Frank says is absolutely correct, technically. It is always difficult and sometimes near impossible to argue with a pedant. No doubt he has a huge following of loyal acolytes hanging on his every word: cruisers, he has informed us previously, who are afraid to sail out of sight of land or make passages after dark and no doubt beset by fears and anxieties only the truly terminally responsible are aware of. Not content to let the facts speak for themselves and allow us to make our own interpretation thereof, he employs obscure metaphors such as revolvers with only one bullet, to show us how stupid we are to even consider contradicting his tedious grasp of reality. He even takes a swipe at those who sail with young children, as they (the children) have no choice in the matter. No doubt he should summon the social authorities and have these people arrested for child abuse, as would no doubt occur in his home country, wherever that is.

The problem is that while his articles are no doubt accurate and informative, they have little appeal for the individuals who go sailing and cruising without a lifetime of servitude in some secure pensioned employment, constantly aware of the folly of impetuousness and smugly satisfied that their retirement dream is as safe and boring as their previous existence. Constantly bemoaning the behavior of the natives, the security habits of the authorities, the lack of proper practices of health and safety, fully cognizant through the omnipresent social media of the price of everything and the value of nothing; it's a wonder they bother at all. (I think I may have said that before but never mind.) In fact, some people stupidly relish the unexpected and enjoy the heady atmosphere of the unknown only the sea can provide, far away from our over-regulated, nanny-state countries and increasingly controlled world.

At risk of being howled down by the politically correct and safety conscious amongst the cruising fraternity, I suggest the words of the famous sailing author Sterling Hayden to better illuminate an alternative view:

To be truly challenging, a voyage, like a life, must rest on a firm foundation of financial unrest. Otherwise, you are doomed to a routine traverse, the kind known to yachtsmen who play with their boats at sea — "cruising" it is called. Voyaging belongs to seamen and to the wanderers of the world who cannot, or will not, fit in. If you are contemplating a voyage and you have the means, abandon the venture until your fortunes change. Only then will you know what the sea is all about.

"I've always wanted to sail to the South Seas but I can't afford it." What these men can't afford is NOT to go. They are enmeshed in the cancerous discipline of "security". And in the worship of security we fling our lives beneath the wheels of routine — and before we know it, our lives are gone.

What does a man need — really need? A few pounds of food each day, heat and shelter, six feet to lie down in — and some form of working activity that will yield a sense of accomplishment. That's all, in the material sense. And we know it. But we are brainwashed by our economic system until we end up in a tomb beneath a pyramid of time payments, mortgages, preposterous gadgetry, playthings that divert our attention from the sheer idiocy of the charade.

The years thunder by. The dreams of youth grow dim where they lie caked in dust on the shelves of patience. Before we know it, the tomb is sealed.

Where, then, lies the answer? In choice. Which shall it be — bankruptcy of purse or bankruptcy of life?

Chris Long
Tropical Dream

Editor's note: We forwarded Chris Long's letter to Frank Virgintino for response, which follows.

Dear *CC*,

Chris is correct in much of what he says and especially in his reference to "old Frank Virgintino", for by most standards I can be considered old.

But there is a non sequitur in his reasoning. Surely freedom is an important aspect of sailing and cruising and we must safeguard it carefully for it is the essence of what supports our chosen lifestyle. However, safeguarding our right to freedom of choice does not mean we have to be reckless. We can exercise our freedom while at the same time avoiding unnecessary risk, unless unnecessary risk is something that we seek.

Is it appropriate to say that those of us who have put in a "lifetime of servitude" "are fully cognizant of the price of everything and (know) the value of nothing?" Why criticize someone who worked hard most of his or her life and now is working hard to preserve their own lives as well as what they have?

We can venture offshore without checking the weather and without charts. For that matter we can also not take life jackets, life rafts or EPIRBS. Most of us would not define that as freedom; we would call it being foolish. We study charts to avoid rocks and reefs; why not study crime in the areas where we will cruise and assess it so as to be able to avoid it when we can? Unless one is trained in the use of guns and weapons, I know of no better way to cope with crime than to avoid it. To avoid it, one must know where it is and what it is.

For example, Oscar Hernández Bernalette, a retired ambassador from Venezuela, writes in October's *CC*, "Death returns to the coasts of Venezuela." He was referring to the murder of a Dutch cruiser anchored in Margarita, an island off the Venezuelan coast, this past September. He says with regard to the violence in Venezuela against cruisers, "there is no clear policy to defend yachting visitors". I have referred to this lack of a clear policy as Venezuela being a country "without the rule of law" and those that would rob and hurt us are well aware that the country does nothing to protect us or to prevent crime against us.

Theft of contents from anchored boats is a concern; however, being subject to a violent attack presents a higher level of concern. On September 26th an incident took place against a boat anchored in Bloody Bay, Tobago.

—Continued on next page

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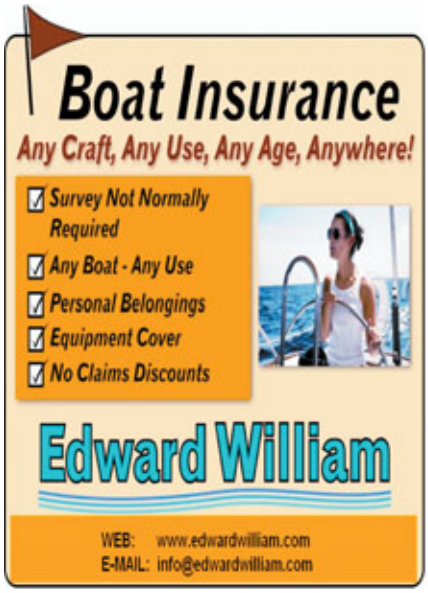
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—Continued from previous page

The boatowner's mother, a woman of 86 years, was threatened with a pistol by the boarders and the owner himself was hit on the head. On October 3rd, on Frigate Island, just off Union Island, an anchored boat was boarded. When one of the two people aboard went to the companionway she was slashed across the face with a machete without any provocation or warning. Her partner stabbed the boarder with a kitchen knife.

What really threatens our freedom is being a victim of crime. The best way to deal with crime is to avoid it.



Power Boats' yard in Trinidad, where Aragon now rests safely — hoping that she can whisk some other adventurous souls to new places

Avoiding crime is not always possible. However, we can reduce our exposure by learning how to assess risk and then making a plan that helps us to avoid it. The assessment must take into account the frequency of crime in a given area and the type of crime in a given area. One incident in Bloody Bay does not mean that anyone who anchors there has a significant exposure, as the incident can be considered a "one off". The same can be said for the incident at Frigate Island. The same cannot be said for incidents on the coast and islands of Venezuela. In the Bloody Bay incident, the authorities were notified and action is being taken to prevent a recurrence. In the Frigate Island incident, three suspects were apprehended immediately. In Venezuela there is no mechanism to address the murder that took place in Margarita. Because the act was violent and because there is a well-documented record of other violent acts in Venezuela against cruising boats, any reasonable assessment should remove Margarita from our cruising plans just as we avoid crossing a reef when we sail from point A to point B.

Chris Long sums up his aria on freedom with a quote from Sterling Hayden. Hayden was a man who loved the sea and loved voyaging. He was not high on fancy yachts or even cruising; what rang his bell was voyaging; pitting his skills against the sea. That was his call to freedom and Chris Long hits that one right on the head. However, Hayden also took his four young children with him in violation of a federal court order. That is not freedom; it is disrespect of the law, a law designed to protect those who cannot protect themselves and who have no vote as to their own safety. In that case Hayden was not adventurous, he was reckless.

"Old Frank Virgintino" is not looking to make cruising a ride at Disney World. My goal is to have cruisers be able to create a cruising route that can adequately assess risk and then to act on it so as to be able to minimize it. Chris Long refers to his point of view as an alternative that broadcasts the value and bravado of "damn the torpedoes". I have sailed and cruised for more than four decades and I will continue to go offshore and sail large distances and I will continue to make landfalls and anchor in remote anchorages. However, I will do all that I can to preserve the safety of those on board with me, as well as to preserve the ship itself, for I know that only "fools rush in where angels fear to tread".

Frank Virgintino
Author of Free Cruising Guides
http://freecruisingguides.com

A TRIBUTE TO TRINIDAD

Dear *Compass*,

For so many yachtsmen Trinidad is a place of work. If you are not there for Carnival then it is a place you are always trying to leave — as soon as the next and last job is completed!

Trinidad will be the place I will always remember for a different and sad reason. It was the place where my husband, Louis, passed away suddenly on September 23rd on our boat at the Trinidad & Tobago Sailing Association (TTSA). The fellow boaters rallied around as only true "yachties" know how. Nothing was too much trouble for the staff and members of TTSA. Jesse James helped me every step of the way with endless advice and he ferried me to and from hospitals, police, airport, etcetera. The staff of Power Boats facilitated all the arrangements for *Aragon* and she now rests safely in their yard, hoping that she can whisk some other adventurous souls to new places.

But perhaps what stands out most in my memory is the kindness and consideration that came from everyone else I had to deal with. All those I came in contact with treated me with the utmost respect and sympathy. Trinidad is a big, busy and commercial island but at heart they still have that true Caribbean spirit which makes the Caribbean a special place and a wonderful yachting destination.

Thank you Trinidad!

Pat de Beer
S/V Aragon

GENTLEMAN OF THE SEA

Dear *Compass*,

Further to 'Eight Bells' in the November issue of *Compass*.

Over 60 people attended the funeral of Caribbean yachting legend Kenny Coombs at Mortlake Crematorium in Richmond, England on October 25th. Leading the mourners were his wife Jane and brother Jim Coombs. Jim gave a eulogy of Kenny's life followed by a performance of "The Sailor's Song" accompanied by Max Pope on his guitar. A team of superyacht captains formed an honour guard of coffin bearers. Of the numerous friends attending, many were also passionate lifelong sailors, including Sparky Beardall (*Rebecca*), Jeremy "Bear" Wynn (*Scheherazade*), Steve McClaren (*Elena*), Alexis Howard (*Windrose*) Johnson "Woody" Wooderson, Caroline Blatter, Ann Louise Stebbing, John Burnie (also representing the Royal Ocean Racing Club), Keith Outram, plus many other friends, family members and associates. Following the service a celebration of Kenny's life was held aboard the *M/V Viscount* moored at Kew Pier on the Thames. Further celebrations of Kenny's life are planned and in particular at the 2014 edition of the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta.

Kind regards,
John Burnie
Royal Ocean Racing Club

Editor's note: A photo tribute to Kenny Coombs can be seen at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iuw3TCgZFGU.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Dear* Compass *Readers,

We want to hear from YOU!

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

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

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St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Letter of the Month

Many, Many Thanks!!



CHRIS DOYLE

Frigate Island in the St. Vincent Grenadines is attached to Union Island by the remains of an abandoned marina project. It usually provides a serene anchorage

Dear *Compass*,

Mark and Tina here, from *S/V Rainbow*. We are anchored off of your beautiful little island of Bequia, heading north to St. Croix for Christmas. While we still are haunted from our incident, we are continuing on with our dream. We are able to do this because of all the wonderful/supportive people in our lives (old and new). Our heartfelt gratitude goes to so many — we must leave room in the *Caribbean Compass* for others, so if we left out a name or business, it is only due to space and we appreciate everyone and everything.



Receiving an outpouring of support after the October 3rd incident at Frigate Island, Tina and Mark became catalysts for meetings regarding yacht security. Over 200 cruisers attended a meeting at Port Louis Marina, Grenada (above), and the cruising couple, seated at center, met with concerned tourism board members on Union Island (right)

Thank you:

Rescue 1 — Darren from Prickly Bay Marina in Grenada for providing your services and organizing all the emergency response teams on Hillsborough dock in Carriacou.

S/V Sea Life — Mark, smiles to you!! Hearing a familiar voice on the VHF during our crisis was a godsend and thanks for being the liaison.

Princess Royal Hospital and staff in Carriacou — especially Dr. St. Louis.

Royal Grenada Police Force — especially Officer James in Carriacou.

S/V Fantasy — Special thanks to Jimmy and Chez for cleaning our boat after the incident and appointing Jordyn as a sail mate for Mark to sail back to Grenada.

Our blessed angel — Shadel Nyack Compton, and Steve Hursford, from the Grenada Board of Tourism for making a horrific ordeal turn into an amazing friendship.

The Flamboyant Hotel in Grenada for putting us up for three days of much needed R&R.

Ule, from Victory Bar & Restaurant in Port Louis Marina, Grenada, for hosting our yacht safety and security meeting on October 10th.

Anita and Mark from Island Dreams yacht services in Grenada, for their continuing support and help with further medical assistance with Dr. Amachi at St. Augustine Hospital.

Glynn Thomas and Danny Donelan from Port Louis Marina for giving us dockage and transportation to St. Augustine Hospital.

The Government of St Vincent & the Grenadines for apprehending the three boys and prosecuting two of them (one has turned Crown Witness). We thank Officer Justin Cupid on Union Island, CID Officer Timm on St. Vincent, Commissioner of Police Michael Charles, and Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves.



STANTON GOMES / SEARCHLIGHT

A special hug and thanks to Louise Mitchell of SVG for supporting us on a very emotional day in court. God Bless!

To the ENTIRE cruising community!!

Our family and friends from St. Croix and beyond.

And the BIGGEST hugs and love to our dearest Eric and Lynne from *S/V Amarula*; Simon, Meredith and Jade from *S/V Karisma*; and Vassil and Inga from *S/V Olgalou*; for being there from the beginning to the end and forever.

Mom, thank you, for coming to Grenada and showing us all the love and support that Moms are known for.

We are sailing forward and loving life.

Mark and Tina
S/V Rainbow
St. Croix, US Virgin Islands

PS. Thank you, Sally at *Caribbean Compass*, for sharing your office, internet and friendship.



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WHAT'S ON MY MIND

A Boat Trip in Haiti

by Mandy Thody

Going from Ile-à-Vache to Les Cayes (or Au Cayes as locals call the town on the Haitian mainland) in the early morning. I'm told that this large Venezuelan-style boat hull was found at sea, adrift, and sold to the captain by the mayor of the town on Ile-à-Vache — which bears the confusing name of Madame Bernard. The captain made this purchase with money from a sister who lives in New York. There was no motor — the 40-horsepower outboard has been "rented" from another project, at 30 percent of the profit, which benefits both since the other boat has sails and so saves on gasoline, here around US$6 per gallon.

It is an eight-mile trip that takes about an hour; less in a water taxi but that's hard on the spine and can be a very wet passage when there is a short chop.

This boat is called *Kris Kapab* ("Christ is able" or "Christ can do anything") and has a cargo this trip of perhaps 30 sacks mainly of charcoal, some loose sticks of purple-skinned sugar cane, and several cooler boxes, all rather smashed about and decomposing — perhaps containing fish caught overnight to be cooked by lunchtime on the wharf. I'm sitting on the sacks with a friend's normally lively four-year-old on my lap. He seems sedated from the instant we are on board; not sick but sleepy and quiet all the way, although he will have been to the mainland many, many times by now.

On the bow, eight young men lean on the gunwales with the captain, there are two anchors made of "rebar" with a wooden crosspiece, a few fathoms of chain and thin polypropylene line I suspect was found at sea.

At the back, the outboard motor is doing well; the captain thinks there may be



Above: The inshore boats ferrying passengers from beach to boats bound for Ile-à-Vache

Below: Sloops at anchor off the eastern point of town



enough gasoline. In fact, in the end it sputters to a halt a few hundred yards before we reach the quay, but they get it going again after ten minutes.

Behind where I'm perched on the cargo, there are four rows of six-inch-wide planks as seats; each has about seven passengers, mainly teenage girls getting ready to return to school next week — and they sing softly in concert most of the way, I can't tell quite what, hymns perhaps, but it's lovely. There is very little spray, and it's a hot day even now, despite the red dawn. The trip takes 50 minutes or so, and we disembark into several smaller boats that are poled alongside in about six feet of water, for the final hundred yards to the shore. Then, from standing on the decked-over transoms, each passenger has to ride piggy-back to shore, courtesy of several strong young men who do this for a living, with extra joking thrown in for free.

Pigs are foraging in the sand amongst the detritus of yesterday's fruit market; the street cooking-fires are starting up with an acrid odour of trash and burnt pine resin to prepare the day's fried snacks and lunches. Goats and chickens are everywhere you look, frigate birds wheel overhead, *motos* (motorbike taxis) arrive to collect us. Within arm's reach I could buy soap, straw hats, powdered and evaporated milk, homemade candy, and oil filters for cars, have a bicycle tyre repaired by melting the inner tube back together, drink seven kinds of soda, and refill a cell-phone with about $2.50 worth of minutes, from three different phone companies.

My little friend of the voyage is on his way to his stepsister's house for a whole semester of kindergarten with the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. He holds my hand tightly until we part but in fact he is not afraid; he is looking forward to seeing all his playmates from last year, after a summer back on the offshore island, and his mother will visit him every two weeks until Christmas. Back on Ile-à-Vache, a new kindergarten is starting, so his baby brother may not have to make this boat trip, separating him from his parents from the age of three, in search of a good education — Haiti's holy grail.

Former cruiser and current St. Croix resident Mandy Thody is the Administrative Director of Good Samaritan Foundation of Haiti, Inc. founded by Michael "Beans" Gardner. The Good Samaritan Foundation is a non-profit, working to improve the lives of rural Haitian communities through schools, microloans, nutrition and health programs and vocational training. Visiting yachts can help by delivering cargo and volunteering at the Ile-à-Vache project, where the Good Samaritan Foundation can help you with local contacts and security. Tel (340) 513-2022, mandy@goodsamaritanofhaiti.com.

CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2013

5 – 13 Bahamas International Film Festival. www.bintlfilmfest.com
6 – 12 Antigua Charter Yacht Show. www.antiguayachtshow.com
7 Dinghy and IC24 Races, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Club Náutico de San Juan, www.nauticodesanjuan.com
13 Public holiday in St. Lucia (National Day)
14 St. Croix Christmas Boat Parade. www.christmasparadestcroix.com
14 Free Public Clinic - Explore Salt River, St. Croix. Bush Tribe Eco Adventures (340) 277-2503
15 Public holiday in Bonaire (Kingdom Day)
16 Inaugural 'Christmas in the Caribbean Rally' departs Canary Islands bound for Antigua. www.sailingrallies.com
16 - 24 Nine Mornings Festival, St. Vincent. http://discoversvg.com
17 FULL MOON Parties at Trellis Bay and West End, Tortola, and at Pinney's Beach, Nevis
19 Public holiday in Anguilla (National Heroes' Day)
19 – 22 29th Havana International Jazz Festival, Cuba. www.apassion4jazz.net/havana.html
21 Winter Solstice
24 13th Annual North Sound Holiday Lighted Boat Parade, Virgin Gorda. Bitter End Yacht Club (BEYC). binfo@beyc.com, www.beyc.com
25 Public holiday in many places (Christmas Day)
26 Public holiday in many places (Boxing Day), Carnival Jouvert in St. Kitts
29 Nelson Pursuit Race, Antigua. AYC
31 New Year's Eve/Old Year's Night. Fireworks in many places, including Trellis Bay, Tortola; Admiralty Bay, Bequia; and Fort-de-France, Martinique. Public holiday in Montserrat; half-day holiday in Curaçao.
31 Boat parade in St. Barth. St. Barth Yacht Club, stbarthyachtclub.com

JANUARY 2014

1 Public holiday or "recovery day" in many places (New Year's Day)
1 – 2 Carnival Parade and Last Lap, St. Kitts & Nevis. www.stkittsneviscarnival.com
1 – 4 Crucian Christmas Festival, St. Croix. www.stxfestival.com
2 Public holiday in Cuba (Victory of Armed Forces Day) and Haiti (Founding Fathers' Day)
4 Free Public Clinic - Explore Salt River, St. Croix. Bush tribe Eco Adventures (340) 277-2503
6 Public holiday in some places (Three Kings Day/Epiphany)
11 – 18 Bitter End Yacht Club Invitational Midwinter Regatta, Virgin Gorda, BVI. www.beyc.com
13 Public holiday in Puerto Rico (Eugenio María de Hostos Day)
14 – 4 Feb St. Barts Music Festival. www.stbartsmusicfestival.org
15 – 24 Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race Series. www.mountgayrumroundbarbadosrace.com
16 FULL MOON Parties at Trellis Bay and West End, Tortola, and at Pinney's Beach, Nevis
18 Anguilla Dinghy Championship
21 Public holiday in Barbados (Errol Barrow Day), Puerto Rico and USVI (Martin Luther King Day), and the Dominican Republic (Our Lady of Altagracia)
22 - 5 Feb Mustique Blues Festival. www.discoversvg.com/index.php/en/mustique/events
23 – 26 Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest. ***See ad on page 45.***
25 Public holiday in Aruba (GF Croes Day)
28 Public holiday in the Cayman Islands (National Heroes' Day celebrated)
30 – 1 Feb Jamaica Jazz and Blues Festival, Montego Bay. http://jamaicajazzandblues.com
30 – 2 Feb SuperYacht Challenge Antigua. http://thesuperyachtchallenge.com
30 – 4 Feb Grenada Sailing Week. ***See ad on page 11***
31 – 2 Feb Club Nautico de San Juan Int'l Regatta, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Club Náutico de San Juan, www.nauticodesanjuan.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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2) bioaccumulate
3) eviscerate
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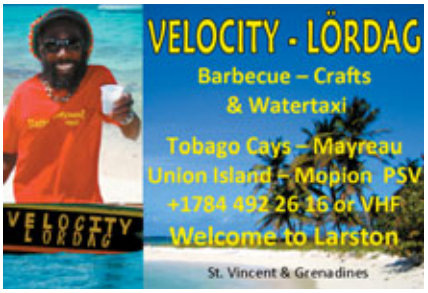
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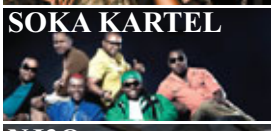
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MP = Market Place pages 42 to 45
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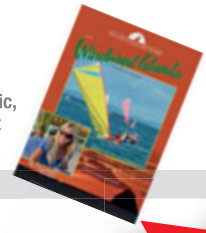
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