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DECEMBER 2015 NO. 243 The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

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JEAN JARREAU PHOTOGRAPHY

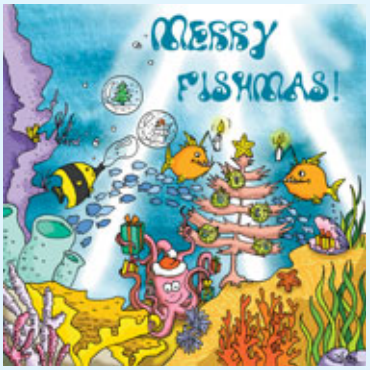

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The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

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DECEMBER 2015 • NUMBER 243



INGA BEITZ

Happy Holidays to all from the entire Compass Crew!



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Tel: (784) 457-3409, Fax: (784) 457-3410, compass@vincysurf.com, www.caribbeancompass.com

Editor.....**Sally Erdle**
sally@caribbeancompass.com
Assistant Editor.....**Elaine Ollivierre**
jsprat@vincysurf.com
Advertising & Distribution.....**Tom Hopman**
tom@caribbeancompass.com

Art, Design & Production.....**Wilfred Dederer**
wide@caribbeancompass.com
Administration.....**Shellese Craigg**
shellese@caribbeancompass.com

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On the cover, Jean Jarreau's dramatic shot of the sail training vessel Danmark *charging through the Anguilla Channel. See sail training news on page 4*



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.**

'When *Caribbean Compass* first appeared in March 1995, it was a long overdue breath of textual and pictorial fresh air. Objective, informative, well written, covering an incredibly wide range of topics, fun to read and appealing to folks of all ages and from all walks of life, not just sailors.

'Over the past 20 years, it has not simply maintained its standards but has developed and improved to the point where it is today one of the most widely respected marine publications anywhere in the Caribbean.'

— Narendra "Seth" Sethia
Barefoot Yacht Charters
St. Vincent

Click Google Map link below to find the *Caribbean Compass* near you!
http://bit.ly/1fMC2Oy

Info & Updates

The Tall Ships Are Coming!

The Tall Ships are coming — and Caribbean youth can go sailing on them again. The non-profit association Caribbean Sail Training (CST) has announced that several Tall Ships and sail training vessels will arrive again soon in the Caribbean.



Through CST, Caribbean youths can sail on Tall Ships such as the three-masted topsail schooner Oosterschelde

Maritime Experience Day trips for schools are offered by CST free of costs to youngsters in the Caribbean. CST also offers one-week and ten-day sail training voyages to youngsters (ages 16 to 21 years) on board two of its member vessels.

As of this writing, in December there is still space for two youngsters on board the 40-metre (120-foot) *Eye of the Wind*, which will set sail out of Marigot, St. Martin just before Christmas for a ten-day Virgin Islands tour. If youngsters who have to fly to St. Martin are selected, they will be provided with free airline tickets.

The other trip is on board the 50-metre (150-foot) overall three-masted topsail schooner *Oosterschelde*, out of Martinique from February 15th through 23rd, 2016. Youngsters who live on another island will receive free airline tickets to Martinique and back.

Caribbean Sail Training is a non-profit organization registered in St. Martin and the European Community. It aims to help in providing education and sail training for young people of all nationalities, cultures, religions and social backgrounds, especially those living in the Caribbean. CST receives funds from businesses, private persons and other organizations to provide youngsters with sponsorship to board ships and yachts as trainees. CST selects cooperating and member sail training vessels including Tall Ships, square-riggers, large yachts and even race boats to take youngsters on sail training trips. CST accepts requests from schools, yacht clubs and institutions that are interested in placing a student on one of the vessels as a trainee. Private persons, youngsters and parents, are also encouraged to contact the association to participate in a sailing adventure on board one of the ships. Applicants need to have the minimum age of 15 and be not older than 25 years on most of the ships, but older trainees are sometimes accepted on board some of the sail training vessels.

Sail training embarkation possibilities will be announced on the CST website www.CaribbeanSailTraining.com and on their Facebook page.

Youngsters interested in sailing on the CST member vessels can e-mail CST at info@CaribbeanSailTraining.com

To learn more about CST visit www.CaribbeanSailTraining.org

New Year's Eve Fireworks in Bequia

The Bang Gang reports: Thanks to the consistent generosity of a wide range of private and business donors, Bequia continues to boast a spectacular fireworks display in Admiralty Bay to see in the New Year.

As Old Year's Night approaches, the popular harbour of Admiralty Bay in the Grenadines fills with hundreds of boats of every description, waterfront restaurants take bookings thick and fast, vantage points are discussed and the island is abuzz with expectation. Then, on the stroke of midnight, right on cue, light and sound explode over the head of the harbour.

—Continued on next page



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DOYLE CARIBBEAN

—Continued from previous page

Flares fly up from yachts and packed crowds line the waterfront to watch the unique display. Each year seems better than the last and this year will surely be no exception!



New Year's Eve Fireworks in Union Island

Heather Grant reports: Union Island, also in St. Vincent & the Grenadines, is another great place to be this New Year's Eve. Don't miss the fabulous fireworks display, starting at midnight and visible from Clifton town and Clifton Harbour. Party all evening in Clifton and then join the throngs of partygoers in the road, dancing to the music, singing, and grooving to the ambiance. Or watch from your yacht in the harbour. It will be truly magical.

The fireworks display is sponsored by Erika's Marine Services, Anchorage Yacht Club, Palm Island Resort and the Union Island Tourist Board.

January and February Cruisers' Parties

Bob Bitchin reports: Last year two of the best Cruisers' Parties we can recall were held one week apart. The first was in the BVIs, and the second a week later in St. Maarten.



Now we're going to see if we can top last year's events! Cruisers' Parties, sponsored by *Cruising Outpost* magazine, Islands Television and Tradewinds Radio, will be held at Cane Garden Bay, Tortola, BVI on January 30th and at Kimsha Beach, St. Maarten on February 6th.

We know not everyone can sail here. But those who can will, and those who can't — why not fly in, or maybe charter? Sail in, fly in, we don't care if you just swim in! Just be there to help us celebrate the cruising lifestyle.

When and where? In the BVIs the place to party will be Mayette's on January 30th, and in St. Maarten we will gather at the Buccaneer Bar on February 6th. No registering, and the parties are free!

Visit www.tradewindsradio.com and www.cruisingoutpost.com for the full itinerary.

Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest in January 2016

Top quality acts with broad-based appeal for all musical tastes, consistently excellent organization and presentation, and outstanding support from sponsors have all led to Bequia's unique musical event proudly reaching its 13th anniversary. The Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest 2016 will take place January 21st through 24th.

Built around the hugely popular annual one-night-only Bequia performance of Basil Charles' Mustique Blues Festival, showcasing the London Blues Band with stellar guest artistes, the Bequia Tourism Association's Bequia Music Fest has been earning rave reviews over the last 12 years.

The event, always held over four days towards the end of January, is well established as a major fixture on the season's calendar. A loyal following of music lovers who delight in the informal, up-close-and-personal atmosphere and the range of music always on offer have ensured that the Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest's reputation grows with every successful year. Yachtsmen put it on their itineraries, visitors book their holidays to catch it, and residents of Bequia and St. Vincent can't wait for January to come around. The main venue for Bequia Music Fest is at De Reef, right on the beach at Lower Bay, with performances there on the Friday and Saturday nights and all afternoon on Sunday.



Arturo Tappin will be one of the headliners in Bequia

—Continued on next page



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

With the Caribbean's legendary saxophonist Arturo Tappin headlining the 2016 Saturday night show, you can be sure that Bequia's 13th anniversary Music Fest will be another winning formula, with old and new friends coming together to create a very special weekend of great music, great performances and great vibes!

For more information see ad on page 14 and check www.begos.com/bequiamusicfest or www.facebook.com/bequiamusicfest for the full final line-up.

Bequia Sailors' and Landlubbers' Auction

The Bequia Sunshine School is a non-profit organization for children with special needs. The annual "Sailors' and Landlubbers' Auction" has become a significant source of income for the school — and a huge source of fun for all who attend.

The 2016 auction will be held at the Gingerbread Restaurant on the waterfront in Belmont, Bequia on Sunday, February 7th. Viewing starts at 12:00 noon and the auction at 1:00PM sharp. Donated food and drink will be on sale, with all proceeds going directly to the school.

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

Visit www.bequiasunshineschool.org for more information.

Blues in Paradise: Nevis

The second Nevis Blues Festival will run April 14th through 16th, 2016.

Yachts heading east to Antigua for the 2015 Classic Yacht Regatta found an entertaining stop-off at the Nevis Blues Festival (17°11'57.53"N, 62°36'39.80"W). The debut of this beachside music festival made a big impact and in 2016 will again coincide with the Classics. For this second edition the organizers promise an even bigger array of international artists, drawn mostly from the UK and the USA.

As the festival name suggests, the music has its roots in ever-popular blues, which has inspired generations of bands, singers and guitarists across jazz, pop, soul and rock.

Situated just feet from the water's edge in Oualie Bay, the Nevis Blues Festival lays claim to the tag "Blues in Paradise". As the sun sets, the stage lights go up and music floats across the bay. You can enjoy a drink under the illuminated canopy of tamarind trees, take your pick of a variety of food dishes (Caribbean and international), or splash out for a VIP experience in the Tamarind Lounge. One thing that marks out this festival is its intimacy and friendliness. It's like being in an open-air music club.

Mooring in the bay you will be just 100 to 200 metres from the festival site. Simply pull your dinghy up on the beach. Or, if you fancy sleeping ashore, there are several hotels close to the festival — the closest being Oualie Beach Resort and Mount Nevis — but none of the island's hotels or inns is more than 20 minutes away by taxi.

Already confirmed for 2016 are Los Angeles-based guitarist Kirk Fletcher;



Justin Merrick at last year's Nevis Blues Festival

Ireland's blues-rock rising star Simon McBride; Ian Siegal, the UK's leading contemporary bluesman; and UK-based gospel/soul diva Denise Gordon, whose parents came from Nevis. More artistes will be announced as the festival draws close.

Visit www.nevisbluesfestival.com for more information.

Welcome Aboard!

In this issue of *Compass* we welcome new advertisers Oceanvolt electric motor systems of Finland, on page 23; Rainman desalination systems of Australia, on page 22; and Blue Diamond Concierge Service of St. Lucia, in the Market Place section, pages 49 through 51.

Good to have you with us!



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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Island Water World Has New Boat Lifts
Island Water World has new boat lifts available in St. Maarten for boats up to 13,000 pounds displacement. IWW's St. Maarten marina offers the comfort of a well-stocked chandlery, a service yard, nighttime security guard, free WiFi, free showers and bathrooms, and a picnic area to relax.



Reserve now — don't miss out!
For more information on Island Water World see ad on pages 9, 11, 35 and 56.

Budget Marine Grows in Eastern Caribbean
Adding new outlets, moving into new buildings and expanding in size are what Budget Marine Chandleries is all about these months. Many of their existing stores have been bursting at the seams and Budget Marine is getting ready for the season to meet the diverse and increasing demands of the boating community by expanding its offering on five islands. The last months have seen the opening of a new Budget Marine outlet in the North Sound Marine Services boatyard, Antigua and the move of two Budget Marine chandleries to new buildings, in Nanny Cay Marina, BVI and Kaya Neerlandia in Bonaire.
The Budget Marine Grenada store has been next on the list as they always had to play catch-up with its fast-growing market. The store has added 1,200 square feet to its current retail space (see photo), as well as roughly 400 square feet of additional warehousing. Nicholas George, manager of Budget Marine Grenada reports, "We are seeing a few marine-related developments here on island and with our current expansion we can match the increased demands. We have been eager to make the new section look very attractive and are ready for the season." The new area will strictly house all boatbuilding materials, being a core part of the Budget Marine Grenada store in its location at Spice Island Marine Services, leaving extra room in the current retail space to expand on ranges and introduce new products.



The Budget Marine Trinidad store has also been in development, expanding its service with the addition of a range of powerful Suzuki outboard engines as well as the installation of an Awlgrip-authorized Awlmix Color Mixing Bank to provide state-of-the-art mixing for state-of-the-art coating.
All these expansions and additions have one thing in mind: the gratification of having that piece of equipment *today* that will keep your boat running smoothly. Budget Marine is the largest retailer of boating supplies and accessories in the Caribbean. With over 30 years of experience and 13 locations Caribbean wide, Budget Marine has grown to become the leading chandlery in the Caribbean. They cater to the small boat cruiser, race boats, superyachts, sport fishermen and everything in between.
For more information on Budget Marine see ad on page 2.

New Island Water World Catalogue
The new Island Water World chandlery catalogue is bigger than ever — with 536 pages, fully loaded with new and existing products. It is now in circulation and available online at www.islandwaterworld.com/index.htm as a searchable PDF version and ready for download. As in previous years, it will also be available for customers to pick up as a USB key version in our stores, right next to the printed copy.
For more information on Island Water World see ad on pages 9, 11, 35 and 56.

Rapier Appointed Sevenstar Representative
With the demand for yacht transport rapidly expanding in the Caribbean, Sevenstar Yacht Transport welcomes its new Caribbean representative.
Douglas Rapier, based in Le Marin, Martinique, will operate as commercial representative and port agent for Sevenstar Yacht Transport in the region. Douglas is an experienced manager of yacht-support activities through his superyacht agency in Le Marin. Over the past six years he has spearheaded efforts to position Martinique as the base for international yachting for the southern Caribbean.
—Continued on next page

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Sevenstar Yacht Transport's Managing Director, Richard Klabbers, says, "The islands of the Caribbean are among the most popular cruising destinations in the world, and this makes them an excellent yacht transportation location and an important region for our company. We are pleased with Douglas to have found a specialist to further establish our presence."
Contact Douglas at (596 696) 45 89 75 or douglas@yachtservices.fr.
For more information on Sevenstar Yacht Transport see ad on page 30.

Suzuki Holiday Gifts for the Whole Family

Efrain Rivera reports: The perfect Christmas gift for boaters is a Suzuki Marine outboard. These engines feature cutting-edge technologies that enhance fuel efficiency and provide maximum performance. Powered by a Suzuki outboard, your boat will be a present the whole family can enjoy.



"Suzuki Marine outboards are perfect gifts for boaters who are looking to re-power or want to upgrade their vessels with the best in power and technology," says Erving Rosario, sales and marketing manager of Suzuki Del Caribe. "Whether it is the portable DF 2.5, an exciting DF 300AP or any other model in between, a Suzuki outboard will be the perfect addition to your boat."

These outboards feature the world-leading Suzuki Lean Burn Control system, which provides the highest performance and efficiency while cutting fuel consumption. Portable motors 9.9 to 30 horsepower feature the unique battery-less Electronic Fuel Injection and Easy Start System while larger motors also offer the Suzuki Precision Control, a state-of-the-art electronic system. Additionally, outboards with 60 horsepower and up are now available in traditional Shadow Black Metallic and new Cool White shades, which allows you to customize your boat's look.

"It's the perfect time of the year to start gearing up for the upcoming boating season," Erving added.

Visit www.suzukipr.com to find a dealer near you. Visit our Facebook page www.facebook.com/SuzukiCaribbeanMarine and hit the "like" button for the latest information.
For more information on Suzuki Marine see ad on page 24.

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For more information on this special offer contact info@partsandpower.com or visit www.partsandpower.com/products_store_specials.php
For more information on Parts & Power see ad on page 8.

IGY Marinas' Community Service Initiative

IGY Marinas, the world's largest international marina network, is rolling out a new community service initiative in 2016: "Inspire Giving through You". The project will focus on community-based initiatives where the company operates its marinas.

Chief Executive Officer Tom Mukamal says, "Boaters come to our marinas to enjoy the destinations, local cultures and attractions. We have always included community service in our business practices, and now we have a plan to embark on our 2016 Community Outreach Project to give back to the local destinations in which we live and work. We hope this call to action serves as a model for the marina industry and an inspiration to others."

The program's objective is to identify a need area at each marina destination and partner with a nonprofit organization; to coordinate a community-focused event where IGY associates, customers and partners can make a difference; and to give back to each community. With opportunities ranging from animal adoption to improvements for youth and elderly organizations, "Inspire Giving Through You" aims to be a catalyst, encouraging ongoing social responsibility. On February 20, 2016, community outreach events will directly benefit Caribbean and Latin American communities.

Visit www.igymarinas.com/igy-community-service for more information.
For more information on IGY's Marina Santa Marta see ad on page 26.
For more information on IGY's Simpson Bay Marina see ad on page 40.

New Pool Suites at Blue Lagoon Marina

Danesha Deane reports: Blue Lagoon Hotel & Marina on the south coast of St. Vincent will soon add seven new rooms to their property. These pool suites feature a view of the hotel's pool, which is nestled in our naturally beautiful garden, steps away from the beach. These luxurious suites offer king-sized or queen-sized beds and balconies. The rooms will be ready for the start of the New Year, making our total number of rooms 27. Now, guests will have three choices of views at Blue Lagoon Hotel & Marina: ocean view, marina view, and pool-and-garden view.

Guests also have the choice of three places to eat on site: Café Soleil, Calm Waters Restaurant and Flowt beach bar. We also have a supermarket, gym, two boutiques, Customs and Immigration, a dive shop and boat charter companies. Our front desk is equipped with information and has contracted tour guides and taxi drivers ready to take our guests on tours, but with so much to do on site you might never wish to leave the compound!

For more information on Blue Lagoon Hotel & Marina see ad on page 39.

ATL Fuel Bladders — Cruising the World

ATL Fuel Bladders has tens of thousands of satisfied customers all over the globe, reaping the benefits of their fully collapsible range-extension fuel bladder tanks. ATL's bladder tanks help put the minds of captains and their crews at ease by ensuring that they have enough fuel to reach their destination.

—Continued on next page

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Over the years, ATL has forged many lasting relationships within the yachting community. However, there is one particular ATL customer whose travels are nothing short of extraordinary. Jennifer and James Hamilton, who reside in Seattle, Washington, are currently cruising the globe in their Nordhavn 52, *Dirona*. Although *Dirona* can carry 1,750 gallons in her main tanks, the husband and wife duo often rely on ATL Fuel Bladders to safely extend their fuel range when traveling far distances. In addition to a pair of standard 300-gallon ATL FueLocker® bladders, ATL also built a custom fuel bladder, based on the dimensions that James supplied, which fits conveniently within *Dirona's* Portuguese bow. When not in use, the bladders easily fold up and are compactly stowed. The additional fuel allows the Hamiltons to conquer feats such as the 3,023-nautical-mile crossing of the Indian Ocean that they just completed.



ATL's complete line of deck-mounted, fully collapsible range-extension fuel bladders, along with a host of accessories, are available for purchase on their website, boatbladders.com. For additional questions or to inquire about ATL's custom capabilities, contact an ATL Sales Engineer by calling (201) 825-1400 or toll free (800) 526-5330.

For more information on ATL Fuel Bladders see ad on page 43.

Learn to Kitesurf in the Grenadines

Nicolas Bascunana-Dulac reports: At Happykite, the kiteboarding school run by the first kitesurfers on Union Island, we are ready to share our passion with all sailors and landlubbers. We are teaching aspiring kitesurfers of all levels and ages, beginners to advanced.

This year, we are expanding our business, and will open a Surf Shop in L'Atelier Turquoise at the town square in Clifton. For all fans of Annie France's artwork, don't worry: the jewelry is staying, of course! In addition to jewelry and Caribbean artwork, you will also find board shorts, bikinis, Lycras, T-shirts and much, much more.

We will also offer kite camps all season long, find a hotel room for you if you need a couple of days on shore, take you on daily kite excursions, and fix your kite. If you like, you can partake in one of Lovely Linda's yoga sessions, suitable for all levels.

If you just want to stop by for a chat, we will share our secrets about Union Island, or we can check the weather forecast for you. Welcome all! We wish you a windy season and hope to see you.

Visit www.happykitegrenadines.com for more information.

In Grenada, 'The Hulk' Calls Catamarans!

Arlene Telesford reports: On October 30th, Clarkes Court Boatyard & Marina Travel Lift, a.k.a. The Hulk, lifted his widest-beamed boat to date, the catamaran *Felicia*, a Privilege 65 with a beam of 35 feet, draft six feet and displacement 35 tons — no problem!

A big advantage of our very wide travel lift (40 feet), according to our Yard Manager, Niels Lund, "is that the lateral compressive loads that are applied to the hulls by the slings are significantly less than those applied to hulls by narrower lifts. The compressive loads decrease as the vessel's beam decreases, so this advantage is enhanced the smaller the boat. The Hulk has four lifting blocks each side with three straps per block. With the center two blocks being able to move along the length of the vessel, the optimum lifting points can be reached."

For wooden boats, the multiple slings/positions together with our ability to monitor and adjust the actual load per block pair means that we can slowly apply the optimum lifting loads to each block as the vessel slowly comes out of the water.

We also have two divers in the water to check for obstructions and monitor sling placement on each lift. Add it all together and this has to be the best lifting arrangement in the Caribbean.

What else is happening at Clarkes Court? A new washroom facility is completed and ready to be used by clients on the hard, significantly enhancing the "living aboard" experience. Water and electricity coming up!

Visit www.clarkescourtmarina.com for more information.

The Market Place at Port Louis Marina

A new delicatessen, wine shop and grocery will open on December 15th at Port Louis Marina, Grenada. This family-run deli aims to provide mariners with fresh, marinated cuts of meat ready for the grill or vacuum-packed frozen pieces for long journeys, plus cheeses, wines, fresh-baked baguettes and local organic produce.

Stop in for a quick basket full of goodies, or to place an order for your special occasion. With Christmas just around the corner, why not plan to entertain hassle-free, with a selection of deli and cheese trays? Christmas hampers and stockings stuffed with candy and toys make your gift list much lighter.

Whether you're picking up a quick cup of green jasmine tea to go, or browsing the wine racks at your leisure, enjoy the small gallery where paintings by local and international artists are on display and the changing floral arrangements, yours to take home or simply admire.

For more information contact marketplacemarina@gmail.com or visit Facebook at The Market Place Grenada.

For more information on Port Louis Marina see ad on page 20.

Imray Iolaire Chart B31 Updated

Don Street reports: Imray Iolaire has issued an updated chart B31, corrected with new soundings, new anchorages and blow-up insets of the east and south coasts of Carriacou. This is a result of explorations in February 2015 by Don Street and Geoff Curtain on the east coast of Canouan, and by Kristian Nygard, a retired Norwegian naval officer, on Petit Tabac and the east and south coasts of Carriacou. On the east coast of Carriacou, Kristian, with the aid of local fisherman Alburn "Rex" Patrice and David Goldhill, who has lived on the east coast of Carriacou since 1984, produced up-to-date soundings in the channel by St. Hilaire Point and transits to pass through this narrow channel. They also corrected soundings in Watering Bay and the south entrance to Grand Bay at Kendeace Point. They also explored Great Breteche Bay on the south coast, which is a good anchorage as long as the wind is east or north of east.

Also go to www.imray.com corrections to find a block correction chart A30 for Fort de France, Martinique, showing the new yacht harbor east of the container port, and a B32 update for St. George's, Grenada. These block corrections can be printed out and stapled to your chart, keeping it completely up to date.

Trinidad's *Saturday Express* newspaper online recently ran an article on the decline of the yachting sector in Trinidad: there were 2,654 arrivals in 2000 and only 1,060 in 2014. The failure of Customs and Immigration to adopt a single-page harmonized form, which has been suggested for around 15 years, was blamed for part of the drop.

Back in the 1990s when Trinidad first went into the yachting business in a big way, it was far from clear that yachts would be persuaded to make the 80-mile trip south from Grenada (overnight for many) to take advantage of the new facilities. The timing was good, however: there were not enough haul-and-store facilities farther north, and in many other islands there was a lack of skilled labor. The new yachting business was an outstanding success and many yachtsmen loved it so much they hung around through the hurricane season to enjoy Trinidad's rich cultural heritage. After all, this is the home of steel pan, the best bands are here, and there are always other things happening. Then there is the wonderfully varied wildlife watching, which features brilliant birds, and turtles coming in at night to lay eggs.

The Yachting Decline in Trinidad — and Hopes for the Future

by Chris Doyle



CHRIS DOYLE

So what happened? Why did half the boats stop coming?

Part of the reason is that people in other islands, seeing Trinidad's success, started investing in yachting infrastructure. This is particularly true of Grenada, which now has three large haul-out yards, and if you are just going to put your boat to bed, staying in Grenada means two 80-mile trips you don't have to make. When Trinidad's yachting boom was going strong, Grenada had rudimentary yacht services. It has now attracted many excellent workers in nearly every marine field.

Trinidad retains a number of advantages and some things are done better there than in most other islands. The first of these is duty-free delivery of yacht parts. If you bring them in yourself, it is a very simple system — you do not need a broker — and it works very well. If parts come in by courier they often arrive in Chaguaramas, where they can be picked up without hassle. (However, if you are shipping in, some carriers seem to have a Customs problem delivering things to Chaguaramas: this happened to me with FedEx, which resulted in a much more cumbersome process.)

Another asset is Jesse James' Members Only taxi service. Jesse is an amazing guy who remembers nearly all his customers, as well as their spouses and kids. He organizes trips to all the interesting places in Trinidad as well as regular shopping trips, some of them free. With Jesse you always have a friend in port. Other islands may have good taxi tours and taxi service providers, but none keeps his finger on the pulse and offers such a good and varied service as Jesse.

The prices at the boatyards and the quality of work in Trinidad are still very competitive, and you will not get a broader range of specialties. As an example, there are two shops that specialize in refinishing props, something you don't find at all in many other islands. It is true that this works best for those who have been in the islands a while and understand how to work with locals, because contractors and prices vary hugely. Having had my boat, *Ti Kanot*, built here, I know I got a wonderful job at an excellent price.

Then, when it comes to hurricanes, the risk in Trinidad is less than in the other Lesser Antilles.

Finally, if you have to travel, it is usually easier and cheaper to fly in and out of Trinidad than many other islands.

So what is the down side? I think much of it has to do with officialdom. As other islands have made things easier for yachts, Trinidad has gone backwards. At the height of the Trinidad yachting boom, yachts were free to sail to just about any anchorage, and even, for a while, to Tobago, without any paperwork apart from entry. This is how it works in nearly every island in the Eastern Caribbean. Nowadays, if you have a non-Trinidad boat, you are supposed to get permission even to go to Scotland Bay for the day. This has a chilling effect on yachties. In the old days, apart from hauling, I would often make a few day trips to nearby islands, taking local friends with me. Now that I have to run to Customs each time I want to move, I've given this up. So I come, haul and leave. After all, it is much like having land tourists who rent a car have to go to the police station to get a permit each time they want to leave one of the parishes. It doesn't work.

In addition, as mentioned in *Trinidad Express*, too much paperwork is required to enter and leave the country. The forms still ask about stowaways, and people are required to fill in the same information time after time on several forms. In the meantime, other islands have SailClear, where, if you wish, you can do your entry in advance on the internet. When you go to Customs, they print it out. And if you don't do that, nearly every country has an easy single form entry.

Then there are simple things like departure. The standard in most islands is to give yachts 24 hours to leave after clearance. This gives cruisers time to clear, sort themselves out and leave. Immigration in Trinidad gives 24 hours, but Customs often only gives four hours.

If any yachting industry is to be really successful, yachting visitors need to be free to enjoy the country and its anchorages. This feeds the haul-out and work side, and vice versa. This used to be the case in Trinidad, but while other island governments have made things easier for yachts, welcoming them for longer stays, Trinidad has gone backwards in its application of regulations. A complete revamp of yachting regulations in Trinidad, aimed at making yachts feel welcome and appreciated, would give Trinidad a chance of regaining some of its lost business. Without that, a turnaround seems unlikely. In times of falling prices for oil, I would have thought a sizeable industry that directly benefits up to ten thousand Trinidadians would be worth the effort.

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Caribbean ECO-News

Save Our Seas, Schools Programme

Sandals Foundation has partnered with the Guy Harvey Foundation and CARIBSAVE to develop and deliver a one-year schools' Marine Awareness Programme throughout the Caribbean to help educate our youth and raise awareness on the importance of the marine environment.

Jonathan Hernold, Environmental Officer of the Sandals Foundation, says, "We as adults have not done a very good job in conserving our marine life. We have degraded our marine life to where it is now in a dire situation and we need to teach the young people about the importance of marine life and why it is important that we need to conserve it."

The Save our Seas, Schools Programme is expected to run in 40 schools in the ten regions of the Caribbean where the Sandals Foundation operates. The programme was launched at Beaches Ocho Rios in Jamaica in September. The programme will educate students on protecting the environment, particularly marine life. Students in Jamaica, Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Antigua, Turks & Caicos, and St. Lucia are to benefit from the programme.

St. Martin's 2015 Migratory Bird Festival

More than 200 people celebrated St. Martin's spectacular migratory birds at the 2015 Migratory Bird Festival, held on October 17th at the University of St. Martin. The Migratory Bird Festival is a free, annual public Wildlife Discovery Event created by the non-profit group Les Fruits de Mer for residents and visitors to see and learn about the island's many migratory species and their extraordinary journeys.

One of the highlights of the event was the Heritage Salt Presentation and Walk led by Dr. Jay Haviser, Director of the St. Maarten Archaeological Center. Attendees flocked to the standing-room-only presentation about the history and cultural heritage of salt on St. Martin, followed by a walking tour of the salt pans and other historic structures visible in the Great Salt Pond, one of the island's most important heritage sites and bird habitats. An exhibition panel about salt production and history was also on view at the event. "The Great Salt Pond is historically important for both birds and people," explained Jenn Yerkes, President of Les Fruits de Mer. "These structures that we can still see from the time of salt exploitation — the stone walls, the levees and poles that are tangible traces of a past which is sometimes invisible — also happen to be great places for observing birds and other wildlife. It's a truly unique intersection of natural and cultural heritage. People really want to engage with their history and culture in ways like this. In fact, Dr. Haviser's presentation was so crowded it was clear we'll need a bigger room next time!"

Also extremely popular with event-goers were the birdwatching tours of the Great Salt Pond, led regularly throughout the Festival by professional birding guide and Nature Foundation Board Member Binkie van Es.

The event's assembly room was packed throughout the Festival for a series of fascinating multimedia presentations. Attendees learned about what happens to St. Martin's birds and bird habitats during drought at the Shadow of a Drought Exhibition, got an up-close look with microscopes and magnifying boxes at the wetland critters that provide food for migratory birds at the Portable Pond Observation Station, and made hundreds of migratory bird-themed cards at the Happy Bird-day Card art workshop.

Anyone who missed the event can download the free photo essay eBook *Shadow of a Drought* and BirdsCaribbean's free *Heritage Plants* guide to bird-friendly native Caribbean plants from the Les Fruits de Mer website's resources page at www.lesfruitsdemer.com.

Les Fruits de Mer's next Wildlife Discovery Event will be Birds & Bugs 2015, a free celebration of St. Martin's incredible insects and fantastic forest birds, coming up on December 6th at Loterie Farm.

Visit www.lesfruitsdemer.com for more information.

Discover Statia's Wildlife in Free EBook

Anyone with an interest in the island of Statia and its wildlife is in for a real treat: a free eBook — *Wild Statia* — was just released by naturalists Hannah Madden and Mark Yokoyama. The 55-page book is illustrated with captivating photos taken by the authors.

The book's 15 chapters each take a closer look at a unique aspect of Statia's wildlife, from majestic tropicbirds to extraordinary nocturnal insects, and all the lizards in between. Many of the chapters are adapted from articles in Yokoyama's ongoing Wild Statia series in the Weekender section of *The Daily Herald*. Readers will also discover more about the habitats that support wildlife and the work being done to



ZSUZSANNA PUSZTAI

understand and protect natural heritage. The format of the book emphasizes the fascinating stories that are often left unexplored by scientific publications.

Madden and Yokoyama will be in the field this week doing research for their upcoming guide to the wildlife of Statia, which will be the first book of its type for the island. The authors aim to complete the wildlife guide in 2016. This project is managed by the non-profit association Les Fruits de Mer, with support from the St. Eustatius Tourism Development Foundation and funding from NuStar Terminals, NV.

In addition to documenting the animals themselves, the authors are excited to learn about wildlife from the people of Statia. According to Yokoyama, "One thing that you will notice in *Wild Statia* is a passion for connecting natural history with human culture — the names given to animals, the stories told about them and the ways that we have impacted nature over time. If you have any information about wildlife on Statia, we'd love to hear it." Stories, information and names for Statian wildlife can be shared by sending them to info@lesfruitsdemer.com.

The eBook can be downloaded for free at lesfruitsdemer.com or statiawildlife.com.

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Bonaire Companies 'Adopt' Sea Turtle Nests

Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire has launched the Adopt a Nest program, which provides a way for local businesses to protect nature and link their brands to conser-



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vation at the same time. Maduro & Curiel's Bank NV, Administratiekantoor Brandaris BV, Blue Jay BV, Flamingo Communications and Flamingo Express Dutch Caribbean were the first companies to sign up for STCB's symbolic adoption of a sea turtle nest. Akkermans Auto Supplies BV and Club Roomer have most recently joined this program by adopting a nest. A symbolic adoption supports the work STCB does to ensure nesting success for Bonaire's sea turtles, and it also allows companies to share highlights of their adoption with customers and employees.

To learn more about STCB's nesting program, visit www.bonaireturtles.org/adopt-a-nest and the Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire Facebook page.

Fishermen and Divers Agree: Reefs Need Stronger Management

New research shows that fishermen and divers agree that coral reefs need stronger management, and that broad support exists for new Caribbean ocean policies. In a new paper, Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Dr. Jeremy Jackson argue that the coral reef crisis has brought fishermen and professional scuba divers on Curaçao and Bonaire (two notoriously independent groups) to a historic consensus: the essential coral reef fisheries of the Caribbean are in serious trouble and stronger government action is needed.

In the past 45 years, Caribbean coral cover has declined from 35 percent to 16 percent. Fish populations have plummeted due to overfishing. And fishers are having a hard time making a living, in turn bringing down the prevalence of a historically important livelihood across the Caribbean. Meanwhile, scuba dive tourism has increased dramatically.

"We found that 94 percent of divers acknowledged that their diving damages the reefs," said Dr. Jackson. "That industry needs to be regulated, too, if reefs are going to have a chance at recovering."

The situation is better on the islands of Curaçao and Bonaire than many other places, but they have not escaped degradation. In the course of her graduate research, Johnson interviewed 388 fishers and scuba instructors. She set out to understand how fishers and divers are using the ocean, how they perceive the reefs and fisheries, and what types of management they would support. Their answers give cause for hope: that the social climate of these islands is primed for policymakers to put strong conservation measures in place, for the benefit of both groups.

According to Dr. Johnson's research, fishermen are more aware than divers of the degradation of their reef ecosystem, but don't acknowledge much of the blame for it. Scuba divers in Curaçao and Bonaire have a rosier view of the reefs, but point to fishers as the primary culprits behind its destruction. Yet the divers are also to blame — especially as their numbers grow — because of poor behavior under water. Many novices kick the reefs, and tourist demand for local seafood has depleted the very fish they want to see when they dive.

"Most jarring were the words of a 15-year-old fisher who told me that fishers used to show the size of their catch vertically [holding his hands off the ground]," said Johnson. "Now they show fish size horizontally [holding his hands shoulder width apart]. And this all happened in the past few decades."

As she journeyed through the islands, fishermen told Johnson that they used to be able to use the oceans around their islands as a supermarket, setting out to catch a specific fish and bringing it home for dinner. "Today, too often, they come back empty-handed," she said.

Meanwhile, dive instructors say showing visitors seahorses and rare marine life is great for their business, but that the halo of reef damage left behind by tourists bumping sensitive corals continues to degrade the already damaged environment.

The study found that most fishers (89 percent) perceived catching fewer fish than previous generations. An overwhelming 96 percent of fishers and 94 percent of divers with over five years of local experience reported that some species they used to catch or see are rare or missing now.

The numbers of large grouper, snapper and parrotfish populations have indeed plummeted across the region, along with the coral itself, as a recent analysis by the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network showed. Meanwhile, invasive species such as lionfish have been able to establish themselves throughout the region, further threatening endemic fisheries.

"Island residents are committed to finding ways to restore their reefs and fish populations. And through the Blue Halo Initiative, the Waitt Institute is partnering with the government and people of Curaçao to envision, design, and implement new ocean management that is grounded in science and based on community priorities," said Johnson, now executive director of the Washington, DC-based Waitt Institute. The Initiative is also active on Barbuda and Montserrat.

Most importantly, this study shows that both fishers and divers are ready for meaningful management actions. The authors offer up a number of policy reforms they believe would be well received on Curaçao and Bonaire. These include establishing large marine reserves that are closed to both fishing and diving, limiting the number of fishers and divers, and easing the transition to more sustainable use of coral reef resources.

"The social climate is ripe for balanced and strong restrictions on both groups for reef recovery and sustainable use," said Johnson. "These measures would be a major step forward towards the long-term conservation of reef resources."

Full article at:
www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2351989415000402



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REGATTA NEWS

New CSA President as Rating Rule Changes Course

More than 50 of the Caribbean's most influential people in yacht racing convened when the Caribbean Sailing Association's Annual Conference was held in St. Maarten from October 23rd to 25th. The three-day conference began with the Annual General Meeting, at which outgoing President Peter Holmberg passed leadership of the organization to Kathy Lammers, Chairman of Antigua Sailing Week's Regatta Organizing Committee.

Holmberg remains on the board along with Chris Haycraft and Pam Fuller of the British Virgin Islands, Jaime Torres of Puerto Rico, Alison Sly-Adams of Antigua and Jeffrey Chen of Trinidad, who continues as Chief Measurer. New to the board are Judy Petz of the BVI and Mike Green of St. Lucia.

Lammers says, "I am honored to be voted in as CSA President and recognize the enormous contribution Peter has made to the association in his role as president over the past three years. Our job as a board and an association is to build on the structure we now have in place and continue to look at opportunities to market our region to the world while building support for our youth programs to ensure we have a strong base of young sailors entering the sport throughout the region. In addition, a refocus of the measurers' group will see our rating rules continue to develop in order to keep up with state-of-the-art developments in the sailing industry."

A significant part of the conference was dedicated to a meeting of the measurers group, led by Jeffrey Chen. In his report back to the conference following the meeting, Jeffrey explained that the CSA rating rule has grown over more than 50 years from an individual keel boat rule into four separate rules under the CSA brand: the simplified rule, the classic rule, the multihull rule and the main CSA rule. Chen said, "After many hours of discussion, the measurers' group has made the decision to move forward in a slightly different direction and as such the CSA will be reaching out to different sources to establish new partnerships to assist with further refining each of the rules. This will ensure the rules continue to meet the specific needs of their local, regional and international customers and provide fair and consistent results."

The major focus of the conference for regatta organizers was on sustainability through the sponsorship support of Sailors for the Sea. The Sailors for the Sea team delivered six separate sessions covering its Clean Regattas program, with discussion of how regatta organizers can use their events to effect permanent change in their communities. Included were presentations on integrated waste management, leveraging sponsorships, engaging youths, working with NGOs and looking at the damage occurring in our coral reefs due to poor waste management. Sailors for the Sea will continue to work with all members of the CSA to assist in developing the program island by island throughout the Caribbean.

The Caribbean Sailing Association promotes sailing within the region, and Caribbean sailing to the world. The CSA also administers Rating Rules to provide a simple and fair handicap system for racing. Additionally, the CSA serves as a forum for yacht clubs, regattas, sailing organizations and sailors throughout the Caribbean to coordinate interests and events, exchange ideas and best practices, and combine voices to achieve broader exposure to the international community.

Visit caribbean-sailing.com for more information on the Caribbean Sailing Association.

The next CSA Conference will take place in Antigua from October 21st to 22nd, 2016. Visit www.csaconference.org for information and updates.

BVI Tops 2015 Caribbean Dinghy Championships

The Caribbean Sailing Association's Caribbean Dinghy Championships were held in San Juan, Puerto Rico from October 16th through 18th, with entries from St. Thomas (USVI), Puerto Rico, St. Maarten and the British Virgin Islands. The event was hosted by the Sailing School of Club Náutico de San Juan.



The 2015 Caribbean Dinghy Champions, Team BVI

Nine windward/leeward races were held in the calm waters of San Juan Bay over two days. Each island fielded a team covering five boat types: four-crew IC-24s, two-crew 420s and single-handed Laser Standards, Laser Radials and Optimists. The total number of points for each team was the sum of the scores of each of their sailors. The overall winner, with victories in three of the five classes, was the BVI team, coached by Taylor Penwell. This is a repeat victory for this promising sailing club, which won the Caribbean Dinghy Championships in 2013.

CSA Representative Jaime Torres was impressed with the quality of the racing and commented, "Club Náutico proved to be a qualified and capable host. The racers had a great time and the team scoring format offered an interesting twist to the Championship. The CSA has made a solid commitment to youth sailing development and this event helped move us in the right direction."

2015 Caribbean Dinghy Champions

OPTIMIST CLASS
1) Rayne Duff. BVI
2) Mia Nicolosi. St. Thomas
3) José Arturo Díaz. Puerto Rico

LASER STANDARD
1) Jason Putley. BVI
2) Agustín Lázaro. Puerto Rico
3) Mark Van den Driessche. St. Thomas

LASER RADIAL
1) Pedro Luis Fernández. Puerto Rico
2) Thad Lettsome. BVI
3) Kai Holmberg. St. Thomas

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420
1) Sam Morrell & Daniel Petrovic. BVI
2) Teddy Nicolosi & Margaret Bartlett. St. Thomas
3) Alec Scasabelli & Johanna Loser. St. Maarten

IC-24
1) F Bus, I Hope Ross, R Hope Ross & C Pessler. St. Maarten
2) C Sharpless, J Holmberg, JP Montegue & R Hunter. St. Thomas
3) A Waters, T Reshetiloff, M Hirst & K Wrigley. BVI

ON THE HORIZON…

30th Anniversary Atlantic Rally for Cruisers

Since its inception, the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) has continued to thrive, reaching a record entry of 235 yachts in 1999, and regularly exceeding 220 entries each year. Following the introduction of ARC+, more than 250 boats now sail under the ARC banner each year. It has become a firmly established event on the international sailing calendar and celebrates its 30th edition this year.

Last month, more than 260 boats and 1,250 people (including 40 children aged under 16) set sail from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, heading 2,700 nautical miles across the Atlantic to St. Lucia in the 30th running of the ARC. ARC sailors had a



WCC/CLARE PENGELLY

Almost ready to go! Mojeka's *crew prepares snack bags for the crossing*

choice of routes with the introduction of ARC+ Cape Verde: 64 boats sailing ARC+ departed Las Palmas on November 8th, followed by the larger ARC fleet (204 boats) on November 22nd.

This year's boats are registered in 30 different countries, and crewmembers represent 41 nationalities. The smallest boat in ARC 2015 is the Hallberg Rassy 310 *Inua* at 9.40 metres (31 feet). The largest boat is *Farfalla* at 104.27 feet, built in 2014 by Southern Wind. Fifteen percent of the boats are less than 12.2 metres (40 feet) long, 43 percent are 12.2 to 15.3 metres (50 feet) and 42 percent are 15.3 to 18.3 metres (60 feet).

The ARC is a fun rally for cruising yachts. Boats are allowed to motor, although motoring times are taken into account when calculating the results. The ARC Racing Division is run using IRC ratings, and yachts in the Racing Division are not permitted to use their engines for propulsion. The ARC course record of eight days 14 hours, 39 minutes and 51 seconds, held by the Farr 100 *Leopard by Finland*, was set in ARC 2014.

ARC 2015 is sponsored by the Tourist Board of Gran Canaria, the Saint Lucia Tourist Board, IGY Rodney Bay Marina; and supported by the Port Authority of Las Palmas, the City Hall of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; in association with *Yachting World* magazine.

A gala reception for ARC 2015 is planned in St. Lucia, where an especially warm welcome awaits the fleet.

For more information on St. Lucia see ad on page 29.

Visit www.worldcruising.com/arc for more information on the ARC.

ARC Caribbean 1500 & ARC Bahamas Head Offshore

Thirty-four yachts headed offshore on November 11th from Portsmouth, Virginia as part of the combined Caribbean 1500 and ARC Bahamas fleets. The rally was delayed for three full days thanks to a disturbance in the tropics that would eventually form into Hurricane Kate. But as the fleets headed offshore, bound for the BVI and the Bahamas, respectively, the skies in Portsmouth had cleared.

Six of the boats were bound for Marsh Harbour in the Abacos. The balance of the fleet set a course for Tortola in the British Virgin Islands.

Visit www.worldcruising.com/carib1500 for more information.

Top Teams for Aguilar Match Race in USVI

Carol Bareuther reports: Nine Open teams representing some of the best match racers in the world will compete in the 7th Annual Carlos Aguilar Match Race (CAMR), set for December 3rd through 6th in the US Virgin Islands.

"We are bringing world-class match racing to St. Thomas," says regatta director Bill Canfield. "Today's young stars will compete against each other as well as former world champions and America's Cup sailors. This is possibly the most compelling match racing event in the world this year."

The USVI's Taylor Canfield, the Number Two ranked Open division match racer in the world, will be back in the waters where he grew up to pit his skills against the impressive fleet.

"This definitely will be one of the toughest events of the year for my team! Charlotte Amalie harbor is a great spot to race: it offers shifty, puffy conditions on a short racetrack right in front of the waterfront, allowing for some great spectating. But it is also unique in that the wall becomes an obstruction in most races and the boats often come within inches of the waterfront," says Canfield.

The USA's David Storrs, the world's Number 19 ranked Open match racer and Number Two in the US, will compete in the CAMR for the first time. Storrs' crew will be fellow American Hayden Goodrick plus New Zealanders Rod Dawson and Garth Ellingham. Canfield and Storrs will be up against the USA's Stephanie Roble, Number Two ranked match racer in the Women's division on the world stage and Number One ranked in the US. The USVI's Peter Holmberg and USA's Dave Dellenbaugh, both former America's Cup sailors and veterans of the CAMR, round out the top five confirmed teams to date. Holmberg, an Olympic silver medalist and former world match-racing champion, won this event in 2009.

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—Continued from previous page

The CAMR is known for introducing young sailors to the sport, working with the USVI government and Department of Tourism in its efforts to get more kids out on the water. This year, each Open team will have a VI high school sailor (under age 18) as a member.

The CAMR is an International Sailing Federation (ISAF) provisional Grade Two event. The event will be raced in IC-24s, a one-design modification of a J/24, provided by Island Sol.

The Virgin Islands Sailing Association and St. Thomas Yacht Club are the organizing authorities for the CAMR, named for the late Carlos Aguilar, an avid match racer. AeroMD is the major sponsor. The US Virgin Islands Department of Tourism is a supporting sponsor.

Visit www.carlosmatchrace.com for more information.

Antigua's High Tide for the Holidays

This year will be the 24th time that the Antigua Yacht Club will be mixing its Christmas celebrations with a series of yacht races. The High Tide Series brings together visitors and locals in friendly, sportsmanlike racing and at the after-race events at the Antigua Yacht Club.

The High Tide Series 2016 will be sponsored by Budget Marine and organized by Sandy Mair. Five races will take place: two on Sunday, December 20th; one on Wednesday, December 23rd; and two on Saturday, December 26th. The fifth and final race of the series is incorporated into the traditional AYC Boxing Day Race. Races will be between one and one-and-a-half hours, except for the longer Race Five. Courses will be in the environs of Falmouth Harbour.

The event will accommodate all types of keelboats; racing class entries will require CSA certificates. Non-rated boats will be fitted as best as possible into classes that may be mixed. In particular, workboats will be protected from racing boats. The greater the number of entries, the easier it is to have great classes!

An after race get-together is traditional after every race day, with a grand final prizegiving and closing party at the AYC on the 26th.

Budget Marine, the principal sponsor, is the largest chandlery chain in the Caribbean. With three chandleries in Antigua located in Jolly Harbour, English Harbour and North Sound they offer boaters in Antigua a wide range of marine products.

There will be no skippers' meeting: all questions and information are to be handled by e-mail. Registration will be at the AYC office or by e-mail to cricketant112@gmail.com.

Mount Gay Round Barbados in January

Plans for the 80th anniversary Mount Gay Round Barbados Race Series, set for January 16th through 24th, are well underway.

Thanks to its re-launch in 2014, where a new race format and more record-breaking opportunities were introduced, this Caribbean-season-opening regatta is now one of the key events on the race circuit, and is fast becoming a speed-sailing, record-breaking favourite. Three days of coastal racing, the headline Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race, and the chance to contest a final 300-mile Ocean Race to Antigua to tie up with the Superyacht Challenge, gives plenty of options for teams looking for top-class racing.



For teams with a taste for speed, and rum, there's a chance to win their skipper's weight in Mount Gay Rum as a prize for the fastest time if any of the 14 Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race records are broken. At the 2015 event earlier this year, three teams managed to scoop the top prizes, amassing a total of 78 cases of Mount Gay Rum!

The racing and record-breaking opportunities, together with legendary parties, a visit to the Mount Gay Rum Distillery, and the chance to soak up Bajan hospitality at an exhibition polo match on lay day, have all helped establish the unique identity of the Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race Series.

Organized by the Barbados Cruising Club in association with Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc, and Mount Gay, this regatta always takes place during the third week in January to incorporate the headline event — the 60-nautical mile Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race — which traditionally takes place on Errol Barrow Day, January 21st.

For more information see ad on page 5.

Island Water World Grenada Sailing Week

Now is the time to sign up for the start line! Island Water World Grenada Sailing Week will take place from January 28th through February 2nd.

With a handshake, GSW Board Chairman Marc DeCaul and Matt Veinotte of Island Water World have confirmed the three-year title sponsorship agreement that began in 2015. Island Water World's active sponsorship commitment and involvement since 2013 has been a big plus for the regatta as it grows and develops. It is heartening also to see the ongoing investment of international and local businesses and organizations in this regatta: Mount Gay Rum, Sea Hawk Premium Yacht Finishes, Secret Harbour Marina, Grenada Tourism Authority, Spice Island Marine Services, Doyle Caribbean, L'Anse Aux Epines Cottages, Real Value IGA, Ace Hardware, Grenada Marine and Palm Tree Marine and more smaller, but just as essential, contributors. With this kind of support, the regatta promises to be even better than before, with fierce competition on the water and great fun ashore afterwards.



—Continued on next page

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The 2016 GSW Notice of Race is now available at grenadasailingweek.com/notice-of-race. Visit www.grenadasailingweek.com and sign up for the newsletter.

For more information see ad on page 6.

Jolly Harbour Valentine's Regatta, Antigua

Jolly Harbour Yacht Club organized the first running of this event in 1993 and it has been held on the weekend closest to Valentine's Day every year since. In recent years the regatta has been growing in popularity with local entries and yachts from overseas. Thirty yachts competed in last year's edition, including ocean racers, production cruising yachts, multihulls, sportsboats and dinghies.



JODY SALLONS-DAY

For the 2016 edition, registration opens on February 12th with a welcome reception and Red Cap party at Jolly Harbour. Three days of racing follow in the beautiful surroundings of Jolly Harbour Marina and Five Islands peninsular.

In addition to the Valentine's Regatta, a stand-alone passage race to Redonda, scored separately from the Valentine's Regatta, will be held on February 16th. The Redonda Passage Race is designed to mirror the finish of the RORC Caribbean 600 Race, which will start on February 22nd. The passage race will finish on the south coast of Antigua.

Jolly Harbour Yacht Club Commodore, Grahame Williams, says, "I extend a very warm welcome to all the overseas competitors joining us at the Valentine's Regatta. Over the years the event has grown and is now seen as one of the premier events in the Caribbean. There is also interest from companies wishing to sponsor our event. I am pleased that Pearns Point was able to support us, as they are a part of the community in Jolly Harbour. I hope you all have a very enjoyable time."

Antigua in February is heaven for any sailor, and with shifting and gusting around the bays and islands on the northwest tip of Antigua, there is plenty of tactical analysis for competitors at the Valentine's Regatta.

Sponsored by Pears Point, Mount Gay Rum and Banks Beer, with other partners including Budget Marine, Regatta guru, Townhouse, Caribbean Union Bank, Seahawk Paint and West Point Bar. The Valentine's Regatta has daily prizegiving and live music every night.

Entries can be made at www.regattaguru.com

For more information see ad on page 14.

Magnificent Fleet Set for 8th RORC Caribbean 600

The 2016 RORC Caribbean 600, organized by the Royal Ocean Racing Club in association with Antigua Yacht Club, will start in Antigua on February 22nd. The non-stop course of approximately 600 nautical miles encompasses 11 Caribbean islands.

The 2016 event has already attracted some of the world's finest offshore racing yachts, promising intense competition for overall honours as well as attempts for both monohull and multihull race records.

Shipping straight to the Caribbean from the Rolex Sydney Hobart Race will be *Comanche*, Jim and Kristy Hinze Clark's 100-foot, USA-based VPLP/Verdier-designed Maxi, the world's fastest monohull, boasting a 24-hour-record run (2015 Transatlantic Race, 618.01 nautical miles, averaging 25.75 knots). *Comanche's* crew is led by Kenny Read, who was on board George David's *Rambler* 100 to set the RORC Caribbean 600 course record (40 hours 20 minutes 02 seconds) in 2011.

Joining *Comanche* in IRC Canting Keel class will be Bouwe Bekking's Dutch Volvo Ocean 65, *Team Brunel*. This will be the first occasion that the one-design, round-the-world yacht has taken part in the RORC Caribbean 600. Jens Kellinghusen's German Ker 56, *Varuna VI*, makes up a formidable trio of early entries for this class and more yachts are expected to follow.

In 2015, Lloyd Thornburg's MOD 70, *Phaedo3* set the RORC Caribbean 600 multihull record (33 hours, 35 minutes and 30 seconds) and will be returning after racing in the RORC Transatlantic Race in November. *Phaedo3* will have hot competition for Multihull Line Honours in Tony Lawson's MOD 70, *Concise 10* and Peter Aschenbrenner's Nigel Irens 63, *Paradox*.

The 2016 RORC Caribbean 600 will be the first four-boat offshore showdown in the history of the Maxi 72 Class. Hap Fauth's JV72, *Bella Mente*, lifted the RORC Caribbean 600 Trophy in 2015, having scored the best corrected time under IRC. *Bella Mente* will be joined by Peter Ogden's *Jethou*, Jan-Henrik Kisteit's *Momo* and George Sakellaris's *Proteus* (ex-*Rán V*). All are capable of a blistering pace in tradewind conditions and a high-speed match race would be thrilling.

Joining the Maxi 72s will be more hot competition from Irving Laidlaw's Rolex Maxi Yacht Cup champion, the RP82 *Highland Fling XI*, and overall winner of the 2015 Transatlantic Race, Bryon Ehrhart's RP63, *Lucky*. The TP52 *Sorcha*, sailed by Peter Harrison, and Piet Vroon's Ker 51, *Tonnerre 4*, had an epic battle last time out and both will be back this year. *Sorcha* won last year's 600-mile match race with *Tonnerre 4* and placed second overall.

The RORC Caribbean 600 has always attracted the majestic classic yachts that frequent the Caribbean and this year an early entry is the 215-foot (65-metre) schooner *Adix*. One of the largest sailing vessels built since the 1930s, *Adix* is a three-masted schooner, the first such to race with the Royal Ocean Racing Club.

Visit caribbean600.rorc.org for more information.

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Belize: Blazing Forward

Youth2Adult — Y2A — is a series of articles celebrating sailing's role in youth development. In December we make a departure from the normal format and feature two Belizian youths who make history this month as they travel to Malaysia to be the first to represent their country in the ISAF Youth Sailing World Championship.

"Belize once had a strong commercial sailing tradition, when lighters full of sand or fish (or probably contraband) were sailed up and down the coast in the usually steady winds and shallow waters inside the barrier reef," reported John Oliver on Scuttlebutt.com in March 2006. "Now with outboard motors replacing sails for those who must make a living at sea, and finances and time for recreational sailing severely limited, and in spite of strenuous efforts by regatta committees and sea scout instructors, this tradition is rapidly failing."

By 2009, Oliver was changing that landscape: "As a sailing teacher for a group of Sea Scouts, I have been asked to find out if a junior program for the schools would be feasible." Eighteen months later, successful planning had created a new Belize Sailing Association (BzSA), which joined the International Sailing Federation (ISAF). Finding local sponsors and securing government tax exemption led to duty-free purchase of 26 Optimists, subsidized and sourced by the International Optimist Association (IODA). Initially, the boats were divvied up between the Sea Scouts and bases in Belize City, Corozal and Ambergris Caye. IODA provided an instructor-training course given by a bilingual coach from Puerto Rico. Expansion was rapid from 2011 to '14, including ordering 40 more Optimists using IODA's "6 for 5" boat purchase scheme. Additional junior sailing centers opened in Placencia and Caye Caulker.

A trailer was built for boat transport and a racing circuit grew from five to seven regattas. The time had come to develop a Five-Year Optimist Program to determine and develop Belize's best junior sailors. In 2015, qualifying trials were held and, because IODA encourages girls to participate, Belize was able to send four sailors, two boys and two girls, to July's OPTINAM in Antigua. That same month, IODA sponsored a basic-level instructor course in Belize.

Capitalizing on the protected waters inside the Belize Barrier Reef, BzSA is making sailing lessons affordable and accessible to youth. Their Board voted in September to sanction the attendance of Blanca Velasquez and Antonio Ricardez Jr. at the December 2015 ISAF Youth World Championship in Malaysia.

The challenge of continuing sailing development sophistication, for example the requirement that a youth participate in all seven regattas in order to qualify to compete in the National Championship, while keeping it affordable and accessible to all Belize children regardless of economic status is calling for creativity and innovation. One answer has been to have youths compete within Bart's Bash (a legitimate international race for sailors worldwide and in every class of sailboat; on a designated date sailors take to their home waters and sail courses designed via computer program by Bart's Bash Committee). In the 2014 race, all of Belize's sailors finished in the top 15 percent of the 16,780 entrants. The Belizean children aged eight to 15 all finished in the top eight percent of the 1,174 competing in their class. This performance stunned the sailing world and promoted recreational sailing in Belize. Because revenue from public sailing classes is a funding mechanism for Belize junior sailing, this is important.

Y2A Featured Youths

Blanca Velasquez, 15 years old
Junior Sailing Program: San Pedro Sailing Club
Favorite boat: Optimist

Blanca Velasquez started sailing at ten years of age. The next year, excitement was high for the first Belize National Championship, which was held in November 2012. Blanca's younger brother Kevin, age 10, won! Racing entered Blanca's blood at that time and still flows through her veins today. By 2014, she'd won the National Championship.

Blanca is a native of San Pedro. She lives on Ambergris Caye with her five siblings, mother and father, and attends San Pedro High School, Second Form. "It has always been math," Blanca says of her favorite subject. When Commodore Andy Milner of the San Pedro Sailing Club spoke of sailing instruction opportunities at her school, Blanca thought it sounded fun and exciting. "Sure enough it was. From the beginning, I loved it. You learn how to bond in a group. (One builds) social closeness from sharing the same experiences and challenges on the water." She feels that racing at the higher level of competition while juggling homework, studying and school projects is forcing her to learn time management.

This year she began sailing Lasers and was selected to travel to Antigua for the ISAF Youth Worlds Emerging Nations Program Advanced Clinic (YW-ENP). "It was hard. The winds were so high. I'm little. I struggled. The coaches asked if I wanted to give up. No way! At the end they said I was one of the most improved sailors. Now I'm picked to go to the Youth Worlds in Malaysia where the winds will be what I like — light."



According to her Argentinian coach, Juan Mazzini, "We train in boats four times a week, we run on the beach twice a week and three times per week she does Crossfit to complement all the other fitness training. As well, she works with a nutritionist to keep her diet right." Between weight training and technique, she is handling heavier wind better. ISAF is giving her a full scholarship to go to Malaysia. The contacts and the resume this will give her is huge. She will be able to apply for a (academic) scholarship in the States." In November, she raced her last Optimist National Championship, taking fourth.

When it comes to pitching in, Blanca indicates they've done three fundraising car washes and sold raffle tickets to raise money for her competitive sailing program. She is expected to wash and maintain the boats and help with the club rental program, which generates revenue that supports the free sailing program for local youth. Blanca aspires to become an Olympic sailor.

"I'm a very competitive person. Sometimes that is good but it can also have its bads. To me, being competitive helped me and motivated me to be better. It also showed me that I will not always win and that losing doesn't make me a loser. It makes me try harder for what I want." She cites confidence that comes from continuing to try despite losses and fear, and the dedication that comes from setting goals and working toward those goals "is all a process that takes time and effort. So, if you're passionate about what you do, see how it can change you in life. In all of this, have fun and enjoy sailing — the wind, the waves, the sun and all that Nature gives you."

Antonio Ricardez, 15 years old
Junior Sailing Program: Belize City Sailing Club
Favorite boat: Hobie Cat

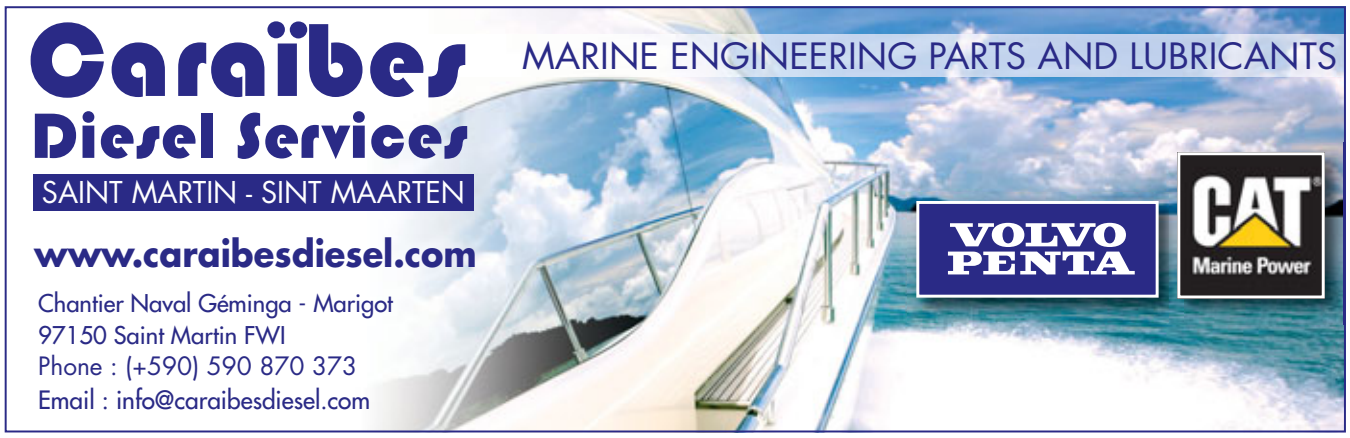
The physics of how a sail performs in the wind appealed to Antonio Ricardez from the beginning. In Third Form at Nazerene High School, physics is his favorite subject; sailing and football (soccer) his favorite activities. According to Antonio's father, no formal coaching was available. "He was self-taught. I sought coaching from Francis Heusner but was told, 'I will train you and you will train your children'." It seemed to work. "You've got to start with the family. First thing I told my children: 'If you want to be an athlete, you have to eat good and sleep good. No staying out late. We trained the children during bad weather, sunshine, wind. They aren't afraid of tremendous wind."



The children who succeed have parental support.

Honey Camp Lagoon was Antonio's first regatta. He qualified in his heat to race in the first Belize National Championship coming in second behind Blanca's brother, Kevin Velasquez. In 2013, he won many races and was named BzSA's Sailor of the Year. In 2014 during the Championship, he jury-rigged his Optimist after a block failed early in one of the races, managing a fourth place finish, but it robbed him of a first place finish overall.

—Continued on page 54



Tribute to a Beautiful Friend and an Incredible Sailor

Donald Marmo: April 9th, 1942 to October 16th, 2015

by Donald Stollmeyer

I love people who make me laugh. It cures a multiple of ills. It's probably the most important thing in a person.

— Audrey Hepburn

Every once in a while, if you are lucky, you will meet a person who is special. I met such a person in 1991. He was shy yet he was great fun to be with. He had a certain spark, a little-boyish grin that portrayed pure wickedness but only in the nicest possible way. About him there was a certain goodness of character, a concern for others, a very keen sense of humor, an interest in world affairs and a spirit for adventure. He had built a trimaran and a catamaran and he had an intimate knowledge of multihulls. He had sailed extensively across the world's oceans and he had an acute understanding of the sea and sailing. Above all, he laughed a lot and he had the ability to make other people laugh with him. It wasn't long before I was calling this man "my friend".



DON STOLLMEYER / INSET: JEFF FISHER

Don Marmo at the launching of the author's cat in Trinidad (inset), and on his last sail aboard his self-built Crowther Spindrift, Ned Kelly, *in February 2015*

Don Marmo's sailing life began when he was a Boy Scout in Australia and met his lifelong friend Ken Conley who introduced him to sailing. Ken described Don at that time just as we know him today: "A skinny tall Boy Scout, his knobby knees resembling buds growing on twigs." Several years later Don graduated to bigger boats but his passion was for multihulls, admiring their speed and stability. In 1964 he helped his friends Ian Eeles and Tony Spooner build a trimaran, which for many years they sailed throughout the South Pacific, up to Hawaii, across to California and finally to Central America where they sold her in 1973. The young friends then went back to California where Don built a Crowther Spindrift 39-foot catamaran at a big old barn called The Ranch. "I remember they used to call me 'Lightning'. Using a hammer, I'd never strike the same place twice!" The boat was launched in February 1976 and it was then that Don's wonderful sailing adventures and his life aboard *Ned Kelly* began.

With his friends, Don sailed *Ned* to far-off lands that most sailors can only dream about visiting. In 1977, he sailed across the Pacific from the States to Australia; in '78, he sailed via Fiji to Vanuatu, where Don registered *Ned* and resided for eight years; in '86, upwind from Vanuatu to California via Samoa and Hawaii, "a piece of cake!"; in '87 to Costa Rica via Mexico, then across the Pacific once again to Australia; in '88 across the top of Australia through the Torres Strait to Darwin then on to Bali, Cocos-Keeling and Thailand, where Ned won the famous King's Cup; then off sailing across the Indian Ocean, up the Red Sea to Sudan and Egypt, through the Suez Canal into the Med, to Cyprus, Turkey, the Greek Islands, Tunisia, Majorca and Gibraltar.

In 1990 Ned crossed the Atlantic via the Canary Islands and the Cape Verde Islands, making landfall in St. Maarten. Except for a short sojourn when he took *Ned* to Rhode Island in 1994, Don remained in the Caribbean, cruising up and down the island chain, taking part in regattas and having friends cruise with him. He kept himself liquid (and in liquid!) by repairing houses and boats, and doing other odd jobs. His desire was simply to earn enough, what he laughingly termed "biscuit" to be able to sail, to keep *Ned* in good condition and to spend time enjoying life with his friends. Don was as happy as a clam.

By the mid 1990s Don and I had become firm friends and what a joy it was to see him whenever we met. In December 1996, when I launched the catamaran I had been building for ten long years, Don sailed to Trinidad for the launching ceremony but in his own words, he really came "to make damn sure you finally get it into the sea!" He brought with him a video camera, not all that common in those days, on which he recorded the launching. That video, coupled with Don's amazing commentary, is now one of my treasured possessions.

Over the ensuing years our friendship deepened. We saw each other when I visited the other islands and when he visited Trinidad, and we were in close contact through e-mails that he regularly sent to his many friends all over the world. These e-mails were keenly anticipated because almost always there would include an absolutely classic joke or he would recount some funny incident. In December 2012, when I launched my second catamaran (this one took only seven years to build), he again sailed down to Trinidad, this time with our friends Chris Doyle and Jeff Fisher, to attend the launching party and I guess once again, "to make damn sure you finally get it into the sea!" As always, it was a joy to see him.

In early 2014 I e-mailed Don to tell him that Karen, one of our friends in Trinidad, had contracted a little-known but awful disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease). ALS is a very rare but fatal neurological disease that affects about one in 60,000 people every year, attacking the nerve cells responsible for controlling voluntary muscles. It's strange to now reflect that Don replied to my e-mail with the words, "Oh my God, I looked up ALS and it's devastating." When Karen died in April 2014 he wrote me saying, "Thank heavens she went comfortably, it's all any of us can hope for." It was only one month after Karen died that Don e-mailed me to say he was having problems swallowing and his speech was becoming slurred. After the initial jokes about the amount of alcohol in his veins objecting to the presence of blood, we realized his condition was in fact very serious. Following initial tests in Grenada, Don sailed *Ned* to Trinidad in Sept 2014 where, almost unbelievably, final tests confirmed that he was also stricken with ALS.

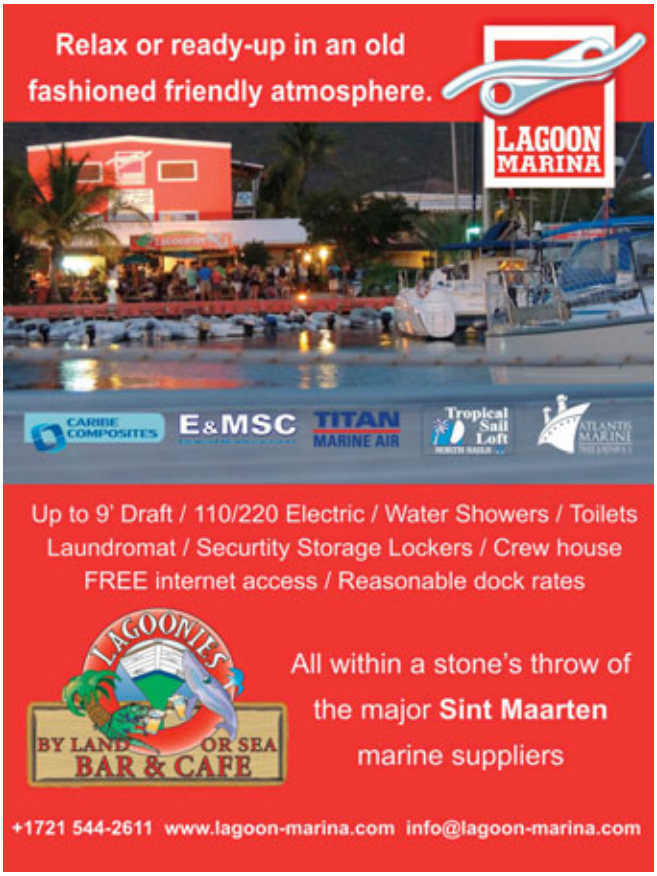
The events over the next few months made me realize how many very good friends Don had accumulated in his life of sailing. On hearing the news, people from distant corners of the world contacted each other by e-mail to ask how they could help and an informal e-mail group of well over 50 friends was formed. Don's great friend Craig Lovett organized an "Ice Bucket Challenge" for Don and an ALS donation in Don's name. A bank account was opened so that friends could help with his expenses but he was not told about it because he would have objected. Then, when his speech got really bad, his friends bought him a "whizzy new talking computer" to help him express himself. Incidentally, Don loved high-tech gadgetry. He was the first person I knew with a handheld GPS.

With severely restricted movements, it was clear that Don could not remain aboard *Ned Kelly* so he reluctantly agreed to return to Australia where he could access First World medical care. *Ned* was duly sold to the son of a friend and he e-mailed me to say the lad liked to sail fast and "he's a surfer as well. Perfect!"

On March 24th 2015 Don said a final farewell to *Ned* and his friends in Grenada. Phil Winters escorted him to California, where he stayed with his old friend Tony. While there, a wonderful event took place. Tony invited Don's long-ago friends, many of whom had known Don when he was building *Ned Kelly* 39 years earlier, to a celebration party for Don at.... would you believe it.... THE RANCH! Don e-mailed me a few days after the party to say how wonderful it was, that "Tone wangled me into it" and "I'd forgotten how good my old friends are." Then, in early April, Craig escorted Don from California to "Ostraalya" where Don quietly resided on the east coast with Lisa, another old friend and, very conveniently, a retired nurse. Ken, his old mate from their days in the Boy Scouts, and other friends were there to take him out and help him along. Over the next few months, as expected, Don gradually lost control of his remaining muscles. He survived a bad fall and a bout of pneumonia but nothing could stop the advancing ALS. Although it still came as a shock, we were not surprised when we received an e-mail from Tony, Ken and Carolyn on October 16th to say, "Our dear friend Captain Don weighed anchor and sailed over the horizon for the last time."

As the news of Don's passing spread amongst his cruising friends, inboxes in computers in various corners of the world began filling up with e-mails all bearing the same simple title: "Captain Don". It was most extraordinary and in retrospect I think we all needed to comfort each other through shared words of appreciation of Don's life and our profound love for him. Interestingly, many of the e-mails referred to Don as "my beautiful friend" and "my beautiful captain". Mike wrote, "rest in peace beautiful man"; Robert wrote, "...one of the few beautiful people I have known" and Pat wrote, "farewell beautiful, dear and true friend." I paused to consider why there was this recurrent theme, this focus on his beauty, because, in the physical sense Don would be the first to laugh at the notion that he was beautiful. In fact, one dear friend humorously described him as "a body attached to more arms and legs than anyone else!" Yet Don really was a beautiful person. He brought people together and he made people feel good. Indeed, as Kirk, another friend, remarked, "He gives one hope for the human race." Or maybe Buzz summed it up best when he wrote, "Whatever the powers were that put Don's existence together, they hit the jackpot".

When Don was diagnosed with ALS he confided in me that the thing he would miss most is making people laugh. But Don will always make us laugh because even today when I hear a funny joke I think of him and that adds to my laughter. And I know his friends all feel the same way. For this and so many other reasons we will never forget our beautiful captain, Don Marmo. We thank you for being in our lives Don. Fair winds forever; you deserve to cruise in peace.



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THE EAST COAST OF MARTINIQUE

by Don Street

The ARC has arrived in St. Lucia and sailors will be entertained with a series of parties and expeditions. Then where do you go cruising, north or south? I advise heading north to the east coast of Martinique. After 60 years in the Eastern Caribbean, it's the Street family's favourite uncrowded cruising ground.

My wife, Trich, loves the east coast of Martinique, as she does not like early morning departures. The harbour entrances lie on an approximate east-west axis, so you should not leave the harbour until the sun is high, about 1100 hours, and you should be entering the next harbour by 1400 before the sun gets low. This gives time for a leisurely breakfast and a swim before hoisting the anchor, and the anchor is down in time for another swim before sundowners. The harbours are close enough together to make it possible.

As you can see on Imray Iolaire chart A301, there are dozens of anchorages in coves and to leeward of islands. From Passe du Vauclin for 13 miles the Atlantic swell is broken by a well-buoyed barrier reef, and harbour entrances are also well buoyed. Martinique is the best-buoyed and best-charted island in the Eastern Caribbean. The French started back in the late 1850s, when they also built the graving dock in Fort de France. The light on the Caravelle peninsula was established in 1862.

Nothing much has changed on the east coast of Martinique in recent years: no big marinas or haul-out facilities have been built. However, roads have been improved and local reports indicate that the massive influx of seaweed encountered earlier this year has been considerably reduced. There are small, shallow marinas in the towns of François and Robert where you can leave your dinghy. The Giant supermarkets in François and Robert can be reached by a ten-minute taxi ride. And, unlike the south and west coasts of the island, the east coast has few foreign tourists, so the prices in the restaurants are prices that the Martiniquais are willing to pay.

From Rodney Bay, St. Lucia to Ste. Anne in Martinique is a day sail. Time your departure to pick up the first of the weather-going tide as you clear Pigeon Island. Do not go into Marin: the anchorage is usually crowded and the marinas often are full. Anchor in Ste. Anne, take the dinghy into Marin and do your entry. Then take the dinghy up the small river in the mangroves (well described in Doyle's guide) to the supermarket to load up with good French wine, cheese and bread and Dutch Heineken. (I find the Dutch Heineken much better than the St. Lucia brew!)

Have on board Imray Iolaire A301, the detailed chart of the south and east coasts of Martinique. If it is unavailable, buy the equivalent French chart. (The information on the Imray Iolaire chart and the French chart is the same, but the Imray Iolaire chart is waterproof.) Back up my Martinique to Trinidad guide (available via iUniverse.com or Amazon) with Jerome Noel's superb *Cruising Guide to Martinique*. It is in French, but with even a smattering of French you will find it is a worthwhile investment. Read the back of the Imray Iolaire chart, check www.imray.com for corrections, and use eyeball navigation — don't depend on electronics. If this is done, you will be able to cruise the east coast of Martinique with no problems.

First stop, Ile Hardy: tuck up behind the island and anchor. Then get in the dinghy and explore the shoal water inside the reef that extends three miles to the north, the Martinique equivalent of the Tobago Cays. The area is perfect for windsurfing, kite surfing, stand-up paddleboarding and snorkelling.

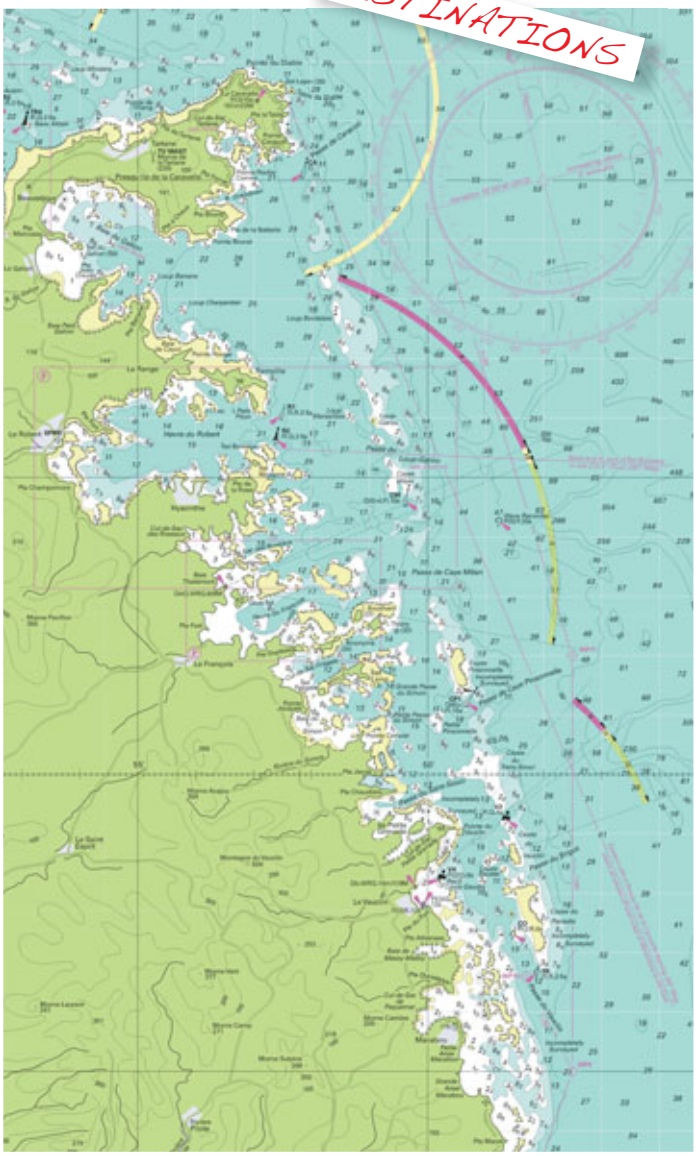
After a day or so, head seven miles north through the well-buoyed Passe du Vauclin. The offshore reef extends 13 miles north, breaking down the Atlantic swell. Skip Vauclin, which has no decent harbour. North from Vauclin there are four anchorages for adventurous and experienced reef navigators to explore before reaching François.

François' channel is well buoyed but zigzags, so it requires eyeball navigation with a crewmember standing on top of the bow pulpit. Anchor behind Gros Ilet and take the dinghy to where the chart shows "YC" and you will not find much of a yacht club, but an excellent restaurant.

Proceeding north, there are half a dozen coves to explore by dinghy or shoal-draft boat before reaching Robert. In Robert, look at the chart: there are too many possible quiet anchorages to list here; just go explore! When the time comes to eat ashore again and re-supply the larder, anchor off Robert and dinghy ashore to the small marina (built for power boats and multihulls). Within walking distance you will find many good restaurants.

Then head on to Baie du Trésor (Treasure Cove) or Cul de Sac Tartane on the Caravelle peninsula, a hideout for pirates right up to the early 19th century.

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



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A 'FRENCH CONNECTION' PANAMA CANAL TRANSIT

by Bill and JoAnne Harris



A night to remember: transiting the Gatún Locks

Our French Connection Opportunity

Our French friends Virginie and Nicolas invited us to join them aboard S/V *Phileas*, their Lagoon 45 catamaran, for almost two weeks this past March for what would be one of the most memorable times of our lives. Of course we said, "Yes!" This was a fantastic opportunity.

Our Panama Canal adventure began in Bocas del Toro, Panama, where we left our trimaran, *Ultra,* at Bocas Marina & Yacht Club and hopped on a water taxi to the mainland town of Almirante. From there, we boarded a double-decker bus to the city of David. We stayed there one night (to check the status of *Ultra's* Perkins engine rebuild at Grupo Vargas-Matamoros Repair Shop). The next morning, Bill's birthday, we were on the early morning bus for the eight-hour ride to Panama City. It was an extremely comfortable trip, since our tickets were for the upstairs front-row seats: #1 and #2. These provided a great view and better comfort; we had been warned that the bottom level was known for its Arctic temperatures. From the bus stop, we took a taxi to make our French Connection with *Phileas* at Shelter Bay Marina.

Virginie, Nicolas and their son, Oscar, and daughter, Athénaïs, were in the midst of preparing *Phileas* for the long passage to the South Pacific. We spent the next week aboard, assisting with the last-minute activities such as finding space for all of their provisioning, doing general boat projects, helping run last-minute errands, and most of all savoring our time together. It will be over a year before we will visit them in French Polynesia.

We were all excited about experiencing this spectacular Panama Canal adventure together! One of Bill's family members helped to build the Panama Canal and he has a medallion that was issued to his relative by President Roosevelt. Several years ago, as a surprise for Bill and his son, David, JoAnne contacted the Panama Canal Society and received certificates and additional information regarding the medallion and the relative whose name is engraved upon it.

The Canal, which celebrated its hundredth birthday last year, is one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World named by the American Society of Civil Engineers. It is 48 miles long, runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and over 14,000 vessels pass through it annually. While in the area, we witnessed the US$5.25 billion combined Panama-China canal expansion project and the installation of the eight new sets of gigantic lock gates that are 65 feet wide and seven feet thick, and range from 47 to 82 feet high, depending on their location. The heaviest weighs 662 tons. Currently, the word on the water is there are major issues with the gates: they do not close properly and are leaking.

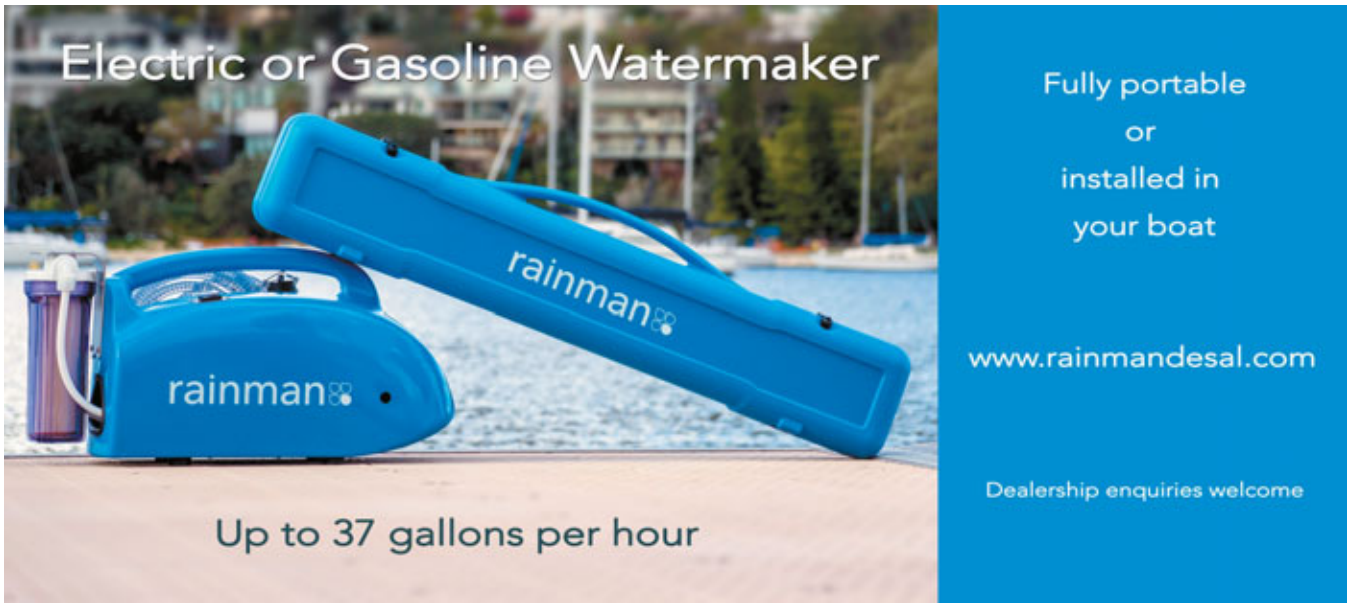
The Panama Canal Transit

On the morning of March 29th, Nicolas gave us a captain's orientation about what to expect when taking the yacht through the Canal. At around 1:00PM, we set out for the canal-transit staging anchorage area called The Flats, where Virginie prepared a fantastic French lunch. After lunch, we were contacted by the Panama Canal Advisor (each vessel is required to have a Transit Advisor appointed by the Panama Canal Authority to advise the captain during the passage) and were told that our transit would be delayed. We all decided to take a nap, so we would be wide awake and ready for the long night ahead.

At 6:45PM the advisor arrived at *Phileas*, we hoisted the anchor and were underway for the first lock. At around 8:00PM we arrived at the first of the three Gatún Locks, which raise Pacific-bound vessels nearly 30 metres from the Caribbean to Lake Gatún. Forty-five minutes later, *Phileas* was flanked with a monohull on each side (both participants in the Blue Planet Odyssey) and at 10:30PM we entered the locks. Nicolas is an excellent captain and navigated the locks like a pro. As crew, we made sure the monohull line handlers were doing their jobs well. Virginie served us all a deliciously fancy French dessert as we lounged on the decks during the smooth late-night passage.

Under the three-quarter moon and the bright golden lights of the Canal, we exited the Gatún Locks at 11:35PM. We disengaged *Phileas* from the two monohulls to allow us to tie up to one of the two gigantic mooring balls in the pristine fresh water of Lake Gatún.

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The monohulls arrived a little later, and rafted to each side of *Phileas* for the night. The Advisor, Francisco, did not spend the night aboard and had a water taxi take him to shore. At midnight, we all toasted with a glass of French red wine and headed to bed. It was a magical night, as the sounds of the creatures in the jungle filled the air.



The next morning at 6:30AM, our new Advisor, Roy, arrived wearing a bright blue Captain America T-shirt for a great French breakfast. Fifteen minutes later we fired up the engines, untied from the mooring and the monohulls, and we were on the move again. We cruised at eight knots for approximately three hours through the breathtakingly beautiful Lake Gatún. It is a wildlife watchers' paradise!



At 7:15AM, to our surprise, Roy stated we that had arrived three hours too early to enter the next locks, at Pedro Miguel, so we tied to one of two mooring buoys to wait our turn.

Upon the approach to the final set of locks, Miraflores, once again the monohulls arrived and rafted up to *Phileas*, and at 2:00PM we entered them. At 3:50PM, we passed under the Bridge of the Americas and into the wide-open Pacific Ocean!

Soon an old Navy motor launch, complete with diesel inboard and tiller steering, arrived to collect the four 70-foot dock lines and eight large ball fenders that are mandatory to pass through the Panama Canal. (You may supply your own or you can rent them.)

At 5:00PM, we anchored outside of La Playita Marina. The dinghy fee is good for seven days, but was US$43 per person! And note: the seven-day period begins on a Monday and ends on a Sunday; if you show up on Sunday, you will be charged for a full week.

Panama City, Revisited

After wishing "bon voyage" to *Phileas* and before our return to Bocas del Toro, we took the bus to Panama City. This was JoAnne's second visit, and Bill's first; we wanted to explore the city together. Back in 1998 and '99, a few years before the United States turned the Canal over to Panama, JoAnne visited Panama frequently while working for a Texas-based oil and gas company. While there, she was shown by her Panamanian counterparts all that Panama had to offer: the vibrant culture, the famous landmarks including the Panama Canal, and more. During our recent stay, we had the great opportunity to reunite with JoAnne's Panamanian business contacts. It was quite an experience for them to give us a tour after all these years. Our photos from 20 years ago are night and day!

Panama has undergone an unbelievable transformation, and is an incredibly modern city. It is full of beautiful high-rises, amazing architecture, and countless corporations. Furthermore, a chain of islands (Naos, Culebra, Perico and Flamenco) located near the Pacific entrance to the Canal that was used as a US military base is now accessible to everyone via the Amador Causeway. An extremely popular tourist playground, it is full of restaurants and hotels, plus the Biomuseo, La Playita Resort & Marina and the Flamenco Yacht Club & Marina, recently the venue for the second annual Panama Boat Show. Nearby is the Balboa Yacht Club, which has a limited number of moorings and slips available.

Clockwise from left below: An old Navy launch carries away extra fenders and lines. The crew: Oscar, Virginie, Athénaïs, Nicolas, JoAnne and Bill. After bidding adieu to their friends, JoAnne and Bill enjoy the culture of Panama City



While in Panama City, you must stroll the walkway along Panama Bay and visit the newly restored buildings of Casco Viejo (the old city center and a UNESCO World Heritage Site), visit the fish market, and attend a traditional Panamanian costumed dance show while you sip the national cocktail, Chichita Panama, a combination of Seco Herrerano (liquor triple-distilled from sugarcane), grapefruit and pineapple juice, and honey. Also, be sure not to miss the unforgettable malls for endless shopping opportunities.

Visit www.noonsite.com/Members/sue/R2012-03-14-3 for more information on transiting the Panama Canal.

JoAnne and Bill Harris are from Clear Lake, Texas and both hold 100-ton USCG Master Licenses. They enjoy writing cruising articles and sharing their experiences. Visit www.jandbyachtultraadventure.blogspot.com to follow their sailing adventures.



PASSAGE TO HAITI

Part Three:

Making Friends

by Nat Benjamin





After a November 2014 departure from Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts aboard the 50-foot schooner, *Charlotte*, and a pit stop in Bermuda, we made landfall at Ile-à-Vache. [*See Parts One and Two in the October and November issues of* Compass.]

Like many Haitian villages, Kai Koq, and for that matter all of Ile-à-Vache, has no cars or electricity. Without the ambient noise that is subtly pervasive in even rural areas of most First World nations, the peaceful, natural quiet greets the visitor like a calming infusion. Walking the waterfront along palm-, mango- and seagrape-shaded trails with the usual entourage of curious but respectful local lads to guide us, we became acquainted with this purely authentic Haitian village.

A dozen or more handcrafted, colorfully painted wooden sloops ranging from 18 to 30 feet long lay at anchor while others sailed off with a patchwork of cloth set on crooked spars for a day of fishing in the waters between Ile-à-Vache and the mountainous main island to the north. Sounds of wood chopping and a caulker's mallet led us down the beach to three boat builders who were shaping timbers for a new vessel and repairing an old one. The design of these sloops has evolved over the centuries through form, function and the shapes of the crooks from which the frames are cut with a machete and axe. They are crude but solid and well proportioned and appear to sail well in most conditions using a sprit mainsail and jib. An oar is the only auxiliary power.

Scattered along the sand and mangrove shore are the ubiquitous dugout canoes — man's earliest conveyance on water — that are still chopped out of logs by skillful men with primitive tools. Meandering through the village along hard-packed dirt paths, we exchanged a smile and a polite "bonjour" with everyone we passed. Donkeys, goats, pigs, horses, cows and island dogs greeted us with sleepy eyes and docile tempers.

Haitian houses are small and well built of wood, cement block and locally cut stone with metal roofs.

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Right: 'Scattered along the shore are the ubiquitous dugout canoes... we exchanged a smile and a polite "bonjour" with everyone we passed'

Top right: The author's wife, Pam, aboard a motorbike en route to the bus stop



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Separate wooden kitchen structures contain cleverly crafted re-bar potholders over fire pits where home-made charcoal burns in carefully measured quantity for cooking. The yards contain fruit trees and small gardens with chickens clucking and ladies washing children and laundry in plastic tubs. Swept clean and neat, there are only the essentials for living — no clutter of "stuff".



Back aboard at dusk, we saw a yellow dugout was heading our way with a smiling Haitian maneuvering his craft with a palm branch in one hand and talking on his cell phone in the other — a confluence of millennia. It's Sam in the canoe. At 28 years old, Sam Alteme, like most of his generation, is looking for a less laborious life than his parents had. He's a good-looking guy with a pleasant smile, fluent command of English and an entrepreneurial spirit that complements his helpful friendly nature. After nearly a year of correspondence, it's a pleasure to meet and talk with him about the challenging issues that loom over a nation still recovering from the cataclysmic earthquake of 2010. Two of my crew, Brad and Malcolm, had to return to the snowdrifts of New England so Sam arranged for an escort to get them safely to Port-au-Prince, departing the following morning.

By 0800, Ian, Zoli, Sam and I were dragging piles of vacuum-packaged clothing and other stowed items out of *Charlotte's* makeshift cargo space and loading them into a 25-foot utility vessel owned by Sister Flora's orphanage. The sputtering Yamaha outboard pushed us out of Port Morgan and along the north coast several miles to the east to a town named Madame Bernard, capital of Ile-à-Vache. This bustling harbor surrounded by reefs and shoal water was teeming with activity in many forms. Burdened 45-foot cargo sloops arriving from Les Cayes and other Haitian ports offloaded their contents on dilapidated piers or directly on shore while fishermen standing waist deep on the reef hauled heavy nets in unison, excited about a bountiful catch. Unlike Kai Koq, this port is chaotic with construction projects underway and a sprawling open market randomly spread upon the unsheltered mud streets along the waterfront — shopping on a rainy day not recommended.

Left: 'Santa Claus' gives Christmas gifts at Sister Flora's home for orphaned and handicapped children

Below: The market at Madame Bernard, 'randomly spread upon the unsheltered streets'

We loaded our offerings onto wagons, which we pushed up the hill past a shaded parking area for a dozen donkeys carrying market produce, and through the gate to the orphanage. Founded in 1968 by Sister Flora, a French Canadian Catholic, this extraordinary facility has become a paradigm of success for the benefit of countless orphaned and handicapped Haitian children. Unreliably funded by government and private organizations, Sister Flora continues to struggle to make ends meet.

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Our donations from the Vineyard were gratefully received and dispersed among the 78 residents, 26 of them wheelchair bound. It does not take a lot to make a big difference in Haiti. Our meeting with the devoted staff was cut short as the pre-Christmas Mass was about to begin and we were ushered to seats in the orphanage's abbey.

Two distinguished Haitian priests attired in flowing white robes and seasonally appropriate liturgical accoutrement, surrounded by shimmering synthetic Christmas decorations and a black Nativity scene, began the service with praise in patois and blessings for the children with us in the congregation. Whenever the priestly ramblings seemed to be droning on excessively, Huguette, a lovely young Haitian woman who was raised in the orphanage, would break into song and lead us all in joyful Creole Christmas carols, including Jingle Bells. This kept the clergy in check and the congregation engaged and awake for an hour and a half during this pleasantly confusing entertainment, occasionally interrupted by the sanctimonious remarks from a portly local dignitary dressed in a pea-green leisure suit and white golf cap.



'The designs of these sloops has evolved over the centuries through form, function and the shapes of the crooks from which the frames are cut with a machete and axe'

Suddenly, a perspiring Frenchman in full Santa Claus costume came bounding through the door ringing a bell and carrying a large sack over his shoulder, to squeals of delight from the children and an indication to the rest of us that the formal part of the service was over. A small present was given to each child until all were quietly clutching their packages waiting for the signal to unwrap. Zoli, Ian and I, sitting in the midst of these kids — with some of them on our laps — watched as they carefully and patiently opened their yearly gifts, taking great care not to tear the precious paper, and then beamed with gratitude clutching a toy or stuffed animal to their breasts. Thank you, Sister Flora, for your immeasurable gift to the Haitian children and to visitors from afar.

Before we had begun to process this cathartic experience, two large tables were rolled into the back of the room, piled high with rice, beans, fried chicken, grated cabbage, plantain, a Christmas cake and cases of beer and soda. It was time for the feast to begin and the wonders of Haiti continued to unfold.

We spent the next few days in Port Morgan doing chores aboard *Charlotte* and making friends with many of the local personalities. A Sunday dinner with Sam and his extended family gave us a close look into their home life and shared values so similar to our own without the overwhelming distraction of excessive possessions or conflicting schedules.

At last, Zoli and I had to return to Martha's Vineyard for work and Christmas holidays with our families, leaving Ian and *Charlotte* to look after each other. The water taxi, an outboard-powered pirogue type of vessel (narrow, wet and tippy without the basic equipment such as compass or life jackets) came alongside *Charlotte* at 0500 with a dozen or more Haitians stoically clutching their offspring and Sam aboard to escort us across the sound to Les Cayes on the main island and then on to Port-au-Prince where we hoped to find our flight home.

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In pre-dawn haze our trusty transport nosed into a mangrove-bordered dumpsite replete with snorting pigs and fresh loads of city garbage. After negotiating the municipal landfill, we hopped on the backs of waiting motorbikes and sped through town en route to the bus stop, dodging dogs and small children scampering across the pot holed streets along the way.

After some diplomacy, Sam had us all aboard for the three-and-a-half-hour bus journey. When our bus lurched into the heart of post-earthquake Port au Prince, we witnessed the shocking consequences of a nation exploited and abandoned by most of the "developed" world. Discharged from our bus onto the train wreck of the city, we exchanged farewells to our fellow travelers with a round of pleasantries, smiles and promises to return; hopped in a dilapidated cab and headed to the airport. And, to another world.

Two days after Christmas, Pam and I returned to Ile-à-Vache, carrying duffel bags stuffed with art supplies, more clothing and US$8,000 in cash raised for the orphanage. Sister Flora greeted us warmly and explained how auspicious our arrival was since she was unable to make the monthly payroll to her staff. We also learned of the school (450 students) and hospital that she founded and continues to manage.

On New Year's Eve, Roberta Kirn and Boyd Petersen flew in to join us aboard *Charlotte,* bearing gifts to capacity for the local community center in Kai Koq. Boyd signed on as a crewmember and would stay aboard for the rest of the winter, voyaging to Jamaica and Cuba later in January and then sailing home to Massachusetts in April. Roberta's specialty is connecting with children through song — our universal (one verse) language.

Pam and Roberta would be off to the village with energy and expertise to share with the children at the community center. Pam nurtured the naturally talented kids in drawing, understanding primary colors, perspective and shading. This activity dovetails nicely with the outreach mission of her non-profit organization: Sense of Wonder Creations, which, through the creative arts, explores environmental and ethnic diversity, community service, leadership and how each one can make a difference. The youngsters were always receptive and thankful. Roberta would share songs from Kenya, where she also travels, and she enjoyed learning the local Creole folk ballads of Haiti. Commuting to the orphanage required a two-hour trek each way and the work involved caring for the children's most basic needs. This assignment was emotionally challenging given the large number of handicapped students and the minimal staff.



Sister Flora with one of her charges. She operates an orphanage, a school and a hospital on Ile-à-Vache: good reasons to bring some extra love when you visit

By late afternoon, we were all ready to take the 20-minute hike to Akaba Beach for a long swim and to enjoy the sunset by the conveniently situated eponymous hotel where cold drinks and intermittent internet service were available.

Hiking on Ile-à-Vache is the best way to get around unless you have a donkey at your disposal. This suits our peripatetic nature and Pam and I had some wonderful excursions through the hilly countryside. One afternoon, with some help from an 11-year-old local guide, we headed east from Akaba Beach in search of a small fishing/farming village that I had noticed with the binoculars when we first arrived. Bo and Ian had also been near this hamlet on one of their surfing expeditions, and they agreed that we could find it without donkey or boat. We wove our way along shore and inland trails then past a spectacular mile-long beach with a lone bull in residence and on through fields and valley until we finally saw from a high bluff our desired destination in the distance. This picturesque encampment with smoke rising from charcoal fires and a fleet of lovely local sloops rocking at anchor in a crescent cove was as alluring as it was unattainable given the rapidly fading daylight. I knew we couldn't achieve our goal to reach the village on this day.

A short distance away, however, a family farm looked inviting with adults and children scurrying about doing chores before dinner, which was simmering on the outdoor kitchen fire. As we approached this bucolic homestead the occupants greeted us with welcome curiosity as well as smiles and laughter, which we returned. Strong, fit young sons and, I surmise, extended family members were working in the gardens and tending livestock in the fields to the east while the women cared for the domestic functions of the compound. Silhouetted on a knoll against the dimming western sky stood an older man whom I presumed to be the patriarch of the clan. Looking like an Old Testament prophet commanding his people, he held a newly crafted oar in his left hand while he finished shaping the shaft with a tool grasped in his right. I walked over to see what sort of plane or spoke shave he was using on this well proportioned and properly tapered auxiliary power for his boat. He must have sensed my intentions and before I finished wishing him "bonsoir", he grinned, opened his weathered, calloused hand and proudly showed me a piece of broken glass that served as his tool.

When I enthusiastically recounted this story to Sam the next morning, he calmly gazed at me and said, "Yes, that's Haiti".

Nat Benjamin is a partner in Gannon & Benjamin Marine Railway (http://gannonandbenjamin.com) a small but flourishing boatyard in New England whose mission and passion is designing, building, repairing, maintaining and sailing wooden boats. Pam Benjamin teaches at Sense of Wonder Creations; visit http://senseofwondercreations.org/for more information.



HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS IN THE CARIBBEAN



CLUB NAUTICO DE SAN JUAN

M/V Nalu *celebrates the theme of 'Christmas Around the World' in the San Juan Christmas Boat Parade 2014*

Welcome to the region where poinsettias grow in front gardens, steel bands play Christmas carols and tropical shrubs are decorated as Christmas trees. Don't miss the chance to enjoy the rich flavor of "black cake", a traditional holiday fruitcake soaked in rum. Refresh yourself with guavaberry liqueur, ponche de crème (similar to eggnog), home-made ginger beer or bright red "sorrel", a drink made from the sepals of the hibiscus-like roselle plant.

Christianity is the Caribbean's dominant religion, so Christmas is a highlight of the year. Most churches hold midnight services on December 24th and again on Christmas Day. Many shops open late into the evening on Christmas Eve. For most locals, Christmas Day is family time, while several restaurants offer special Christmas Day menus for visitors. Christmas Day and Boxing Day (December 26th) are public holidays in many places. A few islands add to the fun by celebrating their annual carnivals in December, and in many places lighted boat parades are a festive addition to the December calendar.

Here is just a small selection of December's holiday happenings. There are many more events region wide, so ask around locally wherever you are.

Bahamas

Throughout the Bahamas, Junkanoo — a carnival-type celebration of freedom from slavery, named after a 17th century African slave trader called "John Canoe" — is celebrated on December 26th from about 2:00AM until dawn with costumed parades and "scratch band" music. If you miss the Boxing Day festivities, you'll have another chance on January 1st as the sun rises.

Puerto Rico

Christmas celebrations in Puerto Rico begin early in December and include the traditional *parrandas*, which are families and friends bringing music from one house to another, supposedly taking people by surprise. From December 15th through 24th, churches conduct masses held at dawn featuring the singing of *aguinaldos*, the Puerto Rican versions of Christmas Carols.

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Homemade lanterns in St. Lucia

ST. LUCIA MIRROR

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• Club Náutico de San Juan celebrates its Christmas Boat Parade 2015 on December 12th at 6:00PM. Last year, 42 boats participated. Visiting yachts are invited to stop in San Juan, join the Christmas Boat Parade, and enjoy the convenience of Club Náutico de San Juan's marina, right in the center of the vibrant city of San Juan. The best place to watch the lighted boat parade is from Bahía Urbana in Old San Juan.

Visit www.nauticodesanjuan.com for more information and to download a parade entry form.

St. Thomas, USVI

• Join the St. Thomas Lighted Boat Parade along the Charlotte Amalie waterfront on December 18th. Enjoy an arts and crafts festival in the streets of St. Thomas' capital, kicked off by a parade of festively decorated boats in St. Thomas Harbour and followed by music, shopping and dining. Most of the stores on Main Street stay open late on this special night.

For more information call (340) 776-0100.

St. Croix, USVI

• On December 12th, the annual St. Croix Boat Parade festivities will begin at noon along the Christiansted boardwalk. At 5:30PM, do not miss Seaborne Airlines fly-over of Christiansted Harbor to launch the parade. The parade will start at 6:00 and end with a fireworks display. This has become one of the biggest boat parades in the Caribbean.

Visit www.christmasparadestcroix.com for more information.

• St. Croix's Crucian Christmas Carnival will run from December 24th through January 2nd.

Visit www.stcroixtourism.com/christmas_festival.htm for more information.

Tortola, BVI

Anchor at Trellis Bay for the New Year's Eve festival, with dancers, stilt-walking *moko jumbies*, a live "fungi" band, and artist Aragorn Dick-Read's famous Fire Sculptures. On this night, he places the sculptures on mounts in the sea, where they are fueled with firewood and set ablaze against a backdrop of fireworks.

Visit www.bareboatsbvi.com/beef-island/new-years-eve-party.php for more information.

Jost Van Dyke, BVI

Anchor in the bay, party for two straight days and nights, then sleep it off on the beach. That pretty much sums up the annual December 30th and 31st Old Year's Party at Foxy's. Bareboatsbvi.com recommends: "If attending the Old Year's Eve celebrations on Jost Van Dyke, I highly recommend you take a lock and chain for your dinghy. Almost all dinghies look alike and there are often hundreds of them in Great Harbour on New Year's Eve."

St. Maarten/St. Martin

The islands of the Netherlands Antilles have a unique Christmas celebration that comes straight from Holland, with visits from Sinterklaas and his mysterious minions, the Zwarte Piet (Black Petes). On the French side of St. Martin, don't miss a visit to the amazing display of Santa Claus's house, a private home situated in Cripple Gate that is fabulously decorated for the season, open every day until January 15th from 6:00PM till 11:00PM.



BONTANSTRAVELS

Christmas lights in Cartagena

St. Kitts & Nevis

The St. Kitts & Nevis Carnival 2015 runs throughout December and culminates on January 9th. The Carnival celebrates local culture with street parties, performances and musical competitions.

For more information visit www.stkittsneviscarnival.com.

Antigua

• Named in *The New York Times* as "one of the five best Christmas events in the world," the Nelson's Dockyard Champagne Christmas Party on December 25th has become a major annual tradition. The Hourglass Foundation has been organizing the "Round the Capstans" Christmas Day Champagne Party for over 25 years.

—Continued on next page



The island of Saint Lucia was made for seafaring – or perhaps it's the other way around. The prevailing warm and soothing northeast trade winds provide ideal sailing conditions. Yet, it's Saint Lucia's breathtaking scenery that attracts the finest yachts from around the world. Drop anchor near the majestic peaks of Petit and Gros Piton. Rodney Bay invites a night on the town. Or choose Marigot Bay for a chic excursion. Must-see dive spots abound, and there are plenty of hidden bays where you'll create your own Caribbean mystique. Of course, no getaway would be complete without exploring the luxurious side of Saint Lucia through its restaurants, shopping, and resorts. Immerse yourself in a luxe yachting adventure in simply beautiful Saint Lucia.

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• On the 31st, Nelson's Pursuit Yacht Race "re-enacts" the colonial-era British Navy chasing the French. The smallest boat entered (which will presumably take the longest time to sail the course) sets off first, carrying the French flag, and all other boats start at intervals afterwards, based on their size and expected speed. This race has become hugely popular over the years and attracts a lot of cruisers.

For more information visit www.antiguayachtclub.com.

• On New Year's Eve there's a party in Nelson's Dockyard ending with fireworks from Fort Berkley at midnight.

Montserrat

Montserrat's culture is a mix of Irish and African traditions, and the latter take precedence during the annual Festival, which runs from December 18th to January 1st. Highlights include a Calypso competition, the Night of Pan party, the crowning of a pageant queen, and a parade on January 1st.

Visit www.facebook.com/MontserratAnnualFestival for more information.

MONTSERRAT ANNUAL FESTIVAL



Festival queens in Montserrat

Martinique

In Martinique, the typically French *crèche*, or manger scene, is re-created live on December 24th and 25th in many village squares or churches, with human figures and real animals. From December 24th through January 1st, every town and village in Martinique is in holiday mood, with picnics, dances, fashion shows and much merry-making.

In Fort-de-France on December 30th (not the 31st; *Martiniquais* traditionally spend New Year's Eve with family), fireworks are launched at around 9:00PM from the historic harborside Fort Louis, and shops stay open late.

St. Lucia

• St. Lucia will get really Christmassy from around December 12th, when the Festival of Lights will be celebrated in the capital, Castries, with displays of wonderful homemade lanterns and Christmas lights.

Saint Lucia's Day is a Church feast day observed on December 13th. The 13th is also St. Lucia's National Day — actually celebrated all month long with parades, sports events, festivals and feasts.

Visit www.stlucianow.com for more information.

• As the ARC yachts arrive in St. Lucia in December, special events in the ARC Village at Rodney Bay Marina feature traditional St. Lucian music, dance, drama and foods.

For more information visit www.igy-rodneybay.com and www.worldcruising.com/arc.

St. Vincent, SVG

• Nine Mornings — a unique Vincentian festivity associated with the Christmas season runs December 16th through 24th. Vincentians awake in the early hours of the morning and partake in sea baths, bicycle riding, dances and street concerts. In the rural areas, the final morning of the festivity usually ends with a steel band "jump-up".

Visit www.discoversvg.com for more information.

Bequia, SVG

Nine days before Christmas musical activities and carols often take place under the Almond Tree in Bequia, too — sometimes starting at 4:00 in the morning, to the surprise and delight of many visitors longing for a good carol or two! So don't be surprised if you hear songs and reveling into the wee hours in Christmas week; it's all part of Christmas on Bequia.

In Bequia on Old Year's Night, take part in a freewheeling bayside "pub crawl" along the Belmont Walkway until champagne corks pop and fireworks explode over the anchorage at midnight. Then round out the night dancing in the sand at a beach bar.

Visit http://bequiatourism.com/events.htm for more information.

Carriacou

• The 38th Annual Carriacou Parang Festival will be held from December 18th through 20th. Parang is a type of string band music that is especially popular at Christmas time. It originated in Latin America and the amusing and controversial lyrics reflect on local political events, in particular the wrongdoings by politicians, and also the social and moral wrongs that occur in people's lives throughout the year.

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

Trinidad

In Trinidad, too, traditional parang music is performed around Christmas time, when singers and musicians travel from house to house, often joined by friends, neighbors and family, using whatever instruments are to hand. Modern parang music has developed a season of staged performances called parang fiestas. "Parang on the Boardwalk" will run in Chaguaramas through December 20th.

Visit www.facebook.com/The-National-Parang-Association-of-Trinidad-Tobago for more information.

Colombia

One of the most popular Christmas traditions in Colombia is Midnight Mass, held on Christmas Eve. Attending this solemn ceremony in one of Santa Marta or Cartagena's beautiful Spanish colonial cathedrals would be an unforgettable experience.

But as cruiser Chuck Cherry wrote, "Christmas in Cartagena is not a single holiday — it's a season. In fact, it is THE season for Cartagena. The city is decorated for the festive season in a major way, especially in the old town within the wall. There are hosts of concerts (many of them free in the plazas) with local and international musicians giving performances in a variety of locales. The theaters put on special holiday shows, which extend into the weekdays. A park near the marinas is taken over by more than a hundred small booths selling only toys. My personal favorite is the Christmas tree light section — a couple of blocks almost exclusively devoted to decorative lighting. You will want to visit this area at night.

"So as not to forget the reason for the season, there is a natural escalation of church services, religious events and fundraisers. Since there are several historical landmark churches that you will want to visit anyway, the extra decorations and events make it a good time to go."

This information is correct to the best of our knowledge as this issue of Compass *goes to press; please confirm with contacts where provided to avoid disappointment.*

Happy Holidays to all — Caribbean style!



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MEMBERS OF SPLIETHOFF GROUP

HERE WE ARE, SIX MONTHS OUT



by George Pyrpiris

'This was the sailing I had dreamed about for as long as I have been a sailor'

Catherine and I flew back to Grenada on a Wednesday evening, heavily laden with over 250 pounds of luggage between us. We landed after an uneventful flight from Miami and exited the rear of the plane. The warm gentle breeze of the southern Caribbean immediately reassured me that this is where we belong.

It had been a long six months since we left Hillsboro Inlet, Florida on March 5th, 2014 aboard our 47-foot sloop, *Picaro*. We worked our way south along the magnificent Bahama island chain, then east with stops in the Turks & Caicos, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands until we reached St. Martin, where we finally began sailing in a more southerly direction along the Leeward and Windward islands of the Eastern Caribbean. We needed to get south to Grenada or Trinidad to be as far out of the hurricane belt as possible for the season.

The sailing eastwards right into the strong and consistent tradewinds was a huge challenge that involved a lot of introspection. Turns out it was hard physically and even harder mentally. I never imagined that I would spend so much of my energy, time and money sourcing and studying weather. The weather was the key to our tough one-thousand-mile slog to windward. We made it and gained lots of good stories, new friendships and many adventures along the way, all the while safely and without mishaps. The boat behaved beautifully and kept us secure and comfortable.

—Continued on next page



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The sailing south along the Leeward and then the Windward Islands of the Eastern Caribbean was spectacular. Wow! What a payoff for all that hard windward work! Our sailboat, a Beneteau 473, reached southerly in breathless fashion. This was the sailing I had dreamed about for as long as I have been a sailor.

We made landfall in Grenada on July 14th. Found a good anchorage in Mount Hartman Bay on the south coast and decided to just rest and enjoy the island and catch up with friends that we crossed paths with. Also, not focusing on the weather as intently was very welcome.

We slowly prepared ourselves for our flight back to the US and *Picaro* for our absence. We were booked for a six-week trip back to Fort Lauderdale, and a long, lazy road trip up the East Coast with stops in Long Island, Prince Edward Island and then to the Eastern Townships of southern Quebec for family reunions. All our friends and family were wonderful and full of questions about what the cruising life is like and what island we liked best, and they all wanted to hear stories about storms at sea. There were lots of hellos and then tearful goodbyes with promises of seeing each other again soon. We left a lot of invitations to come see us, but everyone has their busy life to live and to coordinate a visit together may be a small miracle.





Above: 'Sailing away is not easy but it's so very rewarding. You have to believe in yourself and each other'

Top right: Work goals have been exchanged for life goals

We managed to empty a storage locker we had kept since we sold the house three years ago. We bought *Picaro* at around the same time we sold the house. We thought we were downsizing when we moved into our condo, which we still have in South Florida. The idea of a *pied-à-terre* was reassuring at the time. Now, I'm not so sure. It's just another expense that we keep our remaining "stuff" in. It's a big expensive storage locker. Not yet ready to sell it, but I have the suspicion that it will be gone eventually. Purging one's lifetime of accumulated belongings is not easy to rationalize but once done it's cathartic. Sailing away from the shallow material demands of our working lives in South Florida and searching out the world from the freedom of a sailboat on our terms and accepting the risks and rewards of such a life is not easy but it's so very rewarding.

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REPOWER FOR A RENEWED BOAT LIFE IN SINT MAARTEN / SAINT MARTIN

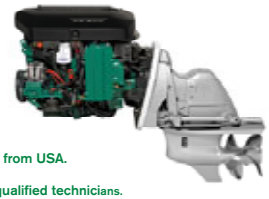


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EASY BOATING

—*Continued from previous page*

Taking small steps and making decisions along the way is how we've managed to end up where we are right now. The key is to take the steps, no matter how small or big they are, or else you'll never get to where you visualize or dream of being one day. Oh yeah, there's one more big thing: you have to believe you can do it. You have to believe in yourself and each other. If not, then who else is there?



Our current plan is to stay in Grenada through hurricane season and then cruise the Eastern Caribbean and stop to enjoy and explore the places we passed on our way down. Places like the east coast of Martinique for example. Last count, we checked into 16 different countries since we left our land life. Staying east is a priority for now because of the huge challenge it was getting here against wind, waves, current and weather. So we plan on getting our fill of the eastern islands before we think of heading west.

The friends we have made in the short six months cruising are remarkable. There are so many different cruisers we have gotten to know, all with their own plans, on big boats, small boats, some with kids, with pets, with both and some without either. They all have their own story and journey and to catch a glimpse of it is wonderful. There is one commonality we all share and that's living on a boat at sea. There's an understanding and acknowledgement that creates a comradeship that makes the time spent together sweet and valued, especially knowing that your time with your new friends is limited. After all, everyone is on his or her own journey. Perhaps we'll cross paths again, and when we do we'll pick up right where we left off, laughing and sharing our lives.

George Cumberbatch picked us up from the airport and drove us to the dock at Secret Harbour Marina, from there he loaded us into his wooden skiff and we motored out to the mooring field. It was a dark moonless night with a light easterly breeze. The starlight was just enough to be able to make out *Picaro's* silhouette as we came into view. I couldn't help smiling. There was no wiping that smile off me. I was back where I've felt more at home than anywhere else before.

George and Catherine are cruising the Caribbean with no immediate plans for the near future other than exploring and enjoying the wonders of the Caribbean seas and islands. They left their busy lives in the US, which were all about their "work goals" and are now focused on their "life goals", which include a lot of sailing. To follow their adventures visit Catherine's blog at www.sailblogs.com/member/picaro.

Left: The author at Elizabeth Harbour, Great Exuma. 'We worked our way south along the magnificent Bahama island chain…

Below: …then east with stops in the Turks & Caicos, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.' In St. Croix, an old sugar plantation was explored





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BACKCOUNTRY BARBADOS BY BUS

by Jo-Anne Nina Sewlal

On my first trip to Barbados, the farthest I ventured out was to the capital city of Bridgetown to mail some postcards and buy a few trinkets. But for a person who loves to explore that is really just not enough. So this time my friend and I were going to do things differently.


WWW.TRANSPORTBOARD.COM

Our plan was to explore the island using public transportation. Bus rides are quite affordable at two Barbados dollars, a little less than a single US dollar. There are large government-owned and -operated buses, which are painted in the national colours of blue and yellow. Then there are the smaller yellow buses, which can seat up to 25 persons but can take passengers standing as well — and, boy, can they cram them in! (If you are not a "people person", I suggest you rent your own vehicle.) Finally there are little vans that can seat up to 15 persons (no standing room), which are painted white with maroon stripes and are also privately owned. On the latter two you can get change, but on the government buses you have to have exact change to pay your fare: you put your money in the fare box in the bus and a ticket is generated on the spot.

Where you go depends on what side of the street you stand on. The bus stops are clearly marked to indicate if the bus is going away from the city (Bridgetown) or towards the city. The government buses and private yellow buses will only take up and drop off passengers at these stops. Although the much smaller striped vans will drop you at any point along the route, with all the stops that these buses and vans make, the journey takes a lot longer.

For a small island, the road system is extensive. To understand why, one has to understand how the island was formed. This involves going back millions of years when the Atlantic tectonic plate went under the Caribbean plate. This shallow section of the sea allowed for the accumulation of sediments and then the bodies of plankton (small marine animals) accumulated. This continued to occur in alternate layers. In between there were periods of uprisings, so that the shallowest part, which contained coral reefs, was thrust out of the water. This encouraged new coral growth in the now surrounding shallow areas. (In most of the old stately buildings on Barbados you will see that the stonework making up the walls is filled with coral exoskeletons.) Therefore, unlike most of the Lesser Antilles, which were formed by volcanic action, flat Barbados is not restricted to a major coastal road and secondary ones radiating into the central elevation.

This meant that we had even more to explore.

We love nature and hiking and, since we had only three days on the island, we had to select the places we wanted to visit. We asked locals what they would recommend. At the top of the list was Harrison's Cave. At the bus terminal at the end of Broad Street, next to the General Post Office, you can get a Route 4 bus to Shorely Village. It drops you at a junction, from where it is a five- or ten-minute walk to the Harrison Cave facilities. We took a smaller yellow bus going to Jackson from the same terminal. These smaller, privately owned buses are quite accommodating and our driver even went off route and dropped us right in the parking lot for the same fare of BDS$2.

Harrison's Cave

The visitor centre itself is an impressive structure. After paying for the tour you want, you get in an elevator and go down over 40 feet into the base of a gully. Before the start we were given a short presentation on the geology of the island and the cave and its development. Visitors are discouraged from touching the formations or the cave walls since the moisture from our hands could cause irreparable damage.

Harrison's Cave has a long history. Besides its existence being known by the first inhabitants, the Amerindians, it was first documented in 1795. It is located on land that at that time belonged to a Thomas Harrison. However, it was the Danish engineer and spelunker Ole Sorensen and locals Tony Mason and Allison Thornhill who together mapped the cave in 1974. The entrance that they used is prominently displayed along the tour and is still used as an emergency exit.

Our guide taught us a neat way of remembering the names of the formations. Stalactites hold "tightly" to the ceiling while stalagmites push "mightily" upwards from the ground. Where a stalactite and stalagmite meet they form a column. At some points along the tour, we could see a white substance similar in appearance to candle wax. This is referred to as "flowstone". The flowstone is as old as when the cave was opened to the public, 34 years ago.

We were even allowed to taste the water in the cave, some of which is actually used to supply the island. We were expecting the water to taste a little salty but it tasted like plain tap water.

There are three miles of caves but the tram tour only covers one mile. The remaining area is undeveloped. (Some visitors may not like the tram, or may opt not to visit at all, stating that it is too artificial. It is true that the pathways for the tram are machine-cut, but not more than they have to be.)

Afterwards we walked along the scenic pathways through the gully outside the cave where there is a replica of an Amerindian hut and there are many informative signs along the way that tell how locals use the gullies and some of the flora and fauna. Just looking at the elevators as you exit the gully scenic tours is like a scene from Jurassic Park where the modern meets the prehistoric.

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Barbados Wildlife Reserve

We also visited the Barbados Wildlife Reserve, located in the parish of St. Peter in the north of the island. Based on its location, our plan was to go right around the island by bus. From Long Bay we took a bus into Bridgetown, then from the smaller terminal next to the General Post Office at the end of Broad Street, we took a bus to Speightstown (pronounced "Spites Town"). In Speightstown we disembarked at the terminal and switched to a small maxi-taxi that was going to Indian Ground.

The Reserve houses a wide variety of animals: peacocks and a variety of other birds, iguana, caimans, brocket deer, red-footed tortoises and mara, which look like a cross between a deer and a rabbit. There is a small reptile house, which also houses aquaria. But the main attraction is the Green Monkeys, although they are actually regarded as a pest species responsible for destroying many crops. The highlight was the daily feeding at 2:00PM.



Entrance to the Barbados Wildlife Reserve

Grenade Hall Signal Station

Admission to the Wildlife Reserve also permitted us to explore the trails in the Grenade Hall forest. When you get to the admissions desk there, show them your ticket and you are directed to two trails. The one to the left takes you to the Grenade Hall Signal Station. These are not guided tours, but there is an audiotape that lasts for the duration of the tour. These signal stations were built as a result of a revolt in the 19th century that resulted in the deaths of thousands of slaves. The governor commissioned about half a dozen signal stations around 1818. Using a combination of flags, semaphore and "time balls", signals were sent between these stations and Bridgetown. After slavery was abolished in 1834, these signal stations were used to alert people to natural disasters or the arrival of trading ships. The stations went out of use around 1884 thanks to the arrival in Barbados of the telephone about eight years after its invention. The station at Grenade Hall fell into ruins but was restored in 1992. On the ground floor of the station, there are many artifacts from life on the estates and pre-Columbian tools. The trail to the right is the start of an extensive network of trails that passes through a small cave. There are many interactive signs along the way (audio signs) telling of the flora and fauna as well as medical plants.

Bathsheba

Next, we took the bus to Bathsheba, the surfers' Mecca on the windward side. It was a pleasant ride and we saw Morgan Lewis Windmill in St. Andrew, which was the last operating windmill used in sugar production. Our ride took us along the Atlantic coast, where at the time the beach was covered with large mats of Sargassum seaweed. We were later told by a colleague at the Cave Hill campus of the University of the West Indies that these mats were not coming from the Sargasso Sea; some of the mats that wash ashore on many Caribbean islands originate near the Amazon. Also, owing to climate change (it is presumed), the wind speeds are decreasing so that the large mats of seaweed are not broken into much smaller fragments.

On arriving in Bathsheba, a lovely coastal village, we saw a bus facing the opposite direction. Our bus driver promptly directed us to take this bus. That route back to Bridgetown cut across the island, instead of retracing our steps to Speightstown.

Local Food

We try to adopt as much of the culture as we can when we visit a new place. Basically our motto is "Live like a local". This includes the food. However, unlike in Trinidad, where we are from, local food is quite elusive on Barbados. I did my research ahead of time and found some local dishes I wanted to try, such as cutters, pepperpot and the national dish of Cou-Cou and Flying Fish. But the restaurant menus were often generic, offering the ubiquitous fried chicken and macaroni pie (baked mac and cheese).

On our first day here we discovered that many of the local restaurants sell out around 2:00PM. We only found this out after a morning of sleeping in and relaxing: we decided to head to Bridgetown to explore and by the time we were hungry it was 4:00PM. A local recommendation was to try a roti from the popular Barbadian fast food outlet Chefette. This may seem like madness. Can fast food be good? Their roti was similar to a very soft flour tortilla, filled with either curried potato only, potato and chicken, or just chicken, and rolled to form a burrito.

The closest you can get to authentic "Bajan" (Barbadian) food is from the vendors who line the parking lot adjacent to the small bus stand. Another dish on my list was cutters, which is breaded and fried fish served in a local bread called "salt bread", which is not salty but a relatively dense sandwich bun. We were lucky to have a cutter made with marlin from one of these small stands. During our bus rides we also saw vendors selling food from the backs of their cars, and based on the lines they have a good local clientele.

On our last day we headed to Oistins to try the national dish, Flying Fish and Cou-Cou. The latter is a cornmeal dish similar to polenta but including okras; after it is cooked it is moulded to form balls and served with lots of gravy. The day to get this is on Fridays, at one of the many stalls next to the fish market in Oistins, but when we arrived they had no cou-cou. On the way we asked the small bus driver to recommend a stall and he dropped us off right in front of his favourite one and told the cook to take good care of us. He has good taste! Each meal comes with an option of two sides. We opted for grilled flying fish with macaroni pie and grilled breadfruit, but we also got macaroni salad and a fresh garden salad as well. All this for BDS$25.

In the end we had to admit that it is not as easy as it looks navigating around the island using public transport. But we would not declare our travel experiment a failure, but rather a learning experience. If we had rented a car we would have spent more time looking at maps and street signs than looking at this beautiful country. Also we would not get to chat with so many locals.

You can check the Barbados Transport Board's bus routes and schedules at www.transportboard.com. Tours are also available.

Jo-Anne N. Sewlal of the Department of Life Sciences of the University of the West Indies St. Augustine Campus is the editor of the Environment Tobago *newsletter and the secretary of the Trinidad & Tobago Chapter of the Caribbean Academy of Sciences.*

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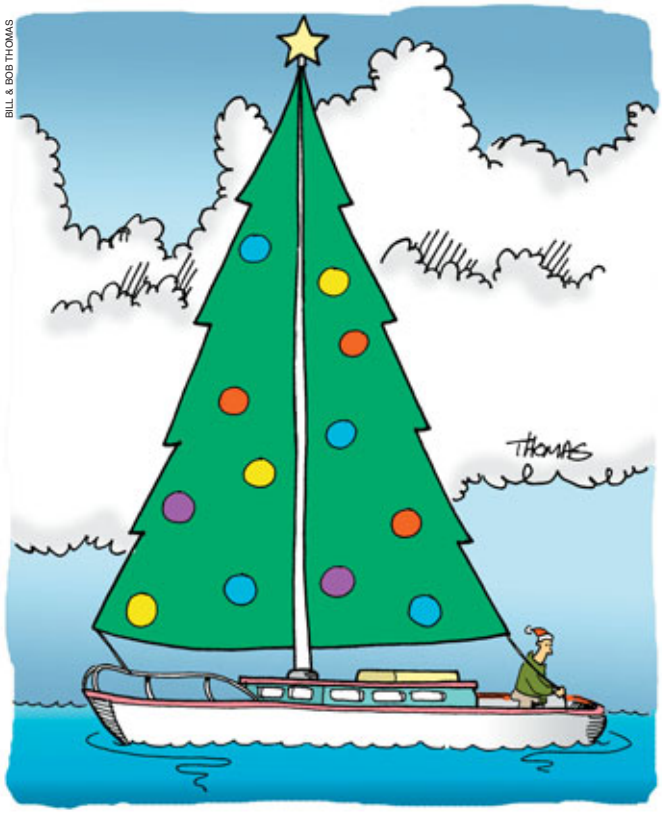
CARRIACOU CHRISTMAS

Island Poets

I jus' wakin' up, an' I hearin' screech,
"Oh Lord, what is dem t'ings down there on the beach?
It lookin' like goat, wit' some real funny horn."
"Oh Michael," I say, "this is Christmas day morn!
Keep calm an' jus' simmer you'self down my dear,
You doesn't know Santa Claus stops here each year
To visit this beach in our sweet Carriacou
An' cool off wit' a sea bath? This is nothing new.
An' Mike, that is not goat you seen' down there,
It is Santa's own world famous flyin' reindeer.
There's Rudolph, an' Blitzen an' Donner an' Cupid,
Takin' a swim, so, Man, don't get on stupid,
An' Santa has changed from that hot old red suit,
He's wearin' his swimmers – Oh, gosh! He's so cute!
Hey! Get him a drink of your sweet Ponche Crème.
An' a piece of black cake to revive him, and then
Get dressed, tune the cuatro, call folks, and soon after,
We'll celebrate Christmas with carols and laughter,
With Santa an' reindeer and our good friends, too,
Oh, there's nothing like Christmas in sweet Carriacou!

— Nan Hatch

COMPASS COMICS







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Browse the local chandleries, shops and markets for special gifts for your favorite sailor. Still got room in that stocking? Here are a few more gift ideas.

It's Not a Cruising Boat Without These

What good is a cockpit without a safe spot to rest a hot or cold beverage? Accon Marine's Drink Holders provide a safe space for glasses, cans, bottles and even cups with handles, helping prevent spills.



Constructed from marine-grade 316 stainless steel or aluminum, these drink holders are offered in single and double models. Measuring 9 cm in diameter, they fit standard cup sizes. An optional wine glass holder insert is also available.

Fitting into Accon's stainless steel bases, the drink holders can be easily removed when not needed. They're a breeze to simply snap back into place when needed.

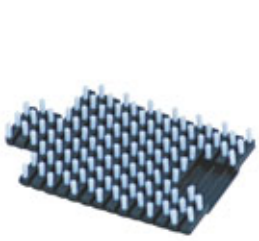
These drink holders are surface mounted, so no cutouts are required. Each model fastens with two #10 screws.

Visit www.acconmarine.com for more information.

Clean Lines with a Wrap-Around Brush

Docklines can get cruddy fast. Sheets pick up that darn Sahara Dust. And anchor rodes… well!

Simple to use, Shurhold Industries' Flexible Rope & Cord Brush is the perfect way to clean 13 mm to 26 mm diameter rope. This ingenious hand tool is ideal for dock lines and other tubular items, such as rigging, hoses, power cables and railings.





To use, wrap it around the line to be cleaned with bristles facing the rope. Hold it firmly to ensure complete contact around the line and scrub lengthwise to remove debris, dirt, mold and other contaminants.

The flexible Rope & Cord brush is easy to clean, only requiring a quick rinse and air dry. It should be stored out of direct sunlight. This brush floats if dropped in the water!

Visit www.shurhold.com for more information.

Hydrofoil Improves Dinghy Performance

Davis Instruments' Doel-Fin improves performance on all boats with outboard motors or outdrive units. Recognized as the original hydrofoil and developed by an aeronautical engineer, it offers greater stability, consistent planing at a lower RPM and faster out-of-the-hole efficiency. Usage also results in better gas mileage, steadier turns, higher top-end speeds and lower bow rise at all speeds.

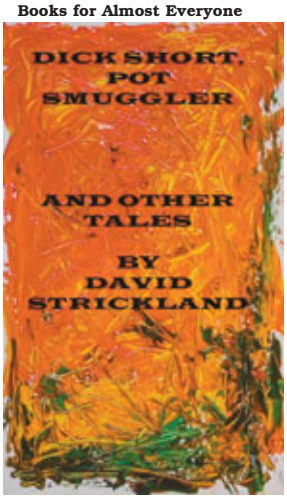
Doel-Fin uses the same principle as airplane wings. Water flows over the extension, creating lift in the stern and compensating for motor weight. It calms the boat down in rough water and eliminates the bow-high position that is common when accelerating, a dangerous slow speed characteristic of most vessels. It also delivers a feeling of power steering, smoothing out and reducing cavitation in tight turns.



Molded in two pieces of guaranteed unbreakable, high-strength plastic, each foil is designed to flex independently to absorb shock. Doel-Fin is suitable for small and big motors, and all dinghies and inflatables. Only a simple 15-minute installation is required.

Visit www.davisnet.com for more information.

Books for Almost Everyone



Is your sailor a bookworm? Shop for these in local bookstores or online:

• *The Puerto Rico Connection*, a Caribbean thriller, replete with drugs, murder and sailing adventure, is by Dominican schooner captain Antony Agar.

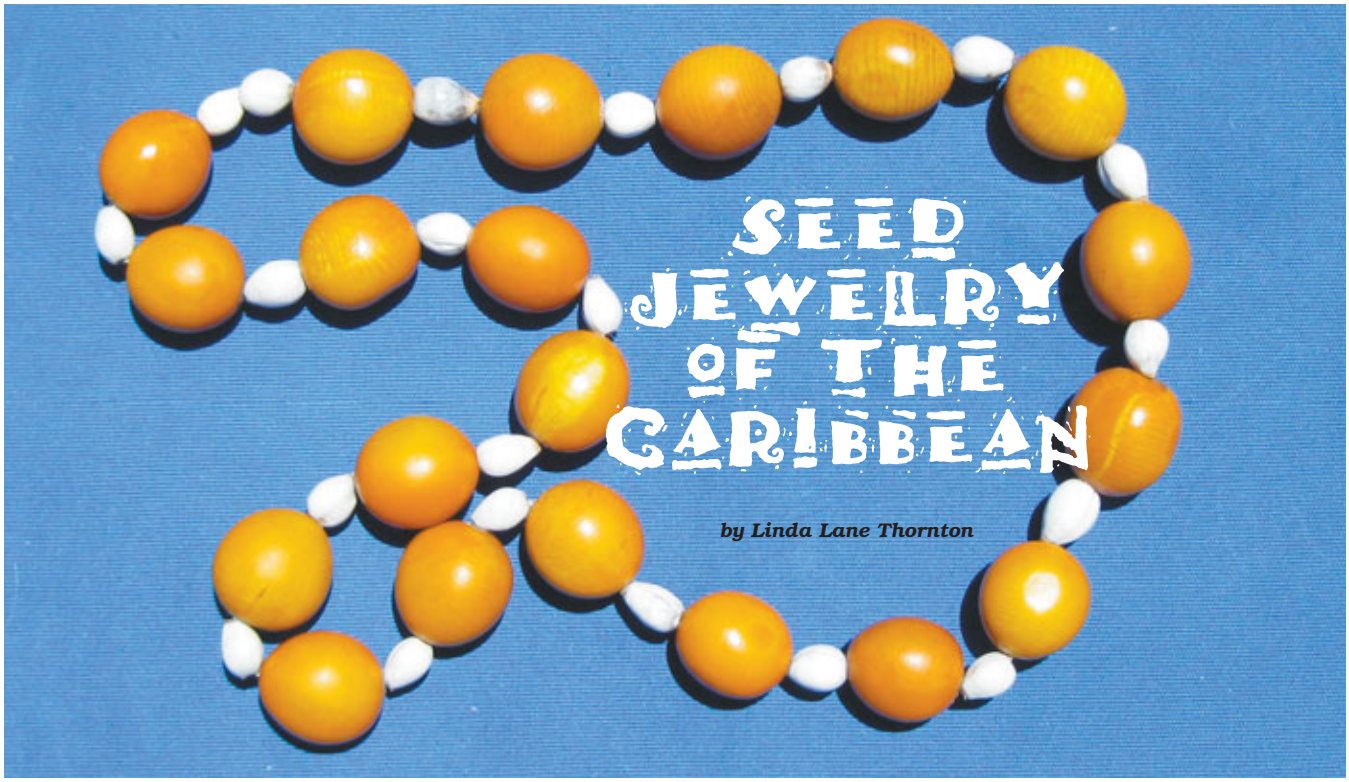
• *Scimitar Sun*, by Chris A. Jackson, is an island fantasy involving sea battles, an evil pirate lord, and a pregnant sailing heroine with magic powers.

• *Dick Short, Pot Smuggler, and Other Tales*, by former yacht captain and magazine editor David Strickland, is a funny and thinly disguised but authentic look at the Caribbean ganja-smuggling trade of three or four decades ago.

• On the more serious side, *Decline of the US Hegemony? A Challenge of ALBA and a New Latin American Integration of the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Bruce M. Bagley and Magdalena Defort, is probably too "wonky" for the average *Compass* reader, but those with a keen interest in modern Caribbean history and politics will get into this book, which examines the influence of ALBA (the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America, a group of eight countries, spearheaded by Venezuela, with loosely socialist aims) on such issues as oil politics, drug-trafficking, security and trade in the Caribbean.

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SEED JEWELRY OF THE CARIBBEAN

by Linda Lane Thornton

Above: The orange seeds of the Sea Bean (Caesalpinia ciliata), *interspersed with Job's Tears*

Bottom: The flowers and seedpod of the Flamboyant, Delonix regia

SOME of the earliest artifacts made by human beings were for personal adornment: necklaces, bracelets, rings, earrings and brooches have formed grave goods, burial hoards and treasure trove, the stuff of legend. Today, a walk around any Caribbean town — the chic towns of the French islands in particular — will show that we are still entranced by jewelry, and one's eyes can be beguiled by gold, pearls and a fascinating variety of precious and semi-precious stones.

Those of us whose pockets do not run to such expensive bijoux can be equally beguiled by the seed jewelry that one sees throughout the Caribbean. In markets and beach shops you can find exciting and interesting examples of seed jewelry, and in many cases the seeds can be collected locally. Having knocked around the world a bit, I can spot imported items at a hundred paces, and I much prefer to buy locally produced items rather than those that have been imported by the container-load from Southeast Asia or South America.

Trees, shrubs and grasses can all provide seeds that can be used for jewelry. The Coral Bean tree — *Adenanthera pavonina* — has bright red, hard-cased seeds that the ancient Chinese used for weighing gold dust, as their weight was so uniformly consistent. The tree reaches about 20 metres and when the ripened seedpods burst, they do so in corkscrews. Sometimes the seeds are still encased in the pods, but many can be found scattered over the ground. I collected mine in Portsmouth, Dominica, on a walk to the IGA supermarket.

The gorgeous Flamboyant Tree — *Delonix regia* — can be red- or yellow-flowered, with delicate and feathery leaves in contrast to its long, leathery seedpods which may be up to 40 centimetres in length and which hang on the tree for several months. The pods contain many long, thin seeds, striped yellow and brown.

—Continued on next page



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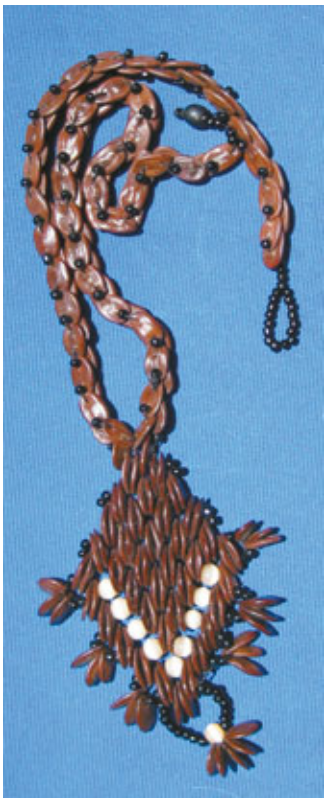
Once the seedpod has been opened — usually a sharp, strong knife is needed — the seeds may be easily scooped out. With holes drilled at one end, these seeds can add shape and texture to necklaces.



The hard outer casing of the Seaheart — *Entada gigas* — is a dark, glossy brown: the colour of bitter chocolate. It comes from a liana of South American origin, but can be found on beaches in the south of the Caribbean island chain; I found several to add to my collection on the east coast of Trinidad. Because of their great size, they are often used as the centrepiece of a pendant or necklace, as the seed can reach up to five centimetres in diameter.

Left: On an uninhabited island I found just one example of Caesalpinia ciliata. *Its seeds were scattered around the base of the shrub*

Below: An elegant tamarind seed necklace



Alongside many watercourses you can find a grass-type plant with hard, tear-shaped grey or grey-brown seeds — Job's Tears or *Coix lachryma jobii*. The seeds are easily collected and come with a most convenient hole already through the seed, filled with a silky fibre that is easily removed with tweezers. The Cherokee have a legend that the plant resulted from the tears which were shed when they were forcibly removed from their reservation in North Carolina to Oklahoma along what became known as the Trail of Tears in 1838, their tears falling on the soil and later growing into plants from which they made commemorative amulets. Combined with the Coral Bean seeds or with Flamboyant seeds, they not only make attractive necklaces, but have also been used to make rosary beads

The tiny brown seeds of the tamarind — *Leucaena leucocephala* — can be used to add texture to produce beautifully sculptural items, but large quantities are needed for any project. Patience is needed to string these slippery little seeds, but the subsequent item can be most attractive and interesting.

Several types of Sea Bean can be found in the Caribbean islands. The grey-green seeds of *Caesalpinia bonduc* are the most common, but on an uninhabited island I found just one example of *Caesalpinia ciliata*, which has bright orange seeds, dozens of which were scattered around the base of the shrub. The outer casing of the Sea Bean is extremely durable and it is thought that they can survive many years in both fresh and salt water before germinating, which is why they have been found on the western shores of Europe, carried there by the Gulf Stream.

Some of the most imaginative seed jewelry I have seen was at the Kalinago Territory in Dominica. These included some seeds with which I was unfamiliar, but which I was assured grew locally, if one knew where to look. Job's Tears, Coral Beans, Flamboyant and Tamarind seeds had been used to make some elegant bracelets and necklaces in imaginative combinations.

One of the issues to contend with when dealing with seeds and seed jewelry is that of infestation by insects. As a precaution, both seeds and jewelry can be kept in airtight containers with a couple of mothballs; just be sure to air them for half an hour before you wear them, otherwise the smell of mothballs could overpower your Chanel No 5! And although the seeds of the Castor Oil Plant are of uniform size and an attractive fawn and brown in colour, they contain the alkaloid ricin, which is poisonous, so should not be used.

If you want to know more about seeds in general and have a good command of French (should you wish to read the book rather than just look at the illustrations), try to get hold of a copy of *Étonnantes Graines* by Nathalie Vidal (ISBN 9782877636391) published by Orphie. In full colour and with many photographs, it will not only enable you to identify seeds but give you an insight into how they have been used over the centuries in different parts of the world.

Linda Lane Thornton cruises aboard S/V Coromandel.

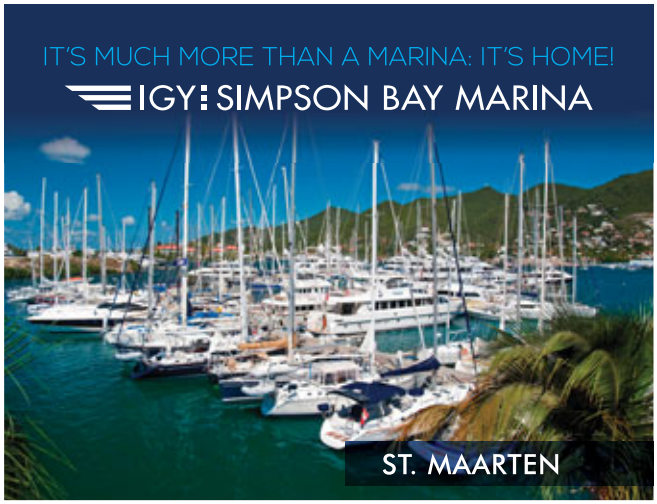


Above: A seed carved into a sloth

Below: The corkscrew seedpod of Adenanthera pavonina







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VHF Radio: It's Your Lifeline

by Ken Goodings

ARE you unable to participate in the morning VHF net? Is your radio humming a mournful tune? Here are some basic ideas to help you send and receive strong, noise-free VHF signals. After all, while you're cruising in the Caribbean, your maritime VHF radio is likely to be the very first line of communication should a serious problem arise, whether it's a distress or security call, hailing a vessel in your immediate path, or just chatting with a friend.

Installation Tips and Techniques

A VHF radio installation is really just a collection of components, but choosing these parts and getting things right the first time around is the key. Let's begin at the top of your vessel and work our way down.

Antenna

Are you a sailboat or a power cruiser? VHF antenna solutions for these two different boats are quite different.

Sailboats achieve excellent long-distance results with the added antenna height at the masthead. A simple steel whip antenna will generally last through many years in the salty, windy, hot-sun environment at the masthead. VHF range between two sailboats at sea using full power with masthead antennas is typically 20 nautical miles.

Powerboats, since they lack the height of a typical 15-metre sailboat mast, need to maximize their antenna height above the sea to produce a long-distance VHF signal. Trawlers often sport a 2.4-metre-long fibreglass whip on the end of a fibreglass extension pole. These fibreglass antennas are commonly called three- or six-decibel gain type. Smaller power craft often use shorter fibreglass antennas. Getting your signal out toward the horizon offers the greatest communication effectiveness.

You might have noticed that your fibreglass VHF antenna comes with a permanently wired coaxial cable. That pre-measured cable length may be necessary to match the impedance of your radio. For best results don't cut it any shorter. If your VHF antenna has a female-threaded coaxial connector right at the base, the length of the cable from antenna to radio may not be as critical.

While we're speaking of antennas, let's touch briefly on AIS.

AIS Antenna

AIS (Automatic Identification System) radio waves have virtually the same properties as those used by your VHF radio. So-called specialty AIS antennas for AIS transponders may be an unnecessary expense. Any good-quality steel whip VHF antenna might be just as effective to send your vessel's AIS signal to the horizon as a premium priced AIS antenna. Some manufacturers also offer AIS or FM broadcast radio combiner modules to share the same VHF antenna used for your VHF radio transceiver. In our view, antenna splitters add an extra level of complexity and may be just another potential point of failure. After all, it's one extra device inserted in line between your VHF radio and the antenna. We're not particularly comfortable with intermediate components such as SWR meters and AIS splitters that might compromise our main VHF system. Two simple antennas, one for VHF radio and another for AIS might well be more reliable than one dual device.

However, antennas are just at the beginning of your VHF system. Let's review the signal path down the mast to your VHF radio.

Coaxial Cable

Because of the long distance from masthead to VHF radio, sailboats should try to use the very highest quality coaxial cable that can be squeezed inside the mast. Good coax gives you more power at the antenna by minimizing signal losses. Thicker cables such as RG-8U or RG-213U are an excellent choice, as they exhibit minimum loss at VHF frequencies. We've had mixed results with so-called mini RG-8X cable in tropical marine conditions. With RG8X, any partially exposed foam dielectric insulation may absorb moisture at the ends, while the solid polyethylene dielectric of RG-8U and RG-213U does not. An additional benefit of premium RG213U is its outer plastic covering or jacket. The non–contaminating PVC jacket resists damage from ultraviolet rays in sunlight, heat, moisture and corrosion twice as long as budget-priced cable.

If possible, try to install your boat's VHF coax cable in one continuous run between the masthead antenna and radio, without any intermediate connectors. We've found that many boats develop water and corrosion problems near the bottom of the mast where the mast cable is spliced to a secondary cable running inside the hull toward the radio. I've seen many slimy, green, corroded VHF coaxial connections at mast steps and in anchor lockers of catamarans: some very salty, wet, dirty places indeed! A happy bonus of a single uninterrupted coax cable from your VHF radio to the masthead antenna is the strongest possible signal with fewer corrosion headaches. If this is all new to you, for the very best results get someone to show you how to solder high-quality PL259 connectors on the ends. Those convenient twist-on coax connectors from marine chandleries will likely come back to haunt you down the line. Be sure to waterproof the outdoor antenna connections effectively. As we'll cover in the next section, try to route the coax cable away from electrically noisy appliances such as AC inverters, generators, chartplotters and digital instrumentation in your boat.

Now that your antenna system is happy, let's get some DC power to the radio.

VHF Power Supply

To receive the most quiet, static-free VHF radio signals possible, I strongly suggest that you power the VHF radio directly from your boat's house battery. Supplying dedicated 12-volt DC power from the main battery can minimize interference and electrical noise on your VHF signal. The radio's positive (+) power wire must be protected within 18 centimetres (seven inches) of the battery by an appropriately sized fuse. Check fuse specifications in your radio's operating manual. For a typical one-way 12V DC cable distance of five metres (15 feet), metric wire sizes 3.31 or 5.26 square millimetres (#12 or #10 US wire gauge) should be sufficient. Your emergency VHF voice and DSC distress capability will now be uncompromised by faults or shortcomings in your fuse panel and battery switch. It will also eliminate any chance of your crew inadvertently switching off all power to your VHF radio.

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Ferrite chokes on the radio power wires are often helpful, but they're not a panacea to help combat noisy VHF transmissions or reception. In our experience, moving coax and VHF power cables away from noisy GPS, depth sounders, autopilots, wind instruments, inverter/chargers and refrigeration compressors goes a long way to help produce a clean VHF signal. The data stream interference emanating from modern digital devices is pervasive, and this noise will likely try to hitch a free ride on your VHF signal. Wires interconnecting your digital instrumentation are a good place to install those ferrite chokes. We've taken one additional precaution; the heavy gauge DC power line to our refrigeration compressor is high quality shielded cable. Later on, we'll show you how to conveniently find the hidden sources of those annoying radio noisemakers on your boat.

Now that we've reviewed the VHF installation, let's have some fun and push some buttons.

VHF Radio Transceiver

Your vessel's 25-watt VHF radio is your primary safety tool, so don't try to economize too much when shopping. A high-quality, uncomplicated VHF radio is easy to use and a real gem! Low-powered portable VHF radios are convenient, but they're not nearly powerful or dependable enough to use as your vessel's primary radio. Their rechargeable batteries can fail at the most inopportune times.

It's imperative that any of your crew or passengers, especially children, can competently operate your VHF radio in an emergency. When serious problems arise onboard, it's likely that the skipper and crew will be quite busy. This usually leaves emergency communication to the least experienced person on the boat. Lower-priced VHF radios have smaller display screens and multifunction buttons that may be difficult to use at in times of stress, or at night. Middle and higher priced radios generally have convenient round knobs as a channel selector, and are usually more intuitive to operate. A large digital LCD display accommodates those of us with age-related vision problems. This goes a long way to facilitate radio operation when you really need it.



The author speaks. 'While you're cruising in the Caribbean, your maritime VHF radio is likely to be the very first line of communication,' so know how to use it to full advantage

There are many convenient DSC paging functions in a modern VHF radio. It's a shame that, without putting your nose right up close, any difficulty viewing the small text or reading tiny buttons can discourage many boaters from ever using their radios to their full capabilities.

Some VHF radios have integrated AIS functionality. That's a great idea and can make your life at sea much easier. Some other VHF radios have wireless microphones, eliminating the curly cord. However, they still depend on tiny rechargeable batteries and can be easily lost in the clutter of your boat. They may even fall overboard to join all of those soggy mobile phones, cameras, hats and sunglasses at the bottom of the sea.

To conclude, here are some of the more common VHF radio problems that cruisers have related to us during our past seven years of cruising.

VHF Radio Troubleshooting Hints

• We've all heard stations chatting away nicely on VHF with great audio. Suddenly they become very quiet, soft and distant. What happened?

This is one of the most common faults on a cruising yacht's VHF radio. It's invariably due to a break in one or more of the tiny wires inside the curly plastic microphone cord. This occurs after it's been stretched once too often over the years.

"Radio checks" from other boats aren't very helpful when diagnosing these intermittent problems. The best way to hear what's going on with your radio is to listen to yourself. How is that possible? It's easy. Using a portable VHF radio placed right next to your ear at reduced volume, switch to an unused channel and key the microphone on your main radio. Speaking into the microphone while listening to your own radio voice on the portable will soon let you know exactly how you sound. Stretch the cord out while speaking and you'll likely hear the intermittent problem while listening to yourself privately via the portable VHF. Unhappily, curly cord repairs can be quite intricate. The cure for most cruisers is generally a new microphone and cord, or a whole new VHF radio.

• Have yachters commented that your radio voice sounds as if you're at the bottom of a well? Try cleaning out the little pinhole sound opening on the front of your microphone. It often clogs with lint, moisture and grime, muffling your voice. Check your own sound by using a portable VHF radio as we've just discussed. To prevent annoying sibilance and popping sounds, speak across the front of the microphone, not directly into it. Remember that VHF radios are not "sound powered", so back off a bit and use a normal conversational tone when speaking.

• Cockpit microphones? It's a windy place. Wind noise in the microphone will overshadow your voice, often making your speech unintelligible. Duck down out of the breeze and try again.

• Squealing feedback? Too many radios on the boat! If you're calling someone on your boat's main VHF and there's an operating handheld VHF radio nearby, audio feedback and annoying howling sounds will drown out your voice. Better to switch off the handheld first.

• "I can't hear anyone at all. Where did everyone go? Radio check, radio check! Hello, hello???" This is very common and quite frustrating for the operator, but great entertainment for the rest of the anchorage. You've temporarily turned down the volume on the radio for a quiet nap. Now it's "sundowner" time and you'd like to make arrangements to socialize with your neighbours. Why aren't they answering your calls?

—Continued on next page

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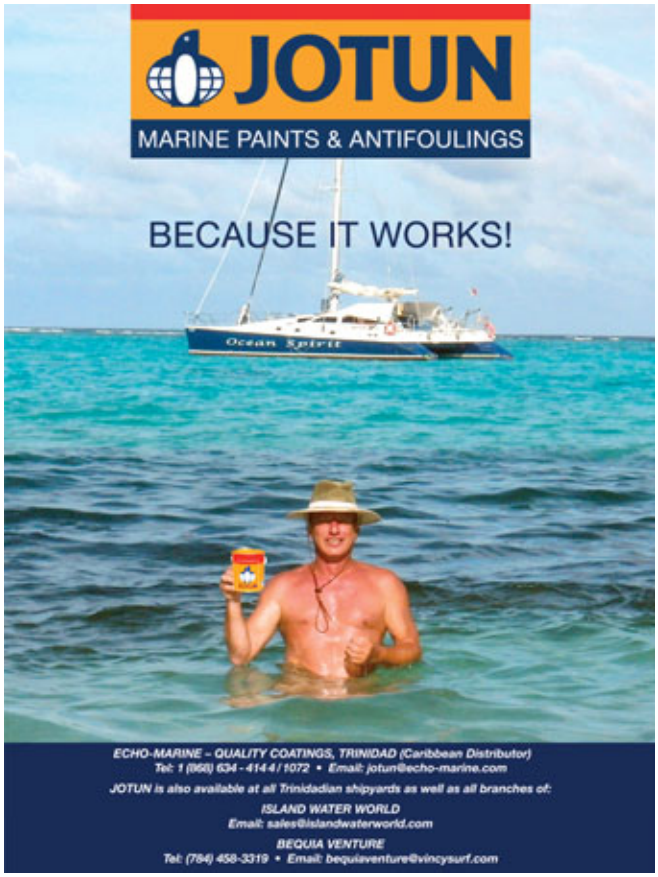
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MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

DECEMBER - JANUARY 2015/16

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 2015		21	2043	10	1229
DATE	TIME	22	2139	11	1325
1	0426	23	2236	12	1417
2	0512	24	2334	13	1519
3	0557	25	0000 (full moon)	14	1602
4	0639	26	0024	15	1654
5	0722	27	0123	16	1746
6	0804	28	0215	17	1839
7	0857	29	0304	18	1933
8	0932	30	0330	19	2027
9	1018	31	0434	20	2123
10	1107			21	2218
11	1158	**January 2016**		22	2312
12	1250	1	0517	23	0005
13	1344	2	0559	24	0000 (full moon)
14	1437	3	0642	25	0055
15	1530	4	0725	26	0142
16	1622	5	0811	27	0228
17	1714	6	0858	28	0313
18	1805	7	0948	29	0354
19	1857	8	1040	30	0337
20	1949	9	1134	31	0519

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Well, they probably are answering, but you just can't hear them because… your radio volume is… still… down. While you're at it, adjust the squelch and make sure that your radio isn't set to intercom instead of radio mode.

• Everyone in the anchorage sounds scratchy and weak and only a few can hear me! It's very likely a corrosion problem in a coax cable connection or a faulty antenna. Salt is our enemy, so dive into your bilge and check your radio connectors for broken cables or nasty green salt corrosion. Look aloft at the VHF antenna; is it still there? As we'll see a bit later in this article, the problem may not be with your radio at all.

• Your transmitted signal is reportedly distorted on high power, but it sounds okay on low? The trick here is to watch the brightness level of your radio's LCD display. Look for any discernable dimming of the backlight on the radio's LCD display when you transmit on high. Transmitting on low power doesn't usually change the display's intensity.

Dimming of the LCD brightness during high power transmit is a big problem. An undersized wire or a faulty, corroded DC connection will virtually starve the radio for voltage. This results in power loss and voice distortion. Again, have a good look behind the radio panel and inspect every VHF power connection all the way back to the power distribution panel and battery. Squeaky clean, tight, well-formed radio DC power connections are the answer. Once again, salt corrosion is your enemy!

• Here's a novel way to "sniff" out sources of those troublesome electronic/electrical devices on your boat using a portable AM broadcast radio receiver. Tune the portable radio below 600 kHz near the bottom of the dial, and find a quiet spot away from any radio stations. Then turn up the volume fully. Holding this radio while touring around your boat will easily identify those noisy, buzzy, clicky, hummy radio interfering electronic culprits. This will tell you where you might consider installing some of those ferrite chokes. As an aside, when boating on North America's Great Lakes in late summer or fall, we often carried a small AM portable radio in the cockpit. It gave timely warnings of dangerous black line squalls by detecting distant lightning crashes over 50 nautical miles away!

• "Radio check!" We've heard stations reply with "Loud and clear, but scratchy". An honest reply is best. Are they truly loud and clear, or just moderately readable along with a "frying" sound? Be honest. Always give your own location when answering, so that the "radio check" station can determine their range. Better still, take them away from the calling channel to give them a better chance to test their radio and antenna with your assistance.

• "That channel doesn't work for me." We hear this so often. There is likely nothing wrong with their VHF radio. One of the boaters is probably still in US mode. Make the switch to the International VHF Band Plan along with the majority of world cruisers. Then you'll be able make contact with everyone more easily.

Note: Check maritime VHF radio regulations for the particular Caribbean country that you're visiting. For instance, Trinidad & Tobago has adopted the "U" US band plan while most other non-US islands in the Eastern Caribbean are using "I" International. Let's all get on the same VHF radio page.

SWR Meters

Affordable meters for measuring antenna system SWR (Standing Wave Ratio) are commonly available. SWR measurements can be a valuable tool for finding faults on a VHF antenna system, but lowest SWR readings are not necessarily the Holy Grail. We once met a yachter who could only hear and communicate with other boats within a range of hundred metres. His friend tested the VHF system SWR and everything measured fine. I drove by his boat in my dinghy just before that skipper departed for the chandlery to buy a new radio. Looking up, I noticed that the steel whip portion of his masthead antenna was missing. It had obviously fallen off the boat and into the sea but he had never looked aloft to notice. With the most important part missing, they had been mis-communicating with only the coax cable and antenna loading coil, rather than the antenna. This easily explained the severely limited range with a near perfect SWR reading. Another friend's dysfunctional antenna loading coil was found to be full of rainwater, thus operating very poorly while showing a reasonably low SWR reading.

VHF DSC Buttons

"RTM" (Read The Manual) — please!

Random button punching on a DSC VHF can send out a false distress or urgency call to every other DSC radio-equipped vessel within a radius of 30 nautical miles. This is the radio equivalent of "crying wolf", and in some areas of the world these false transmissions cause boaters to switch off their radios altogether. When cruisers ignore the VHF radio, the safety of everyone afloat will be negatively impacted. It's also illegal to send false distress or urgency calls.

VHF channel 70 is reserved by international agreement and exclusively set aside as a Maritime DSC only data channel. Older VHF radios, manufactured before June 1999, may still enable you to have voice conversations on 70. That channel is no longer legal for voice. In fact, modern Maritime VHF radios won't even allow you to key your microphone on channel 70; they'll just beep at you should you try.

Why not take an hour or so in a comfortable seat in front of your DSC VHF radio, with its operating manual and perhaps a cold drink? Put on your reading glasses if you need them and start at the beginning. Simply skimming the VHF text without poking buttons at the same time isn't the most efficient way to familiarize yourself. With a hands-on approach and the VHF transceiver's manual in front of you, you'll soon be up to speed and ready to pass on your newfound DSC knowledge to your family or crew.

We're looking forward to hearing your crystal-clear signals on the VHF during this cruising season.

Ken Goodings cruises the Eastern Caribbean with his wife, Lynn Kaak, on S/V Silverheels III. *As a Designated Maritime Radio Examiner with Industry Canada, he taught and examined students in VHF and HF-SSB DSC Maritime Radio boating classes in Toronto from 2002-2008. Working as a broadcast television and radio electronics technologist for 38 years at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ontario, Ken was licensed for Canadian Amateur Radio in 1981 with Ham call sign VE0SH.*



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More Old Salts' Tips for New Caribbean Cruisers

New to Caribbean cruising? We've been asking a wide selection of experienced Caribbean cruisers for their top tips, just for you!

NAVIGATION
Don Street, formerly aboard *Iolaire*
When relying on eyeball navigation, make your way through reefs and shoals when the sun is high and you can see into the water without reflection or glare. Do not head east before 1100 or west after 1400.


LUKA RONE

Do not rely solely on navigational buoys or lights, as in many areas of the Eastern Caribbean they are very unreliable.

DINGHIES
Ralph Wright, aboard *Arcturus II*
Be a good dinghy neighbor! Approaching a crowded dinghy dock, rather than barging through a group of tied-up dinghies under power, use your hands to move them aside if necessary. When tying up, please leave room for others. Never tie bow and stern alongside, which takes up tons of room. Use a long painter (or cable or chain), so others can get up to the dock, too. Don't leave your outboard tilted up; your propeller could damage someone else's dinghy or outboard. And last but not least, when untying your painter to leave, make sure you don't set someone else's dinghy adrift.

GREETINGS
Devi Sharp, formerly aboard *Arctic Tern*
Say hello or "good morning" to islanders on the street. You are a visitor and it is expected that you will reach out first. You might be rewarded with a big smile



or a return "morning", or you might end up in a conversation with a friendly person. This simple act will open doors to the island.

SUNBURN
Wendy Murphy, aboard *Andiamos*
Protect yourself from the sun with long sleeves and a hat. Wearing a rash guard or even a T-shirt while swimming or snorkeling protects your back from sunburn. If using sunscreen while in the water, please make sure it doesn't contain oxybenzone, which recent studies have shown to be extremely harmful to corals.

NEW TASTES
Angelika Grüner, aboard *Angelos*
Coming from Europe to the Caribbean you will realize a completely different culture — it is a New World. Going to the market you will see fruits and vegetables you have never seen before. Don't hesitate in buying them. Ask the vendor what it is, how long does it last uncooked, and how it is prepared. I know people cruising up and down the islands for more then ten years, not knowing what is a breadfruit, a yam, or dasheen. Give it a try, and bring new tastes into your cooking.

RESPECT!
Lynn Fletcher, freelance crew
Kick down a few gears and enjoy it. Respect the people — and the rum!

RELAX!
Sue Klumb, aboard *Orion*
Relax. Things happen more slowly in the Caribbean, but they still get done in the end.



See more Old Salt's Tips for New Caribbean Cruisers at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/september15compass_online.pdf on page 20.

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The Sky from Mid-December to Mid-January

by Jim Ulik

Has the Kepler Space Telescope found an alien civilization?

Scientists discovered that light emitted from a star — KIC 8462852 — is showing erratic behavior. The large variations in light intensity have no predictable pattern that scientists have previously experienced. The known variables such as cosmic dust, exoplanets transiting the star, multiple comets passing or planetary collisions have so far been ruled out. It is no surprise that internet posts have come out about the discovery of an alien civilization. Is it possible that aliens have surrounded the star with a structure or a satellite array of solar panels to harness the star's energy for use on their planet? That concept was first introduced by science fiction writer Olaf Stapledon in his book *Star Maker* (1937), an idea later brought to television in an episode of Star Trek. The reason for the light variations is probably natural in origin but the SETI Institute is investigating. They have also turned their telescope array to further study the star.

Around 500 years ago, the artist in Leonardo da Vinci paid close attention to light and shadows. Da Vinci the scientist realized that light reflected off the Earth ("Earthshine") illuminated the dark surface of a crescent Moon. That realization helped to advance astronomy. That discovery was long before people even believed that the Earth revolved around the Sun. On January 3rd, Leonardo da Vinci recorded the unsuccessful attempt of a flight test in his notebook. That day will be the 520th Anniversary (1496) of the test flight. However, the glider design was recently replicated and a flight proved successful.

Wednesday, December 16th

The peak of the Geminids Meteor Shower may have passed but there could be two more days left to see more meteors coming from the direction of Gemini. Gemini will follow Orion into the night sky as it begins to rise above the horizon around 1830 hours. The Moon is approaching first quarter and setting at 2243 so there will be little interference from moonlight. There is a good chance to catch a few more shooting stars tonight and tomorrow night.

Friday, December 18th

After spending the last 19 days in the constellation Ophiuchus, the Sun is entering Sagittarius over 23 degrees south latitude. The Moon will reach its first quarter phase at 1114. Look for the Moon to rise at 1210.

Saturday, December 19th

Conjunction between the Moon and Uranus. As the Moon moves toward the western sky, Uranus is positioned less than one degree from the Moon by 2300. Follow the boundary line between the light and dark portions of the Moon northward at 2300. That is where you will find Uranus.

Tuesday, December 22nd

The December or Winter Solstice occurs today at 0049. The Sun is directly over the Tropic of Capricorn or 23.5 degrees south latitude during the December Solstice. The Tropic of Capricorn was named over 2,000 years ago because the Sun was then positioned in the Capricorn constellation during the Winter Solstice. As mentioned above, the Sun is now in Sagittarius.

Today is also the peak of the Ursids Meteor Shower. The source of this shower is the Ursa Minor constellation or the Little Dipper. The best time to view these meteors is for a couple hours after the Moon sets at 0227 on December 21st or after 0325 on December 22nd. The meteors are the debris left behind by comet 8P/Tuttle discovered on January 9th, 1790 by PFA Méchain (France) and later confirmed by Horace Tuttle in 1858.

Thursday, December 24th

It is Christmas Eve and the 47th anniversary of the Earthrise photograph taken from *Apollo 8*. Command Module Pilot Jim Lovell commented, "The vast loneliness is awe-inspiring and it makes you realize just what you have back there on Earth." It is amazing how many people still believe the trip to the Moon never happened.

Friday, December 25th

Choose your holiday beverage for the Full Moon on Christmas Day. If you are up around 0620 you will find the Moon setting just before the Moon turns full at 0711. You will see the Sun begin to rise just as the Moon sets. The Moon will return to the evening sky at 1816.

Monday, December 28th

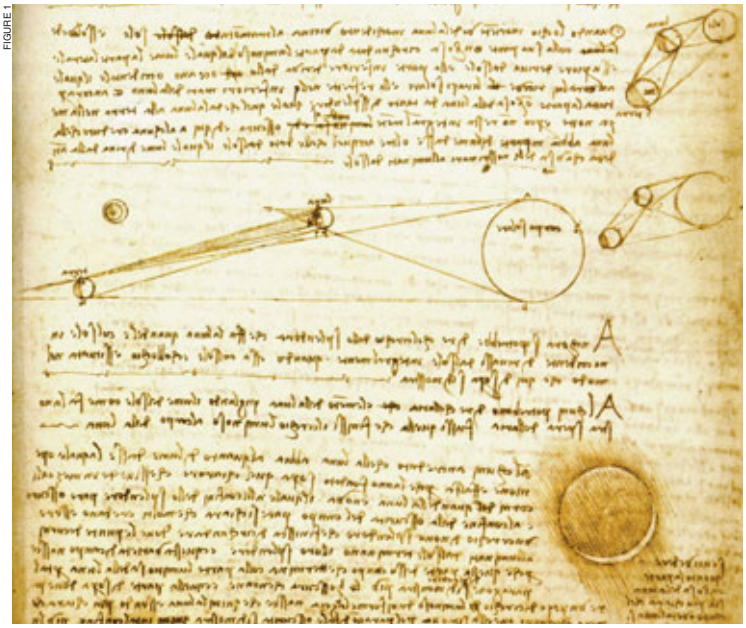
Mercury should be visible and at its highest point above the horizon in the western sky. From our perspective, Mercury has reached its greatest distance from the Sun. That provides us a clearer view of the planet that would otherwise be positioned too close to the Sun.

Tuesday, December 29th

Regulus, the heart of Leo the Lion, will be located five degrees away from the Moon.

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FIGURE 1



Leonardo da Vinci's writings and diagrams regarding his theory of Earthshine

GRENADINES SAILS & CANVAS • BEQUIA

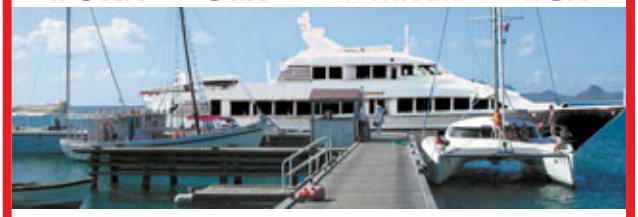


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—Continued from previous page

Thursday, December 31st

There will be a conjunction between Jupiter and the Moon. The Moon will rise at 2234 on December 30th and gradually appear to approach Jupiter. The two bodies will be less than four degrees apart at 0600. Look for Mars to be near Spica before sunrise.



FIGURE 2

Above: Earthrise from the Moon taken from Apollo 8

Right: The geysers on the south pole of Saturn's moon Enceladus

Below: Planets, stars and the Moon at 0545 hours on January 3rd



FIGURE 3

Friday, January 1st

Showing up a little late for Christmas is asteroid (4370) Dickens as it makes a close approach to Earth. The asteroid was discovered by Edward LG Bowell on September 22nd, 1982 and named for Charles Dickens. The asteroid is located between Gemini and Canis Minor.

Saturday, January 2nd

The Earth has reached its closest orbital point (perihelion) to the Sun. The Earth receives more intense radiation from the Sun at perihelion. That extra radiation does not increase the Earth's average temperature because the southern hemisphere is facing the Sun. The southern hemisphere is 80 percent water, which absorbs the additional radiation and disperses the additional heat throughout the southern oceans.

Sunday, January 3rd

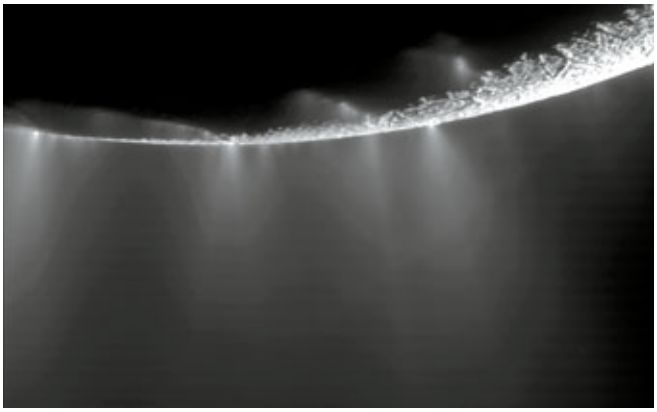
Early this morning there will be two trios of celestial bodies pairing up in the eastern sky. One group is Mars, the Moon and Spica located in Virgo. If you are up around 0530 you will also see a bright Saturn just below Venus. And to the right or south of Saturn is Antares, the heart of the scorpion, as shown in Figure 3.

Monday, January 4th

The first meteor shower of 2016 is the Quadrantids. It actually started in December but the peak event is tonight. The peak may be around 80 meteors per hour but it only lasts for a few hours. The best time to look for the shower is between 0200 and 0600 on January 4th or January 5th. The Moon is approaching the New Moon phase, so hopefully it will not interfere with viewing shooting stars. The source of the meteors is from the northeastern sky.

Monday, January 9th

Over the last few mornings Saturn and Venus have been on converging paths. This morning the two planets will almost appear as one celestial object. If you look through a pair of binoculars you may be able to see the narrow separation between the planets. Since January 3rd the Moon has been moving out of the picture as it drops below the horizon and approaches the Sun for the New Moon phase tomorrow.



In the News

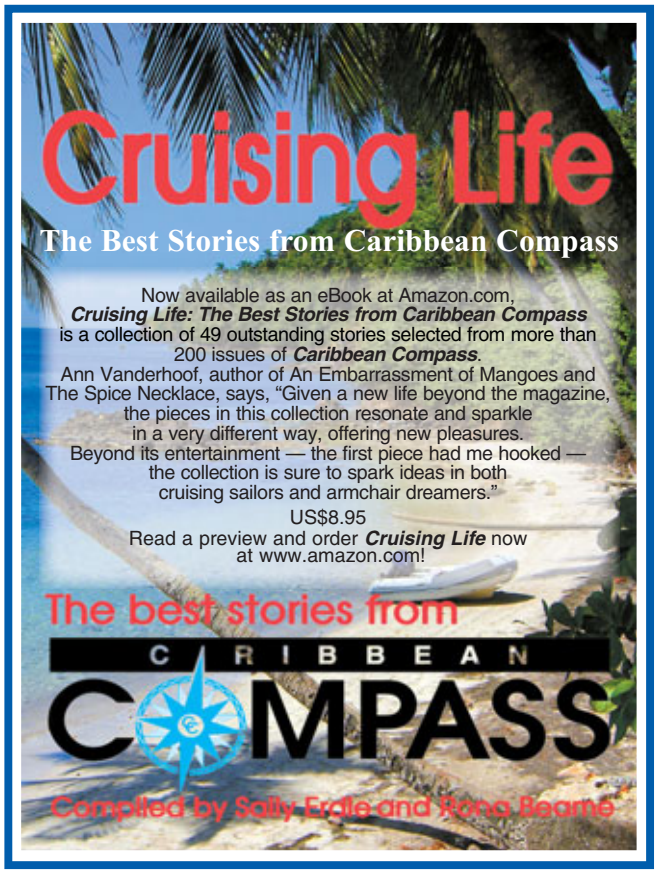
The spacecraft *Cassini* has made a pass through the geysers of Saturn's moon Enceladus to determine the composition of the water jettisoned from the underground oceans. *Cassini's* final close flyby of Enceladus will take place on December 19th. That pass will measure the amount of heat coming from the moon's interior, providing evidence of how much hydrothermal activity is occurring in the moon's ocean. Instruments will also record more detailed data about the ocean's chemistry. For future missions, 28 models have been presented to NASA. A launch to Enceladus could happen in 2021.

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 of S/V Merengue *is a photographer and cruiser currently based in Grenada.*







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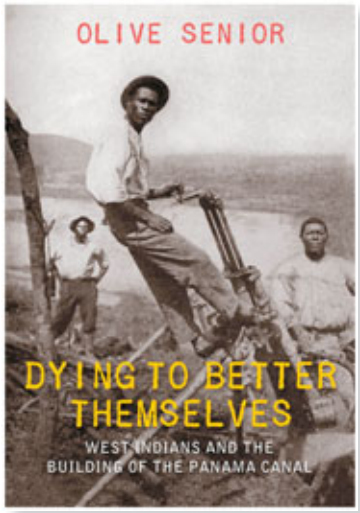
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BOOK REVIEW BY J. WYNNER

'SILVER WORKERS' ON THE PANAMA CANAL

Dying To Better Themselves *by Olive Senior, The University of the West Indies Press, ©2014, 416 pages, ISBN 978-976-640-457-4*



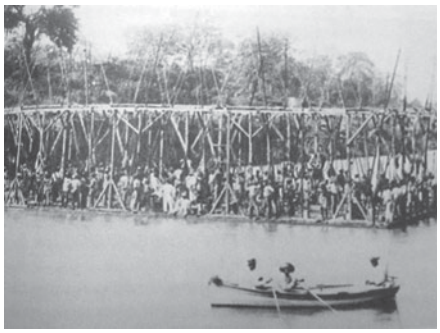
The Olive Senior chronicle *Dying To Better Themselves* features the presence of West Indians in the Panama Canal Zone, and their contribution to the construction of one of the greatest engineering achievements on the planet during the first decade of the 20th century.

Of her enduring testament to those labourers — who worked all through the night and day, from top to bottom of the cut, from north to south on the water passage reuniting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans after millions of years, and lessening the sailing miles from New York to San Francisco from 13,000 miles going around Cape Horn to 5,200 miles via the Canal — she says, "I knew I had to 'tell our story'. Revisiting my notes, I was overcome with the need to tell the canal's most essential tale: that of the men and women whose physical labour made it a reality. Innumerable books discuss its construction, detailing problems in mining, engineering, project management and medical innovations. Few speak of the reality of daily life and work by the so-called silver workers. Few recognize the immense contribution of physical labour." And this indeed is the essence of Senior's book: the contribution of physical labour by mainly West Indians, the so-called "silver workers", thus labeled because they were paid in Panamanian silver, as were all other non-US citizens and Afro-Americans, even for the same labor as the white Americans, the "gold workers", who were paid in gold.

"This narrative, then, tells the story of the Panama Canal from the other side, the underside. It tells of the impact on the islanders who supplied the manpower and of the impact on their homelands. So many young men of reproductive age came from the islands and British mainland territories that the construction of the Panama Canal might be called the most effective birth-control device of its times."

At times the reading becomes a bit taxing, but that is because there is so much to absorb. And if you find the book leans more towards Jamaicans, the reason is that the majority of "West Indians, who were never less than two-thirds of the labour force" were Jamaicans, including the author's great-uncle and his sister, and her maternal grandfather, about whom no other information is divulged.

However, one of the interesting vignettes tells of Mary Seacole, after whom one of the halls at the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies in Jamaica is named. Mary Seacole, who first arrived in the isthmus in 1851 and was to earn her greatest fame during the Crimean War (1854-1856), "came from a long line of women traditionally called 'doctoress' in Jamaica, a self-taught medicine woman whose knowledge of tropical disease and treatments at the time often surpassed those of doctors." Alas, more West Indians have heard about Florence Nightingale than they have about Mary Seacole.



Behind the rowboat, West Indian workers on a raft used for underground placement of dynamite prior to dredging

Although presenting tables and maps alongside her work, and expansive notes, selected bibliography and index, and countless pictures which lend a visual impact to the narrative, the bulk of Senior's narrative is about the endeavours of the silver workers. She tells us of their hardships; the racism experienced; and their social activities, prayer life, fraternal organizations, living conditions and working conditions. She details the work they carried out, the climate change they had to undergo, and their health problems on the isthmus: "'Malaria was raging yellow fever was raging another fever was called tyfod fever raging in the matachin section. United States Citensin and West Indian lives and blood was taken to put through this canal.' So wrote silver worker Alfred Banister of the early years." And then there were accidents on the job, many of them fatal.

The experiences of children are not to be forgotten. "West Indian children brought to Panama or born there were to experience other difficulties, not least the effect on their sense of identity and notions of 'home'. With their parents hard-pressed to meet living expenses, children as young as five and six were put to work as household helpers. On the canal, boys were employed as 'water boys'."

The time spent placing these workers in context before, during and after the construction of the Panama Canal, and the effort of the Jamaican author, who began researching material for her narrative in the 1970s, is not only laudable in itself, it is also a lasting tribute to "West Indians, who provided at least 60 percent of the workforce for the entire construction period".

LOOK OUT FOR...

Jurassic Park: Tree Ferns, our Prehistoric Plants

by Lynn Kaak

As you travel through the Caribbean, every month there's something special to look out for. In December, why pine for Christmas trees when we can observe the unique tree ferns?

Before dinosaurs ruled the Earth, while our diminutive ancestors scurried in the undergrowth trying not to be eaten, ferns were a dominant feature in the plant world. These days, smaller-scale dinosaur descendants are trying not to get mashed or eaten by us. Ferns are still with us, however they aren't as dominant as they once were.



It's unusual to see a shade-loving tree fern standing alone

"Tree fern" is a term for ferns that have a longer, trunk-like, stalk. There are some true tree ferns, of the families *Cyatheacae* and *Dicksoniaceae*, with the majority being in the *Cyatheacae* family. There are numerous species to be found, and they tend to be quite regionalized. One species may be found on one particular mountain, but not another, even on the same island. Species disappear and new ones appear with regularity, with new species being discovered quite often.

Ferns are certainly not like most other plants that we know. They don't flower or produce fruit, and they don't have seeds. They reproduce using spores that grow on the underside of their leaves, or fronds. Without getting too technical, when the spores fall they create a sort of pseudo-plant (my term, not a real one) that creates one egg and multiple sperm. However, the sperm doesn't fertilize that same egg — that would be inbreeding and not bode well for the continuing vitality of the species. It will fertilize an egg from another fern plant. Once fertilization occurs, this pseudo-plant dies and the "embryo" falls to the soil and then grows into the fern that we know.

Ferns can also spread by means of their roots, with offshoots growing from the roots and developing. This is a fairly efficient method, which gives the tree ferns an advantage in the highly competitive rainforest.

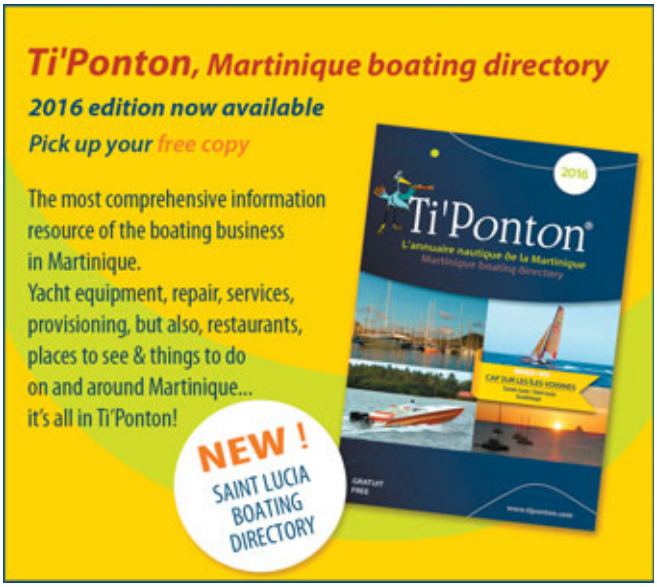
The typical (*Cyatheacae*) tree fern that we see in the Caribbean tends to have a hairy trunk or stem and can grow to a height of about ten metres (35 feet). The stems have veins that allow the movement of water and nutrients more effectively than in some other plants. As water evaporates from the leaves, this creates a partial vacuum in the veins, drawing up more water and nutrients from the well-developed root system. The term "trunk" is more for convenience, as the stalk is actually comprised of roots that grow vertically, with the new leaf growth coming out of the top. This new growth unfurls in a form that is often referred to as a "fiddlehead", as it looks like the rounded end of a violin. Some species have very edible fiddleheads. This new fiddlehead eventually becomes a new frond.

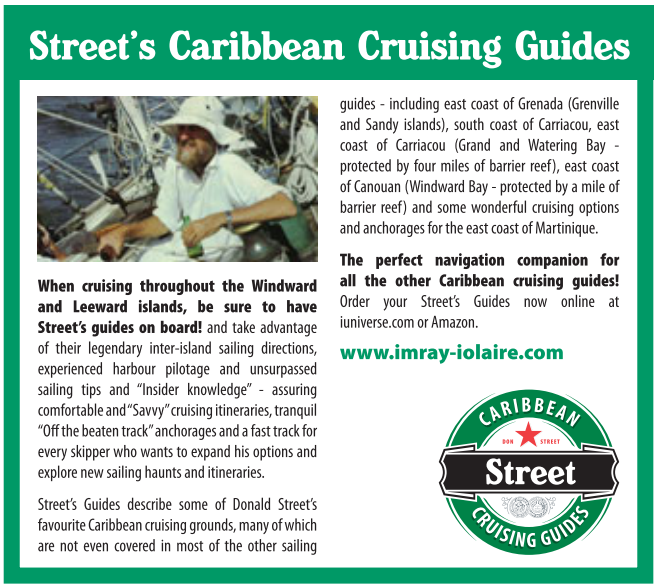
The leaves or fronds of the typical Caribbean tree fern are scaly with hairs or spikes. The underside has rows of bumps housing the spores.

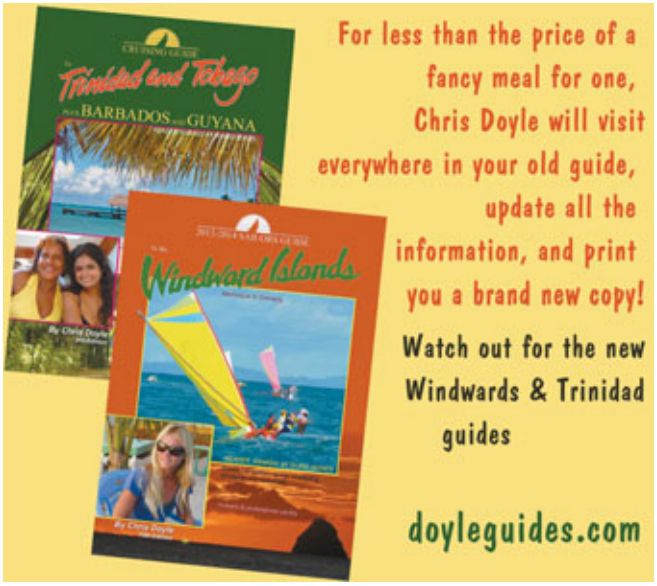
These ancient throwbacks can be found in relatively cool, humid areas (by tropical standards), with plenty of shade. Essentially, they are one of the mainstays of the rainforests. They provide the intermediate growth above the ground cover, but below the tall canopy trees. This gives them the water that they need, as well as the shade. They are also not overly fond of heat, but may still be used for ornamental purposes in some gardens, provided that one doesn't expect them to grow very large or possibly produce offspring. Frequent watering would be absolutely necessary.

The stalks, because they aren't made of wood, have some unique properties. Because of their relatively porous construction, they provide a fantastic medium for the propagation of orchids and other epiphytes, and tree ferns are harvested in some places for this very purpose. The "wood" stands up pretty well to dampness, and it's utilized in some countries for the manufacture of outdoor furniture. The lumber can have fascinating patterns due to its vascular network. Many hiking trails in Dominica and other islands use the readily available tree fern wood to make steps on the trails. Artisans carve the stalks into masks and other forms of three-dimensional art, which is often for sale to tourists. In some areas these activities have created such a threat to some tree fern species, that many have now been protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

So while evolution has helped some plants, several millennia ago those ancient tree ferns already had pretty much figured everything out.







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Perspective:

THE PITS TO PARADISE

by John Smith



Just how do we rate a place we have visited? By what standards is a place determined to be "paradise" or defined as "the pits"? Some places are to be avoided like poison ivy on a playing field while others are worth all the trouble and risk.

It is a question of perspective and priorities.

So, I thought that I would make a list. Create my own rating system based upon my almost 50 years of literally beating and bashing around the Caribbean.

Any such list, and any attempt to judge a destination, will be based on actually sailing to and then living there awhile. These periods of time may vary considerably: I was only on La Orchilla, Venezuela for a week but I lived on Carriacou for over 15 years!

The reader of this list must bear in mind that my vessel has no engine and that I quite often sail alone for weeks at a time aboard my rather cumbersome "butterfly" of a Carriacou Sloop. This last is pertinent because my ship is made entirely of wood and built on a beach without the use of electricity, using timber that grew on that same beach. Oftimes — well, actually always — "replacement parts" must be located, harvested, trimmed and installed wherever I happen to find myself. I am very fond of my axe and bow saw.

Because of the common reasoning that requires women, whiskey and gymnastics to be rated on a 1 to 10 scale, I will employ the same system in my personal evaluation of some of the Caribbean islands that I have visited.

First off I will establish a few ground rules. Any island that has an international airport and a cruise ship pier can never be rated above a 4, except for Grenada — I love Grenada! Nevertheless, I hate airports, cruise ships, paved roads and traffic. This is, after all, why I went sailing in the first place. This list is made from the perspective of a fella who never ties to docks, has no air conditioning, no refrigerator, who has never owned a car and has no driver's license, and rarely wears shoes. I also like to watch the sky at night and to be able to see the stars and planets, which means that nearby lighted marinas, discos, bars, restaurants and hotels ruin my view. My boat weighs over 20 tons and draws seven feet of water.

Essentials include good anchorages with at least one mangrove-fringed hurricane hole that can be entered under sail and that preferably is not lined with sunken and abandoned steel wrecks. Access to clean drinking water is essential, and waterfalls are the best. A nearby haulout facility is always nice. Good swimming and fishing is essential. A local outdoor market is important because never-chilled vegetables last a lot longer than chilled ones. It is good to have a few neighbors — but not too many. Electronic music screaming about "bubbling up" at 0200 is a double-down negative for this sailor. I prefer a silent anchorage with only the sound of a few roosters at dawn. A place where the sand is soft, the sea is clean, the reef is healthy, there are no sand flies, where there is always enough breeze to spin my wind generator and preferably fewer than 30 rainy days a year.

The people, if there are any, are of course an important consideration. I prefer the company of folks who really care about others and not only what others think about them. My preference is for a community that rises at dawn. A place where folks go fishing, diving and farming. Where people are walking to school, dancing in the streets, building wooden boats and where they greet you on your morning bayside walk.

So, here is my limited list of more than 40 destinations. This is not meant as a critique of any place in particular, only to be the view from another sailor's porthole. These are not judgments, only my perspective and my priorities.

The only port which has enough of my favorite traits to compensate for being on the mainland is Carenero, Higuerote in Venezuela, so it is included in my list.

2: St. Croix (US Virgin Islands), St. Thomas (USVI), Sint Maarten/Saint Martin, St. Kitts, Bonaire, Curaçao, Utila (Honduras)

3: Tortola (British Virgin Islands), Virgin Gorda (BVI), Antigua, Martinique, Isla Mujeres (Mexico), Roatan (Honduras)

4: Montserrat, Guadeloupe, Les Saintes, Anegada (BVI), St. Eustatius, St. Lucia, Aruba

5: Anguilla, St. John (USVI), Dominica, Canouan (St. Vincent & the Grenadines), Bocas del Toro (Panama), Margarita (Venezuela)

6: Culebra (Puerto Rico), Nevis, St. Vincent, Cubagua (Venezuela), Guanaja (Honduras)

7: Mayreau (SVG), La Orchilla (Venezuela), Tortuga (Venezuela),

8: Grenada, Los Testigos (Venezuela), Coche (Venezuela), Carenero/Higuerote (Venezuela)

9: Bequia (SVG), Carriacou, Los Roques (Venezuela), Las Aves (Venezuela)

You will notice that no place received a 10. Carriacou has no waterfalls! Neither did any destination receive a 1, because the privilege of arriving somewhere and getting the anchor down demands a minimum of a 2. For lagniappe I suppose I might, however, give that 1 to Sombrero in the Anegada Channel and El Farallon off of Portobello in Panama, under each of which I have hove to, getting a night's rest in the company of a friendly light.

John Smith sails the Caribbean aboard Mermaid of Carriacou.

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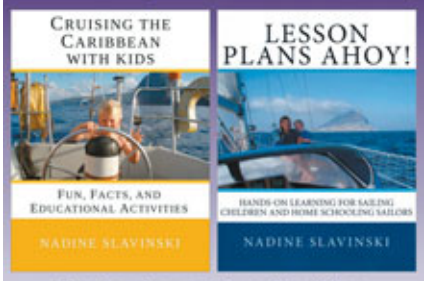
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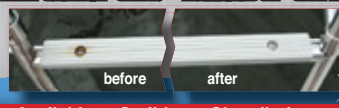
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3 – 6	Carlos Aguilar Match Race, St. Thomas, USVI. www.carlosmatchrace.com
4 – 6	Course de L'Alliance race, St. Maarten, St. Barth & Anguilla. St. Maarten Yacht Club (SMYC), www.smyc.com
4 – 10	Antigua Charter Yacht Show. www.antiguayachtshow.com
5	Christmas Regatta, Puerto Rico. Borinquen Islands Sailing Association, smileandwavesailing@gmail.com
6	Start of Christmas Caribbean Rally, Canary Islands to Antigua. www.sailingrallies.com
8	Public holiday in Colombia (Immaculate Conception)
9	Public holiday in Antigua & Barbuda (National Heroes' Day)
12	Christmas Boat Parade, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Club Náutico de San Juan (CNSJ), www.nauticodesanjuan.com
12	St. Croix Boat Parade, Christiansted, USVI. www.christmasparadestcroix.com
13	Public holiday in St. Lucia (National Day)
15	Public holiday in Bonaire (Kingdom Day)
16 - 24	Nine Mornings Festival, St. Vincent & the Grenadines. http://discoversvg.com
18	St. Thomas Lighted Boat Parade, Charlotte Amalie, USVI
18 – 20	Carriacou Parang Festival. carriacouparangfestival.com
18 – 1 Jan	Montserrat Festival. www.facebook.com/MontserratAnnualFestival
19	Public holiday in Anguilla (National Heroes' Day)
19 – 20	San Juan Sailing Championships, Puerto Rico. Club Náutico de San Juan (CNSJ), www.nauticodesanjuan.com
20	High Tide Race Series day one, Antigua. Antigua Yacht Club (AYC), www.antiguayachtclub.com
21	Winter Solstice
23	High Tide Race Series day two, Antigua. AYC
25	FULL MOON
25	Public holiday in many places (Christmas Day). Nelson's Dockyard Champagne Christmas Party, Antigua
26	Public holiday in many places (Boxing Day); Junkanoo parades in The Bahamas
26	High Tide Race Series day three, Antigua. AYC
26 – 27	Dominica Christmas Regatta. nfo@dominicamarinecenter.com
30	Fireworks in Fort-de-France, Martinique
31	Nelson's Pursuit Race, Antigua. AYC
31	New Year's Eve/Old Year's Night. Public holiday in Montserrat (Festival Day); half-day holiday in Curaçao. Fireworks in many places, including Trellis Bay, Tortola; Admiralty Bay, Bequia; Clifton Harbour, Union Island; Kralendijk, Bonaire; and English Harbour, Antigua

JANUARY 2016

1	Public holiday or "recovery day" in many places (New Year's Day); Junkanoo parades in The Bahamas; Festival Parade in Montserrat
1 – 2	Crucian Christmas Festival Parades, St. Croix. www.stcroixtourism.com/christmas_festival.htm
1 – 9	St. Kitts & Nevis Carnival. www.stkittsneviscarnival.com
2	Public holiday in Cuba (Victory of Armed Forces Day) and Haiti (Founding Fathers' Day)
3 – 5	Public holiday in Guyana (The Prophet's Birthday)
6	Public holiday in some places (Three Kings Day/Epiphany)
10	Public holiday in The Bahamas (Majority Rule Day)
12	Public holiday in Puerto Rico (Eugenio María de Hostos Day)
12 – 24	St. Barts Music Festival. www.stbartsmusicfestival.org
15 – 17	Caribbean Laser Midwinter Regatta, Cabarete, Dominican Republic. www.caribwind.com
16 – 24	Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race Series. www.mountgayrumroundbarbadosrace.com. SEE AD ON PAGE 5
18	Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI (Martin Luther King Day)
20 – 3 Feb	Mustique Blues Festival. SEE AD ON PAGE 41
21	Public holiday in Barbados (Errol Barrow Day) and the Dominican Republic (Our Lady of Altagracia)
21 – 24	Bequia Music Fest. www.begos.com/bequiamusicfest. SEE AD ON PAGE 14
24	FULL MOON
25	Public holiday in Aruba (GF Croes Day)
26	Public holiday in the Cayman Islands (National Heroes' Day) and the Dominican Republic (Duarte Day)
26 – 1 Feb	St. Barth Fun Cup. www.saintbarthfuncup.com
28 – 30	Jamaica Jazz and Blues Festival, Montego Bay. http://jamaicajazzandblues.com
28 – 31	SuperYacht Challenge Antigua. www.superyachtchallengeantigua.com
28 – 2 Feb	Grenada Sailing Week (yachts). www.grenadasailingweek.com. SEE AD ON PAGE 6
30	Cruising Outpost cruisers' party, Cane Garden Bay, Tortola. www.cruisingoutpost.com
30 – 31	Grenada Sailing Festival (workboats). www.grenadasailingfestival.com

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

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"You have no messages ..."

RON MORGAN

—Continued from page 18 ...Blazing Forward

Though he qualified to represent Belize at 2015 OPTINAM, at 5'9" and 143 pounds, he was too heavy for Optimist competition and opted instead for the ISAF YW-ENP in Laser Radials. He felt his performance was "just okay, but I met many people and I was sailing better at the end of that week than before I got there."

Antonio has access to Belize Sailing School's new 2014 fleet of ten race-ready Laser XD Radials. They are sailed from a beach shared with Caribbean Villas Hotel, which has sponsored one of the new Lasers. Additionally, one or two Lasers each are located in Placencia, Belize City, Corozal and Caye Caulker. Antonio raced a Laser Radial in the 2015 Bart's Bash. He's begun receiving professional coaching costing his family $100 each weekend. In a recent "mano a mano" exercise, he beat his coach in two out of three match races.

Antonio's training is complemented by stitching sails and performing maintenance on Belize Sailing Vacation's large cats. "Antonio informed me of a leak in one of the catamaran pontoons when none of the rest of us noticed it. He is very observant," says BSV employee Tony Ricardez. Also, visiting cruisers from North America invite Antonio to crew in overnight regional sails. In fact, Antonio would have traveled to Canada by cruiser invitation this month had he not already been committed to his Malaysia trip.

Antonio's message for Caribbean youth: "Competent sailing isn't just about racing and beating others. It's about doing your best even when others don't believe in you."

In this examination of Belize junior sailing, we've seen that youth training is creatively supported by:

- demonstration of local parental and youth commitment to garner support from international organizations such as IODA and ISAF,
- private industry funding (resorts, revenue from sailing lessons for tourists & locals),
- extensive local regatta circuit developed through regional cooperation,
- training alongside adult marine professionals and cruisers.

Follow Belize junior sailing on Facebook at BzSA.

Ellen Ebert Birrell attributes her opportunity to cruise the Caribbean aboard Boldly Go with partner Jim Hutchins to life skills built in childhood. Believing swimming and sailing are essentials for island youth, she supports junior sailing and serves on the Caribbean Sailing Association Sailing Development Committee.

Visit caribbean-sailing.com/youth/youth-programs for more information.

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54' Jeanneau SO 54DS '06 Asking $295K


51' Beneteau Oceanis 510 '93/94. (2) From $123K


51' Jeanneau SO 51 1990 Asking $125K

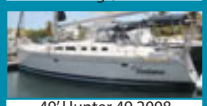

50' Jeanneau SO 50DS 2011 Asking $199K


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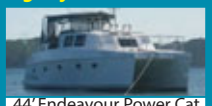

49' Jeanneau SO 49 2004 Asking $169K


47' Beneteau Oceanis 473 2003. Asking $149.9K


46' Jeanneau SO 45.2 2003 Asking $145K


46' Jeanneau SO 45.2' 02 Asking $175K


45' Wauquiez Centurion 45 1993. Asking $129K


44' Endeavour Power Cat 2001. Asking $199K


44' Voyage 440 2001 Asking $295K

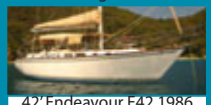

44' Bavaria 44 2002 Asking $79K


44' Trintella 44 1980 Asking $85K


43' Beneteau Cyclades 43.3 2005. Asking $87K


43' Jeanneau SO 43DS '02 Asking $99.5K


42' Bavaria Cruiser 42 2001 Asking $80K


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39' Privilege 39 1991 Asking $115K


36' Beneteau Oceans 361 2000. Asking $55K

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C/W = Caribbean-wide


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