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HERE THEY COME!



See story on page 14

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The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

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Cover Photo: Among the hundreds of sailing vessels bound individually for the Caribbean right now is the mighty Corwith Cramer *(see story on page 7). Yet more boats are streaming in with a growing number of transatlantic races and rallies (see story on page 14)*



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

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Cocoa, Florida

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Info & Updates

Panama Radio Nets

In Bocas del Toro, Panama, there is a cruisers' net every morning on VHF channel 68 at 0745. In Portobelo, currently there is no morning net but cruisers monitor and use VHF channel 72. The Southwest Caribbean Net on SSB 6209USB is on at 0815L, 1315Z. The Panama Connection Net is on 8107USB at 0830 L, 1330Z.

Honor Roll!

• FRANKLIN BRAITHWAITE

John Duffy reports: Former Olympic sailor, former Commodore and current Rear-Commodore of Antigua Yacht Club, and current President of the Antigua & Barbuda Marine Association are just a few of the achievements of Franklin Braithwaite, who was named in Antigua's Independence Day Honours list as a Grand Officer Most Precious Order of Princely Heritage for his distinguished contribution to sailing and community development. Franklyn's part in the development of yachting and the marine industry in Antigua & Barbuda is deservedly recognized.

• JESSE JAMES

On November 3rd the Trinidad & Tobago Coalition of Services Industries hosted its fourth Annual Excellence in Service Award Ceremony.

Jesse James of Members Only Maxi Taxi Services was named Service Provider of the Year 2014 (Individual). Well known in the yachting community as the "go to" tour and transportation provider, Jesse is also the Seven Seas Cruising Association cruising station host in Trinidad.



T&T Service Excellence Award winner Jesse James and his wife, Sharon Rose, at the awards ceremony

• FRANK VIRGINTINO

Barbara Theisen reports: Frank Virgintino, who has been a member of the Seven Seas Cruising Association (SSCA) for the past 15 years, has cruised the Caribbean for over four decades. Early on he fell in love with Haiti and its people, particularly Ile-à-Vache. He featured Ile-à-Vache in one of his Free Cruising Guides, and organized a flotilla to bring supplies to the orphanage there. His efforts over the years have produced an increase in boats visiting Ile-à-Vache to an average of 20 per week.

Intrigued by the possibility of encouraging more cruisers to challenge stereotypes and visit Haiti, Frank explored the option of using the Windward Passage to enter the Caribbean and access a string of Haitian fishing villages. That research cruise led him to establish Second Life Sails, a project to bring used sails and other basic fishing gear to fishermen and their families who rely largely on a barter economy on their remote seacoast. Frank has enticed more cruisers to visit Ile-à-Vache and other coastal Haitian villages, and made it logistically feasible for cruisers to lend support to families with very scarce resources who depend on the sea.

The Growltiger Clean Wake Award recognizes voyaging sailors who exemplify by their behavior one of the main principles of SSCA, namely to "leave a clean wake": to show respect for others and for our environment so that those who follow in our wake will be warmly welcomed. Award recipients are those who show generosity and offer assistance to others, whether to cruisers or to those who live in the countries they are visiting, and/or those who involve themselves in activities of significant benefit to mankind and the environment. The SSCA is proud to honor Frank Virgintino with this award for 2014.

Security Matters

Kim White reports: December brings many seasonal cruisers back to their boats, and the official end of hurricane season brings many year-round cruisers out of their hurricane hidey-holes. It also brings many new cruisers and boats to the Caribbean Basin from ports far away, many for the first time. For all of us it usually means attending to our boats' needs as well as just relaxing and fully enjoying the cruising lifestyle.

For a small segment it represents an increased opportunity to take advantage of those of us who are unprepared about security matters, careless, or simply unlucky.

The Caribbean Safety and Security Net (CSSN) volunteers have spent the past year working to make safety and security information and resources more timely, visible, accessible and useful for the cruising community. Check out the CSSN website, www.safetyandsecuritynet.com, to see the many resources and tools that are now available, making it easy to "Know Before You Go!" Learn from other cruisers who have taken the time to share their experiences.

Sadly, crimes against cruisers have begun to look much more like crimes experienced ashore. We no longer enjoy the unrestricted, never locked, completely carefree and basically crime-free existence we could take for granted not that many years ago. Changes happened gradually and in different places on different timelines, but the reality is that crimes against cruisers occur everywhere now — but to varying degrees. Hence the need to understand the current specifics and the increased importance of proper preparations.

Some simple choices and precautions could make the difference between enjoying your cruising lifestyle crime free or having to look back and say, "If only I had…" Reasonable precautions can be taken to avoid being victimized.

You can review historic as well as the most recent reported incidents included in the CSSN database easily, by island and anchorage, in the Island Reports section of the CSSN website. Make the most informed decisions possible about which areas/islands/anchorages to visit. Current incidents and news items are easily viewed…

—Continued on next page

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…from the CSSN home page, and 2014 Hot Spots are easily viewed geographically, with supporting reports links. There are helpful tabs about initiating effective boat watches, emergency communications, basic precaution ideas and also two recently added features (the icons are on the home page) that have proven very popular: a simple online incident reporting form, and a free subscription service to CSSN Alerts. CSSN Alerts sends automatic notifications to your e-mail in-box whenever there are new news items or security incidents reported and posted on the website, on whatever schedule you choose.

It could not be easier to educate yourself, to make a report or to stay informed, and Know Before You Go! It is an individual choice and cruising community benefit for everyone to utilize these valuable resources and tools. Please help yourself and other cruisers by being an active supporter of cruising security matters.

For more information visit www.safetyandsecuritynet.com.

Underwater Sculpture in the Bahamas

Installed at the beginning of October 2014 on the western coastline of New Providence in Nassau, Bahamas, "Ocean Atlas" by Jason deCaires Taylor references the ancient Greek sculpture of Atlas holding the heavens, but depicts a young Bahamian girl sustaining the ceiling of the ocean. The largest single sculpture ever to be deployed underwater, it reaches from the sea floor five metres to the surface and weighs over 60 tonnes.



The sculpture, commissioned by the Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation, aims to create an underwater sculpture garden in honor of its founder, Sir Nicholas Nuttall. It includes other sculptural works by local artists Willicey Tynes and Andret John and an artificial reef trail designed by Reefball.

The new work, which during low tide will reflect a mirror image on the underside of the sea's surface, is a dramatic increase in scale from Taylor's previous works, such as those in the underwater sculpture park in Grenada, and ensures that even after substantial coral growth the figure will still remain highly recognizable.

Constructed using sustainable pH neutral materials, it creates an artificial reef for marine life to colonize and inhabit, while drawing tourists away from over-stressed natural reef areas. A solar light and flag are located on the highest point to aid marine navigation.

For more information visit www.jasondecairestaylor.com.

Yachting in Prince Rupert's Bay, Dominica

Jeff Frank, President of PAYS, reports: With unspoiled beauty, a rich culture and hospitable people, Dominica has become one of the rising stars among yachting destinations.

The town of Portsmouth on Prince Rupert's Bay is the hub for yachts and marine-based tourism. In 2005, 13 certified Indian River tour guides there formed the non-profit Portsmouth Association of Yacht Security (PAYS). Our primary role is to protect the yachting industry in order to sustain future development in Dominica. PAYS aims to provide security and services to yachters in Prince Rupert's Bay, to increase arrivals in the bay and in Dominica as a whole, and to ensure that the yachters' stay is safe and enjoyable.

When anchored at Prince Rupert's Bay, one of the PAYS members will welcome you to Dominica. Services that are provided to yachters by PAYS include night security patrols for yachts anchored within the Prince Rupert's Bay area, and help in search and rescue operations. Other services include tours, laundry, taxis and assistance with Customs and Immigration clearance. We are famous for our Sunday-night barbecue.

PAYS now has an office located on the Purple Turtle Beach at Portsmouth. Information is provided at the office, and there is a washroom.

We acknowledge the individuals, yacht clubs and charter companies who have recommended Dominica as a sailing destination. Many thanks for partnering with PAYS.

For more information contact dominicapays@gmail.com.

Wreck Off Haiti Not *Santa Maria*

Although archaeological investigator Barry Clifford had hopes that a wreck found off the north coast of Haiti was Columbus's flagship *Santa Maria* (see Info & Updates in the October issue of *Compass*) a UNESCO mission of experts has concluded that this is not the case. The UNESCO mission was requested by the Haitian Government, and according to a report drafted by mission leader Xavier Nieto Prieto, who visited Cap-Haitien from September 9th to 14th, "There is now incontestable proof that the wreck is from a much later period." Mr. Nieto Prieto is a former Director of Spain's National Museum of Underwater Archaeology and a leading expert on Spanish shipwrecks.

The bronze or copper fasteners found on the site, near the Coque Vieille Reef, point to shipbuilding techniques of the late 17th or 18th centuries; prior to that, only iron or wood fasteners were used. The *Santa Maria* ran aground in December 1492.

—Continued on next page



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The report recommends further exploration to find the *Santa Maria* and draw an inventory of other major wrecks in the area. It also calls on Haiti to adopt legislative measures to enhance the protection of underwater heritage, notably with regard to the attribution of authorizations for the excavation of underwater archaeological sites, and to meet the standards of UNESCO's Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage, which Haiti has ratified. Adopted in 2001, the Convention aims to ensure the protection and safeguarding of underwater heritage as well as supporting research and international cooperation in this area. States that ratify the Convention — 49 to date — undertake to safeguard this heritage, refrain from its commercial exploitation and fight illicit trafficking in pillaged goods.

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 2015 auction will be held at the Gingerbread Restaurant on the waterfront in Belmont, Bequia on Sunday, February 8th. 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 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.

Good Samaritan's Ile-à-Vache Flotilla Postponed

Mandy Thody reports: Good Samaritan Foundation of Haiti, Inc. works in several villages of Ile-à-Vache, Haiti, with a primary school, adult education, artisan training, scholarships for higher education, clinics and more. We are forming a small group of yachts to sail from the Virgin Islands to Ile-à-Vache, delivering donated equipment and participating in a week of workshops focusing on health and construction. Originally scheduled for this month, the flotilla will now be in March/April to allow more boats and crews to participate and more activities on Ile-à-Vache.

For more information contact mandy.thody@gmail.com, visit www.goodsamaritanofhaiti.com or see us on Facebook.

Eastern Caribbean International Yachting Conference

Eustace Theo Wallace reports: An Eastern Caribbean International Yachting Conference has been scheduled to take place April 28th and 29th, 2015, in St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

The Eastern Caribbean is undeniably one of the best sailing destinations in the world. With new marinas such as Christophe Harbour and other yachting infrastructure in the pipeline, there are numerous investment opportunities in the region's yachting sector. Associated areas with growth potential range from dockside services and maintenance to administrative services, port management, registries, insurance, regulation, maritime law and oceans governance, corporate services and ancillary services.

The Joint Mission of the Eastern Caribbean States to the European Union representing Dominica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent & the Grenadines in partnership with Quaynote Communications therefore announce the inaugural Eastern Caribbean International Yachting Conference. Planned as an annual event on the international yachting calendar, the conference will showcase the region's attraction to the international yachting industry, while providing delegates with a real opportunity to discuss and analyze the potential represented by the Eastern Caribbean for their businesses.

Topics to be explored by the conference are investment opportunities in infrastructure and ancillary services and the transformation of the Eastern Caribbean region as a hub for superyachts, yachting and tourism branding, harmonization of regulatory frameworks, market trends and competition in global yachting, developments in the superyacht industry, concierge services and provisioning, crew and training opportunities, joint marketing for the region's yachting industry and international shipping registries and flag choice, as well as fiscal incentives for the yachting industry.

The "Many Islands, One Sea" concept will comprise a central theme, looking at how the growth of the yacht sector will generate economic growth, stability and development for the region, while simultaneously offering opportunities for local and international investors.

The Eastern Caribbean International Yachting Conference is a must-attend event for senior-level yachting executives interested in learning more about the untapped growth potential of this exciting region. With plenty of time allowed for networking and debate, the conference will also offer a unique meeting forum for the industry, away from the usual round of industry events and with the emphasis firmly on new business development opportunities.

For more information on participating in the Eastern Caribbean International Yachting Conference as a sponsor, exhibitor, speaker or delegate contact Dr. Len Ishmael at len.ishmael@gmail.com or Eustace Theo Wallace at Eustace.Wallace@gmail.com or (322) 534-2611.

Farewell, Melinda and Lee!

With this issue of *Caribbean Compass* we bid a fond farewell to two longtime columnists, Melinda Parke of Sailor's Horoscopes and Lee Kessell of Cruising Kids' Corner. Both of these talented women arrived in the Windward Islands by sailboat, and made the islands their home. Many thanks to Melinda and Lee for all of your contributions to *Compass* over the years.

Where Are the Caymans?

The promised article about a cruise to the Cayman Islands will appear in next month's issue of *Compass*!

Welcome Aboard!

In this month's issue of *Compass* we welcome new advertisers Caraïbes Diesel Services of St. Martin/St. Maarten, on pages 21 and 28; Marine World of St. Vincent & the Grenadines, on page 33; and Bugz B Gone of St. Vincent & the Grenadines, in the Market Place section. Good to have you with us!



SSV Corwith Cramer Returns for 'Colonization to Conservation in the Caribbean'

Around the 9th of December, the *SSV Corwith Cramer*, a tall sailing ship operated by SEA Semester/Sea Education Association of Woods Hole, Massachusetts, USA, will arrive at Dominica after crossing the Atlantic from the Canary Islands. On board will be a working crew of 30 which, in addition to professional crew and visiting researchers, includes undergraduate students from colleges and universities across the United States. The students are enrolled in a SEA Semester study abroad program entitled Colonization to Conservation in the Caribbean. The central aspect of this program is an examination of cultural and environmental sustainability issues in the Lesser Antilles. Student-driven projects delve into modern issues facing residents with an eye to the complex history of the region from Columbus's voyages to the advent of the Caribbean as a tourist destination.



SEA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The *SSV Corwith Cramer* is a 134-foot steel brigantine built as a research vessel for operation under sail. The vessel was named after SEA's founding director, and was designed by Wooden & Marean specifically for SEA. Constructed by ASTACE in 1987 in Bilbao, Spain, the qualities that made SEA's original vessel *R/V Westward* both versatile and seaworthy were incorporated into the design of *SSV Corwith Cramer*. As the designation "Sailing School Vessel" indicates, this tall ship is a platform for education at sea. The designation also means there are no passengers on board, and students are integrated into the ship's crew under the direct guidance and supervision of professional mariners. After their three-week crossing, the students on board will have gained proficiency in handling sails and plotting the ship's position (both electronically and celestially), helped prepare meals and assisted in the maintenance of shipboard equipment.

The *Corwith Cramer* is well-equipped for oceanographic research with nets to collect small plankton and fish, drifting *Sargassum* and (unfortunately) plastic; devices to record salinity and temperature and 12 *niskin* bottles that collect seawater from various depths; several devices that sample the seafloor and record ocean bathymetry; and a hull-mounted acoustic Doppler current profiler that measures ocean currents as deep as 600 metres. The lab is outfitted with microscopes, networked computers, and myriad instruments allowing students to determine the chemical properties of the seawater they collect including pH, nutrients, dissolved oxygen, and ocean productivity. With these resources, students can explore all manner of independent research questions relating to climate change, ocean acidification, sea level change, biodiversity and fisheries, invasive species, harmful algal blooms, and marine pollution, to name but a few.

The six-week "sea component" of this SEA Semester program follows six intensive weeks at the SEA campus in Woods Hole with classroom sessions and field trips. The sea component is not limited to time spent on board the ship; the sailing vessel's community of learners also engages in scheduled academic activities at each port stop.

The *SSV Corwith Cramer* has visited Dominica on numerous occasions, and once the ship arrives, the island-focused aspects of the program will continue with three full days on the "Nature Island". Students will have the opportunity ashore to further their understanding of current issues including those that center on the efforts to balance the income concerns of the people of this island nation with the recognized need to preserve the natural resources that make Dominica unique. This will be facilitated by presentations by local experts and direct interactions with residents of Dominica and first-hand observation of the island's physical environment. Working with long-time collaborator and local tour coordinator Jeff Frank, the faculty have arranged guided tours including a visit to the cultural interpretation center for the Kalinago people, and time for directed research into the specific circumstances of Dominica including management of forestry resources, preservation of resident culture and endemic species, and the management and protection of marine ecosystems.

Community outreach and direct involvement with the communities through ship visits are a central part of SEA Semester programs and typically include local beach cleanups, presentations to school-age children and cooperative efforts with local community and environmental advocates. On a previous trip to Dominica, this included a visit to the ship by the Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Ian Douglas, who shared his insights into the modern history of the island as well as his knowledge of the unique local flora and fauna.

From Dominica, the *SSV Corwith Cramer* will move on to St. Maarten where students will have similar opportunities for a guided introduction to both the Dutch and French culture there and time to explore and observe on their own. The program will wrap up in St. Croix, USVI, and the ship will await the arrival of a new group of students taking part in the next SEA Semester program focused on Caribbean resources and sustainable development.

Colonization to Conservation in the Caribbean is one of several programs offered by Sea Education Association that raises awareness and directs research into efforts to develop or maintain initiatives for sustainable growth in coastal and island communities. Students build an understanding of the complexities of balancing economic growth with the preservation of culture and history of maritime populations in the Caribbean as well as other island and coastal communities throughout the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

While every SEA Semester program is unique, given the emphasis placed on student-driven research in areas of their choosing, this particular program has benefited from the invaluable contributions of Dr. Clare Morrall, Director of the Marine Biology Program at St. George's University, Grenada. Dr. Morrall, during her sabbatical, has chosen to join the faculty and offer lectures on a series of current environmental issues for the Caribbean ranging from protection of terrestrial endangered species, to coping with the effects of climate change and the establishment of marine protected areas. Dr. Morrall will be on board the *Cramer* for the duration of the voyage.



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BUSINESS BRIEFS

EZ Docks Handled Hurricane Gonzalo

Budget Marine reports: Many marinas in St. Maarten suffered damage in October's Hurricane Gonzalo. Initially it seemed as if the EZ Docks at Budget Marine Sint Maarten had as well. But afterwards, when the still-intact sections were collected, it turned out that damage was minimal, as can be seen in the photograph of the quickly re-positioned dock.



There are clearly two approaches for dock survival. One is to build it very heavily, but even then there can be substantial damage, as occurred when a cargo vessel hit the Port de Plaisance dock in Hurricane Gonzalo. The other approach is to have a dock that breaks up in a planned fashion and can be easily reconstructed at minimal cost. The latter is the EZ Dock solution and the Hurricane Gonzalo experience has reconfirmed the confidence that Budget Marine has in this innovative and Caribbean-suitable dock product.

Robust polyethylene construction and revolutionary connection couplers allow the sections to move independently under high-stress conditions, while still providing unified firmness. In the tropical sun the buoyant dock sections remain cool underfoot and are UV resistant, requiring minimal maintenance. The majority of the EZ Docks at Budget Marine are well over ten years old. Millions of people have walked over them and they look as new as they day they were installed.

At Budget Marine we would prefer not to test products via the hurricane method, but concede that survival during Gonzalo supports EZ Dock's claim to be not only versatile, but also durable and easy to (re)install!

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

IWW Sponsors Arawak

Arawak, a 52-foot catamaran, originally built for and sailed in the 1988 Route du Rhum (as *Casino*) has been fully refurbished, was splashed in October and as this issue of *Compass* goes to press was moored on Island Water World's T-dock in Cole Bay, St. Maarten. It will be used for day charters soon.



Capable of speeds up to 30 knots and weighing only 2.5 tons, *Arawak* will be moored in Simpson Bay and operated by Aldo NV, which owns the well-known day charter boat *Bluebeard* (www.bluebeardcharters.com). Plans are to offer three-hour racing trips for about 12 guests and private charters.

Also, IWW's new 2015 catalogue is now online and ready for download, with thousands of new and known products. Fitting out? Need gift ideas? Check it out at islandwaterworld.com/page.htm?PG=catalog.

For more information on Island Water World see ad on page 48.

Plan B is Northern Lights/Perkins Dealer in St. Thomas

Parts & Power, the British Virgin Islands-based Caribbean distributor for numerous industrial and marine products and brands, is delighted to announce the appointment of a new dealer for Northern Lights generators and for Perkins Engines and spare parts. Plan B Generators has been appointed the new Northern Lights dealer and the new Perkins dealer in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands.

Plan B is managed by Randy Berry and Zach Hachem. As Northern Lights dealers they can supply, install and service Northern Lights generators. They also stock and supply spare parts for the complete Northern Lights range. As Perkins dealers they can supply, install and service Perkins engines. They also stock and supply spare parts for the complete Perkins engine range.

For more information on Plan B contact planbgenerators@islands.vi.

For more information on Parts & Power's Perkins engines see ad on this page.

Sea Hawk Presents Award to Island Water World

For over 15 years Island Water World (IWW) has been a distributor of New Nautical Coatings/Sea Hawk Paints product line and helps to promote new innovative products coming out of Sea Hawk Paints, including their new epoxy system, Hawk Epoxy. During that time, a true friendship has grown between IWW and Sea Hawk Paints.

IWW is one of the largest distributors of Sea Hawk products in the Caribbean, and their reputation as a leader in the marine products distributor arena speaks for itself. Simply put, everybody in the Caribbean knows them for their quality products and impeccable customer service.

Continued on next page

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Sea Hawk Paints and IWW have co-sponsored sailboat racing teams at many regattas throughout the Caribbean. And it's through this partnership that both companies have enjoyed even wider recognition within their fields.

Recently, IWW was in Tampa for the 2014 IBEX (International Boatbuilders Exhibition and Conference), which provided an opportunity for them to tour the Sea Hawk Paints' manufacturing facility in Clearwater, Florida. Sean Kennelly, IWW's Managing Director, and James Dickerson, IWW's Principal, were in the group. While they were



The IWW crew at Sea Hawk's manufacturing facility

visiting, Sea Hawk took great pleasure in presenting a "Partnership Excellence Award" to IWW. This was Sea Hawk's way of saying "thanks for being great business partners and true friends over the years."

IWW takes great pride in its products and service, just as Sea Hawk's Research and Development Team takes pride in its never-ending pursuit of innovative marine coatings, repair supplies and epoxy solutions to solve contemporary problems. "We're constantly experimenting with new formulas to provide peak performance and simplify application processes," said Erik Norrie, CEO of Sea Hawk Paints. "From environmentally friendly solutions to bio-engineered technologies, we have consistently created new, ground-breaking products every year."

New Nautical Coatings, Inc., manufacturer of Sea Hawk Paints, was established in 1978.

For more information on Island Water World see ad on page 48.
For more information on Sea Hawk Paints see ad on page 23.

Nauti Solutions in Grenada

Danny Gray reports: Nauti Solutions, your one stop service center in Grenada for mechanical repairs, deck gear, plumbing, electrical, welding and fabrication, also offers yacht delivery service, short and long distances. We can also look after your boat long and short term, and have storage sheds for all your bits and pieces.

We at Underwater Solutions can also offer all your underwater work: hull cleaning, replacing through-hull fittings, removing rudders and doing rudder bearings, cutlass bearings, props and more, saving a haulout.

Also at Driftwood Fine Woodwork we offer all your woodwork repairs, teak decks, hatches, cockpit tables, anything wood or plastic.

We are on Lagoon Road, St. George's, just across the water from Port Louis Marina. Much is happening in Grenada: there is a VHF net at 0730 six days a week and a Grenada Cruisers Facebook page with lots of info.

For more information on Nauti Solutions see ad in the Market Place section, pages 42 to 45.

Rodney Bay Marina Readies for the Season

Alana Mathurin reports: As the 29th edition of the world's most popular sailing event, the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC), sets sail, St. Lucia prepares to receive and play host to hundreds of sailors and their families. The rally is expected to bring 242 boats. During the month of December, IGY Rodney Bay Marina will be buzzing with live music, folk dancers, local arts, craft booths, face painting and a variety of local food and drinks.

Over the last few months the Marina has been upgrading its washrooms and other parts of the facility to cater to the needs of its customers. IGY believes that the facility is a home away from home for sailors, so it does its utmost best to create an atmosphere that is welcoming and relaxing.

Rodney Bay Marina has increased security in and around the lagoon and the marina, as well as ensuring that the security company has VHF radios, so that visiting yachtsmen can contact them immediately if they witness any suspicious activity.

We have also introduced a premium service internet to complement our free service. This provides up to 15 MB per boat, allowing you to kick back and stream your favourite movie without leaving your vessel.

For more information visit www.igy-rodneybay.com.

Talking Caribbean

In telling stories of the Caribbean, how things are said is almost as much a part of the texture as the descriptions of the people and the place. To capture that aspect, Float Street Press (www.floatstreetpress) has partnered with Caribbean voice-over artist Norbert Thomas to bring Ed Teja's short story 'The Rum Shop' to life.

Along with *The Legend of Ron Añejo* (narrated by Paul Aulridge; see a review at www.audiofilemagazine.com/reviews/read/95264), the story of the world's best Caribbean boat bum, 'The Rum Shop' is available through Amazon, Audible.com and iTunes.

Former *Compass* contributor Ed Teja is a boat bum, magazine editor, freelance writer, poet, musician and traveler. He writes about the places he knows, places that lie in the margins of the world. Boats, islands and remote tropical places are his natural habitat.

Norbert Thomas is the premier Jamaican/Caribbean voice-over artist with over 20 years in media communications.

You can find 'The Rum Shop' at https://itunes.apple.com/us/audiobook/the-rum-shop-unabridged/id933155673 and at www.amazon.com/The-Rum-Shop/dp/B00OUQMP6W.
You can find all of Ed Teja's audiobooks at www.audible.com/Author=Ed+Teja.

Providencia's Bush Agency Adds Staff

The Bernardo B. Bush Howard Maritime Agency in Providencia, Colombia — better known to cruisers as "Mister Bush" — has added Jean-Paul Bush Romero and Alex Newball Archbold to its staff. Jean-Paul is a specialist in the logistics of international merchandise transportation, and Alex is a specialist in maritime law.

For more information contact bushagency2012@hotmail.com.

Tall Ship Announces New Transatlantic Voyage

If sailing across the Atlantic on a square-rigger is on your bucket list, you can achieve that goal aboard the tall ship *Picton Castle*. Starting in October 2015, the award-winning sail training ship will make a full circle of the Atlantic, including two transatlantic sailing passages. Along the way, call at ports in the Azores, Spain, Portugal, Senegal and the West Indies. Trainee sailors may sign on for the full six-month voyage or for a three-month leg of the voyage.

For more information visit picton-castle.com.



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It's About Growing Sailing:
CSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Caribbean Sailing Association (CSA) Annual Conference took place October 24th through 26th at Antigua Yacht Club, English Harbour, Antigua. Fifty delegates from around the Caribbean convened at the Conference, which featured a new format this year that included CSA officers, CSA measurers, regatta organizers and experts in developing sailing programs.

The Caribbean Sailing Association is a non-profit organization registered in Anguilla that owns and administers the CSA Rating Rule and exists to govern, promote and encourage interest and participation in the sport of sailing in the Caribbean.

Tim Cross from the International Sailing Federation (ISAF) and Elizabeth Jordan of Antigua's National Sailing Academy hosted workshops on the development of the sport from grass roots through to advanced training. Starting with a needs assessment of each island, Tim Cross will be mentoring the Caribbean region alongside the CSA to bring a coordinated approach to sailing development to achieve the goal of getting more people sailing throughout the Caribbean, from beginner to advanced level.

Also in attendance was the new CSA sponsor Sailors for the Sea, which held a workshop on environmental sustainability and how regattas can achieve the status of a "Clean Regatta". Delegates left the Conference armed with a tool kit of ideas for taking steps in the right direction, along with a willingness to do just that.

The regatta organizers' segment included sessions on race management, marketing and sponsorship, and how to continue working together to help make the Caribbean region more attractive to local and international sailors.

The AGM segment of the conference included important discussions on all aspects of the CSA, particularly in continuing to define its role as the one body that can help coordinate all aspects of sailing in the region. The members confirmed their goal of having the CSA serve the important roles of providing a rating system, helping the development of sailing, coordinating the race calendar, and promoting the sport both within the region and to the world.



'Our goal was to get all the key players and stakeholders together... to help grow our sport and our island economies'

New members joining the CSA during the Conference were Superyacht Challenge Antigua, Mount Gay Round Barbados Race Series, Eduardo Lentz, Le Guadeloupe de Voile, Cherche Sport de Bas-du-Fort, Borinquen Islands Sailing Association, Discover the Caribbean Regatta, Puerto Rico, Melges 32 Caribbean Association, and San Sebastian Vela Cup Regatta, Puerto Rico.

Re-elected President Peter Holmberg commented, "It was very gratifying to receive such positive feedback from all the participants on this new format of our conference. Our goal was to get all the key players and stakeholders together under one roof for a weekend of meetings, strategy sessions, and general networking. We are most proud of this initiative of the CSA to achieve cooperation among all the islands and events to help grow our sport and our island economies. If we can serve as the body to help connect our grassroots sailing through to our international regattas, we will be contributing greatly to our sport, and our region."

Alongside Peter Holmberg, re-elected board members are Alison Sly-Adams, Jaime Torres and Kathy Lammers. Joining them are new officers Ellen Birrell, Chris Haycraft, Pam Fuller and Chief Measurer Jeffrey Chen.

The CSA thanks its sponsors Sailors for the Sea, LIAT, Antigua Sailing Week, Antigua Yacht Club Marina Resort, Antigua Yacht Club, Digicel and Quin Farara, as well as host restaurant Club Sushi and all the teams that contributed to the success of the Conference.

For more information visit www.caribbean-sailing.com.

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Your contributions of tail fluke photographs of humpback whales from the Caribbean region are critical for conservation efforts.

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REGATTA NEWS

Grenada's New Catfish 14 Regatta

Sarah Baker reports: A new sailing event — the Catfish 14 Regatta — has joined Grenada's sailboat racing calendar, thanks to a joint initiative among Grenada Yacht Club, Gouyave Sailing School and Catfish Inc., a Gouyave-based company building fiberglass boats.

The event, created to showcase the new fleet of Catfish 14 dinghies that has been built in Gouyave, was staged over two days, September 27th and 28th, combining long races between Gouyave and St. George's and shorter, more tactical races around a course set at the mouth of St. George's Lagoon.

The first event saw a fleet of eight boats sailed by 16 young crewmembers from Gouyave Sailng School and Grenada Yacht Club. Conditions were mixed and challenging and put both boats and crew through their paces, showing the potential of this new design of dinghy and the skills of the young sailors.



KENZO SZYJAN

The results were:

Gouyave to St. George's Race (September 27th)
1) Israel Darangit and Kimron Marshall
2) Leroy and Dennis Bernadine
3) Ted Richards and Joel Phillip

GYC Lagoon Race Series (September 27th)
1) Israel Darangit and Kimron Marshall
2) Kwesi Paul and Moses Simon
3) Kemon Charles and Kemo Sampson

GYC Lagoon Race Series (September 28th)
1) Kwesi Paul and Moses Simon
2) Israel Darangit and Kimron Marshall
3) Ted Richards and Joel Phillip

St. George's to Gouyave Race (September 28th)
1) Kemon Charles and Kemo Sampson
2) Leroy and Dennis Bernadine
3) Rees Evans and Noah Bullen

The organizers thank the following for their support: Catfish Inc., Gouyave Sailing School, Grenada Yacht Club, Budget Marine, Horizon Yacht Charters, Glenelg Spring Water, Grenada Sailing Association and Grenada Sailing Festival. Thanks also goes to 'Feb', Emroll Banfield and 'Tombay', the skipper and crew of the safety boat.

Carlos Aguilar Match Race Cancelled for 2014

Carol Bareuther reports: The Virgin Islands Sailing Association announces the cancellation of the 2014 Carlos Aguilar Match Race. Plans are underway to resume this regatta, which has welcomed the world's top male and female match racers and has been held for the past six years in late November/early December, in 2015.

"It was a very difficult decision to cancel this year's match race, however we all felt that a watered-down version of this great event due to lack of sufficient sponsorship was not the way to go," explains regatta director, Bill Canfield. "At the same time, this is a wonderful time for us to reach out to new sponsors."

For more information visit www.carlosmatchrace.com.

ON THE HORIZON…

Mount Gay Round Barbados Series 2015

Sign up now for the Mount Gay Round Barbados Race Series 2015, January 16th through 24th!

This event was re-launched in 2014 with a new race format and plenty of record-breaking opportunities. It proved such a success that an even bigger fleet is expected in 2015.

Organized by the Barbados Cruising Club in association with the Barbados Tourism Authority and Mount Gay, the Series encompasses the established Mount Gay Round Barbados Race plus a series of coastal races, and a final 300-mile sprint to Antigua to tie up with the Superyacht Challenge.



PETER MARSHALL

One of the biggest draws is the opportunity to break records. The headline event is the 60-nautical-mile Mount Gay Round Barbados Race on January 21st, in which teams race to set Round Barbados Records. There are currently 14 record categories, all of which offer the skipper's weight in Mount Gay Extra Old Rum if broken.

As expected at the home of Mount Gay Rum, fine Caribbean hospitality will be in full flow throughout the week with a party every night, including the legendary Mount Gay Red Cap party. Following the success of the lay-day activities in 2014, the organizers have lined up another Barbados Polo Club exhibition match, and a visit to Mount Gay Distilleries.

For more information see ad on page 13.

Register Now for Grenada Sailing Week 2015

Ruth Lund reports: With just a few weeks to go to the Island Water World Grenada Sailing Week January 29th through February 3rd, things are heating up for an especially spicy event, both on and off the water. As this issue of *Compass* goes to press,



16 boats from eight different countries are already registered and many more have expressed their intention to do so.

Previous top contenders are coming back to defend their places. In Racing Class will be *Category 5*, the Hobie33 that placed second in 2014, and the RP37 *Taz*, captained by Bernie Even-Wong, the Frers 43 *Jaguar*, best performing yacht in 2014, and *Chao Lay*, the Beneteau Oceanis 461 that gave her a run for her money. Also keen racer-cruisers on the Albin Stratus 36 *Apero*, the Beneteau 38 *Tulaichean II*, …

—Continued on next page



—Continued from previous page

… the Beneteau First 35 *Cricket* and *Rasmus,* the veteran Swan that sails so well to her rating that she can never be discounted.

There will be a One Design Class for J/24s with *Island Water World Die Hard* (Grenada) *Ambushe* (Trinidad), *Isis* (Barbados), *Buffalo Soldier* and *Attitude* (St Lucia) already entered. *The Blue Peter,* 2014 Classic Class winner, will be back in 2015 and special attention is being given to the courses to help grow this class. New to the event is the Beneteau First 47.7 *EH01* and this will also be a first time for the Soverel 42 *C-Mos* from Trinidad, although her crew has participated before.

For more information see ad on page 11.

New Sponsors for Antigua's Valentine's Regatta

Jody Sallons-Day reports: Mount Gay Rum and Banks Beer will sponsor Antigua's Jolly Harbour Yacht Club Valentine's Regatta for the next three years. Known not only for grand prix racing, but also for fun and friendly rallying for cruisers, the Jolly Harbour Valentine's Regatta 2015 is scheduled for February 13th through 15th. It is expected to be a major attraction for island-wide and overseas participants, with an open invitation extended to yachts from neighbouring islands. Race organizer www.regattaguru.com and Budget Marine have also given their valued support to the event. Race Officer Paul Miller will be setting the pace outside Jolly Harbour waters within easy reach of the coastline.

For more information contact jollycommodore@gmail.com.

Swan Cup Caribbean in Virgin Gorda

The second edition of the Rolex Swan Cup Caribbean in Virgin Gorda, which had its successful debut in 2013, runs from March 3rd through 7th and is organized by ClubSwan, Rolex and the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda. This year's entry list is expected to include Marco Rodolfi's Swan 80 *Berenice Bis,* Don Macpherson's Swan 90 *Freya,* Wendy Schmidt's Swan 80 *Selene* and Devin McGranahan's Swan 56 *King Daddy.*

A Rolex timepiece will be awarded to the first overall Swan in each class, trophies for the first, second and third overall Swan in each class, and the Rolex Swan Cup Caribbean Trophy will be presented to the overall winner.

For more information visit www.nautorswan.com.

Gill Commodore's Cup Widens Entries

The St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, March 5th through 8th, 2015, announces that their pre-event, the Gill Commodore's Cup, is accepting entries in all boat categories (excluding Lottery Class). This pre-event used to be open to spinnaker boats only, but for the 35th edition of the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, organizers are inviting all regatta entries to take part.



TIM WRIGHT / WWW.PHOTOACTION.COM

The Gill Commodore's Cup takes place on March 5th, and will maintain individual results, allowing sailors to practice and perfect their racing without influencing their main event results. In addition to opening up the pre-event to all regatta sailors the organizers plan to introduce an extra race on the Sunday, depending on weather conditions.

For more information visit www.heinekenregatta.com.

Entries Open for St. Maarten Heineken Regatta

Entries are now open for the 35th St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, taking place from March 5th through 8th. For over three decades, the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta has showcased the top boats and sailing, and has become equally famous for its world-class parties and musical entertainment. Each year the event lives up to its motto: Serious Fun.

You can enter the race via Regatta Guru at www.regattaguru.com/heineken/minisite?series_id=100083#Entries.

For Notice of Race and more information visit www.heinekenregatta.com.

Triskell Cup Regatta on the Move!

With a new format, the ever-popular Triskell Cup Regatta will also have a new place on the racing calendar. The 2015 dates for the Triskell Cup Regatta will be March 11th through 15th.

The multi-destination event will take participants from Gosier, Guadeloupe to the enchanting neighboring islands of Marie Galante and les Saintes, and back to Guadeloupe.

The event is likely to become one of three regattas in a new series to be developed, which will include a regatta in Martinique, the Triskell Cup Regatta and Antigua Sailing Week.

For more information see ad on page 13.

Les Voiles de St. Barth

From April 13th through 18th, 2015, Saint Barthélemy will host the sixth edition of Les Voiles de St. Barth. No fewer than 80 boats and 1,000 sailors are expected to compete.

"In St. Barth, we benefit from an extraordinary playing field, which is exposed to the tradewinds at varying degrees," says organizer François Tolède. "The numerous sur-



rounding islets serve as perfect course marks. In short, St. Barth has all the ingredients that the most demanding racers dream of on the water. This sentiment is echoed on shore, as well, thanks to the event's 'French Touch', which translates as marvelous gastronomy and a welcome beyond compare."

For more information visit www.lesvoilesdesaintbarth.com.

'Sail Aruba' at Oranjestad in May

Commemorating the 200-year existence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, celebrations are scheduled to take place until October 2015 throughout the entire kingdom.

The largest event in Aruba, which will be planned around the annual Open House Day of the Dutch Marine Corps, is to be held from May 1st through 3rd at the Port of Oranjestad. The activities will be open to the public and will encompass the Harbor Arena, as well as the surrounding waters that fall under the port jurisdiction. The Caribbean Sail Training Foundation and Sail Amsterdam will encourage sail training vessels (the so-called tall ships), classic schooners and other yachts to visit Aruba during Sail Aruba. Participating vessels will be open for the public to visit.

During the weekend, visitors will be able to enjoy a Seafood Festival, a Sail-In Cinema at the Schoener Haven, the Sail Aruba Races organized by the Aruba Sailing Association, miniature boat races, a walking tour in Oranjestad, live music, food tents and refreshment, a Barbecue Cook-Off and more. To top it all off, a final night of international music will be organized.

For more information visit www.sailaruba.com.

Nevis's Booby Island Regatta & Sailing Festival

From humble beginnings in 2008, the Booby Island Regatta has grown in popularity to become an established fixture in the Nevis sailing calendar and a major contributor to the Nevis Yacht Club and youth sailing program. It is inclusive, relaxed and fun. The philosophy behind the event is simple: anyone can enter; anyone can win. The event brings all kinds of people together to enjoy the waters around St. Kitts & Nevis while also enjoying the tastes, sounds and culture of life ashore in Nevis.

In 2015 the regatta will expand to a three-day event with more sailing, bigger parties and a wider program of onshore activities for competitors, visitors and residents. The regatta will be held May 8th to 10th, in the week following Antigua Sailing Week.

For more information visit www.boobyislandregatta.com.

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HERE THEY COME!

Every November, December and January, waves of yachts leave Europe and the US East Coast bound for the Eastern Caribbean. In addition to those vessels sailing independently, ranging from tiny private yachts to the *Corwith Cramer* pictured on this month's cover (see story on page 7), races and rallies bring boats en masse. The events below alone promise to bring nearly 600 boats to the islands — even as the World ARC 2015-16 and the new Pacific Odyssey plan to lure a few away!

FROM EUROPE

Record-Busting 10th Route du Rhum to Guadeloupe

To start things off with a bang, ocean-racing superstar Loick Peyron has won the Route du Rhum singlehanded transatlantic race aboard the 103-foot (31.5-metre) maxi trimaran *Banque Populaire VII*, setting a new outright record for the 3,500-mile course from St. Malo, France to Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe of seven days, 15 hours and eight minutes.

Y. ZEDDA



On November 2nd, the tenth edition of the Route du Rhum race departed France with a 91-boat fleet — which *Latitude 38* magazine has called "the most impressive array of ocean-racing hardware ever assembled in one place" — including eight maxi trimarans, nine Open 60s, 11 Multi 50 trimarans, 20 Rhum Class boats and 41 Class 40s. The biggest boat in the fleet was the current outright round-the-world record holder and largest racing trimaran in the world, Yann Guichard's 130-foot (40-metre) *Spindrift 2* (ex-*Banque Populaire V*).

In Guadeloupe, racers were welcomed with a gala array of special anniversary celebrations, music, dancing and other entertainment.

For more information visit www.routedurhum.com.

29th Atlantic Rally for Cruisers to St. Lucia

More than 240 boats and 1,200 people, including 34 children aged under 16, will take part in the 29th Atlantic Rally for Cruisers from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, heading 2,700 nautical miles across the Atlantic to St. Lucia.

ARC sailors have a choice of routes with the introduction of ARC+ Cape Verde. Fifty-one boats sailing ARC+ departed Las Palmas on November 9th bound for a stop in the Cape Verde islands, to be followed by the larger ARC fleet (190 boats) bound direct for St. Lucia on November 24th.

This year the ARC has boats registered in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, the UK, Germany, Japan, Iceland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, the USA and 13 other nations: 36 in total.

ARC 2014 features one of the most diverse fleets in history with boats ranging from the 9.58-metre Marieholm 32E *Thalassa* to the super-maxi Farr 100 *Leopard by Finland*. Catamarans are extremely popular this year: 25 are entered as of this writing for the direct route, and 12 in ARC+.

The ARC+ Cape Verde route includes a three- to five-day stopover in Mindelo, Sao Vicente, which lies 850 nautical miles southwest of Gran Canaria. Although below the rhumb line, the island's latitude at 16°50'N is right in the tradewind belt, promising a great sail for the 2,150 nautical mile passage on to St. Lucia, setting off on November 19th.

The main start from Las Palmas is November 24th. ARC boats will make landfall in IGY Rodney Bay Marina, St. Lucia after 2,700 nautical miles of sailing. This distance will take the fastest boats around 12 days, and the family cruisers 18 to 21 days.

Every boat will be welcomed on arrival (day or night!) with a basket of local fruit, chilled beers and rum punches. This warm St. Lucian welcome is just the start of the festivities ashore, with the whole community of Gros Ilet getting involved with the visiting sailors. The ARC brings significant economic and tourism dollars to St. Lucia every December.

Ten ARC boats will be continuing their sailing adventure with World Cruising Club by joining the circumnavigation rally in St. Lucia in January. Nineteen boats will take part in the round-the-world rally via Colombia, the Panama Canal, the Pacific Islands, Australia, Mauritius, South Africa and Brazil.

We'll have a full report on the ARC and ARC+ arrivals in St Lucia in next month's *Compass*.

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

Atlantic Odyssey Sets Sail for Martinique

On November 17th, 31 sailboats flying the flags of 13 nations departed Lanzarote, Canary Islands bound 2,750 nautical miles for Martinique in the Atlantic Odyssey. Conditions were perfect for the start, with 12 knots of wind from the northeast. The yachts ranged from the 72-foot (21-metre) expedition vessel *Sea Dragon* to the 27-foot (8.5 metre) *Gazel Rebel*. Four yachts departed a day later, having been delayed by technical issues, bringing the total number to 35.

From Lanzarote most boats headed southwest to leave the Canary Islands behind as quickly as possible, with the hope of picking up the tradewinds near the latitude of the Cape Verde Islands. The Atlantic crossing is expected to take between 14 and 22 days.

The Martinique sponsor of the Atlantic Odyssey is the Regional Council of Martinique and the host is Marina Le Marin.

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Following on will be the Pacific Odyssey, a new rally aimed at sailors heading for the South Pacific organized by ARC founder, three times circumnavigator, and author of *World Cruising Routes*, Jimmy Cornell. Starting from Le Marin Marina, Martinique on January 18th, 2015, as well as from Key West, Florida on January 10th, the boats will cross the Caribbean Sea to the San Blas Islands. Ten days will be spent among the islands of this archipelago. Preparations for the transit of the Panama Canal and the onward passage to the Galapagos Islands will be completed at Shelter Bay Marina.

As Jimmy pointed out in an interview with *Caribbean Compass*: "The main reason I launched this new event for cruising sailors is to ease their passage through Panama and the Galapagos. Formalities in both these places are among the most difficult, as well as expensive, in the world. As participants in the Pacific Odyssey will sail as part of the Blue Planet Odyssey, a round the world rally sponsored by UNESCO, our yachts are given a special treatment by the authorities all along the route, and these benefits will be enjoyed also by those sailing in the Pacific Odyssey."

The passage to the Galapagos will start immediately on completion of the Panama Canal transit. The Galapagos landfall will be at San Cristobal, where the fleet will stay a few days before sailing to Puerto Ayora, the archipelago's main settlement. Day excursions within this world-renowned nature reserve will be organized from one of those two ports. A 3,000-mile passage will then take the boats to the Marquesas, with a final landfall on Hiva Oa.

Boats sailing in the inaugural Pacific Odyssey in 2015 will sail in the company of the Blue Planet Odyssey fleet as it continues on its route around the world. The Pacific Odyssey will take place each year, independently of the Blue Planet Odyssey. The second edition will start from Martinique on January 17th, 2016.

For more information contact info@cornellsailing.com.

RORC Transatlantic to Grenada

A varied and international fleet ranging from 40 to 100 feet (12.19 to 30.48 metres) will set off for Grenada on November 29th from Lanzarote, Canary Islands, in the Royal Ocean Racing Club's new offshore race. The International Maxi Association has joined forces with the RORC in the organization of the inaugural RORC Transatlantic Race and will be awarding a vintage sterling silver trophy to the Line Honours winner. As this issue of *Compass* goes to press, ten boats have entered and 15 more have expressed interest.

Grenada will be the destination for the finish of the 2,800-nautical-mile race. The Grenada Tourism Authority with Camper and Nicholsons' Port Louis Marina will host this first edition of the race.

For more information visit http://rorctransatlantic.rorc.org.

Christmas Caribbean Rally to Antigua

Scheduled to depart Lanzarote, Canary Islands on December 14th is the Christmas Caribbean Rally, bound for Nelson's Dockyard in Antigua, a course of approximately 2,850 nautical miles, intended to place participants in the islands just in time for the holidays after a tradewind crossing.

As this issue of *Compass* goes to press, ten boats have signed up.

For more information visit www.sailingrallies.com/christmas-caribbean-rally.

Panerai Transat Classique 2015 to Martinique

Starting at Lanzarote in the Canary Islands on January 7th, the Panerai Transat Classique 3,000-mile race for classic yachts will finish at Fort-de-France, Martinique. The 14 elegant entries listed as this issue goes to press include the lovingly restored 1927-vintage, 163-foot (49.9-metre) three-masted schooner *Xarifa*.

For more information visit www.paneraitransatclassique.com.

FROM THE US EAST COAST

Salty Dawg Rally to BVI

With a 68-boat fleet, down from last year's 116, the Salty Dawg Rally departed Hampton, Virginia on November 2nd and 3rd, at the skipper's discretion, following the passage of a strong cold front. With clearing weather behind them, the fleet set out for the Bitter End Yacht Club on Virgin Gorda, BVI. As this issue of *Compass* goes to press, some boats report doing a lot of motoring on the passage.

The free Salty Dawg Rally is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit company based in Rhode Island. The annual cruising rally is comprised of sailors who have completed at least one bluewater passage.

For more information visit http://saltydawgrally.org.

Caribbean 1500 to Tortola and ARC Bahamas

Forty yachts headed offshore on November 3rd from Portsmouth, Virginia as part of the combined Caribbean 1500 and ARC Bahamas fleets. The rally was delayed 24 hours thanks to the season's first real nor'easter. But as the fleets headed offshore, bound for the British Virgin Islands and the Bahamas, respectively, the wind was steady and the seas were down. This year, unlike the recent past, offered up textbook conditions. The nor'easter that had brought gusts in excess of 50 knots quickly moved offshore and to the northeast, clearing the way for the delayed start.

The bulk of the fleet was made up of cruising monohulls and multihulls in the 40- to 60-foot range.

Despite a one-year hiatus while the Caribbean 1500 focused on the move to Portsmouth, ARC Bahamas is back on the calendar. Five boats took the start ahead of the BVI fleet and will cross the Gulf Stream before breaking off and sailing just west of south, bound for Marsh Harbor, Abacos.

The ARC Caribbean 1500 fleet sailed 1,500 nautical miles to Tortola. In the slowest year since 2011, the last boat was still at sea with nearly 100 miles to go as the ARC Caribbean 1500 prizegiving got underway on November 15th.

"I usually end this evening thanking everyone and scurrying off to bed!" said event manager Andy Schell at the conclusion of the awards. "But we've got four boats coming in tonight, so we'll be on the docks with the cold rum punch until the last boat is tied up!"

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

North American Rally (NARC) to St. Maarten

Also on November 3rd, after two days of waiting for a break in the weather, 18 sailboats left Newport, Rhode Island to embark on a nearly 1,500-mile journey to St. Maarten, with an optional stop in Bermuda. This was the 15th annual North American Rally to the Caribbean (NARC). The Rally is restricted to professionally crewed boats or boats that are big enough or fast enough to get to Bermuda in four to four and a half days and crewed by experienced crew who have made the passage before. Masterminded by Hank Schmitt of Offshore Passage Opportunities, the rally is free to its participants and supports the annual migration of East Coast boats heading south for the winter with either free or deeply discounted dockage at the designated rally ports, fuel discounts, weather routing, regular on-water communication through Radio Net for SSB, and last but not least, social gatherings.

The St. George's Dinghy & Sports Club is hosting participants who choose to stop in Bermuda, while the IGY Marina Group is sponsoring the NARC finish in St. Maarten at Simpson Bay Marina.

For more information visit www.sailopo.com.







Colombia Sets Course for Yacht Tourism Growth

by Sally Erdle

On October 24th, the Colombian government hosted that country's Fourth Nautical Tourism Forum, bringing together the national Government through its Vice-Ministry of Tourism, the mayors of a number of Colombia's Caribbean coastal communities, Customs and Immigration officials, and private sector representatives, in order to learn about developments and projections in boating tourism.

The full-day Forum, held at El Isleño Conference Center on the island of San Andrés, was opened with a welcome by Aury Socorro Guerrero Bowie, the Governor of the islands of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina.



Above, back row, left to right: Mayor Arturo Arnulfo Robinson Dawkins of Providencia & Santa Catalina, Natalia Bayona, Manuel Julian Dávila, Javier Julvez, Capt. Andrés Avella and Esteban Biondi. Front row: Vice-Minister Sandra Howard Taylor, Tracey Hart, Sally Erdle, Antonella Farah and Rodrigo Lopez

Below: A presentation on Colombia's potential as a new yachting destination included input regarding what cruisers want, thanks to participants in Compass *Readers' Surveys over the years*



The morning's agenda featured three presentations by foreign guests: on the environmental and social sustainability of today's marinas, on what is wanted by yachting visitors considering Colombia as a cruising destination, and on methods of expanding recreational boating. The afternoon included a panel discussion on the development of marinas in the country, and presentations on nautical tourism vis-à-vis the maritime authorities, and on the international promotion of Colombia as a nautical destination.

In her opening remarks, Vice-Minister of Tourism Sandra Howard Taylor explained that, taking advantage of the natural resources and favorable conditions enjoyed by Colombia, the country has the potential to lead in the development of nautical tourism.

The Colombian Ministry of Tourism and the National Fund for Tourism have advanced a National Plan of Nautical Tourism covering 3,882 kilometres of shoreline on the country's Caribbean and Pacific coasts and offshore islands. There are currently more than 21 developed projects with an investment amounting to US$13,200 million, including marinas, watersports facilities and docks. Much more development in this sector is projected, including small marinas on the offshore islands of Providencia and San Andrés, as well as a new yacht marina in the historic coastal city of Cartagena.

In the Forum's first presentation, US-based, Argentina-born Senior Project Manager at ATM Marinas, Esteban Biondi, offered a convincing case that modern marinas need to be made environmentally and socially beneficial as well as economically viable — and that with proper research and planning, these goals are achievable and practical. For example, while in the past, marina developers' first instinct was to remove mangroves, Esteban showed beautiful examples of where docks were positioned just outside existing mangrove areas, allowing unimpeded waterflow to the mangroves and providing a spectacular natural backdrop to the marina. "We are selling an experience," he said, "and authentic experiences — incorporating local culture, community and environment — have the highest value."

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Regarding positive social impacts, for example providing local job training and business opportunities in and around marinas, he added, "Local community members have the highest potential to offer visitors an authentic experience."

The following two presentations focused on two types of users of marinas and other recreational marine facilities: visiting cruisers and local boaters.

In my presentation I highlighted the cruising yacht sector in the Caribbean, outlining what cruisers want in a destination and how Colombia measures up. According to Compass Readers' Surveys taken since 1997, as well as letters, articles and my own observations, cruisers are looking for five key "must haves": a clean, unspoiled natural environment; friendly people with an interesting culture; a low crime rate; simple and inexpensive clearance procedures; and quality yachting facilities (including anchorages) and services. Colombia currently offers four out of five of these criteria, having a unique range of Caribbean coastal environments and offshore islands, much of it in protected reserves and all generally below the hurricane belt; a well-deserved reputation for friendliness and a diverse mix of cultures; an effective hold on crime against yachting visitors and other tourists; and some up-to-date marinas and a skilled labor force. Currently lacking are simple and inexpensive clearance procedures; the Temporary Import Permit required after just a few days is a real impediment. However, the intense focus that the government has now placed on the yachting sector is sure to help cut some of the existing red tape.



Above: Illustrating a point about yachting arrivals, Vice-Minister Howard read an excerpt from an article by JoAnne and Bill Harris in the August 2014 issue of Compass *on sailing to Isla Providencia*

Below: Getting everyone on board, Tracey Hart of the NMMA's Discover Boating program showed how promotional campaigns can encourage people to take up the lifestyle



As the saying goes, "a rising tide floats all boats", and Tracey Hart of the North American National Marine Manufacturers' Association's (NMMA) Discover Boating program spoke about how a national boating campaign that encourages recreational boating as a lifestyle benefits not only the growing communities of local boaters themselves but also the related retailers and manufacturers. The videos she showed, which in the US and Canada have been extremely successful in expanding boating as a fun family activity, and therefore stimulating related sales and manufacturing, resonated with the audience. Colombia, with a population of 49 million people and what is now the third-largest economy in Latin America (after Brazil and Mexico), has a pent-up in-country demand for more recreational boats and boating facilities.

A lively panel discussion with marina principals Manuel Julian Dávila of Marina Santa Marta and Javier Julvez of Marina Puerto Velero, Antonella Farah of the Regional Competitiveness Commission, and longtime Colombian liveaboard, marine biologist and boatbuilder Rodrigo Lopez, discussed the current Colombian marina scene and its potential.

This was followed by an outline by Captain Andrés Avella of nautical tourism as regulated by the Colombian Maritime Authority.

Rounding out the Forum was Natalia Bayona of Proexport, the Colombian agency tasked with the promotion of non-traditional exports in markets with potential, the attraction of foreign direct investment into Colombia, and the positioning of the country as an international tourist destination. Proexport has been instrumental in showcasing Colombia at the Miami International Boat Show and in developing the rapidly growing Cartagena International Boat Show.

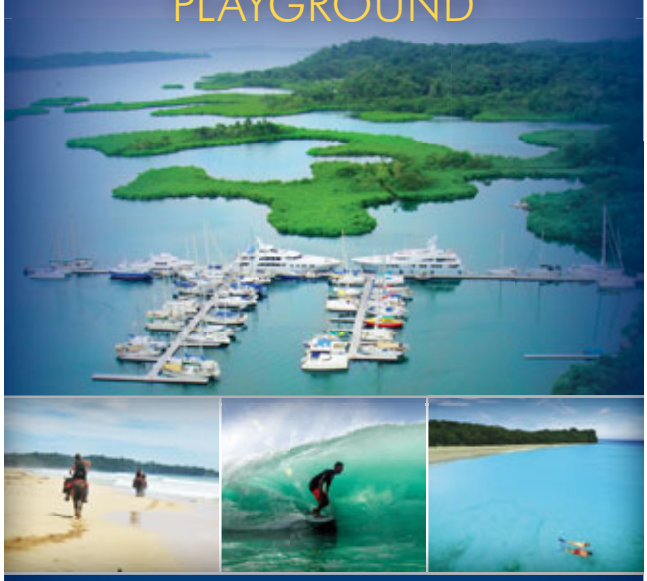
Vice Minister Sandra Howard Taylor announced during the forum that in January 2015 the World ARC rally will visit Colombia for the first time, stopping at Marina Santa Marta en route from St. Lucia to the Panama Canal. She explained that the arrival of World ARC was initiated by Marina Santa Marta, which contacted the Ministry of Trade and Proexport to help "realize this opportunity of promotion and income generation for Colombia. Although the rally visits only Santa Marta, this will be an ideal opportunity to position Colombia as a yachting destination," the Vice Minister added. "We'll be able to showcase the offer that Colombia has for this segment of the market."

The Vice Minister stated that a yachting tourist spends, on average, US$35 dollars a day just within a marina, while in the surrounding area — for example for accommodation, food and entertainment — this amount may increase to US$100. Accordingly, the Ministry has set a goal for 2030 to consolidate the country as a nautical destination in the Caribbean region, planning marinas with capacity for more than 11,000 vessels and a range of more than 150 complementary companies.

"We are already on the radar of this tourism sector," the Vice Minister concluded, "Now our task is to continue adapting the infrastructure and continue the marketing of Colombia as a nautical country."

See Colombia's Nautical Tourism Plan at www.observatorioirsb.org/cmsAdmin/uploads/plan-nacional-de-turismo-nautico-de-colombia.pdf.

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Panama's Escudo de Veraguas

by Attila Berry



Circumnavigate the island by dinghy? Why not — it's only two and a half miles long

In September of 2012, Vlad and I hopped, skipped and jumped our way down the sparsely inhabited Panamanian coast aboard our 36-foot Cascade sloop, *Bettie*, searching for out-of-the-way anchorages to break up our trip from Bocas del Toro to the San Blas Islands. Despite the notoriously weak winds in the Bocas del Toro area, we had a decent sail east from the Zapatillas Cays, two idyllic sand islands near Bocas Town. The wind was less than ten knots, but it was enough to keep the main and the jib full at a close reach as we motor-sailed to our next stop at Isla Escudo de Veraguas.

Coming in at a petite two and a half miles long, Veraguas sits 12 miles off Panama's mountainous mainland coast and 50 miles from our start in Bocas. The island may be small, but it packs a punch with more to explore than islands twice its size. We anchored in 24 feet of water on the southwest corner right off the beach and spent the next two full days enjoying the perfectly clear, blue-green water and circumnavigating the island via dinghy.

You see, Veraguas has unusual geography. Apart from one extended stretch of beach on the west and south sides, the island is ringed with even tinier islands, almost like miniatures of itself, each topped with a pouf of foliage and with mangrove roots stretching down to the sea. The rock is obviously softer in some places, and years and years of wave action have eroded those spots away, leaving not just the tiny islands but also caves and even a natural bridge. And in between the cliffs and crannies are little snippets of beach that sea turtles nest in. We saw turtle tracks in the sand, evidence of that fateful waddle up from the sea.

From the beach, the island doesn't just flatten out into the typical palm-tree-speckled view of a tropical postcard. Instead, the landscape springs up in a dense thicket of rainforest, complete with fresh water. And the snorkeling is superb. The island is surrounded with pristine coral, ripe for exploring for anyone with a mask and a pair of flippers.

Ours was the only boat in the anchorage, but we were by no means the only people on the island. Several Indian families live on Veraguas, and every week or two about a hundred more fishermen come from the mainland. Working for the government, one of the families collected donations for turtle conservation, and that's how we met Maricelo Senior and consequently Maricelo Junior.

Maricelo Senior came by to collect the donation (we gave a big bag of rice and a six-pack of Pepsi but he also likes 20-dollar bills and is rather fond of gasoline). The following day Maricelo Junior stopped by with two of his sisters and another kid, looking for more soda, and he offered to take us to look for the elusive pygmy sloth that is endemic to Veraguas.

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The next morning we picked Maricelo up at his home, which consisted of five or six huts built out of scrap wood and palm fronds, and proceeded clockwise around the island in our dinghy. He knew every single shallow spot, each coral head and every reef pass as we dipped in between and around tiny islands and slinked back into mangrove-lined channels. He directed us with just a flick of his hand in a particular direction, not a word needed.

We pulled onto short, sandy beaches and walked along the mangroves looking for the sloths, and occasionally Maricelo took us back into the jungle along muddy paths and across creeks on bridges made from logs, always so quietly we sometimes couldn't tell where he had gone. And Maricelo saw everything. Every iguana, every conch, every tiny animal that we couldn't spot even when he pointed at them. Impossibly, he didn't even always leave footprints in the thick, dark mud as though he were some type of jungle ninja.

Unfortunately, we didn't see a pygmy sloth that day, despite Maricelo's dogged perseverance, quietly stalking through the jungle peering up into the trees. He said that they used to see sloths all the time, but then gringos came looking for them, which disturbed them somehow. We really couldn't figure out how looking at the sloths bothered them to that extent, so I decided that it must be like the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle — that just by observing the pygmy sloth we change its behavior.





Above: Sailing Panama's north coast from west to east, first you come to the islands of Bocas del Toro in Bahia del Almirante. After passing the Peninsula Valiente, which forms the east side of Laguna de Chiriqui, you come to a tiny dot: Escudo de Veraguas
Left: Erosion has created an intriguing shoreline with cliffs, caves and 'snippets of beach'

On our third day at the island, we had to move on to Portobelo. We raised the anchor at 1:00PM and headed east for an overnight passage that included crossing the entrance to the Panama Canal. As we pulled out the jib on a nice port tack, we said goodbye to Escudo de Veraguas, a tiny jewel in the Panamanian Caribbean.

See more of Attila's adventures at http://bettiedelmar.blogspot.com.



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SABA THE IMPOSSIBLE

by Mira Nencheva



Sweet, neat and petite, Saba was an unexpected stop — and a delightful one

The Anegada Passage

Early in the morning we set sail from Virgin Gorda's east anchorage at Saba Rock to St. Maarten, an 85-nautical-mile passage against tradewinds and Atlantic swells. Most cruisers motor or motor-sail heading east across the Anegada Passage to get it over with as soon as possible. Not us. Ivo, our daughter, Maya, and I are strictly sailing, no engines for us.

First we head northeast. Then tack southeast. Our progress aboard our 38-foot cat, *Fata Morgana*, is slow. In the afternoon we can still see the round belly of Virgin Gorda (the Fat Virgin) floating on the horizon behind us. We estimate it will take us about two days and nights of tacking. Eighty-five nautical miles from point A to point B can easily become 150 nautical miles, even more, when zigzagging. With 20-knot tradewinds and four- to six-foot waves stopping us, *Fata Morgana* barely does four knots. And there are some weird currents, as if always against us.

In the evening small storm cells start floating our direction: a string of dark clouds that come with sudden puffs and rain we'd rather avoid. We watch them closely on the radar and tack north to run away from one, tacking back southeast when the danger has passed. We manage to cross the string of squalls without hitting any.

The sunset is spectacular that day. The sky and sea look smeared with blood, our son Viktor says ominously. And then the night, thick disorienting blackness, takes over. Ever since that storm in the Yucatán Channel, we dread the night. We take turns on the helm, short naps in the cockpit. The wind is steady from the east, but the currents are messing with us. We get pushed south and by midnight another island looks closer to us on the charts. We change course for Saba, a small island 25 nautical miles south of St. Maarten.

We have gained enough height the previous day tacking north, so now sailing southeast on a starboard tack takes us quickly to Saba, an island we know nothing about. On the charts it looks round, with no bays and no anchorages on the east and south lee sides. We read what the cruising guide has to say about approaching the island, anchoring, and any other information that will prepare us for what to expect. But there is nothing that can prepare you for Saba. Saba you have to see and experience.

The morning reveals the lonely shadow of a small mountain sticking out of the sea, like an epiphany.

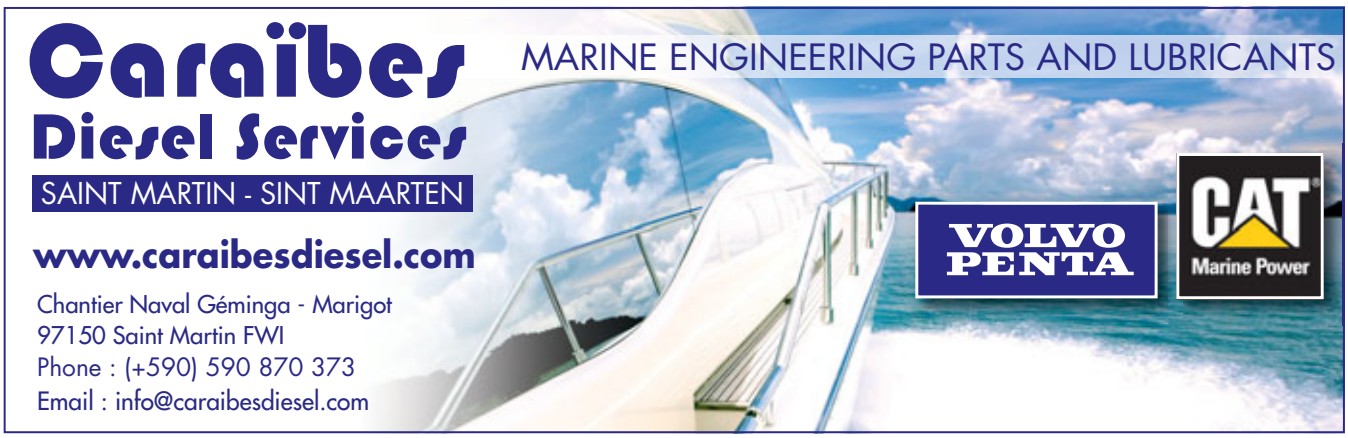
Saba, the Impossible

You must imagine a sleeping volcano, about five square miles in territory, rising vertically from the sea, reaching 3,000 feet, its inaccessible perilous cliffs like the dark back of a sea monster, its green peak where wild goats roam, always wearing a fashionable white cloud.

It's impossible for ships to access the island. Where would the ships drop anchor if there isn't a single bay, a single anchorage, a single beach? Even Columbus, who sighted the island in 1493, didn't attempt to stop.

It's impossible for people to live here. Only ships bring people and supplies.

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It's impossible to build towns. The terrain is too steep.

It's impossible to build a road connecting the towns. The terrain is really too steep.

Most of all, *it's impossible* to build an airport. A plane cannot land on a mountain.

There are so many things deemed *"impossible"* that actually happened on Saba.

Once uninhabited, the island became a territory of The Netherlands in 1816. People and goods arrived on the island via the leeward (west) shore, which offered some shelter from ocean swells, but boats could only land in calm seas. There the Sabans cut steep steps in the rock to be able to climb on land, a stone ladder so vertical it looks surreal when seen from the sea. All cargo, including a piano once, and a bishop, was unloaded by men standing in the water waist deep and then hauled up The Ladder. During invasions it was easy to protect the island with piles of boulders let loose when the attackers were climbing the hills.



A goat greets us. Note the rainwater catching system on the house behind

Little by little Dutch, Scottish, and English settlers, along with Africans brought in as slaves, built two villages: one on the bottom of the south side, called "The Bottom" and another on the windward side called "Windwardside" with houses perched on the edge of cliffs and atop hills up and down the slopes of the island. Even though they evidently did not have much imagination for naming places, the settlers became farmers and fishermen, cobblers and boat builders, creating a unique strong-willed community based on hard work and mutual help. But they had no road linking their two villages.

In the 1940s Dutch engineers arrived on Saba to look into "the road problem". They came, measured and calculated, and then they declared, "It's impossible to build a road here; the terrain is too steep." And they left.

But one Saban didn't believe them. Joseph Lambert Hassel, "Lambee", born in 1906, took a correspondence course in road building from the International School of Correspondence in the US and with no formal training he designed and supervised the impossible building of the "impossible" nine-mile road which they named "The Road".

It took a crew of local farmers and fishermen 20 years, using no machinery, only wheelbarrows, to finish The Road. For the support walls they had plenty of volcanic stones, and for the road itself they used cement imported from Puerto Rico. And, as government funding was refused, a local merchant eager to see the road finished paid for the cement. No one could guarantee that the building of the road would be successful, yet the first car arrived on the island in 1947, ten years before the completion of the project. The Road, Lambee's road, inconceivably steep at places and with drastic curves, was finished in 1958.



The Ladder, a steep stone stairway, was once the island's main thoroughfare

"Now, how about an airport?" the Sabans asked.

The Dutch engineers returned to Saba. And once again the experts declared, "It's impossible to build an airport runway on a mountain; there is no space." And they left.

You might have guessed (and as I'm writing this I have tears in my eyes), but the Sabans, once again, didn't believe them and proved them wrong. They found the flattest spot on the island, called "Flat Point" and cleared it by hand. In 1959 French pilot Remi de Haenen from the neighboring island of St. Barth's became the first man to land an aircraft on the dirt strip at Flat Point, proving it's possible.

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In 1963 the airport was a fact with a 1,300-foot landing strip, the shortest commercial runway in the world, where only specially trained pilots flying small aircrafts may land.

It must be quite an experience arriving on Saba by plane. We watched one landing, and it was incredible. The plane started slowing down long before approaching the airstrip and miraculously stopped almost immediately after hitting the ground. If the pilot cannot stop because their speed is too fast and the runway is too short, they touch down and then lift off on the other side to try a second time.

Our Saba

We approach Saba at noon on the second day of our passage, sooner than we expected, but then, we expected to get to St. Maarten, not Saba. On the west side, which in regular tradewinds should be the most weather-protected side, an anchorage is indicated on the charts called Wells Bay, even though it isn't exactly a bay.

There isn't an anchorage; there isn't a beach. All we see are rocks, rugged black magma towers, sharp and broken, and the red vertical cliffs of the island. There is a row of nine mooring balls, all vacant and not at all close to the island. We grab one. The depth is 60 feet; the water is dark blue. It feels as if we are stopped out in the open sea, holding on to a small mooring ball. Accelerated puffs turn around the island all the time and the boat violently pulls on its mooring ball. Really hard to sleep peacefully here at night. Saba's shores and waters are so harsh and unforgiving that not many boaters venture this way. The island is also off-limits for most charter boats.

From where we are we see only one house up on the green hill and the beginning of a road at the foot of the island. We also see The Ladder, which no one uses anymore. There isn't a marina, not even a dinghy dock, and the shore is rocky. The only way to access this forbidden land from this side is by kayak; a dinghy won't do. From here, most cruisers take their dinghies all the way to the south side of Saba where the commercial port is, and they can access land from there. But it's a long ride.

We kayak to shore on the west side and begin climbing the steepest cement road in the world, surrounded by thick tropical vegetation, huge elephant ears and ferns, fragrant flowers and tamarind trees. There are no cars, no people, only shy goats grazing on the steep hillside. The place looks deserted. It takes us an hour to reach the top of the hill, all sweaty, legs hurting, hearts exploding. We have climbed up to The Bottom.

The Bottom, even though on top of a hill, is still in the foot of a volcano, Mount Scenery, about 3,000 feet high. It is a fairytale village; hard to believe real people live here and not elves. All houses etched against the dark mountain are painted white with green rims around the windows and doors, and red tin roofs, with low stone fences, tropical flowers and mango trees. Each house has its own rainwater collection system, some almost 200 years old made of stone, as there is no fresh water on the island and the inhabitants are very conscious of their freshwater consumption.

We decide to visit the village on the other side, Windwardside. We start walking again. Every car passing us on the road stops and people offer us a ride, and we have to explain that, in order to see and experience the place, we would rather walk the nine-mile road, The Road.

We pass by the Saba University School of Medicine, established by American expatriates, whose international students make up a fifth of the entire population on the island, which is about 2,000 residents. Thanks to the university, there is an excellent hospital on Saba providing residents with medical care. Most Sabans are in fact born in this hospital and some have never ever left the tiny island.

The Windwardside, much like The Bottom, is another fairytale place with white red-roofed houses perched on the slopes of hills overlooking the sea. Santa Claus' Summer Retreat. There is an art gallery displaying local artists' paintings and crafts, a hotel, and a few restaurants and shops. From here begins the long, steep but pleasant trail to the top of Mount Scenery, a 90-minute hike up among pristine tropical rainforest, referred to as "The Elfin Forest", one of many trails on the island all maintained by the park service.

We spend a few unforgettable days in Saba, one of the world's best diving sites with underwater magma towers, coral fields, and over 150 thousand species of fish. We snorkel near the volcanic shores, hike up Mount Scenery and The Ladder, we try tropical fruits we had never seen before, hitchhike between the two villages, and meet friendly people.



Hiking the trail to the top of the aptly named Mount Scenery

As we are sitting on the terrace of a restaurant with the most spectacular view, drinking cold beer in the company of tiny white red-roofed houses neatly huddled in a small valley surrounded by banana and papaya trees, among the green hills of a sleeping volcano populated by free-roaming goats, I am thinking, "How lucky that the wind has brought us to Saba".

And beyond: the sea. Blue water in all directions, pale shadows of islands in the distance.

Mira Nencheva, writer, photographer, wanderer, is sailing around the world and has been living full-time aboard her 38-foot Leopard catamaran, Fata Morgana, *with her husband, Ivo, and 11-year-old daughter, Maya, since July 2013. Their journey is documented in a travel-adventure blog www.thelifenomadik.com and in their Facebook page Facebook/TheLifeNomadik where Mira is publishing stories, pictures, and videos.*

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AUTHENTIC CARIBBEAN ARTS & CRAFTS

by Christine Gooch





In Bequia, where children race their homemade coconut-husk boats at Easter time, model boats of all sorts make fine souvenirs. In virtually all of the islands, craftspeople make origami-like birds, fish and other creatures out of palm fronds

Christine Gooch of S/Y Sweet Sensation *shares some tips and ideas for finding locally made souvenirs and gifts that put money into the local economy and reflect the culture and traditions of the Caribbean.*

"For us the word 'local' means Caribbean. Our identity is shamed and our visitors disappointed when they find shops full of crafts from the Far East." So says Aragorn Dick-Read of the Caribbean Artisan Network. But how do you tell the difference and where do you find locally made arts and crafts?

Based in Trellis Bay, Tortola, in the British Virgin Islands, Aragorn or his assistant can be seen on most days touring the anchorage in his floating "shop". He carries a selection of hand-printed T-shirts designed by him, baskets of spices sourced from agricultural communities throughout the region, and small locally made craft items such as carved calabash shells or coconut-shell turtles to amuse the kids. He has a larger selection of artisan crafts in his shop onshore, including beautiful pottery "fireballs". These are pottery spheres painted in various colours that mingle together, and decorated with swirling cutouts that cast lovely shadows when a lit candle is placed inside.

The Caribbean Artisan Network developed out of a connection between a few friends and grew into a network enabling artisans scattered across the Caribbean to connect with other artisans and share ideas, markets and talents. Passionate about preserving Caribbean crafts and traditions, Aragorn says, "I studied History of Art and Tribal Art and Tourist Art. I've sort of been into it all of my life, really."

Visiting a studio and watching an artist or traditional craftsman at work can be both fun and educational. We found Felix's studio right on the beach at Portsmouth in Dominica. Canvasses of all sizes are displayed on the walls, with more leaning in an upright stack, which you are welcome to browse through. A jar of paintbrushes, various paints and half-finished paintings obscure the top of the wooden table where Felix works. As well as canvasses, he paints calabash shells, and the last time we visited he had branched out and opened a small bar at the entrance to his studio, with cool beers kept in a huge glass-fronted fridge and colourful chairs and tables on the beach.

Also in Dominica is the Carib Cultural Centre, where you can taste cassava bread — starchy and filling and tasting smoky from the fire it's cooked over — and watch local ladies weaving baskets. The Caribs migrated from South America up the island chain in pre-Columbian times and Dominica is one of the few places in the Caribbean where they still live; the Cultural Centre is important in keeping their traditions alive. As well as the distinctive traditional woven baskets, the ladies make an ingenious device they call a "wife leader" — a cone-shaped latticework item with a woven ring at one end and an open mouth at the other. Slip the open end over your wife (or husband's!) finger and pull on the ring. The latticework closes up tight around their finger and they are trapped until you decide to release them. "Guess what this is" makes a good party game or conversation piece, but beware — as they get older they become less flexible; I put ours on while I was writing this description and got it stuck on my finger!

Bequia in St Vincent & the Grenadines is another place where there is a good selection of local art and crafts. Boat building has a long tradition on the island; nowadays you can watch beautiful model boats being made by members of traditional boat building families at Mauvin's or Sargeant Brothers' workshops in Ocar. To find them, walk round Admiralty Bay from Port Elizabeth towards the village of Hamilton. They will even make a model of your own yacht if you leave them a photograph to work from. If your budget doesn't run to such a luxury, walk back to the ferry dock, past the taxi rank under the big old almond tree where the taxi drivers lounge chatting on the bench seats in the open back of the vehicles or calling out as you pass, touting for business. A little further along the path is another tree with very unusual "flowers". Small coconut-shell boats with bright yellow, blue or red cotton sails hang from its branches, swinging gently in the breeze. If you're lucky enough to be in Bequia for the Easter

→



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—Continued from previous page

...Regatta you will see a crowd of local children, up to their knees in water, setting these boats racing from a tiny beach at Hamilton. The boats sail surprisingly well; we predicted they would capsize or sink almost immediately but this proved not to be the case, some making it out as far as the moored yachts before being scooped up by the race officials in their inflatable dinghy. The children's enthusiasm as they waded further into the water shouting encouragement to their boat and the beaming smiles on the faces of the race winners were a delight to see.

If you continue walking along Front Street you will pass many stalls selling crafts such as woodcarvings, coconut shell bird feeders and jewellery. There is one lady who has been there as long as I can remember, usually accompanied by at least one of her small children. She sells hand-made jewellery and crocheted Rasta hats, which she can often be seen working on while sitting by her stall.



Normally I would suggest buying direct from craftsmen or local stallholders rather than shops to ensure you are "buying local", but Bequia is one place where you can find locally made items in the shops. For example, there are calabash shells beautifully painted by one of several local artists, as well as painted "shack-shacks". A shack-shack is a percussion instrument made from the large, curved seedpod of the Poinciana or Flamboyant tree. After the pod is dried, the sound it makes when shaken gives it its name. There are also shops selling paintings by local artists, batik clothing, hand-painted silk scarves, pareos and cushion covers. If you can't afford an original painting, the Oasis Gallery sells prints, and the Bequia Bookstore sells books featuring the work of local artists plus a selection of titles by Caribbean authors.

Another option if you like the work of an artist but don't want to buy a painting is to look for something smaller and less expensive. It's sometimes possible to find reproductions in the form of prints, greeting cards or even fridge magnets, which is what we bought from a lady painting small watercolours on the waterfront in Les Saintes, Guadeloupe.

T-shirts are a popular and practical souvenir. In almost all of the islands you will find locals selling T-shirts and sarongs from beach-front stalls or strung on lines between the palm trees. While it's good that the money for these items goes directly to the stallholder, not all of them are made locally. T-shirts and jewellery designed and made in Grenada are available from Fidel productions, based in Carriacou. Felix Preisig was only seven years old when he drew a picture of Fidel, the lizard that became the company logo. Since then Felix has designed many T-shirts, including the best-selling turtle. His younger brother Lucas also designs for the company. Fidel Productions have



Think natural. The hand-painted calabash (locally called a boley) on the left, and the palm-frond fruit basket above and bird figure below are all made from readily renewable, locally grown resources — and don't add weight to your boat or your suitcase



shops in Port Louis Marina in Grenada and at Paradise Beach on Carriacou. The T-shirts are also available in the Tobago Cays, but Sandra from Fidel Productions advises you to beware of imitations; the only authorized sellers for Fidel in the Tobago Cays are boat boy Rondel Weekes on *Mr Quality* and Wilma Stowe on the island of Petit Bateau.

Local markets are a good place to buy spices and local jams, chutney and sauces, especially on "The Spice Isle" of Grenada. As you wander through the array of stalls piled high with fruit and vegetables, the pungent scents of cinnamon, coriander, mace, curry powder, vanilla and nutmeg fill your nostrils. It's good fun to chat with the local ladies. At the market in Le Marin, Martinique some of the vendors dress in their traditional costume of dresses made from madras (a cotton cloth with a checked orange, yellow and red pattern) and fringed with white *broderie anglais*, with a madras handkerchief tied in their hair. The number of knots and their position supposedly indicate whether the lady is married, available — or spoken for but still looking!

In some popular anchorages boat boys, like mosquitoes, can sometimes be regarded as a bit of a pest. But unlike mosquitoes, a polite "no thank you" or "we've already bought a fruit basket/bracelet/hat, thanks" is usually accepted with good grace. But hey, boat boys are human, too, and are just trying to make a living.

My husband, Kevin, and I have a fruit basket on board woven from palm fronds in Marigot Bay, St. Lucia. (When they have just been made they are green and squash flat to pack in a suitcase if you're flying home soon — I'm assured that they spring back into shape when unpacked). We also have a selection of origami-like palm-frond birds, fish and even a grasshopper. A word of caution if you are planning to visit New Zealand or Australia in the future: the authorities there are understandably very vigilant about introducing foreign pests and diseases, so you might have trouble taking products woven from natural fibres into the country. On our old boat, *Caliburn*, we had some much-loved palm-frond birds that were almost confiscated on arrival in New Zealand, despite being 20 years old. Eventually the official relented and let us keep them, but only after she had put them in a plastic bag and sprayed them liberally with insecticide.

It is perfectly possible to buy locally made crafts to suit all budgets throughout the Caribbean, especially if you venture away from the more obvious souvenir shops and get chatting to the locals, whether they are part of a network of artisans, local ladies selling homegrown spices, or enterprising solo men carving calabash shells and bamboo or weaving palm fronds. These are just some suggestions based on our own discoveries; I'm sure other yachties will have suggestions of their own. Sorry if I haven't included one of your favourites — why not let others know about them and help Caribbean arts and crafts thrive?

What Not to Buy!

The Caribbean environment is fragile. Please help protect it, and the wildlife that lives here, by not purchasing products made from turtle shell, coral, seashells, shark teeth, bird feathers or other animal products.

This is not just being conscientious, it's being safe: there are laws pertaining to environmental protection throughout the Caribbean. Unscrupulous vendors might tell you that "it's allowed here" or "this is government approved", but virtually all Caribbean nations are members of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), which prohibits trade in products made from endangered species. In Trinidad & Tobago, for example, it is illegal to take black coral out of the country and if found by Customs, you will certainly lose it and may be subject to a stiff fine.

Choose crafts made from renewable resources, such as calabashes, palm fronds, banana leaves, seeds, wood and coconut shells, as well as clothing, pottery and artwork. The environment that you are here to enjoy will thank you!

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SMOOTH SAILING AT NIGHT

by Frank Virgintino

For many, sailing at night is either something to be avoided or an uncomfortable task that must be undertaken. But it is not always possible to make all Caribbean passages during the day — Grenada to Trinidad is just one example — which makes nighttime sailing inevitable at times, and there are also times when sailing at night may actually be advantageous. A good example of when sailing at night may actually be advantageous would be when sailing eastward along the Greater Antilles. High mountain ranges result in katabatic wind after sunset (cold air sliding down the mountain side because it is heavier). Often the katabatic wind will stall the tradewind and create an offshore breeze.

While you may not actively choose to sail at night, nighttime sailing is a valuable part of the cruiser's inventory. Sailing at night is like any other aspect of cruising; the more you do it, the better you become at it. With the advent of GPS and use of AIS (Automated Identification System), nighttime sailing is simpler and safer than it ever has been.

What Are You Afraid Of?

There are many reasons that sailing at night can cause anxiety, foremost of which is human nature's fear of the dark.

Inability to see is a major issue, which is why so many are happy to see a full moon. The fear of going overboard and not being found is often a worry.

Heavy sea conditions are always a major concern, but at night everything seems magnified. Heavy wind requires additional sail handling. Even with roller furling and sheets led into the cockpit, reducing sail takes more work and more planning to execute.

Fear of hitting a submerged object or another boat is also listed by many as a concern. There are also cases of collision with other boats.

Fear of a navigation error that can result in a grounding or impact with rocks and



reef is another concern that causes worry greater than a similar situation occurring in daylight.

Lastly, for many and perhaps most, we like to sleep at night and being underway at night is not usually conducive to a good night's sleep. Many on watch simply fall asleep, while others are so anxious that they cannot sleep at all, leading to fatigue.

Night Sailing Tools and Tips

For those who are concerned that they cannot see at night, try to time your nighttime sailing with the full moon. A full moon is a magical thing and really "lights up the night".

If this is not possible then you have to prepare your "eyes" to see. If you have radar, learn how to tune it properly. If the radar has too little gain set, you will not see the target on the screen; if it has too much gain, you will not see anything. There has always been a discussion of the best way to set radar range at night. Below ten miles and you will be able to see clearly what is close to you. However, a large ship moving at 22 knots 20 miles away will not be seen and at his speed will be close to you in ten minutes and on top of you in 20. If you set your radar too far out, 24 or 48 miles, then seeing something close to you becomes difficult, if not impossible. One solution that I like is to use two radars simultaneously or, if that is not possible, to instruct the watch to switch back and forth between ranges every ten minutes.

AIS (Automatic Identification System, receiver version) can be installed inexpensively. With AIS and one radar, you will be able to "see" reasonably well. The radar can be set on six or 12 miles to spot anything close to you, and the AIS will pick up commercial ships heading your way and give you their CPA (closest point of approach) as well as TCPA (time to closest point of approach). This information will allow you to plan effectively to avoid contact.

Keep in mind that AIS is not a substitute for good radar that is well tuned and well monitored. There are small boats that do not have AIS, which you will not see on a dark night except on a radar screen and by looking for their running lights.

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However, not all boats have running lights and sometimes the only way to see them is on the radar screen.

The protocol for the watch should be to monitor the radar screen carefully and to switch back and forth between ranges every ten minutes or so. Additionally, the watch needs to stand up and look around 360 degrees every ten to 15 minutes. Looking through the ports or the dodger is not acceptable. A clear view is most important and the watch must have "night vision eyes", which means that they have not recently looked at any white light. If your cabin is equipped with "red" night lighting, so much the better. I do a great amount of nighttime sailing and so often the watch has picked up the lights of a boat or ship when the radar did not pick it up until the tuning was further tweaked. It is also helpful for the watch to stand and look around because the practice wards off the impulse to fall asleep. Many times the autopilot is on and the night brought a light balmy wind, perfect for dozing off.

I have always instructed crew (and guests) never to leave the safety of the cockpit. In addition, if there is only one person on watch, being attached to a safety line makes good sense: clip on! The man overboard light should be handy and it should have been tested before you head out; a dead battery makes for a good-looking piece of safety equipment that is of no use. I always like the night watch to have a whistle on a long lanyard tied around their neck. The man overboard pole and life ring should also be in good order, handy and easily released. The quicker the light goes into the water with the overboard ring, the easier it will be to spot and retrieve the man overboard. There are small portable overboard LED lights that the watch can attach that can mean the difference between life and death. If there is more than one person on the watch, standing protocol should be that if someone goes overboard, in addition to throwing the life ring, pole and light, that the "man overboard" location button on the chart plotter or GPS be activated to mark the spot. All of these precautions make some people even more tense, but they should be viewed as just good seamanship and not as something that we think will necessarily happen.

There are some hazards that cannot be seen. Flotsam and jetsam are always of concern with semi-submerged containers coming to mind. There really is no way to spot such hazards, so be prepared in case worse comes to worst and your pumps and efforts to stop a leak can't cope. The emergency bag should be in the cockpit and ready to take with you at a moment's notice. The safety raft and/or dinghy should be able to be launched instantly in any conditions. I always carry two half-filled five-gallon containers of water on deck as well, the idea being that if they are loosed, they will float. A few years back, a cruising sailboat en route to St. Croix hit a submerged obstacle, was holed and sunk in a matter of minutes. The couple on the boat were well prepared and used their dinghy to make landfall. While such an encounter is frightening, it is something we can effectively plan for. Fortunately, it is not a frequent occurrence but should it happen the best way to handle it is to be prepared for it and be sure that everyone on the boat is aware of what needs to be done and who is to do it.

Lastly, there is the fear of navigation error that can result in going aground or hitting a reef. Navigation errors are always possible and more so when an autopilot is interfaced with an electronic chart plotter resulting in "dumb line cruising". Cruising in such a fashion is dangerous and should be avoided. Cruising on a sailboat is an art. One of the most important parts of that art is alertness. Avoid the false sense of security that comes from being on autopilot. Consistently check your position; always know exactly where you are. Whether you plot your position on a paper chart or on a chart plotter, keep your position updated at all times. This discipline can significantly reduce the possibility of navigational error.

Night sailing is best done in open sea unobstructed by anything other than other vessels plying the sea. Big commercial ships can be managed by your eyes and reading of their navigation lights. You can easily compute their speed and direction and plot to avoid them. If you have an AIS receiver it is even simpler than that as you will see them on your plotter and the machine will calculate their CPA as well as their TCPA. Have you ever noticed that many times when you try to reach them on channel 16 they do not respond? Large commercial ships are underway doing their business and most do not want to chat with small pleasure boats. However, if you have DSC (Digital Selective Calling, a paging system that uses data signals to automate the transmission and reception of calls) on your VHF and know how to use it, and if you absolutely MUST contact the ship, it will be very hard for them to disregard a DSC call as it is logged electronically. Do your best not to make a nuisance of yourself. Unless you have something substantial to say, don't say anything. If you have broadcasting AIS, they will see you on their screen as well, even if they do not spot you on their radar. If you have only receiving AIS, you can still easily determine how to avoid the "big boy". The small boats that you may encounter that do not transmit AIS, you can spot on your radar or see their running lights if you maintain your watch carefully. Once you have taken care of business and your course is clear, all that is left is to count the stars in the sky and watch the magic in your phosphorescent wake!

When Light is Right

The Caribbean Sea may be one sea but it is clearly not one place. Sailing east along the south coast of the Greater Antilles is best done during the night, while exploring around the northeast corner of Antigua through the intricate maze of reef is best undertaken during the day. Entering an unknown harbor at night is usually a very bad idea. Many times your chart plotter will not reflect what is really so. Sailing into the main harbor at Aruba, the channel is more than 100 feet off what is shown on most chart plotters. The Gorda Sound passage just south of Necker Island is also misrepresented on many chart plotters and if you "follow the little red boat" you will end aground on the reef at on the southwest side of Necker. Closing on land at night, and in particular unfamiliar land, does not make for good seamanship. Always stand off and wait for daylight so you can add your eyes to the array of instruments you use to navigate.

Learn to Love Night Sailing

All of the above methods and strategies can be categorized as good seamanship. Good seamanship is a matter of knowledge and experience but those who are uncomfortable being at sea during the night are not always open to logic. In such cases the block is emotional and all the preparation and discussion will not overcome it. The best way to deal with this problem is to sail a few hours on nights that have some moonlight and do it repeatedly until he or she comes to realize that sailing at night is very much like sailing any other time. Often the wind is moderate and the night cooler, which can make for really pleasant conditions.

One of the big bonuses of sailing at night is the amazing sunsets and splendid sunrises seen. I remember a few years back, heading from Trinidad to St. Maarten. We were sailing on a starboard tack at a good pace on a beam reach powered by a very dry tradewind. On the starboard side the rising moon was so large that you could almost reach out and touch it. To the west, as the sun was setting, huge clouds of infinite variety were backlit and provided a wonderful show of slow-moving circus animals in delicate hues of pink and yellow. In all the years I have sailed, there were very few moments that could equal that one!

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







Reefing the Main for Caribbean Comfort

It is impossible to really enjoy sailing in the Caribbean unless you know how to reef the mainsail easily, quickly and efficiently, and how to then shake the reef out again. The Caribbean is renowned for consistent tradewinds, but there are also squalls, wind acceleration zones between islands and, usually this month, the notorious Christmas Winds. Be ready for them.

There are various methods of reefing a main: slab, single-line slab, roller, Leisure Furl and in-mast reefing. But the most important thing about reefing, no matter what system you have, is practice. Go out in ten to 12 knots of wind, reef the sail, mark all the control lines and shake the reef out. Do this operation four or five times, so you are really familiar with the procedure and can do it in the dark or in the midst of a hard squall.

Standard Slab Reefing Method

In slab reefing, the normal method is to take up on the topping lift (unless the boom is supported by a centreline boom vang), ease the mainsheet, drop the main until the rings on the tack reefing eye can be hooked under the hooks on the gooseneck, and then take up on the clew reefing line until the clew is two-blocked. Then the halyard is taken up until there is enough luff tension and the main is re-trimmed.

When shaking the reef out, the mainsheet is eased, the halyard slackened so the rings can be lifted clear of the hooks, the clew reefing line thrown off, the main hoisted, the luff tensioned and the main re-trimmed. Practice in the lee of the islands, marking the halyard so that the re-hoisting is minimized, and marking the clew reefing line so that the crew knows when the clew is two-blocked. It is essential that the clew reefing padeye and block are correctly placed so that there is proper tension on the foot of the sail.

Sailing in the Caribbean, a boat spends so much time sailing under reefed main that a wire, or low-stretch line, should be run in a pocket attached to the clew reef earring and secured to the tack reef earring by a lashing line. This should be adjusted so that the load is on this line. Since the load is on the line rather than the sail, only a couple of reef points are needed to gather up the bunt of the sail. Having the load on the line will preserve the shape of the sail; otherwise a few years of reefing will destroy the shape of the sail.

A jackline should be installed through the slides as far up as the first reef. At each slide there should be a double grommet. A jackline is secured to the first grommet below the second tack reefing eye, then through the sail slide, back through the next grommet, down one grommet, through the sail slide, and back through the grommet on the sail. Repeat this procedure until the bottom slide is reached. With the sail hoisted, pull the jackline tight and secure it. This will make reefing much easier, as there will be no strain on the bottom slides as the sail is reefed.



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The Dashew-Street Method

The above is the standard method of reefing a main, but there is an easier and faster method. I call it the Dashew-Street Method. I learned of Steve Dashew reefing his main by easing the sheet, topping the boom well up and slacking the halyard to the mark.

—Continued on next page

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—*Continued from previous page*

Then he took the clew reefing line to the mark and took up on a line secured to one side of the mast and run through the tack reefing eye to a winch. He then took up on the tack, dropped the topping lift, and re-trimmed the main. This is much faster than the usual method described above. Because of the angle of the boom, the clew reefing line is slack and only the last foot or so is under tension when two-blocking the clew. Shaking the reef out is faster, as the main is eased, the clew and tack lines are thrown off, and the main re-hoisted and re-trimmed. With the standard method, the halyard has to be slacked to unhook the rings and then the halyard cranked up to tension the luff.

The Street improvement to the Dashew method is to have a second tack reefing eye about a foot above the first one. If the halyard or luff of the sail stretch, or the main halyard has been slacked slightly too much, instead of cranking up on the halyard, the tack line is unreeved and fed through the upper eye lead to the winch and the luff re-tensioned. It is much easier to tighten the luff by pulling down rather than up!

Single-Line Reefing

Single-line reefing looks wonderful. Ease the main, slack the halyard to the mark, take up on a single reefing line, re-trim the main and all is well. But single-line reefing is not a free lunch. There are a lot of blocks in the system and each block causes friction, requiring a big winch. As time goes by, it often becomes harder and harder to crank down the reef. This is because, no matter how carefully the system is designed and installed, in time the tackles inside the boom will twist. I strongly recommend that once a year you have a rigger who is familiar with single-line reefing pull the system out of the boom, untwist it, check it for chafe and re-install it.

Roller Reefing

A method of reefing by rolling the sail around the boom was used on the Bristol Channel Pilot Cutters back in the late 1880s and is still found on replicas today. This type of reefing became very popular with ocean racers right after WWII and continued its popularity until the early 1970s. It was popular, as the main could be reefed to any size: you were not limited to a single, double or triple reef.

Roller reefing lost its popularity in the late 1960s and early '70s when the two-speed Barient winch came on the market. Sailors realized that slab reefing with lines led to two-speed winches enabled sails to be reefed faster and more easily.

Then came in-the-boom reefing/furling, with an electric or hydraulic motor winding the sail around a spool inside the boom. I have not sailed with in-the-boom reefing/furling, which I am told works well as long as the boom-mast angle is perfect. At the Annapolis boatshow, the boys at Forespar, the maker of the popular Leisure Furl, gave me a sales talk and an explanation of how to make sure the Leisure Furl gave a good reef: the boom should be approximately at a 90-degree angle to the mast. If the boom is too high the sail works its way aft on the roller, if too low the sail work its way forward. Again, go out in ten to 12 knots of wind and experiment. When the angle is correct, mark the topping lift and whenever you are reefing make sure the topping lift is on the mark.

To hoist sail, the line to the drum controlling the roller is thrown off, the halyard run to an electric winch and the sail hoisted. To drop the sail, the halyard is led to a winch or turns taken around a big cleat, the line to the roller drum is led to an electric winch, and the sail rolled up with the crew on the halyard slowly easing the halyard as the sail is rolled up. Once the sail is completely rolled up, a cover that is stowed in the boom is pulled forward, sealing the boom. This means no UV degradation and rainsqualls will not fill the boom with rainwater. If a rainsquall comes by and you want to collect water or take a shower, top up the boom and all the rain running off the boom will flow out by the gooseneck like a veritable waterfall.

As with any gear, in-the-boom reefing/furling does have its limitations. The roller is attached to the mast by a universal joint that will take care of misalignment, but the misalignment is limited to about 45 to 50 degrees off center. This means that the sail can only be set, doused or reefed going to windward or on a close reach. If the boat is running downwind, and the wind builds to the point that the sail must be reefed or doused, the course must be altered to a close reach before doing so. This would seem to me to be a major limitation of in the boom reefing/furling, but after the boatshow, Forespar had a party for owners of boats that had installed Leisure Furl and done extensive off shore passages. One boat had been twice around the world, two others once around the world, and others had done 10,000 or so miles. All were very happy with their Forespar in-the-boom reefing/furling system. However, they were all also wealthy. To convert to in-the-boom reefing/furling you need deep pockets.

As for in-the-mast roller reefing, I am not a fan of it. In my first experience with it, it was blowing and the electric motor was not powerful enough to roll up the sail unless we eased the main until it was luffing violently. Then I sailed two Antigua Sailing Weeks on a boat that had in-the-mast reefing. It worked well, but the sail had no battens and a hollow leach — not a good-looking, powerful sail. Also, a mast containing roller-reefing gear is much heavier than a standard mast, so the boat's heeling and pitching effect will be greater and additional ballast is required to give the same stability. Internal roller furling masts are expensive. However, correctly engineered these systems do work; look at the huge Perini's that have roller furling in the mast.

A number of sailmakers are now making sails for in-the-mast reefing with vertical battens. The photos show a nicely setting sail with a nicely curved leach, but how well will the sail roll up? Will the battens jam in the slot in the mast? Many skippers have had problems in heavy weather with the sail binding up when trying to reef. Billy Porter, a most experienced megayacht skipper, told me of his solution:



Well reefed down, a boisterous inter-island passage becomes a safe yet exhilarating experience

"Forget about the 'in' and 'out' labels on the control switch; think of clockwise and counterclockwise. No matter how tight the roller is tensioned, there is always some sag to it. When reefing or furling the main, always roll it to windward, as there will be more space on the windward side than the leeward side of the mast slot. So on starboard tack roll the sail clockwise, on port tack roll it up counterclockwise."

Practice Makes Perfect

To repeat, no matter which reefing system you have, it is important to go out in ten to 12 knots of wind, reef and shake out the reef a number of times, and mark all the halyards and reefing lines so that there is no debate as to whether they have been trimmed or slacked to the correct position. Do this, and then when sailing up and down the Eastern Caribbean island chain you can easily and quickly reef the main before leaving the lee of an island, have a fast and comfortable passage across the channel, and then shake out the reef as you reach the lee of the next island. If you have reefed down before leaving the lee of the island and the wind in the passage is lighter than you thought, you can easily shake out the reef and pick up speed.

For more information see The Ocean Sailing Yacht, Volumes One and Two, *by Donald M. Street, available at Amazon.com. Visit Don Street's website at www.street-iolaire.com.*





DECEMBER 2014

♈ **ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)**
Make the most of your creative inspiration and verbal skills before the second week, and let your romantic fantasies sail away during the third. Happy holidays!

♉ **TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)**
Boat business is still becalmed but your ingenuity, love life and gift of the gab will all get a lift around Week Three. Make as much way as possible at the end of the month.

♊ **GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)**
You'll have the drive to accomplish, but this month, creativity, articulation and romance will all put obstacles on your course until the third week.

♋ **CANCER (22 Jun - 23 Jul)**
The beginning of the month will be clear sailing, but around the third week your personal relationships and problem-solving abilities will meet shifting winds and contrary currents. Wait for Santa to come down the hatch.

♌ **LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)**
Approach romantic ties, inventive boat projects and cruiserly conversations with humor for the first two weeks. Be as productive as you can in the first half of the month, and then enjoy the holiday spirit in the second half.

♍ **VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)**
Any small squalls in new endeavors, love and self-expression will blow away by the third week, so be ready to hoist the chute again and don't give up your positive attitude.

♎ **LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)**
Ho, ho, ho. The first three weeks may be smooth sailing but after the third week things will turn frustrating with fluky winds and choppy seas in domestic relationships, ingenuity and correspondence. Don't despair; many others are in the same boat this month.

♏ **SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)**
Your sense of humor will be becalmed but other than that you are relatively aspect free, so take advantage of this lull. Perhaps it would be fun to invite your friends over for a poop-deck party: they aren't having such a calm month and need a little fun.

♐ **SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)**
Use your verbal talents to make progress in talks with loved ones and you will make positive progress on that course in the New Year.

♑ **CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)**
The first two weeks will be uneventful but you will pick up some fresh breezes in your sails in the last half of the month. Use this relatively aspect-free time to enjoy the holidays.

♒ **AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)**
Your energy is on a rising tide, so use it where you need it most and ignore the backed sails of your sense of humor.

♓ **PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)**
Business will be the prevailing weather in the last week, so use the time before that to prepare the ship in case of a short-notice charter. Creativity, relationships and communications will do their best to distract you in the first two weeks but just keep a firm hand on your emotional helm and everything will be smooth sailing.

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.

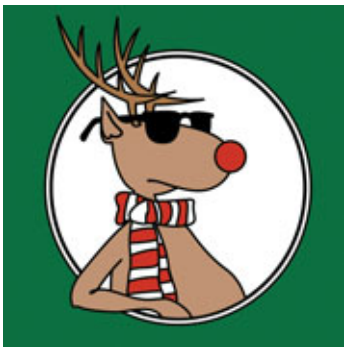
The dolphins were ready to power the sled,
But the guy raised a genny and mains'l instead.
With a burp and a chuckle he gathered the breeze
And called to the dolphins, now swimming with ease:

"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!

CHRISTMAS WINDS

(To the tune 'Mercedes Benz' sung by of Janis Joplin)

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a big jug of rum?
The weather's been crazy, it's time for some fun!
The winds of Saint Nicholas quite early have come.
I've got the juice, Lord — hurry up with that rum!

Oh Lord, can you help us with these great big seas?
Doyle says "an easy reach", but it ain't been for me!
The windward side's crazy, but so is the lee —
Oh Lord, can you flatten these awful rough seas?

Oh Lord, can you give us a little less wind?
Some friends, they have cats now; I've forgiven the sin.
Our rail's in the water, it's gone for a swim.
Head up or fall off, the sails need a trim.

Oh Lord, how I need you, please get it in gear!
Off to the Virgins I'm trying to steer.
The big party season is really too near —
Along with that rum, Lord, could you also bring beer?

— Janice Nagle



KEN DYER

The Sky from Mid-December to Mid-January

by Jim Ulik

The winter solstice is approaching and people are gearing up for the holiday season. Was there a Christmas Star? The actual date of this event is not documented. Ancient civilizations did associate the stars and planets with gods and spirits. The movements of these objects were also connected to weather and seasonal events. Infrequent astronomical events such as eclipses, visible comets or the conjunction of planets were often considered religious manifestations. The natural procession of Venus and Jupiter in their orbits has these planets occasionally lining up, creating bright apparitions. Another event that took place 2,013 years ago probably attracted a lot of attention. Look at Figure 1. There was a conjunction between Jupiter, Venus, Mars and Mercury. To the naked eye the four planets combined must have been a spectacular sight and shown very bright in the eastern sky. That natural event was sure to have religious significance for some believers. This close pairing of planets actually happened on November 6th, 0001.

The planets have taken their seasonal positions in the constellations. Mercury, Venus and Pluto are in Sagittarius. Uranus is positioned in Pisces. Neptune sits in Aquarius. Mars is located in Capricornus and visible in the western sky at dusk. The only two planets that are visible most of the night are Jupiter, located in the constellation Leo, and Saturn in Libra. The stars and planets position and movements are known. But discoveries are still being made. Check Figure 2 for the latest cosmic scoreboard.

Sunday, December 21th – December Solstice

This day marks the two-year point past the end of the Mayan calendar, which some concluded was a prophecy that the world would end. Another doomsday prediction gone wrong!

Now back to astronomy: the December or winter solstice occurs at 1903 AST (2303 UTC). The Sun reached its most southerly declination and will be directly over the Tropic of Capricorn at 23.44 degrees south latitude. The tropic of Capricorn was named over 2000 years ago when the Sun was positioned in the constellation Capricornus during the winter solstice. Currently the Sun passed from Ophiuchus entering Sagittarius.

Monday, December 22nd - New Moon

This phase occurs at 2136 AST (0136 UTC). With no Moon to interfere, this may be a good time to find the Andromeda Galaxy in the northwest sky after sunset.

Monday, December 22nd to Tuesday, December 23rd - Ursids Meteor Shower

These are the peak nights for these meteors. It is predicted that there will be approximately ten meteors per hour and no moonlight to interfere. Historically there have been outbursts of 25 per hour. The source is the constellation Ursa Minor (the Little Bear) also known as the Little Dipper. The longer meteor streaks are traveling towards you and the shorter ones are traveling away.

Wednesday, December 24th and Thursday, December 25th – Christmas

The Moon and Mars line up in the west at dusk. Two of the seven comets in the December sky are positioned very near a bright Mars, which is 94 percent illuminated. Is there anything that could pass as a Christmas Star this year? Not likely. This season the comet Siding Spring was too far away and arrived too early to be a candidate as a modern-day Christmas Star. How about comet C/2014 Q2 Lovejoy? It is the brightest comet this period. It will reach the closest point to Earth on January 7th. Look for it near Sirius in the constellation Canis Major. The only planets visible at night are Jupiter and Saturn. The only planet conjunction occurs on January 10th, 2015 between Mercury and a bright Venus.

Friday, December 26th - Puppid–Velid meteor shower

This is the peak night for the Puppid–Velid meteor shower. The velocity of these meteors is approximately 82,770 mph (133,200 km/h). The maximum number of meteors expected to be visible from a dark location is around 15 per hour.

Saturday, January 3rd to Sunday, January 4th - Quadrantids Meteor Shower

The shower runs annually from January 1st through 5th. It peaks this year on the night of the 3rd and the morning of the 4th. The Quadrantids is an above-average shower, with 40 to 100 meteors per hour at its peak. The best time to look is after midnight, from a dark location. It is thought to be produced by dust grains left behind by an extinct comet. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Bootes, but can appear anywhere in the sky. They will enter our atmosphere at 90,000 mph, burning up 50 miles above Earth's surface. Unfortunately the nearly full moon will block out all but the brightest meteors this year.

Monday, January 5th – Full Moon

The Moon becomes full at 0054 AST and almost directly above Port-au-Prince, Haiti (2354 EST). It will set at 0636 only to rise again at 1830.

Monday, January 12th – Deep Sky

January is a good month for finding some deep sky objects in the night sky. The winter skies can be clearer because there can be less moisture and turbulence in the atmosphere. Numerous deep sky objects can be found in the constellation Orion. Ten of them are noted in Figure 3. Two of the famous nebulas are number eight, The Horsehead Nebula, and number ten, the Great Nebula in Orion. The locations of four other deep sky objects that might be found are included in the graphic. The Moon will not interfere until it rises at 2359.

In the News

Comet sniffing is in the news. The first discovery of organic molecules found on a planet outside our solar system was in 2008. Recently the *Rosetta* orbiter took an electronic sniff of a comet. The comet is made up primarily of water ice and dust. At least 11 compounds have been identified in the comet's atmosphere. Five of those compounds — methane, carbon dioxide, ammonia, methanol and formaldehyde — can originate from organic sources. Landing a probe on the comet was the next step. Tracking down the source of the compounds is the next task for the *Rosetta* team.

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

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

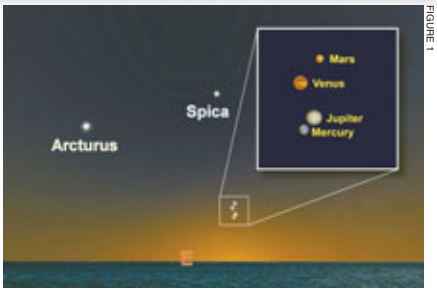


FIGURE 1

Conjunction of planets on November 6th, 1AD



FIGURE 2

A short list of discoveries in 2014 including the number of asteroids approaching Earth



FIGURE 3

Deep sky in January. 1) Monkey Head, 2) 37 Cluster, 3) NGC 2194, 4) NGC 2141, 5) NGC 2022, 6) NGC 2112, 7) M78, 8) Horsehead Nebula, 9) De Mairan's Nebula, 10) Great Nebula in Orion, 11) Satellite Cluster, 12) NGC 2232, 13) M47, 14) M41



FIGURE 4

Christmas Tree Star Cluster found in the Cone Nebula near the constellation Orion

ESO



CRUISING KIDS' CORNER

My School Is Not a Building

The Things I Like and Don't Like About Cruising

by Maya, age 11

Hello people! It's Maya here. Today I will be writing about things I like and things I don't like in this *Nomadik* boat-life.

My mom asked me if I'd rather live on the boat or in the house back in Canada. That was probably the hardest question, harder than god-forsaken math! I think I **like** the boat better. In the house I was always scared of the dark and I still am and I always will be. I'm willing to hold my bladder till the morning instead



of going to the bathroom at night. And also I was scared because I was young and I believed in monsters. My room was the biggest in the house not to mention it was pretty empty. I'm pretty much the opposite of claustrophobic. Here in the boat my room is small, proportional and cozy. The house was okay though. We had a huge TV, a leather couch, a big kitchen, and all that cool stuff. But it was boring when my brother wouldn't let me in his room, my parents were watching movies that are not for kids, and I had nothing to do. So yeah, I definitely pick the boat. We travel, meet new people, we go sailing and see remarkable islands. It's really great.

But let me start with one thing I **don't like** about cruising. The worst part of sailing is that every single thing gets salty wet. And we have to wash it by hand! I wash my clothes or bedcovers and the next day we go sailing. And a huge wave splashes on top of everything, which really, really sucks. Then comes the worst part: washing again! I have to fill up a bucket with water, and then I put all the bedcovers in it with detergent. Then I mix and scrub and I leave them to soak for about half an hour, and again scrub, scrub, scrub, then squeeze the water out, then rinse twice with fresh water, then put them to dry on the safety bars on the sides of the boat. So now you know how I wash my stuff by hand. But you guys on land have your washing machines, right? To be honest, your way is a pretty lazy way of doing it.

The really cool thing I **like** about saltwater is saltwater itself. I have become a professional free-diver and if you don't believe me, your loss. I dive, like, seven or eight meters deep. Pretty much as much as my dad but I'm sure I will learn to go deeper. I can hold my breath for 32 seconds. We did a test at the beach in Martinique. But I'll learn to hold it even longer. I have never been so proud and happy for myself. Just a couple of months ago I was terrified by deep water and the creepy animals lurking inside the vast ocean: sharks, barracudas, remoras, and stuff like that. But now, when I dive deep to the ocean bottom, I feel flawless and fearless of what's around me. I feel like I'm the scary great white shark chilling on the ocean bottom. It's a feeling not everyone can feel; it's as though I can breathe underwater. I am blessed to have this superhuman power that King Neptune has granted me.

But the best thing I **like** about cruising is friends. Back in Canada, I had only a few friends that you can count on your ten fingers, at school and in my neighborhood combined. But since we are on the boat, it's genius, so many new friends: old, young, everyone is awesome! I love going to the beach and other places to meet new local kids and also other boat-kids like me. It saves me from going crazy on the boat. Meeting new friends is easy. I usually ask them: "Hi, do you want to hang out?" Or "Hi, want to be friends?" And it almost always works! Worst-case scenario: they don't want to hang out with me.

Whether examining a freshly caught fish, wearing traditional dress with my friend Noial in Guatemala, or studying on the boat, my school is the whole world around me



NENCHEVA (ALL)

But so far, since Guatemala, I really miss my best friend Noial from *S/V Friendship*. The day we met at the pool, she came for a sleepover, just a couple of hours later. I miss playing with her, I miss swimming, drawing, sleepovers, chatting, climbing mountains, exploring canyons, jumping from waterfalls, making our own breaking-news videos that I still keep on my phone, and also when we recorded ourselves dancing in the cockpit when my brother Vik was DJ-ing his music. I still have that on my phone but it's embarrassing so I won't show it to anyone. She helped me at school in Guatemala, because I didn't speak Spanish in the beginning, and we went together to this local school with the local kids for a few months. Also, Noial taught me how to dive from the steps of our catamaran. We used to jump in the water after school with our clothes on. I feel like crying while I am writing these happy memories… Noial and me, we were born almost at the same time. We celebrated our double tenth birthday together. That was the day I saw her for the last time. We hugged, wished each other happy birthday, said "See ya tomorrow", and never saw each other the next day, or ever since. We had good wind and we sailed away… I always wonder what she does right about now. We did argue more than we should have, which I totally regret doing, but like they say: you only realize what you had after you've lost it.

Of course, leaving is one thing I **don't like** about cruising. Every time we meet cool people and make new friends, we have to leave, or they have to leave, and who knows when we will meet again…

Another thing I **like** is hiking up mountains and volcanoes. I have a list of all the best climbing we've been doing: we climbed Mount Scenery in Saba, Morn Diablotin and the Boiling Lake in Dominica, la Grande Soufriere in Guadeloupe, Mont Pelé in Martinique, and not to mention the great, one and only Pico Duarte in Dominican Republic, the tallest mountain in all of the



Caribbean! It took us two days to reach the summit and we had a guide and two mules: Margarita and Pintero. It was awesome! We also visited all types of waterfalls and natural pools.

Green became my favorite color. Not the money-green, but the vegetation-green of the Caribbean. All the beautiful plant-, trees-, fruit-, vegetable- and insect-green. The Caribbean is a great place, I will never ever forget it, and it's just wonderful! Not that I am bragging but all I'm saying is that I'm proud of all the climbing I did. I lost a lot of fat and my legs became the legs of Hercules because of walking, climbing, and free-diving. I'm fit now.

Everyone we meet asks me, "What about school?" It's really getting on my nerves. I do actually go to school. And I also have something to teach you today: MY SCHOOL IS NOT A BUILDING, it is the world!

I have this huge book on the boat fully illustrated and alphabetic and it's called *The Random House Children's Encyclopedia*. I learned a lot from it, and when I opened it on "K" and read about *knowledge* it said, "If learning took place only at school no one would ever graduate." It also said that the three steps of learning are: 1) Traveling, 2) Reading, and 3) Growing up. I'm doing all three steps at the same time!

There is your answer to your really annoying question.

Did I **like** school back in Canada? Not so much. But school on the boat is pretty great. I bet I learn more traveling and talking to people in one day then any school kid does in a classroom for one week!

Anyway, I wanted to write this because it's all facts and I think I will end it here. Thank you for taking your time and reading!

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CRUISING KIDS' CORNER

The VILLAGE CHRISTMAS Feast

Fiction by Lee Kessell

In a small village in the hills of an island in the lower Caribbean, the women didn't have any money to spare for Christmas gifts or special food, either. But then Motsy had an idea to bring everyone a little Christmas cheer. Like a lot of young children in the village, Motsy lived with her grandmother because her own mother was off somewhere trying to make a better life for herself, and eventually for Motsy. So Motsy said to her grandmother, "Granny, let's get each of the mothers to make just one special dish for Christmas and we can share them all between us!"

"That's a wonderful idea, *doudou*. Then we can sit and eat and chat with each other and celebrate Christmas!"

Granny gave Motsy a big hug, then she grew serious and said, "But we must start organizing the food right away because Christmas Day is only a week from now."

Granny and Motsy went to all the houses in the village and told the women what they had in mind. The mothers agreed that it was no hardship to make a special dish to share and after a little thought they told Granny what they could make. The women who had cottage gardens promised bowls of salad or dishes of cooked beans, eggplant, carrots, corn or yams. One old mother promised to make cassava pone, a sort of cassava short bread. Another old lady who had an avocado tree in her yard said she would slice all the ripe ones, take off the skins and put them in a big bowl

They told Granny what they could make

sprinkled with a little vinegar, because avocado always went well with a salad. A few women who kept chickens promised hard-boiled eggs and one said she had an old bird that had stopped laying so she would boil it and make a good, hot chicken stew with chewy dumplings. Everyone would want some of that! As for something to drink, that was easily solved because Granny had a big lemon tree right next to her guava tree and with Motsy's help she would prepare jugs of delicious juice.

On Christmas morning everyone was busy cooking and making all the dishes that had been promised. When they were ready, benches were set up and the food and drinks laid out. Children were running about underfoot, screaming and laughing and chasing each other because they had never had any reason to be excited about Christmas before. Mothers were scolding their young ones, trying not to laugh, and everyone was hungry and anxious to begin the feast. And what a feast it was, with everyone tucking in and going back for second helpings and all washed down with Granny's fruit juice.

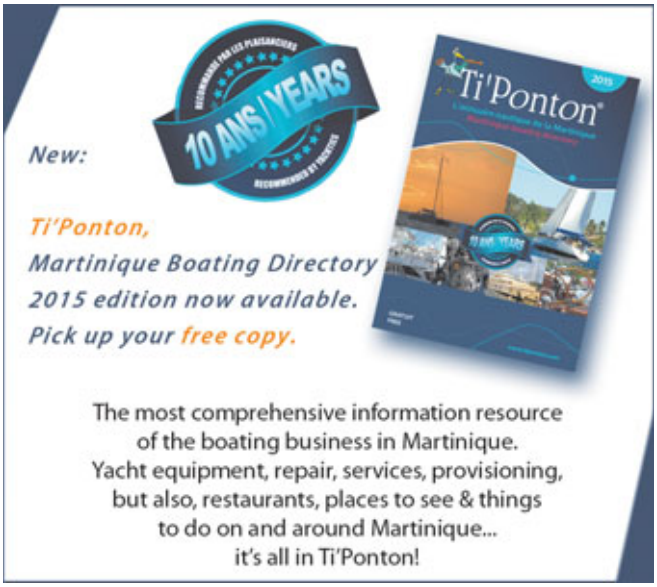
As the afternoon was drawing to an end, the happy women gathered up their empty dishes, put away the benches and wished each other "Happy Christmas".

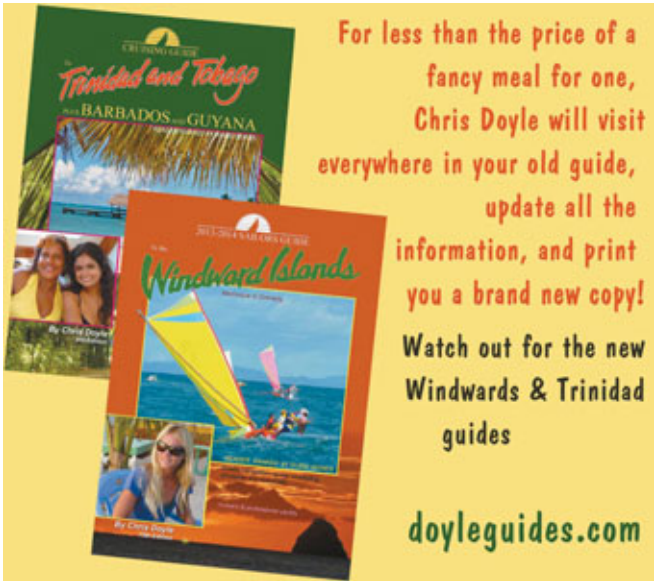
The next morning the children woke up and there at the bottom of their beds was a Christmas gift — a bright ball or a small cricket bat, a spinning top or a pretty doll. Meanwhile in Granny's cottage, Motsy found at the foot of her bed a silver angel doll with golden wings — something that the little girl had always wanted.

Everyone in the village wondered where the gifts had come from. Who could afford to buy such gifts and who could sneak into their cottages and leave the gifts on the children's beds? No one had an answer to those questions but everyone agreed it was the happiest Christmas anyone could remember, yes, it was a real Christmas miracle.

So you see, miracles do happen!

THE END







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MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

DECEMBER - JANUARY 2015

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 2014		21	1125	11	0422
DATE	TIME	22	1224	12	0509
1	1957	23	1323	13	0548
2	2048	24	1421	14	0634
3	2140	25	1557	15	0722
4	2232	26	1611	16	0815
5	2325	27	1703	17	0908
6	0000 (full moon)	28	1754	18	1005
7	0018	29	1845	19	1104
8	0110	30	1936	20	1204
9	0200	31	2027	21	1303
10	0248	**January 2015**		22	1400
11	0335	1	2119	23	1445
12	0419	2	2211	24	1549
13	0502	3	2307	25	1641
14	0544	4	2353	26	1735
15	0627	5	0000 (full moon)	27	1825
16	0710	6	0042	28	1916
17	0756	7	0129	29	2008
18	0843	8	0214	30	2059
19	0934	9	0258	31	2149
20	1028	10	0340		

LOOK OUT FOR...

The Sandbox Tree – Beware of Flying Dolphins!

by Lynn Kaak

As you travel through the Caribbean, every month there's something special to look out for.



The Sandbox tree (*Hura crepitans*) has a couple of interesting claims to "fame". Really, how many trees have had YouTube videos made about them, except for those Cat vs Christmas tree videos?

The Sandbox tree, also sometimes known as the Monkey No-Climb, is native to the Caribbean, and is one of the largest native trees. They can grow to a height of about 40 metres (130 feet), with a trunk wide enough to take the weight of all of that height. It garnered the "Monkey No-Climb" moniker from the very recognizable multitude of sharp dark spines or points that grow on the smooth brown bark. The tree has an arching top canopy, as opposed to lots of lower branches, which makes it a good shade tree. The heart-shaped leaves can grow up to 60cm (two feet) in width.



This species of tree produces two kinds of flowers, a male and a female, both found on the same tree. The male looks somewhat like a cluster of dark red berries, and has no petals. The female flower is shaped something like an ice cream cone (without the scoop), with the petals around the top having colour, while the base is green.

The other recognizable part of the tree is the mature seedpod. These pods, which are about 7.5cm (three inches) wide, looking like little pumpkins, have 16 segments. In early colonial times, the unripe fruit was hollowed out and filled with sand, to create a sandbox for blotting ink while writing; thus the name. The seedpod is also the stuff of the videos. These pods can explode or burst open with a loud bang and can reportedly shoot the seeds a great distance varying from 14 to 45 metres. In some places, the tree is also known as the Dynamite tree for the loud sound the exploding fruit makes. Injuries have been known to occur! The other common names of Monkey's Pistol and Monkey's Dinner Bell are derived from the fruits' propensity to explode.

The mature fruit segments look like tiny dolphins, frequently seen being sold as jewellery at straw markets and craft sales. With a little care, and some sanding, the fruit or pod segments can make nice necklace pendants and earrings.

Handling the fruit and seeds is perfectly safe when they aren't exploding, but the tree's sap is caustic and poisonous. In some areas, fishermen use the sap to poison fish, while the Caribs took advantage of the poisonous sap to add a little something extra to their arrows.

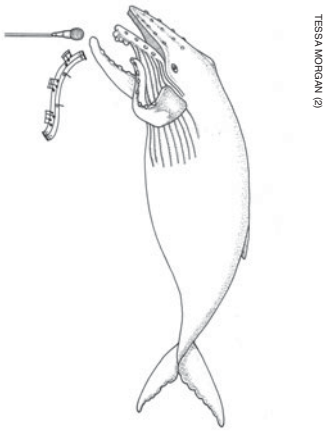
When walking through the damper areas of a Caribbean forest under partial shade, should you hear a loud "crack", better duck. You might be assailed by flying dolphins!

Can a Difference of One Degree Determine the Sex That You Could Be?

Salty is a humpback whale who loves to sing. Every the winter he swims throughout the Caribbean Sea. He doesn't need a passport because he's an international citizen! Want to know more about his friends the sea turtles?

Unlike many animals, a sea turtle's sex is not determined at the time of conception, but instead is greatly influenced by the temperature of the sand where the eggs are incubated.

Unlike humans and most vertebrates, whose gender is determined by sex chromosomes (XX for female and XY for male), sea turtles lack these chromosomes. Instead, incubation temperature determines the sex of sea turtles, which means the temperature of the nest plays a large role in the sexes of the baby turtles.



TESSA MORGAN (2)

This factor is known as Temperature-dependent Sex Determination, or TSD. Female hatchlings are produced at warmer temperatures and males at cooler temperatures. For example, in green turtles, temperatures need to be 88°F or above for the eggs to become females. For males to develop, the temperature is around 82°F. If the temperature of incubation falls somewhere between 82°F and 88°F (28-32°C), a mixture of the sexes develop. Heat produced by the eggs themselves can also contribute to the incubation temperature — eggs in the center of the nest become females and the eggs along the periphery become males.

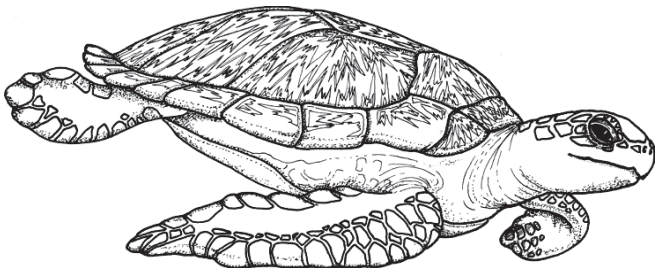
For sea turtles, the critical period during development when the sex is determined appears to be during the middle third of incubation. The pivotal temperature — the constant incubation temperature that produces equal numbers of male and female hatchling sea turtles (when the sex ratio is closest to 1:1) — is approximately 82 to 86°F (28 to 30°C) for all sea turtle species for which data is available.

The incubation duration is inversely proportional to the temperature. This means that at higher temperatures the incubation period is shorter, and at lower temperatures the incubation period is longer.

Climate Change Effects

If temperature affects the sex ratio of sea turtles, how might climate change impact populations in the future? As it turns out, the temperature-dependent sex determination story may be incomplete. Currently, rising temperatures are already resulting in a greater number of female sea turtles and a smaller number of males. It has been suggested that if there is even a one-degree Celsius warming of average temperatures, an even more significant bias could occur. If average warming exceeds three degrees Celsius, mortality rates of the eggs may also occur.

Relatively cool sand produces males, relatively warm sand produces females, but extremely warm sand results in eggs that hatch much more quickly (and may have development problems because of this rush). Climate change isn't just resulting in many more female turtles; it might be resulting in weaker or less fit sea turtles.



What's the conclusion? Rising temperatures increase the chance that sand temperature will exceed the upper limit for egg incubation, which is 34°C. Climate change may also affect the nesting grounds of turtles as sea levels rise. Beaches currently being used by turtles might vanish under the sea. Ocean acidification (caused by increased CO2 levels) could potentially alter the sediment of the beaches, which may lead to inadequate conditions for incubation. Sea turtles select their nesting sites based on several factors, such as low salinity, sufficient space above the high-tide line, adequate vegetation (for some species), high humidity, etcetera. All of these may be affected by an increase in average global temperatures.

Nathalie Ward, PhD, works with the US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary,

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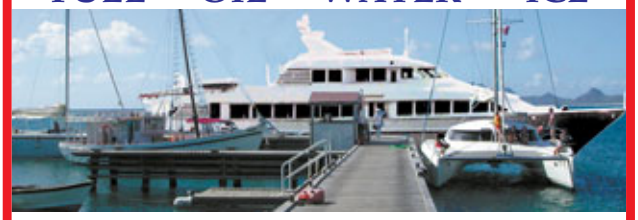


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... and much more!

A Caribbean Christmas to Remember

by Shirley Hall

I love Christmas in Trinidad, everything about it: the togetherness, parang music and, of course, the food. This is the story of my Christmas childhood in Trinidad, where my parents, grandparents and brothers all got together and played a part in the preparations.

My father would find three rocks almost the same size and place them in a triangle on the ground. At the front he would put pieces of dry wood. Next a biscuit tin three-quarters full of water would be placed upon the triangle of stones. He would then light the wood to heat the water, and let it burn for about ten minutes, adding more wood if necessary. Then came the big moment when he would place a ham in the biscuit tin and leave it to boil for two to three hours. He would check occasionally to make sure the water was still covering the ham — or stray dogs weren't eying it.

We did not have an oven, all we had was a two-burner stove, but that never presented a problem for us because we knew alternative ways of baking. My grandfather would dig a hole about a foot and a half in diameter and about a foot deep. He would place chopped pieces of very dry wood in the hole, till it was three-quarters full. As it burned down, Grandpa would add more wood. In the meantime my brothers and I were given the task of beating butter and sugar light enough for the cakes. (As I reminisce I wonder how much of the mixture we ate, and if it would have made a difference in the quantity and quality of the finished baked goods.) We were also given the task of grating the coconut for the sweetbread on a homemade biscuit-tin grater.

My mother was responsible for kneading the flour for the bread and my grandmother would sort the ingredients for the sweetbread and the cakes. By this time the cakes were mixed, and the sweetbread and the regular bread were ready for the makeshift oven.

When the fire in the hole was red and not smoking anymore, my mother would place a large pot quarter-filled with water over it and let it come to a boil. Then they would place the cake mixture — or the sweetbread, or the regular bread — in coated pans and place those pans in the pot with the heated water. A piece of tin was used to cover the pot. On this tin were placed pieces of burning embers. This made a covered pan with heat at the bottom and top. Baking in this manner normally took about two hours to finish all your cakes and breads.

It may sound difficult, but once you get a handle on it, it becomes easy. By the time everything was finished baking, my father would drain the ham.

Here are a couple of simple cake recipes you can try — with the use of your oven! I hope you enjoy making these cakes, for they are easy to make and the taste is beyond this world. The regional holiday drink is ginger beer or ginger ale made from the true ginger root, not fake chemical flavors. Ginger settles the partying stomach!

Have a safe and Merry Christmas, one and all.



Pound Cake
2 Cups (one pound) butter
2 Cups granulated sugar
8 large eggs
1 teaspoon fresh grated lime peel
1 teaspoon almond essence
4 Cups flour
4 teaspoons baking powder

Cream butter, beat in the sugar gradually, and then beat in eggs one at a time. Add the grated peel and essence and mix thoroughly. Combine flour, baking powder and a pinch of salt, gradually fold into the butter mixture. Pour batter into a greased and floured loaf pan. Bake in a preheated oven at 325°F for 45 minutes or until tester comes out clean.

Golden Coconut Cake
3/4 Cup flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
pinch of salt
1 Cup (8 ounces) butter
1 1/4 Cup granulated sugar
1 1/4 Cup shredded coconut
1 Cup raisins
1/2 Cup chopped candies cherries (red and green)
1/2 Cup of mixed peel
4 eggs
3/4 Cup evaporated milk

Sift together flour, baking powder and salt. Cut in butter until mixture looks like finely ground breadcrumbs. Stir in sugar, coconut, raisins, cherries and mixed peel. Beat eggs well, and slowly add to flour, stirring thoroughly. Add the milk and combine well. Pour the mixture into a greased round pan and let bake for one hour at a 325°F. Cool in pan for ten minutes before serving.

Instant Ginger Ale
1 Cup fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
1 Cup sugar (or less to taste)
2 Cups water
club soda
1 lemon and 2 local limes sliced into wedges and seeded
fresh mint to garnish (optional)

In a suitable pot combine ginger, sugar and water. Simmer slowly until sugar is dissolved and ginger is softened, about ten minutes. Strain warm syrup and allow to cool. Fill tall festive glasses with ice; add one part ginger syrup to three parts club soda. Squeeze a lime and a lemon wedge into the glass. Increase ginger syrup if you desire more sharpness.

Ginger Beer
1 Tablespoon of the freshest ginger root you can find, peeled and grated
1 Cup sugar
juice of 1 lemon
1/4 Tablespoon baker's yeast
filtered or bottled water

You'll need a funnel and a two-litre glass bottle with a screw-tight cap or cork. If you can't find a glass one, a clean two-litre plastic bottle will work. For the best results, sterilize all of your equipment as much as possible. Immerse it in hot water, close to boiling.

Through a funnel, put sugar and yeast into the bottle. In a bowl combine the grated ginger root and lemon juice and transfer it to the bottle. Add water to fill it halfway and shake well to mix all ingredients. Add more water, leaving about an inch of space at the top. Screw the cap on, or cork, and shake again. Leave in a warm place for about two full days, but not in direct sunlight. Then put the bottle in the fridge to stop the fermentation process. Refrigerate overnight. I recommend pouring it through a strainer unless you like pieces of grated ginger.

Shirley Hall is the author of The New Caribbean Home Garden Handbook.



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'MOST PLAGIARIZED' YACHTING AUTHOR?
Dear Chris Doyle,

Excellent article in the October issue of *Caribbean Compass* and kudos to the crew of *Traumerei*, for whom the loss of the rudder was a major inconvenience, but not a disaster. You state that you had the idea of how to rig that type of emergency rudder because it was described in an article in a yachting magazine. That type of emergency rudder is drawn on page 609 of my book *The Ocean Sailing Yacht* volume 1, printed in 1974. In the late 1970s and the '80s so many articles appeared in yachting magazines where the basic info came from OSY that I was often asked, "What does it feel like to be the most plagiarized yachting author in the world?"

As a footnote to my article in the August issue on keeping belowdecks cool, after a lecture in the Annapolis boatshow where I showed the omni-directional windscoop, one of the audience said that they had seen them in the Middle East, ventilating buildings. He was told that that type of ventilator had been in use since 800AD — obviously it is a very effective design.

Don Street
Glandore, Ireland

WARMING MY SOUL
Dear *Compass*,

I cannot even begin to tell you how much I enjoyed reading the November issue! From all of the pictures (where can I get a picture of that boat with Christmas lights?), to the stories — my wanderMUST is kicked into full gear!

Thank you so much for warming my soul even though my body is freezing (21°F here in Iowa). I will be joining the ranks of the newbie sailors, I hope — even if it means a salvaged 30-foot sailboat to fix up.

Again, thank you so much. Blessings and peaceful waters to you all.

Shelly
www.TropicalTreasureHunters.com

YOUTH SAILING AT PORTSMOUTH, DOMINICA
Dear *Compass*,

I helped rejuvenate kids' sailing in the south of Carriacou and had been watching the success of the local team who took over, now, two years on, doing a better job than I could have, when I got a call from my friend, Bucky in Dominica.

Bucky (Newton McLawrence) is a Dominican who is also related to Windward, Carriacou. He has worked for me on several boat projects and, some years back, found and trained a local cabinetmaker to build dinghies for me, working with him until he understood the plans and material. He has also worked for other yachts and rebuilt a Hurricane Ivan wreck. He started as a young man in Dominica working for visiting yachts and rowing tourists up the Indian River. Bucky is a good man who likes helping out in the community.

Some months back Bucky called me to say he'd found an unused fleet of eight Optis with which to start a kids sailing program in Portsmouth, Dominica. Cobra Tours of Dominica (which I understand to be a "together" operation) has joined in. They have finished a summer of youth sailing, are taking a break while the kids settle back into school, then intend to conduct Saturday sailing through the school year. Their summer sailing program was ambitious, with sailing most days and maintenance as required, hands-on work with out-of-pocket expenses to boot. They are volunteers.

They requested and I sent all that I had written up on youth sailing here, including three *Compass* stories on what is now L'Esterre Junior Sailing on Carriacou ("Old Dinghies Sail On", "Grass Roots", and, 15 months after the club had become locally operated, "Watching It Happen"). LJS has now been locally operated for more than two years. Allison, who runs LJS (as well as Isle of Reefs Tours), has two kids in the program. Kirsann, a local fisherman who started as a volunteer, has now done sailing instructor clinics and has become a good and patient teacher who knows his material and comes well prepared. When something succeeds, support materializes. Donations and fundraisers have provided new lifejackets, sails, and maintenance items. Additional boats have been added to the fleet. And LJS now pays its instructor — as a good teacher (who also is the safety escort) should be — when possible.

LJS has had the kind of success that I wish for youth sailing on Dominica. Bucky and his associates, now with a season of youth sailing under their belt, have shown that they can do it. So if you're looking for an opportunity to "give back", as visiting yachties say, I think this is a good one. When calling at Dominica, check out their kids sailing program at Portsmouth, see what you think they're worth. Cobra Tours sent me photos of what they are doing. It's a good-looking fleet and the kids are wearing lifejackets. Ask what else they might need — I know that Opti rudder pintles and gas money for the escort (coaching/safety boat) will be on the list.

Contact information:
Newton McLawrence
Roller Street
Portsmouth, Dominica
(767) 614-3463
cobratours@hotmail.com

Fair Winds,
Jim Hutchinson
S/Y Ambia

SPECIAL DELIVERY
To the *Caribbean Compass*,

When somebody wants a yacht delivered, there can be various reasons. In some special situations (e.g. sudden illness or death) it might not be possible to hire an experienced, well-paid delivery crew. Maybe in these cases we can make a difference.

I'll explain: We are a small group of professional charter skippers in Holland. All of us charter our traditional sailing ships in summertime.

Recently during our coffee meeting we were talking about the coming winter and it became obvious that, even with maintenance, we have free time in this quiet period.

The idea came up that if it would be possible to help people with a problem by doing a delivery for them (based only on the costs), we would like to do that —

—Continued on next page



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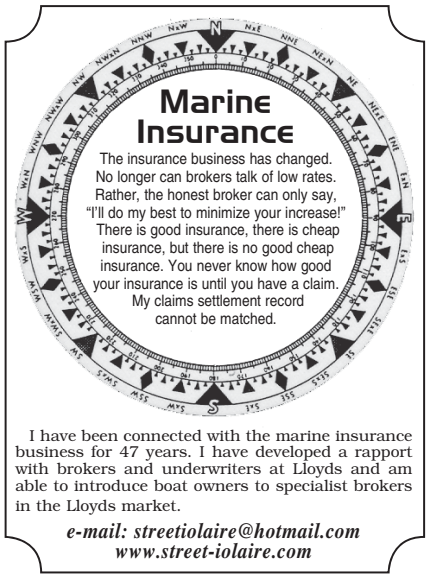
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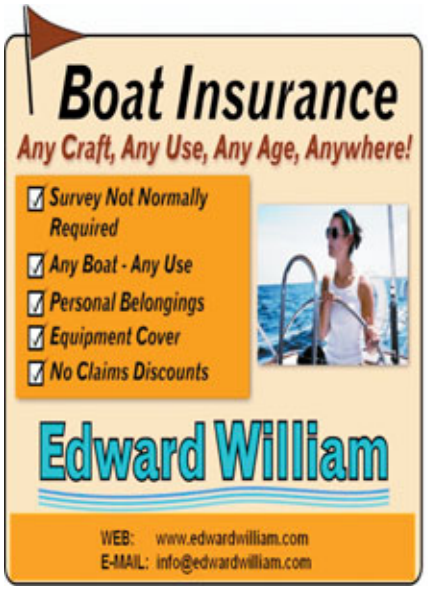
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—Continued from previous page

...only when there are special circumstances and no other solution is possible, because we don't want to make a "false competition" with other delivery companies.

The reason we offer this assistance is that it gives a nice feeling to be of any worth to somebody else, and every delivery experience improves our quality. Also we uphold the tradition of sailors helping each other on the water.

We can be contacted at michelsarolea@gmail.com.

Michel Sarolea
The Netherlands

EMPOWERING GRENADA'S YOUNG SAILING TALENT

Dear *Compass* Readers,

Once young sailors in Grenada grow out of the Optimist sailing dinghies and the Mosquitoes available on the island, the options to sail competitively become extremely limited.

Since 2013 I have run Sailing School Grenada, using my own Nautiber cruiser, *Dione*, to help young people improve their sailing and navigational skills. *Dione* introduces them to the basics, but I need a competitive yacht to help them take their experience to the next level. Without this we risk losing their talent and enthusiasm for a sport that is of growing economic importance to the island.



Finance is an issue. The sort of yacht I had in mind would cost approximately US$140,000. But as a professional designer and builder with experience on a wide range of projects I knew I had the skills to build a yacht of the right calibre myself. Naval architect Nicolas Roelens and boatbuilders Jeff Fisher and Roger Adams collaborated with me on the one-off design whose working title is *RF33*. It is a lean, mean racing machine that will provide a platform for team building and training the next generation of Grenadian competitive sailors.

The overall length of the boat is 35.6 feet with a beam of nine feet. It carries around 1000 square feet of sail: main, jib and asymmetrical spinnaker combined. Code Zero is approximately 774 square feet. The planing hull is built in strip planking with carbon fiber and lightweight fiberglass. The draft with fin and bulb is ten feet. The displacement is 1.162 kilos.

Work on the hull is well advanced, but even providing my own labour free of charge, the cost of the *RF33* project will be approximately US$75,000 — well beyond my own budget. So my wife, Daniela, and I are inviting sponsorship from friends and colleagues who share our concerns about the future of competitive racing in Grenada. Sponsors will get the opportunity to sail on *RF33* in one of our local regattas plus onshore accommodation if they need it.

A local business, The Canvas Shop, Grenada, has promised support and we have signed our first major sponsor, a regular visitor to the Grenada Sailing Week from the UK who, like us, wants to promote local sailing talent.

Find out more about RF33 at www.grenadateamsailing.com.

Rene Froehlich
Grenada

COME TO LUPERON

Dear *Compass* Readers,

After renovating my boat for five years I was finally ready to cruise the Caribbean. My only destination was south — islands, islands and more islands.

I headed out on a cold October day from Toronto on my 42-foot Lancer sloop, *La Vita*. What a glorious day it was crossing Lake Ontario and heading to my first lock. By November we had motored through 43 locks in the Oswego and Erie Canals and survived the Hudson River in flood season, when many docks ventured out on their own and several boats had sunk — my first experience with an enraged Mother Nature for this trip.

We worked our way down the ICW. When we reached Georgia it was apparent that there was not enough water on the ICW with my 6'3" keel. Fifty-two hours later *La Vita* was at Umbrella Island in the Abacos. The next day, Spanish Harbour. That night Mother Nature roared again with Tropical Storm winds at 65mph and more. The megayacht at the end of the dock said his mega-gear had clocked gusts of 145mph. Hold on — the furled jib has a balloon in it! Two hours later I grabbed the emergency fire axe, which is ridiculously large but mandatory for the size of my yacht, and sliced a jib sheet to free the jib and protect the furling. The jib was shredded. We were off to Man-O-War for repairs and in due time Georgetown in the Exumas. A long story short, I was in the Bahamas for a year and received another gift from Mother Nature: Hurricane Irene!

While researching the next part of my trip, I was thinking "hurricane hole".

Luperon kept popping up and, although the reviews were not great, the protection of the harbour was the best bar none. I left the Bahamas (three days after expiration of my permit, owing to weather. I paid US$650 for my safe three days). I stayed three weeks in the Turks & Caicos, where I spent three months of my sailing budget.

Twelve hours later I was entering the most beautiful harbour, with white beaches at the entrance and lush protective mangroves full of Pom Pom birds. Majestic mountains, caves with blow-holes acting like trumpets to announce your arrival. Beautiful! I was greeted by the officials and taken by dinghy to the appropriate offices where I paid my fees, which were less than two burgers a beer and a glass of wine in the Turks! I returned to my boat, set up a lounge chair on deck with a glass of wine, and looked around. Ahhhh. That was January 31st, 2011.

I have explored this beautiful harbour and the town of Luperon. It is a fishing and farming village. I am a single female captain and at no time have I felt uncomfortable or afraid. The people here are helpful, respectful and very charming. Life here is simple and comfortable. I decided to buy a dock to keep *La Vita* safe, with 3/4 of an acre and full utilities. That way I could sail to the other islands and return to my safe hurricane hole. However, I fell in love with Luperon. I have since sold *La Vita*, built a house, and I rent my dock.



I have a little cruisers' bar and barbecue in town now, called Putula's. We do excursions with cruisers by motorbike and bus to the spectacular north shore beaches, historical sites, waterfalls and, one of my favourite places, a mountain, to swim in a freshwater river. We are also a cruiser information centre. Do not miss Luperon. Whether you are here for a few weeks or for hurricane season, you won't be disappointed. It will be a highlight.

Kathay McColl
www.Putulas.com

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

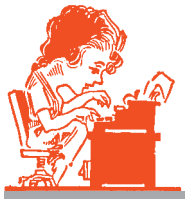
Dear* Compass *Readers,

We want to hear from YOU!

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

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

Send your letters to sally@caribbeancompass.com.



Letter of the Month

Dear *Compass* Readers,

I know it's 100 knots because I've never been in 100 knots before and I've never imagined winds like this, so, it must be 100. On the next boat to mine shrieking fingers of wind sneak under a tightly rolled genoa and suddenly rip it open to flog until the forestay breaks and within feet of a man's head on deck the mast rips free, crashing into the deck. Another boat, unattended, derelict, breaks free of its mooring and careers around the anchorage smashing into boats, wrecking hulls, topsides, lifelines until it T-bones a family's boat built of love and varnish and both boats, the derelict and the pristine, drag inexorably towards the Causeway Bridge, its pylons jaws of death. The uninsured family's boat hits first. Its mast splinters, falls, but still the boat is rammed into the pylons by the derelict until, like the family's retirement dreams, it is crushed.

They say there's a calm after a storm and just before dawn no one was moving; no one could. Boats were tangled in marinas, on the beaches, rocks and mangroves, and spread like spiders' webs in the Causeway were at least six boats. Nor could the survivors move as their dinghies had flipped. The few who could were doing that "flushing the outboard with fresh water" trick. But no one was moving to see if anyone needed help, to see if injured were lying below, if survivors were still in the water.

In the calm after the storm was a complete lack of emergency response. We cruisers are a pretty resilient and independent mob; give us a spanner and we will fix it ourselves, but where were the coast guards of two countries? The guys who book you when you forget your flashlight at night but before and after a storm vanish?

The only Coast Guard boat seen in the lagoon for the week after Hurricane Gonzalo was on the Dutch side, attending a deceased. The French not at all until some did a routine paperwork check on me two weeks later.

The French volunteer rescue boat was high and dry, bottom stove in, on Marigot beach thanks to a towline not picked up promptly and catching the rescue boat's propellers.

Price gouging by a few salvage companies started within hours after the storm, with a quote to lift a boat given as US$2,400 at 11:00AM rocketing to $7,000 by 5:00PM. Fortunately some businesses, like Atlantech Diver Services, and Steve Coetzer of SeaCure Marine Construction who lifted the French volunteer sea rescue boat, have integrity and used their normal rates. Steve says, "Sea Rescue do everything for nothing, so the least I can do is help them."

In the news reports immediately following the hurricane, why were the numbers of boats destroyed so low? Because no authority took a look. Finally the cruisers did their own survey. There were about a hundred boats sunk, destroyed, or washed up. (See http://hurricanegonzalostmartin.wordpress.com.)

The apparent slackness of the authorities started before the hurricane with a lack of weather reports in English and precious few in French. MRCC Fort de France, Martinique did some weather reports after midday in French only, and without a warning alarm signal on VHF or using the DSC alarm. The Dutch did no weather reports in any language at any time.

Of course there are difficulties predicting fast-developing storms like Gonzalo — it went from nothing through Tropical Storm to Hurricane in mere hours. Perhaps the low staff levels at the National Hurricane Center on a Sunday exacerbated the lack of good data. But why were there no reports on VHF when it was called a Tropical Storm? We knew it was one by early Monday. Why didn't the French Coast Guard order all the boats at anchor in Marigot Bay to go inside the Lagoon? Of the 13 boats anchored there, 12 are now wrecked upon the pristine beaches and as of this writing (early November) still proving an eyesore, just weeks before the tourist season. The lack of government weather reports allowed sway of the old codgers: "It won't blow hard, sonny". It's amazing how far the naysayers' voices were projected through VHF, Facebook and the walkways of the marinas to the anchorages.

The personal injuries, the loss of boats and the destruction of docks by boats could have been averted, in some part, by better leadership by authorities on both sides of the island. It must start before the Hurricane Season in good training and planning; before the storm in better alerts on VHF and orders to boats in unsafe areas; monitoring during the storm; and a full response effort after the storm.

Just to clarify: during the hurricane no one could do a thing to help anyone; by nightfall it was every person for themselves and Maydays on VHF were not requesting help but merely telling people they were adrift. If would have been foolhardy for any authority to have been in the Lagoon in a RIB after about 3:00PM when the wind was already about 50 knots.

We cruisers are not sneaking out without a fair share of blame, either. What crazy reason is there to stay in an outside bay open to the north with a Tropical Storm due, instead of using the special bridge opening to come inside the Lagoon? What on earth was their hurricane plan? Why were people at anchor in the Lagoon in the full wind zone from any direction between Mt. Fortune (the correct name for a certain well known headland) and Explorer Island? Didn't they put any time into studying the best-protected spots before the Hurricane Season?

As to combined responsibility: should cruisers be reporting derelict boats to the authorities before the Hurricane Season so they can be ordered to improve their situation or be removed?

At this writing it's weeks after Hurricane Gonzalo and the beaches are still littered with derelict boats, ones with no salvage value. They sit rotting while some authorities are blaming the cruisers for the eyesore and saying we should be paying for their removal before the tourist season. Expecting people who have lost everything to pay for someone else's abandoned boat is clearly not going to occur. Nor can devastated marine businesses afford to while struggling to rebuild.

If cruisers and the authorities would work together instead of displaying antagonism (perception of cruisers as fat wallets versus anti-authoritarianism) we will have safer future Hurricane Seasons. And if we can't survive 100 knots, let's get the anchor up before June and head north or south.

For those who have lost everything, my heart goes out to you and I hope this article hasn't offended you or opened the wound. I'm just trying to make it better for the future.

Mark Jensen
Sea Life

Australian cruiser Mark Jensen has circumnavigated in his Beneteau 393, s, and has anchored in the Great Barrier Reef during a Category 5 cyclone. Currently in St. Martin, he will cruise the Mediterranean in 2015.







Above: Simpson Bay Lagoon on October 13th, 2014, at 12 noon, 3:00PM and 5:00PM

Below: A general idea of the hardest-hit areas. Not expecting hurricane-force winds, many owners had left their boats in their usual locations





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CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2014

5 Sinterklaas Birthday Celebration, Bonaire
5 - 11 Antigua Charter Yacht Show. www.antiguayachtshow.com
6 Gustav Wilmerding Regatta, BVI. West End Yacht Club. martin@sailsistership.com
6 FULL MOON Parties at Trellis Bay and West End, Tortola, and at Pinney's Beach, Nevis
7 24th Annual Gustav Wilmerding Memorial Challenge, Tortola. martin@sailsistership.com
13 Public holiday in St. Lucia (National Day)
13 St. Croix Christmas Boat Parade. www.christmasparadestcroix.com
13 Commodore's Cup Race, Tortola, BVI. www.royalbviyc.org
14 Start of Christmas Caribbean Rally, Canary Islands to Antigua. www.sailingrallies.com
15 Public holiday in Bonaire (Kingdom Day)
16 - 24 Nine Mornings Festival, St. Vincent. http://discoversvg.com
18 - 21 30th Annual Havana International Jazz Festival, Cuba. www.apassion4jazz.net/havana.html
19 Public holiday in Anguilla (National Heroes' Day)
20 & 26 - 27 Hightide Christmas Series, Antigua. www.antiguayachtclub.com
21 Winter Solstice
24 14th Annual North Sound Holiday Lighted Boat Parade, Virgin Gorda. www.beyc.com
25 Public holiday in many places (Christmas Day)
26 Public holiday in many places (Boxing Day)
26 Boxing Day Race, Barbados. www.barbadoscruisingclub.org
26 Tobago Kite Festival, Plymouth, Tobago. (868) 639-5428
27 - 28 Dominica Christmas Regatta, info@dominicamarinecenter.com
28 First Annual Dominica Poker Run, Mark@CaptainMarksWay.com
28 – 4 Jan Crucian Christmas Carniva, St Croix. www.facebook.com/stxcarnival
31 Nelson Pursuit Race, Antigua. www.antiguayachtclub.com
31 New Year's Eve/Old Year's Night. Fireworks in many places, including Trellis Bay, Tortola; Admiralty Bay, Bequia; Kralendijk, Bonaire; and Fort-de-France, Martinique. Old Year's Night Party at Nelson's Dockyard, Antigua. Public holiday in Montserrat; half-day holiday in Curaçao

JANUARY 2015

1 Public holiday or "recovery day" in many places (New Year's Day); Junkanoo parades in the Bahamas; SSCA New Year's Day Gam in Trinidad, www.ssca.org
1 – 4 St. Kitts & Nevis Carnival. www.stkittsneviscarnival.com
1 – 4 Crucian Christmas Carnival, St Croix. www.facebook.com/stxcarnival
2 Public holiday in Cuba (Victory of Armed Forces Day) and in Haiti (Founding Fathers' Day)
5 FULL MOON Parties at Trellis Bay and West End, Tortola, and at Pinney's Beach, Nevis
6 Public holiday in some places (Three Kings Day/Epiphany)
7 Start of Panerai Transat Classique Race, Lanzarote to Martinique. www.paneraitransatclassique.com
9 – 25 St. Barts Music Festival. www.stbartsmusicfestival.org
13 Public holiday in Puerto Rico (Eugenio María de Hostos Day)
15 – 18 13th Caribbean Midwinter Laser Regatta, Cabarete, Dominican Republic. www.caribwind.com
16 – 24 Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race Series. ***See ad on page 13***
17 Round Antigua Race, www.antiguayachtclub.com
17 – 18 San Sebastian Vela Cup, San Juan, Puerto Rico. mteixidor@yahoo.com
21 Public holiday in Barbados (Errol Barrow Day), Puerto Rico and USVI (Martin Luther King Day), and the Dominican Republic (Our Lady of Altagracia)
21 – 4 Feb Mustique Blues Festival. www.discoversvg.com/index.php/en/mustique/events
22 – 25 Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest. ***See ad on page 10***
25 Public holiday in Aruba (GF Croes Day)
26 Public holiday in the Cayman Islands (National Heroes' Day)
29 – 31 Jamaica Jazz and Blues Festival, Montego Bay. http://jamaicajazzandblues.com
29 – 1 Feb SuperYacht Challenge Antigua. http://thesuperyachtchallenge.com
29 – 3 Feb Grenada Sailing Week. ***See ad on page 11***
31 – 1 Feb Cruising Outpost cruisers' party, Road Town, Tortola. www.cruisingoutpost.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*

We are on-line:
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WHAT"S ON MY MIND

Then and Now (and Where's the Ibuprofen?)

by Candy Colley

When I tell people that my husband, Barry, and I have lived on a boat for 33 years and their jaws drop, I hasten to add that I was a child bride. Hardly, but they're not to know that. Where did the time go? I'm not sure, but I do know that things have changed over the years.

The Boat

Back then, in the Eighties, our ferro-cement Endurance 40 was new and came with a Lloyd's certificate of approval for the hull. Everything was shiny and strong and she took anything the sea threw at her, and in the Indian Ocean, our cruising grounds of those days, it was plenty. Our biggest "modern" investment then was an Aries windvane steering system, an amazing mechanism that seemed to love it rough. Many grateful hours were spent at sea watching it work from the warmth of the saloon.

Antifouling paint stayed on for years; we used conventional hard red paint and it worked just fine. Electrically, things were simple. We had two batteries: one to start the engine and the other for the house. No such thing as solar panels or wind chargers back then. If the lights dimmed, we went to bed. We had two well-insulated iceboxes that kept blast-frozen, vacuum-packed meat solid for months, as long as we topped up with ice when we could. Our loo was a Lavac; no power needed.

Navigation was all done with a sextant and a watch. Time was checked every morning with the BBC pips. The only power needed was brainpower. Barry, my husband, was good at sun sights, one in the morning and one at noon. We always made landfall when and where he said, despite currents and bad weather that restricted sights, sometimes for days. The man seemed to have some sort of in-house magnetic pole and there were many early mornings when he would tell me to watch the horizon and, sure enough, a tiny black smudge would emerge and grow into an island. If we steered at night we used the stars, far easier on the eyes than watching the compass.



Life back 'then' included taking a sun sight aboard Syrius, *somewhere at sea*

Running lights took a lot of power at sea, no LED lights then, so we sailed without, kept a good watch and lit up if we saw traffic. On our later trips we also had an SSB radio, used sparingly. If we motored, we got to listen to BBC for more than the time pips. One year we listened to the Wimbledon finals while hove to off Madagascar in bad weather. I almost lost Barry over the side when he was attacked by the wind-charger, but that's another story.

On the whole, demand was little, boat maintenance lean and when things did need fixing we had a boating business back home in Durban, South Africa, where we used to sneak the staff when we needed them. How the mighty have fallen and how my hands miss those guys!

Us

We were in our thirties, (me) and forties (Barry), full of energy and confidence and happy to live on the edge. The Indian Ocean was challenging and exciting, lots of reefs and currents, you could be off course 50 miles in 24 hours and come to grief. We sweated sometimes, but it was worth it. We were careful and the Accident Angel was kind.

Environment

Our trips then were from Durban north to the Seychelles islands, about 5,000 miles round trip. These islands weren't on the round-the-world sailing route and so were mostly unspoiled by civilization. Europa, the first island out of Durban, was a French military outpost, complete with (and I think the only) saltwater mosquitoes. I kid you not. A fast trot from landing the dinghy to the weather station was obligatory. It was an unimaginably beautiful place complete with giant turtles mating noisily next to the boat, quite a to-do, reef sharks, dolphins, coral, loads of fish, incredible shells and immaculately clear water that held us till we moved north again a few hundred miles to the next French island, Juan de Nova. Here, the bored troops would welcome us literally with open arms and ply us with Camembert, wine, pâté and attention, especially where anything female was concerned. An inebriated and amusing game of volleyball would follow on the beach, after which we would slide home in the offshore Trades in our tiny dinghy towards the pinhole size cockpit light on *Syrius*. If we messed it up, it was Africa's east coast all the way.

—Continued on next page

—*Continued from previous page*

Next islands were the Comoros and Isle Glorioso and finally the Seychelles, all equally beautiful, welcoming and affordable. There were hardly any other boats and zilch visa problems. It was Paradise and we went as many times as we could over the years. Durban is conveniently situated on the east coast of South Africa so we could shoot off when we could get away and the winds were favorable. This meant waiting for a southwester, preferably a gale, to blow us up inside the south-flowing Mozambique current and when the wind clocked into the northeast we would leave the coast, head east across the current and work our way north. We beat plenty.

Finally in 1991, after selling the business, we left South Africa and headed for the Caribbean. No plans, just retiring on a more permanent basis. No pensions, no insurance policies of any kind. Never did have. Just commitment and big anchors.

Fast Forward to Now in the Caribbean

Since then, having wandered all over these parts from Barbados to Belize and the US East Coast up the waterway to the Chesapeake and back, we have finally come to rest for the last ten years in the area between Aruba and the Venezuelan islands of Los Roques.

The Boat

She is a lot older now at 33. I should be 33! She's taken good care of us, as we have her. But she's getting possessive. Maintenance is now relentless and upkeep of the dreaded amp another challenge. I am responsible for visual maintenance, Barry for functional. Many areas cross, where we "deal". Regarding electrics, things are very different. Now it's computers for the Internet, Skype, movies, electric loo pumps, long showers (there's a wonderful woman who delivers water *to your boat* in Curaçao), a very power-hungry fridge. Windcharger and solar panels do the trick but in September and October, my least favorite months, sometimes our little green generator is our new best friend, jumping to attention like a little smurf and helping out via the battery charger. We manage, but have to think about the fuel, etcetera, and how necessary is the noisy power we are going to make.

Antifouling just doesn't seem to work anymore and without our much-repaired Brownie's Third Lung we would have problems. We delay our haulouts, and the months between when the antifouling starts not to be as promised and the next haulout are always too long.

Then there are today's prices of marine replacement parts and the quality you get for those prices. Much head shaking in the marine stores as we fork over the bucks. Gotta have it, so shuddup and get over it.

Us

Well, we're getting older too. When the weather kicks up we're not as gung-ho as we used to be; there's more concern. Did somebody put the fender under the dinghy? It has a habit of taking off across the deck if not supported. There's a WHAT coming?? And we tire faster, want to do less maintenance, but *Syrius* doesn't understand that.



Yes, it's different now — but we have no plans to give up the ship!

Environment

We all know how crowded the Eastern Caribbean has become. It's hard to get away from civilization, and when you do you don't see the sea life in the water that you did even three years ago: I cite Islas Las Aves as an example. In other places, there are too many pricey buoys, visa restrictions, etcetera. Love of money is ruining Paradise here, as it has done in many other parts of the world.

Don't Give Up the Ship

So yes, it's different now. Am I writing this from an air-conditioned apartment somewhere, *Syrius* a thing of the past? No. We're still here at 76 and 63, with no plans to abandon ship and the only ones left out here of all our friends over the last 20 years.

Frankly, I think it's too late to leave. We're barely able to relate to society anymore and I can't really remember where all those different forks go on the table.

Today, as I write this, we're on a mooring here in beautiful Bonaire. We swim every day from the back of the boat, it doesn't get any easier. The water is warm and clear and, depending on where you are, you can see big tarpon close up (and I mean big), many types of reef fish, turtles, squid and healthy coral. Believe me, there's nothing wrong with it.

And let's face it, commercialization does have a good side. There's better and more available medical care (useful if you're older), and internet access is a cinch. You can sign up with Digicel and the contracts continue between the islands, which is really handy. This keeps you in touch with friends and family, sometimes more than you'd want! In the Eighties there was no such thing: we literally fell off the planet for six months and that was that. Barry once received a posted letter from his mother three months after she died! It had been all over the Indian Ocean islands' General Delivery postal departments. Creepy. Plus the internet's also good for ordering things you need (useful if your boat's older and God bless you, Amazon). Stuff will get here in two weeks via E-Zone, FedEx, whoever.

So, all said and done, and reading the news of the other world as we do every day, we volunteer to stay to the end and turn the lights out when we leave. LED lights, of course!

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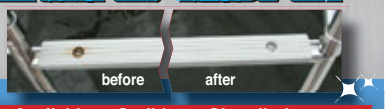
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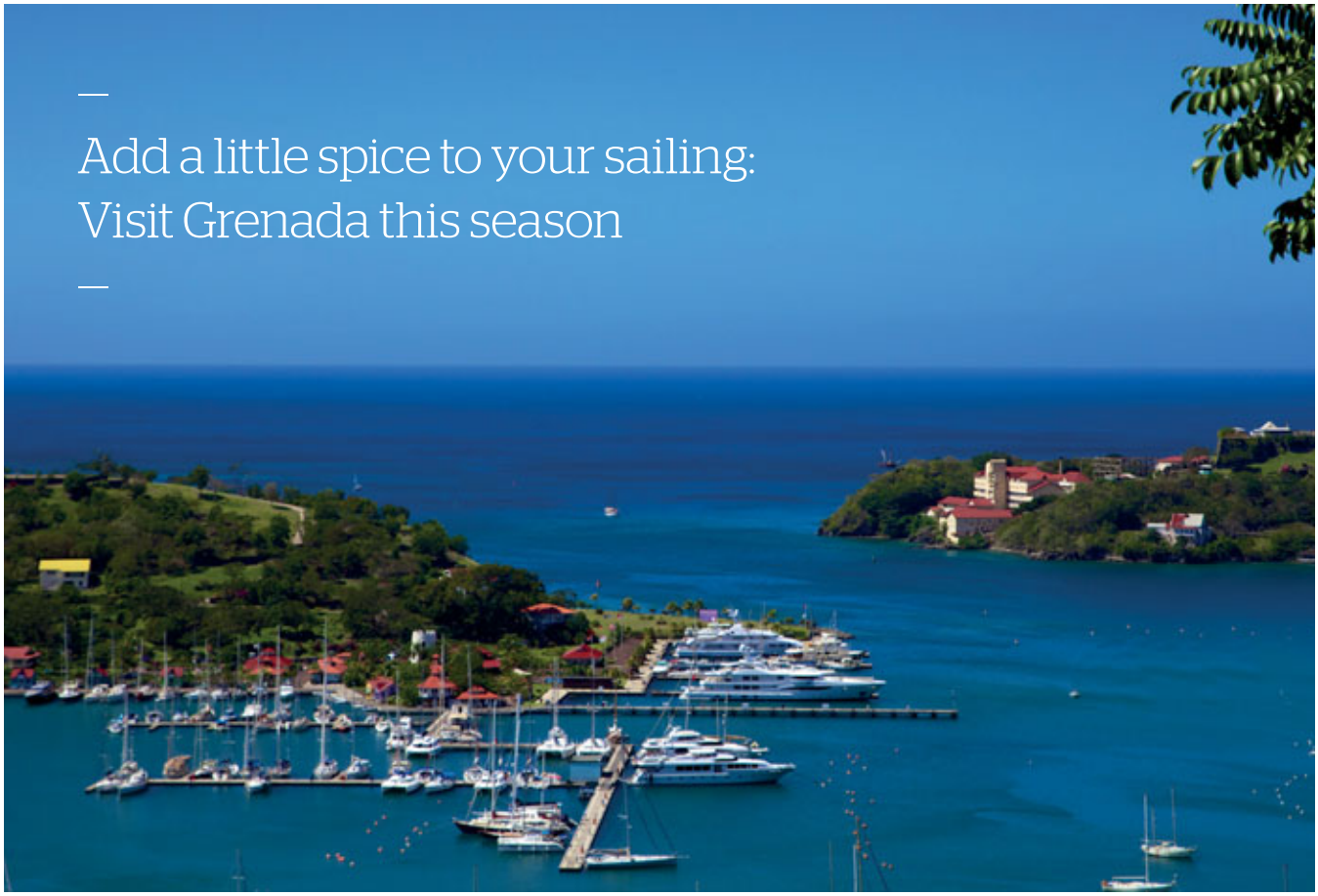
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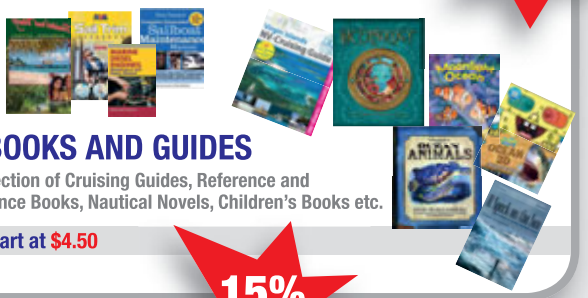
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