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On-line
FEBRUARY 2012 NO. 197
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

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See story on page 28



STEVE MANLEY



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Cover photo: Barbuda offers lonely anchorages, endless beaches and unusual adventures ashore. Photo by Steve Manley; see more of his photos at www.spicenecklace.com



***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.**

"In my mind's set, *Caribbean Compass* is the only periodical that covers the entire Caribbean for CRUISING BOATS. In fact I am so attached to it that I could not imagine a month without having it to read. Regardless of what else I do, I am a cruising sailor and have been for my entire life. While my eye may pass and stop for a moment on some coverage of this or that in the Caribbean my real interest is in cruising it. For what it is worth, no one else has done or does it better."

— Frank Virgintino
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Info & Updates

Carriacou Yachting Community Provides Scholarships

The Carriacou yachting community provided six TA Marryshow Community College scholarships in 2011. The Carriacou Children's Education Fund (CCEF) provided scholarships to Coatney Charles and Deon Crompton from Bishops College and Curtrim McGillivary and Jillean Scott from Hillsborough Secondary School. Through the generosity of several ex-pat residents, Kadem McGillivary from Bishops and Quiteria Coy from HSS have been recognized for scholastic excellence with the awards of the Sue Kingsman Memorial Scholarships, administered by the CCEF.



Judy Evans (CCEF), Fleure Patrice (Director of TAMCC Carriacou), Jillean Scott, Leah Hagley, Gloria Wells, Lizzy Conijin (CCEF), and John Pompa (CCEF)



These young men are just three of the six students who are attending the main campus of TA Marryshow Community College in Grenada thanks to CCEF scholarships

Five of these students, plus 2010 scholarship recipient Trevin McLawrence, are attending the main campus of TAMCC in Grenada. One student from the 2011 group plus 2010 recipients Leah Hagley and Gloria Wells are attending the satellite campus at Six Roads, Carriacou. The scholarships cover full tuition and fees for two years plus a stipend of EC$1,000 towards the purchase of textbooks.

These students bring to 19 the number of scholarships awarded by the CCEF. Previous awardees include Michelle Alexander, Nadia Edwards, Reann Martineau, Rena Noel and Tahera Paul from Bishops College, and Stacey Bain, Carnisha Charles, Camille DeRoche, Marcia Scott and Codell Stafford from HSS. A number of these have already put their education to good use as staff at HSS and several local businesses in Carriacou.

Each student writes an essay of 1,000 words on the topic "How I will use my education to build a better Grenada", and the primary focus for all students has been development of opportunities for the youth of Grenada, an issue dear to their hearts.

Rholda Quamina (Bishops College) and Brian Lendore (Hillsborough Secondary), the principals of the two secondary schools in Carriacou, select the scholarship recipients based on CXC/CSEC scores and financial need.

—Continued on next page



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Patrick Compton, of the Carriacou branch of the Grenada Union of Teachers, assists in the process every year, collecting and reviewing the essays.

Visiting yachts and local businesses continue to assist local students through the fundraising efforts of the CCEF. The 2011 awards bring the total amount of financial aid to more than $34,000. With the amount already allocated for 2012, the total contribution by CCEF for scholarships to TAMCC will exceed $45,000.

The Carriacou Children's Education Fund is an informal, voluntary group of individuals from visiting yachts from around the world, and a number of concerned local businessmen and women. Since 2000, CCEF has conducted fund raising activities during the first week of August at the Carriacou Yacht Club in Hermitage, Carriacou coinciding with the Carriacou Regatta Festival.

During this time, CCEF has raised over $150,000 to provide uniforms, school supplies and other educational assistance to the children of Carriacou. The mission is to help as many children as possible and to fill the gap between what is required for a child to receive a proper education and what the families can provide.

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

If you would like to become involved in this project, contact ccefinfo@gmail.com.

Yacht Chef Killers Get Life Sentences in St. Maarten

The yachting community in St. Maarten was stunned in February of last year by the murder of 37-year-old Frenchman Ludovic Guillevin, a chef aboard the 126-foot motor yacht *Cheetah Moon*. After a night on the town, Ludovic was picked up by a gypsy cab. Its two occupants took him to a beach to rob him. Ludovic was found on February 26th on Mullet Bay Beach badly beaten but alive. He was transported to a hospital in Martinique where he died later that day of his injuries.

Two other victims were subsequently robbed and killed in a similar manner while heading home from work in the same area.

Curtley A. Richards (32) and Sherwan Roberts (20), both from Dominica, were arrested on April 7th, 2011. On December 14th, 2011, Judge Monique Keppels handed the two men life sentences, the maximum allowed under St. Maarten law. As is often the case, a spate of crimes was solved with the capture of one or two perpetrators. The Court found Richards and Roberts responsible for eight crimes involving aggravated manslaughter, rape and theft, theft with violence and severe mistreatment, all committed between February 13th and March 4, 2011.

Cruisers' Site-ings

• The *Antigua & Barbuda Marine Guide* has a new website for 2012 at ***www.antiguamarineguide.com***. The new website more closely follows the style of the printed *Marine Guide* and now includes links from advertisers' websites and e-mail addresses.

The *Antigua & Barbuda Marine Guide*, published since 1994, is a guide for sailors visiting the twin island state. The *Marine Guide* is distributed in Antigua through marinas, chandleries, Customs & Immigration offices plus other outlets and at yachting events such as the Antigua Charter Yacht Show, the Antigua Classic Regatta, Antigua Sailing Week, the RORC Caribbean 600 and the Superyacht Cup Antigua.

Supported by advertising, the *Antigua & Barbuda Marine Guide* is free to the end users.

• ***CommuterCruiser.com*** is an information-packed resource for commuter cruisers. "Commuter cruising" — combining the best of two very different lifestyles — is one of the fastest growing segments of the cruising community. The past ten years have seen an explosion in popularity as cruisers spend the cold winter months cruising warm tropical paradises, then leave the boat in paradise and return home during the more temperate months enjoying family, friends and changing seasons. Other commuter cruisers may live a distance from their boats and go for mini-cruises ranging from long weekends to a month or more several times a year.



Are you a part-time cruiser? Meet Jan Irons, co-creator of the website CommuterCruiser.com

With over 200 articles and three new articles added each week, CommuterCruiser.com addresses issues common to those leaving their boats, featuring practical advice and downloadable PDF checklists for Leaving the Boat for the Summer, Re-Commissioning the Boat When You Return and Leaving the Dock.

The site is chock-full of tips, techniques and real world info from commuter cruisers, including information on a variety of marinas and cruising grounds experienced by the authors, Jan and David Irons, during their 10,000 miles aboard from Annapolis to Cartagena, Colombia and return to Florida.

• Where do you go when you are desperate to find crew, services, boat parts or events in any given anchorage or country?

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Are you new in a place and want to find out what's going on? That is where Desperate Sailors come in. Designed and established by John Perry, ***www.desperatesailors.com*** is for cruisers and sailors by a cruiser and sailor himself. Having sailed for many years back and forth across the Atlantic John found himself needing crew but with no particular resource to turn to. With this idea in mind and the wheels set in motion the site has evolved to encompass a wider variety of cruisers needs and wants putting people with skills in touch with people with needs and vice versa.

Desperate Sailors is the definitive website for the cruising community bringing together services, crew, boats and events. It is easy to use; simply sign up, fill in your profile and off you go. It even has the new "project waterline": a classified section to offload those treasures of the bilge that you have been carrying for ages. The live chat and message feature make it easy to connect with other members. The new blog section is extremely simple to use, there is even a facility to upload your photos and share with other people and armchair readers back home who do not need to be members. If you organising a potluck or a beach volleyball afternoon, let other sailors know about it with the Desperate Sailors Events, which is also where local bars advertise their happy hour or book swaps.

• Frank Virgintino reports: Free Cruising Guides is pleased to announce the imminent release of the Caribbean Security Index. This index will be reviewed and updated monthly. It covers the Caribbean — the entire Caribbean — country by country.

Today cruisers have a great deal of technology available to make cruising safer. Weather reports, communication systems, chart plotters, Automated Information Systems (AIS), Radar and so much more all work together to keep cruising boats on course and "off the reefs".

However, regarding security, we have little more than chronologies of crimes committed and word of mouth. Because security underway and at anchor is so important, cruisers need to have something more that they can use and rely on. Safety is a dynamic quotient. What was safe yesterday can very well be dangerous tomorrow. The basis for change is related to a variety of factors that can be reviewed and analyzed, and from which probabilities can be determined. While no system is foolproof, if the factors being analyzed are broad enough and known to be related, they can be weighted and a determination made as to the risk involved.

CSI ratings are not meant to be an absolute. What they are is a carefully calculated risk assessment expressed as a number between 1 and 10 (10 being the most secure) along with notes on mitigating factors that were observed. A good example would be the Rio Dulce in Guatemala. A review of the infrastructure and past history as well as socioeconomic factors clearly indicate that a boat in a marina and its crew are quite safe, while those that are anchored out are at high risk. There are many factors that can explain why this is so, some of which have deep cultural ramifications.

Free Cruising Guides look forward to your comments and questions and hope that this monthly publication will add value to your cruising experience.

For more information visit ***www.freecruisingguides.com.***

• Free Cruising Guides also announces the release of the Cruising Guide to Puerto Rico, which will be available at ***www.freecruisingguides.com*** as well as at Kindle and other e-pub bookstores. The over 200-page guide covers all four coasts of Puerto Rico as well as its off-lying islands. Puerto Rico is an underutilized and safe cruising area and it is hoped by the Department of Tourism of Puerto Rico that this guide will encourage more yacht traffic to the island. The guide was written by Frank Virgintino, author of a series of Free Caribbean Cruising Guides, all available at the Free Cruising Guides website.

• A short film at ***http://vimeo.com/32574938*** is part of a documentary film by Alexis Andrews that is in production, estimated for completion by winter 2013. It was shot in Carriacou, where some of the last Caribbean boatbuilders wield their traditional skills, in St. Barth's where the smuggling trade in liquor and cigarettes thrived, and in Antigua where the Carriacou vessels race each year among vintage yachts in the Classic Regatta. Mixed with rare archival footage and interviews with the last old-time Caribbean sea captains, the film combines dramatic sailing footage with narration and an original soundtrack to tell the story of the Vanishing Sail of the West Indies.

Caribbean Arts & Crafts Fest Next Month in Tortola

The 2012 Caribbean Arts and Crafts Festival will take place in Tortola from March 9th through 14th.

JO-ANNE SEWAL



At the last festival, in 2010, more than 50 artisans from 15 Caribbean nations participated and more than 1,000 visitors enjoyed the activities and crafts on offer. The 2012 festival is already shaping up to be even bigger, with support from across the entire region. The festival brings together every interest in the Caribbean Arts and Crafts scene.

For more information visit www.caribbeanartisan.net.

Welcome Aboard!

In this issue of *Compass* we welcome new advertiser Velocity water taxi services of the Southern Grenadines, in the Market Place section pages 50 through 53. Good to have you with us!



50 Years of the Antigua Charter Yacht Show

by Lucy Tulloch



ALL PHOTOS: LUCY TULLOCH

Charter Show boats congregated at Nelson's Dockyard and at Antigua Yacht Club and Falmouth Harbour marinas

Anniversaries celebrate not just where we are now but how we got here and the birth of something — and the 50th Antigua Charter Yacht Show, held December 5th through 10th, 2011, was no different.

From the sparkling row of shiny white domes on the motor yachts moored in historic Nelson's Dockyard, English Harbour, to the sight of the beautifully restored 1902 Schooner *Coral of Cowes* moored cheek by jowl to the carbon-built minimalist Wallys, this show celebrates a mix of innovation against a backdrop of history and tradition.

It was the Nicholson family who, when they took some American tourists on an adventure down island on their schooner *Mollihawk* in the 1950s, perhaps inadvertently began the Caribbean yacht charter industry. They certainly paved the way to a whole new way of life for many people on this south coast of Antigua because the yachts need a captain and a crew, who need training, and the boats need marinas and security, maintenance, chandlery, storage and boatyards. They need electricians, sailmakers, carpenters, engineers, varnishers, fridge and watermaker repairers, fabricators, sign writers, food suppliers, florists. And that's before what the crew themselves need!

In short, whether you are deeply involved in the industry or simply notice the view of English Harbour changing from November to December, there is no doubt of yacht chartering's significance to the island.

One particular group of people had been hard at work since about January last year, making sure everything about the annual charter show ran smoothly. The backbone of the show is Sarah Sebastian, Afsaneh Franklin, Janetta Miller, Lynn Bardoe, Paul Deeth, Ann Marie Martin and Festus Isaac. The theme to commemorate these 50 impressive years was to be Black and Gold.

And so, it was with fitting glamour but set in the traditional Copper and Lumber Store Hotel in the Dockyard that the Welcome Party was held. The black and gold dresses were not ruined by the rain (which poured down during most of the show) and spirits weren't dampened by the weather. A selection of fantastic dance troupes entertained us after a feast of seafood and West Indian cuisine, and brokers, agents, captains and press caught up with each other in perfect surroundings for the event.

One of the great things about the Antigua Charter Yacht Show is that it is not only about showing boats and entertaining.

It is informative: there are early morning talks by experts, wine tasting and more.

There is support: shuttle buses run between the three marinas that host the yachts on show, and the team at the Registration Desk are always on hand to help newcomers to the show.



Above: Brokers got a glimpse at what's on offer for charter guests, such as the lavish interior of Huntress
Below: The best of local culture was also on display

It is a networker's heaven: 113 boats, 300 agents, 650 crew and 177 non-exhibiting vendors all covered by press from all over the world.

It is competitive! The chef's competition is renowned in the industry, having run for 12 years, and is "an extravaganza of epicurean splendour" with much-sought-after prizes.



Pendennis Shipyard of Falmouth, UK, and Antigua Yacht Club of Falmouth Harbour, Antigua hosted a cocktail party to launch their new Falmouth-to-Falmouth Rum Race to feed into the 2012 Olympic Superyacht programme in the UK.

The Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings saw participating yachts open by invitation only for the Andreas Liveras Best Yacht Party Awards. The crews' hospitality, immaculate displays and creative table decor were impressive but the smiles and genuine enthusiasm shone through even their professional polish. Personal commendation goes to the crew of *Huntress*.

It seemed more than ever that this was a year for innovation. *AIR* — the largest boat in the show, Feadship's 81-metre (266-foot) superyacht — has a one-of-a-kind paint job. Her black hull has been painted with a specialized and environmentally friendly nano coating technique that has a matte finish. Almost confirmed is the new Caribbean pre-arrival notification system, a free (government-funded) service to clear your yacht into the island before you arrive. A French firm is developing an app for the iPad to show 3-D virtual boat tours. Nelson's Dockyard has built a new dock allowing 245-foot *M/Y Leander* to tie up in this beautiful National Park.

On the last day of the 50th Annual Antigua Charter Yacht Show, following the traditional Beating the Retreat by Antigua & Barbuda Royal Police Band, the participating boats blew their horns to mark the end of the show. There followed an exhibition by more than 25 Antiguan businesses of things to do in Antigua — crucial and inspirational ideas for visitors who want to know Antigua beyond English and Falmouth Harbours.

For more information visit www.antiguayachtshow.com.

Sailor, photographer and designer Lucy Tulloch is based in Antigua. Visit her website at www.thelucy.com.



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BUSINESS BRIEFS

LIAT to Expand Air Cargo Service

Got stuff to move around the Eastern Caribbean? The regional airline LIAT intends to expand its cargo service this year, Director of Cargo and Quikpak, Wilbur Edwards, has announced.

The freighter service transported a million pounds of cargo within a year of its February 2011 launching. Edwards said the milestone was achieved with the recent opening of the San Juan, Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands markets. The airline was previously unable to move cargo into those territories because of the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States.

"In 2012 we will focus on greater service delivery and using our website to better advantage in terms of tracking, proof of deliveries and other customer service information," Edwards said. He noted that the freighter service has stimulated significant movements on LIAT's regular line flights, which when combined produced more than 1.5 million pounds. The airline official pointed out that amount does not include more than 30,000 pounds of bulk baggage also carried by the freighter aircraft over the period.

For more information on LIAT's cargo service see ad on this page.

Sea Hawk Paints Joins St. Maarten Regatta Sponsors

The 32nd edition of the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta (www.heinekenregatta.com) is pleased to add Sea Hawk Paints as one of their presenting sponsors. This



TOM ZINN/ST. MAARTEN HEINEKEN REGATTA

family owned and operated business fits into the regatta family with ease, as both the regatta and Sea Hawk strive to be on the cutting edge of technology and work hard to bring the best possible product to their customers.

"We are proud to be chosen as one of the Official Sponsors of the Heineken Regatta in 2012," reported Erik Norrie, CEO of Sea Hawk Paints. "Although we've sponsored individual yachts in regattas throughout the Caribbean for many years, including those in the Heineken Regatta, this is the first year that we will be an Official Sponsor," he said. Sea Hawk Paints was established in Clearwater, Florida in 1978.

For more information on Sea Hawk Paints see ad on page 23.

Offshore Risk Management News

For Offshore Risk Management, 2011 was a year of exciting challenges, many new clients and new products. Products included insurance for private and pleasure yachts, bareboat charter boats, captained charter boats, submarines and submersibles, fishing boats, cargo, deliveries, marinas, marine repairers and artisans, yacht haulout and much more.

For more information on Offshore Risk Management see ad on page 10.

United Insurance Sponsors Inter-Schools Cricket

For over 20 years, United Insurance has been a loyal sponsor of the Inter-Schools Cricket Competition in Antigua & Barbuda and the other OECS islands. Anjo Insurance is United's agent in Antigua & Barbuda.



United recognizes that the fast pace and mental challenges of the sport of cricket make it the perfect activity to condition the body and shape the minds of today's young athletes. The sport fosters strategic thinking, team unity and peer respect, lessons that can be utilized in all areas of life as the youth embark on adulthood. All this ultimately assists in reinforcing historical, traditional and cultural links to the sport in the Caribbean.

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This year United Insurance has once again given its commitment as the major sponsor of the Schools Cricket Competition in collaboration with Antigua's Ministry of Sports, organizers of the competition. The competition runs from February through June.

Established in 1977, United has grown with the Caribbean people and recognizes the youth as being the future. This recognition prompts United to continue giving back to communities in this way, reminding all that they are in "Safe Hands with United".

United now writes all major non-life classes of insurance through its Head Office in Barbados, Branch Office in Trinidad and Tobago, and our agency networks in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Montserrat, Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, the Netherland Antilles, Guyana and Belize.

For more information on Anjo Insurance see ad on page 33.

Jamaica's Newest Dinghy Dock

Errol Flynn Marina's General Manager Dale Westin reports: In my experience in the Caribbean since 1979, I have noticed that in many areas yacht folks on anchor are often regarded as second-class citizens and generally ignored as something of a nuisance. This is a mistake. They all spend money in our respective locations, patronizing restaurants, bars, supermarkets, etcetera. They are often considered pests as they frequently park their dinghies in locations generally reserved for larger yachts that patronize dock facilities.

Here, at Errol Flynn Marina in Jamaica, we take a different attitude and have bent over backwards to accommodate this valued visitor. How? We now have a special dinghy dock to cater to this type of visitor. The 40-foot-long dock sits about a foot above the water, making it an easy on-and-off situation for anyone. The dock is accessed by an aluminum ramp that rides with the tide. We even provide free dock carts that can be brought down to the dock for easy loading or off-loading of provisions or anything else. The dock also features numerous cleats so dinghy painters can be secured without preventing another user from untying his dinghy.

For more information visit www.errolflynnmarina.com.



Island Boats of Grenada Holds Inaugural Cruise

Island Boats Limited held its inaugural cruise for invited guests on board *Island Hopper*, Grenada's newest cruise boat, in December. *Island Hopper* is a 37-foot open motorboat that carries up to 25 passengers. Guests, including representatives from the island's leading hotels and tour operators, enjoyed a Wine and Cheese Cruise off Grenada's west coast at sunset. Island Boats Limited is owned and operated by Brian and Marion Samuel, a Grenadian-Jamaican couple who returned to Grenada after a lifetime roaming all over the world. They bring global experience, commitment and passion to their new business venture. "Our aim is to take visitors and Grenadians alike off the beaten track, to expose our clients to the marine beauty that surrounds us but which we take for granted," says Brian.

For more information contact Islandboatsgrenada@gmail.com, tel (473) 420-1903.

HIHO to Supply Antigua Sailing Week Clothing

HIHO, the BVI-based brand of Caribbean clothing, has inked a multi-year deal to be the exclusive clothing supplier to Antigua Sailing Week. HIHO will design a range of casual and technical clothing for the event. The collection will feature the brand's quality materials and details, plus dedicated hangtags and main labels. HIHO will partner with the Galley Boutique in English Harbour to offer year-round sales. "Teaming up with HIHO provides us with a fantastic opportunity to underscore everything that is great about Antigua Sailing Week," said Marketing, Sponsorship Liaison and Shoreside Organization manager Alison Sly-Adams. From Tortola the HIHO designers offered: "It's great to be a part of the Caribbean's oldest and best sailing regatta!"

For more information on HIHO clothing visit http://shop.go-hiho.com.

Paper and Digital Charts Now Available for Cuba

NV Charts, a global supplier of precision charting products for mariners and cruising sailors, has now extended its coverage and produced new chart regions for the



PHIL CHAPMAN

north coast of Cuba. The coverage is divided into two regions; the northwest coast chart set is Region 10.2, and the northeast coast is Region 10.1.

—Continued on page 47

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Caribbean Eco-News

Man O' War on Your Shore?

Juliana Coffey reports: On Thursday, November 17th, 2011 several Magnificent Frigatebirds (*Fregata magnificens*) were observed near the main jetty in Mayreau, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, in pursuit of some fisheries discards. One particular individual bore a yellow tag on each wing with corresponding letter and number codes. These codes detail its personal identity within a doctoral research project being conducted by Sarah Trefry at the University of New Brunswick in Canada. This project aims to determine where frigatebirds go when they are not at their breeding

STEVE MANLEY



Frigatebirds at their colony in Barbuda. Have you seen tagged frigatebirds elsewhere?

colonies, as well as attempting to understand the size differences between adult males and females, a characteristic not usually seen in seabirds.

This project is being conducted in Barbuda, which has the largest frigatebird colony in the region (see related article on page 28). So far, there have been over 300 male and female birds tagged. Sarah has received reports of over 100 re-sightings as far north as Florida, throughout the Lesser Antilles, and as far south as French Guyana. Some birds have been sighted numerous times, which can shed light on an individual's movement patterns over time. This particular individual, an adult female, was tagged in Barbuda in 2009, seen in Guadeloupe in May 2009, back on Barbuda in 2010, in Guadeloupe again in early 2011, and has now made her way to the Grenadines.

Speculation also exists on the differences of breeding frequency between male and female frigatebirds. A female frigatebird lays one egg at a time, which may take up to almost two months to hatch, and more than a year to become independent. The female accompanies the immature bird throughout its first year, teaching it how to survive, while the male leaves the colony early in the chick's life stage. One theory is that males may breed numerous times within one year, while the female, occupied with her fledgling, breeds every other year. In fact, one of Sarah's tagged males from Barbuda later attempted to breed at a colony off French Guyana. This information has management implications for the species, and suggests that there is a meta-population of frigatebirds in the Caribbean, rather than specific populations defined by breeding colonies.

Frigatebirds feed primarily on fish, and are known to regularly attack other birds, forcing them to either drop or regurgitate their catches which can then easily be scooped up by the larger, aerodynamic frigatebird. This behaviour has earned them the name "Man O' War" bird throughout the region. As their feathers are not water-proof, they cannot land in the water, meaning that all foraging antics must occur during flight. Frigatebirds have been known to be almost constantly on the wing, utilizing thermals for travel, and are quite regularly seen along coastlines or at sea. If you live or are traveling in the region and see any frigatebirds with tags, please report your sighting.

For more information on this project, or to report a sighting, please visit www.unb.ca/acwern/people/strefry.htm.

Isla Tortuga Highlighted at Ecological Congress

At the Ninth Annual Venezuelan Ecological Congress, held at the Universidad de Sigo on Isla Margarita in November of last year, Fundación La Tortuga made a presentation called "Isla Tortuga, Biodiversity at Risk". The presentation informed researchers, students and the public about the results of more than seven years of scientific investigation done on the federal dependency of Isla Tortuga, the second largest island in Venezuela.

The studies included sea turtles, birds, vegetation, phytoplankton, water chemistry, marine mammals, algae, sponges, corals, cartography, geology, archeology and anthropology, and indicated that stronger legal protection from negative human impact is needed for this unique reservoir of biodiversity and natural beauty.

The island is especially noted as a nesting site for numerous seabird populations, some of which are in decline. At the Congress, Professor Gedio Marín pointed out that part of the problem is the growth of the tourist industry, with the inherent urban development of the island's coasts that possibly isolates rocky forelands, which previously were relatively safe places to nest. Also tourists like to venture in the remote islands to view the colonies of sea birds. Unfortunately, sea birds are highly intolerant of the human presence, and a visit by people untrained in proper behavior can decimate the annual reproduction rate of a colony.

For more information visit www.fundacionlatortuga.org.

Marine Parks Hold Law Enforcement Workshop

Park officials and managers, and police, coast guard, and enforcement officials from Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines met from November 29th to December 2nd, 2011 in St. George's, Grenada to train together and share experiences in the enforcement of marine protected area (MPA) rules and regulations.

—Continued on next page

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The workshop was developed and presented by the Grenada Fisheries Division, Sustainable Grenadines Incorporated (SusGren Inc.), the Environmental Law Institute (ELI), the Grenada Coast Guard, and the Grenada Department of Public Prosecutions. Officers from Grenada Marine Protected Areas Network (GMPA), the National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority, and the Tobago Cays Marine Park (TCMP) of St. Vincent & the Grenadines learned fundamental principles and technical enforcement skills.

"The training comes at a crucial time for shoreline habitats in the Grenadines," said Director of SusGren Inc., Martin Barriteau. The coastal and marine environment — coral reefs, seagrass beds, and mangrove forests of the Caribbean — are essential for local livelihoods, food security, protection from natural hazards, and tourism. These critical ecosystems are threatened by overfishing, pollution, poaching, and climate change. Protecting coastal and marine resources is critical for the sustainable development of the countries of the Caribbean. Indeed, marine protected areas seek to conserve marine biodiversity, ensure protection of valuable fisheries resources, and provide the basis for sustainable alternative livelihoods for coastal communities.

This landmark training course brought together wardens and rangers from Sandy Island/Oyster Bed Marine Protected Area, Moliniere/Beausejour Marine Protected Area, and the Tobago Cays Marine Park, to learn the basics of law enforcement and technical environmental issues. The wardens and rangers applied their new knowledge in an at-sea practical exercise. They practiced apprehension, arrest, and gathering evidence for enforcement proceedings. The course was completed with wardens and rangers presenting their cases in a mock trial, complete with prosecutors and a magistrate.

Oil Spill Fears in Statia

As journalist Betsy Crowfoot reported in the January 2nd edition of *Ecology Today* (www.ecology.com), concerns are mounting about a proposed oil terminalling and processing expansion on the Caribbean island of St. Eustatius (Statia). The news comes as NuStar Energy LLP (NuStar) petitions to expand its presence on Statia.

Already NuStar has a large oil terminal on the north end of the island: 67 tanks with a capacity of more than 13 million barrels, and another five tanks slated to go on-line. Earlier this year NuStar asked the Island Council to rezone a parcel of land to allow the construction of 30 to 40 more 100-foot storage and processing tanks, adjacent downtown Oranjestad.

But the increasing frequency of oil spills related to groundings, mishaps and negligence has conservationists worried about the risks to Statia's environment, both on land and at sea.

A marine park wraps around the entire five-by-two mile Dutch island. The park, established in 1996, embraces a variety of habitat — calcareous reefs and corals, volcanic rock with cracks and fissures — inhabited by a diverse array of extraordinary sea life that attracts tourists who come here to dive. There's a sandy plateau on the leeward side where large populations of Queen Conch thrive, and beaches that provide critical nesting grounds for threatened and endangered sea turtles.

The risk of pollution is palpable, Crowfoot says. She writes that in February 2002, the calling tanker *Paulina* dumped its bilges of oil-tainted ballast water, which went unnoticed until dawn. By that time, the oil had fouled the length of the island and polluted the marine park, harbor and shoreline. Nearly ten years later, she says, the St. Eustatius National Parks Foundation (Stenapa) has yet to receive restitution for cleanup of this incident.

A decade earlier, one of the terminal's 24-inch pipelines ruptured, spilling oil at a rate of 8,000 barrels an hour and creating a slick some 20 miles long. In fact, there have been a dozen major tanker spills in the Caribbean — making it a 'high risk' area, according to the International Tanker Owner Pollution Federation Limited (ITOPF). One such incident — a collision between supertankers *Atlantic Empress* and *Aegean Captain* — remains the largest ship-based accident in history. The tankers, laden with more than a half-million tons of crude, collided off Tobago during a tropical storm in 1979, killing 26 crew as 287,000 tons of oil spewed and blazed from the wreckage. This was 40 times the amount of the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

But if the terminal expansion goes ahead, the boost in capacity of roughly 50 percent will likewise increase the number of visiting vessels, and residents worry hazards on the densely trafficked channels will multiply as well.

Crowfoot reports that currently 800 vessels come to Statia annually to bunker and obtain fuel. The jetty can accommodate the world's largest supertankers — up to 520,000 dead weight tonnage — but most remain on moorings and transfer offshore. About 100 will tie up at the wharf to discharge or take on oil and products.

Where Are All the Sharks?

As the Cayman News Service reported on January 6th, international marine scientists working in the Cayman Islands over the last few years studying local populations of sharks and rays have found far fewer species of sharks in local waters than they would have expected. Dr. Mauvis Gore revealed that although researchers have counted 16 different types of sharks and rays the scientists had expected to see more than a dozen other species in Cayman. Speaking at a special presentation hosted by the department of the environment, summarizing their work the scientists said there was a strong case for Cayman to introduce protection for sharks in local waters.

Dr. Gore explained that shark populations are under tremendous pressure all over the world as a result of fishing driven by the fin and other shark product trades as well as for the flesh. Up to 73 million sharks are caught every year, which is why "populations are collapsing" and at least 20 of the 360 species worldwide face extinction in the next five years. She explained that the loss of sharks threaten ocean ecosystems as these top predators help maintain healthy reefs.

Over the last three years the experts have not only been counting sharks but have also tagged some to track the movements of the various species and they found that larger species such as tiger sharks or oceanic white tips are covering considerable ground. This means that any fishing ban or sanctuary that Cayman establishes to try and save its sharks will require the co-operation of other countries in the region. Around the Caribbean so far Mexico, Honduras, the Bahamas and Florida have introduced bans on all or some species of shark fishing.

Given the importance of economics when it comes to persuading people to act to save species, he said the case for the tourism dollar that could be generated from people willing to pay to see and swim with sharks and other mega marine fauna was persuasive. But Ormond also noted that a strong population of sharks denotes healthy reefs and general marine and beach environments that are important to all visitors and residents alike.

Join a 'Lionfish Derby' in Carriacou

Lumbadive in Carriacou is offering a weekly "Lionfish Derby". The dive shop's co-owner, Diane Martino, says, "Please join us every Saturday on the second dive of the afternoon. It is a free dive and you can help us to stop the invasion."

For more information visit www.lumbadive.com.

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REGATTA NEWS

Grenada Groups Support Carriacou Junior Sailors

Frank Pearce reports: The Gouyave Sailing Club and Catfish Boats of Gouyave, Grenada, surprised the Carriacou Junior Sailing Club on December 3rd, 2011 with an amazing visit.



CJSC members also sail on local workboats like Skyler, *left, and yachts like* Saga, *right*

Out of the blue, Lyndon Harper of Catfish Boats in Gouyave phoned Teena Marie, who runs the CJSC, asking her to meet the ferry *Amelia* in Tyrell Bay. They wanted to support sailing in Carriacou by donating two Mosquito dinghies, which they would deliver to the ferry. The boats duly arrived and one week later the Catfish team — Lyndon Harper, manager and builder, Roger Adams, coach, and Israel Dhavangit — arrived from Grenada with more gear including two spanking-new sets of spars, sails, and sheets, and even new lifejackets. These boats are built in Gouyave, Grenada, by Catfish Boats and are a Mosquito licensed class built to a high standard.

This was the first new equipment CJSC had ever received, except for one new sail received last year. "The kids are so excited to have these boats to sail. We are planning to take the boats and four young sailors to the Grenada Sailing Festival Junior Dinghy Sailing Championship in February," said Teena. "It gives them a new incentive for them to train."

The Catfish Crew and the young sailors of Carriacou spent the day together at the club in Tyrell Bay sailing in light wind, eating pizza donated by the Lazy Turtle, and learning more about sailing the new boats, and how to tune the Mosquito rigs. Teena says, "We appreciate greatly this support from a local club and business and are hoping to link more and more with the Gouyave and other sailing clubs in the future. The uplift that this has given Carriacou junior sailing is invaluable."

Meanwhile the Sunday races out of Tyrell Bay continue. Every fortnight there has been a well attended and sometimes exciting yacht race for the "grown ups". The rules are based upon the Keep it Simple principal: handicapping, race committee and starting "guns" have been eliminated. To save some poor soul having to wait on a committee boat until the last yacht has finished the race, the winner of the day's race is the yacht that first gets a crewmember ashore, beer in hand. No dinghies allowed and a cooling swim ashore mandatory. There is only one winner and the only prize is the bottle of beer. There is not even a "committee" to protest to, except at the bar later…

St. Lucia's Beth Lygoe at Sailing World Championships

Beth Lygoe loves surfing, kite boarding and sailing, and has her own company to teach kiting at Cas en Bas, St. Lucia. Beth represented St. Lucia in Laser Radials in the ISAF Sailing World Championships in Perth, Australia, held December 3rd through 18th, 2011. The Laser Radial is a one-person dinghy; the event was an Olympic qualifier.

Twenty-five of the 29 Olympic spots available at Perth 2011 in the Laser Radial were decided following the fleet split, leaving four available for Silver fleet sailors to fight over. Singapore's Elizabeth Yin, Portugal's Sara Carmo, Japan's Kanako Hiruta and Norway's Marthe Enger Eide all qualified their nation after ten races.

Beth came close to qualifying St. Lucia in Perth, finishing just 14 points behind the Norwegian. With nine of the further 39 spots available at the upcoming World Laser Radial Women's Championship to be held in Germany in May, Beth will have a second chance to qualify for the London 2012 Olympic Sailing Competition.

For full results visit www.perth2011.com.

Transatlantic Superyacht Regatta Arrives in BVI

The 2011 Transatlantic Superyacht Regatta & Transatlantic Maxi Yacht Cup concluded on December 4th with the arrival of the final participant and the official prizegiving ceremony, held at the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda's Caribbean base in Virgin Gorda. The 20-metre X-Yachts X65 *Karuba 5* of Croatia took overall victory on corrected time ahead of the 66-metre Baltic Yachts ketch *Hetairos* in second place. Tobias Koenig's British Swan 82, *Grey Goose* of the RORC took third place overall.



Sir Peter Harrison presents the Transatlantic IMA Challenge Trophy for line honors Captain Vincent Fauquenoy of Hetairos

Hetairos, which was launched in July 2011, claimed line honours having completed her 3,069-mile crossing from Tenerife in eight days, ten hours, 58 minutes and 30 seconds at an average speed of just over 15 knots. The event was organized by the YCCS in collaboration with the International Maxi Association and saw eight superyachts and maxi yachts participate.

At the prizegiving ceremony, Peter Harrison's *Sojana* received a special prize for having participated in all four editions of the transatlantic race organized since 2007.

Premier of the British Virgin Islands, Dr. Orlando Smith, was in attendance and commended the organizers on the success of the event and commented on its impact on the country's global image as a sailing destination.

"The BVI has always been known as a good sailing destination due to the topography of the islands and is called the sailing capital of the world," said the Premier. "But with the addition of the yacht club here and the finish of the Transatlantic Superyacht Regatta and Maxi Yacht Cup with these beautiful boats in the BVI for the first time, the reputation of sailing in the islands has been taken to another level altogether and I think after this, we can truly say that the BVI is the sailing capital of the world."

For more information visit www.yccs.com, www.yccs-marina.com or www.internationalmaxiassociation.com.

PR and USVI Sailors Excel at Orange Bowl Regattas

Junior sailors representing Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands excelled at both the Orange Bowl International Youth Regatta and Open Orange Bowl Regatta, both sailed out of Miami, Florida, December 27th to 30th, 2011. The Open Orange Bowl Regatta was also the International 420 North American Championships.

Puerto Rico's Juan Perdomo finished third and the USVI's Ian Barrows ended fourth out of 145 sailors in the Laser Radial Class at the Youth Regatta, in which nearly 500 sailors competed in Lasers, Optimist Dinghies and Club 420s.

Meanwhile, Puerto Rico's Raul Rios and Fernando Monllor won the 20-boat International 420 Class and the Virgin Islands' Nikki Barnes and Agustina Barbuto finished second in the Open Regatta, in which over 50 sailors competed in International 420s, 29ers and Lasers. Interestingly, Rios and Barnes as Caribbean sailors scored the top two slots in the International 420 Class in which the rest of the competitors represented the USA and Canada.

Winds gusted over 20 knots on Biscayne Bay during the first two days of the regatta and dropped to less than eight knots the final two days of sailing, making challenging conditions for all sailors.



MERCEDES DE CHOUDENS

Left to right: Fernando Monllor, Agustina Barbuto, Nikki Barnes and Raul Rios

Full results are available at www.coralreefyachtclub.org/Waterfront/orange-Bowl-Regatta/Orange-Bowl-Results.aspx.

St. Lucia Bids Bon Voyage to World ARC 2012-13

Christy Recail reports: There are adventures sailors dream about! And 26 boatloads of sailors will get to live the iconic dream over the next 15 months. This is World ARC, a 26,000-mile sail around the world. The fleet departed Rodney Bay, St. Lucia at noon on January 8th bound for the San Blas islands of Panama in perfect Caribbean sailing conditions of 15 to 20 knots of wind.

In Panama, 1,100 miles away, the fleet will be joined by five additional yachts, which will bring the fleet to 31-strong. They'll then transit the Panama Canal before setting off across the Pacific for Australia, stopping at Pacific islands including Tahiti, Bora Bora and Fiji.

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Some boats will leave the rally in Australia, with more joining for the restart of the second half of the adventure from Darwin in September 2012. Avoiding the troubled areas of the Indian Ocean, the World ARC route takes in Bali, Cocos Keeling, Mauritius and Reunion before enjoying Christmas and New Year's Eve in South Africa. From Cape Town the boats will visit St. Helena before enjoying carnival in Brazil and then heading back into the Caribbean via Grenada to finish in St. Lucia in April 2013.

The St. Lucia Tourist Board in collaboration with IGY Rodney Bay Marina and ARC organizers World



Cruising Club play hosts to the start and finish of the event. One of the pre-start activities was the presentation of donations to two local charities, the GroWell Charity and an orphanage in Gros Islet. ARC 2011 participants had made the monetary collection following their stay on the island. A total of EC$2,156 was collected, which in turn was matched by World Cruising Club bringing the donation to EC$4,312.

In total 39 boats and over 200 people will take part in World ARC 2012-13, some sailing the full 26,000 miles, others joining for a stage. The largest boat is the US-flagged 20.8-metre Discovery 67 *Sapphire II*, and the smallest is 11.96-metre Beneteau Oceanis 393 *Glamorous Galah* of Australia. The fleet includes five catamarans, three of which started in St. Lucia. St. Lucia is the only destination that will be visited twice in the circumnavigation.

For more information visit www.worldcruising.com/WORLDARC2012.

The 2012 Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race

The 2012 Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race was scheduled to take place on January 21st as this issue of *Compass* was going to press. Organized by the Barbados Cruising Club in association with Mount Gay Rum and The Barbados Tourism Authority, this was the 76th anniversary race. To celebrate the inscription of Historic Bridgetown and The Garrison on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites, and to bring the sailing race to the people of Barbados, the organizers planned to open up the inner basin of the Bridgetown Careenage to participating yachts and site the Regatta Village in Independence Square.

Last year's race saw class records set across the board. We'll have a report on this year's event in next month's *Compass.*

South Grenada Regatta This Month!

The Hon. Peter David, Grenada's Minister of Tourism



South Grenada Regatta 2012 T-shirt design winner Kieran Belfon

& Civil Aviation officially launched the South Grenada Regatta 2012 (SGR). The fourth edition of the SGR takes place February 23rd to 26th at Le Phare Bleu Marina & Boutique Hotel.

During the Launch Drinks Reception, the top three winners of the SGR T-shirt Design Contest were announced. The winning designer, Kieran Belfon, received EC$1,500 plus four of the "hot off the press" T-shirts that he kindly gave to his family members who were there to see him win the award. Second place designer Daniela Froehlich, received $1,000 and third place was awarded to Melvon Mitchell winning $500.

This was the second T-shirt Design Contest and it proved very competitive with an almost 75 percent increase in entries from the previous year. The winning T-shirt design was selected through a voting process by the regatta's Gold Sponsors: Netherlands Insurance, Westerhall Estate Limited, North South Wines, Real Value IGA Supermarket and Le Phare Bleu Marina & Boutique Hotel.

For more information on the South Grenada Regatta visit www.southgrenadaregatta.com.

'David and Goliath' in RORC Caribbean 600

The 4th RORC Caribbean 600 Race looks set to stage a David versus Goliath contest on February 20th, with a number of superyachts keen to do battle with each other while starting and finishing in Antigua, and circumnavigating 11 Caribbean Islands between the two lines.

The superyachts entered so far range from 35 metres (114 feet) to 66 metres (216 feet). As well as racing against comparable boats, they will also vie with a formidable fleet of much smaller, but highly competitive racing yachts. These include the 2011 Rolex Fastnet Race winner *Rán*, the 2010 Rolex Middle Sea Race winner *Lucky,* and *Privateer*, winner of the 2009 Montego Bay Race.

The largest yacht in the superyacht fleet is six-month old, 66-metre (216-foot) *Hetairos,* which recently took line honours in the Transatlantic Superyacht Regatta from Tenerife to Virgin Gorda in her inaugural race. Her classic looks and sleek green hull may be based on the early 19th century pilot cutters, but as well as being built for comfort with a stunning interior, she is an ultra-modern competitive yacht and one of the largest composite sailing yachts in the world. She also boasts the largest composite standing rigging.

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Also competing for the Superyacht Class perpetual trophy (awarded along with a keg of rum from North Sails Caribbean) will be Peter Harrison's magnificent British 35-metre (115-foot) Farr, *Sojana*. Peter competed in the Caribbean 600 for the first time last year, finishing second in IRC Zero and third Overall. *Sojana*, skippered by Marc Fitzgerald, has also participated in all four editions of Transatlantic Superyacht Regatta and won the 2010 race. Their crew for the Caribbean 600 includes one of the race founders in Antigua, John Burnie, and veteran Caribbean sailor and author Don Street.

While *Hetairos* may be the Goliath amongst the fleet, David may certainly be the much smaller Austrian Class40 contender, *Vaquita*. The yacht was recently the first across the Atlantic in the RORC Racing Division of the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria to St. Lucia (*see story in last month's Compass*). The highly competitive crew took on the giants in the ARC fleet arriving in St. Lucia a full 36 hours ahead of their nearest competition and followed just behind the 28-metre (91-foot) maxi *Med Spirit* who took line honours amongst the 217 boat fleet, a few hours shy of the fastest time ever. *Vaquita* blasted her way across the Atlantic, exceeding 23 knots at times during her surfing runs, and managed to sustain 18 to 20 in the fresh conditions, covering the 2,800 nautical mile course in just over 12 days; a magnificent feat for a 40-footer. *Vaquita's* owner, Christof Petter, will race with two friends, supported by three professional sailors, including ex-Volvo Ocean Race skipper Andreas Hanakamp who summed up their thoughts on the Caribbean 600: "So far we have mainly been racing against non-Class40 boats, so we are looking forward to lining up with some equal boats to figure out where we are standing. The Caribbean 600 is very attractive for us as it is a mid-winter event with the world's best and most famous racing yachts competing. We look forward to the Race as it has lots of reaching predicted, something a Class40 is best at."

For more information visit http://caribbean600.rorc.org.

Holmberg Seeks Third Title in Budget Marine Match Cup

Virgin Islands sailing legend Peter Holmberg — the only Caribbean sailor to win both an Olympic Medal and the America's Cup — will return to St. Maarten this month to compete in the fourth running of the Budget Marine Match Racing Cup. This annual event, scheduled this year for February 28th, will serve as the official kick-off to the 32nd edition of the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, in which racing begins on March 2nd.

Holmberg, who won the first two editions of the Budget Marine Match Racing series, was denied a third trip to the winner's circle last year when he was upset in the finals by New Zealand ace Gavin Brady. "I will definitely go into the Budget Marine event looking for a win," he said. "Last year Gavin got the better of us in the finals, so I would like to erase that memory if I can."

Eight teams of sailors will once again gather in St. Maarten to compete for the US$8,000 purse: $5,000 for the winning team; $2,000 for the runner-up; and $1,000 for the third-place finishers. But Holmberg said that the prize money was only a small part of the attraction in competing for the Budget Marine Cup. "The racing is held in the Simpson Bay Lagoon to promote spectating, so we are often racing in between moored boats and marinas," he said. "This can make the racing quite tricky, but that's all in the spirit of the event. St. Maarten itself is a very friendly island, which always makes for a fun time visiting."

Sailed in identical Jeanneau SunFast 20s with three-person teams, after an initial ten-flight round-robin series, the field is narrowed to a final four that compete for the prize money and bragging rights as one of the top match racers in the Caribbean.

For more information visit www.heinekenregatta.com.

***Le Pingouin* for St. Maarten Heineken Regatta**

The St. Maarten Heineken Regatta will celebrate its 32nd edition March 1st through 4th, and organizers are pleased to see that Brad Van Liew has entered his Open 60, *Le Pingouin*, which has recently undergone a one million USD refit. Capable of sustained speeds of over 25 knots and a top speed to date of 38 knots, this will be one of the participants to keep an eye on. Brad Van Liew, owner and skipper of the boat, is the only American to race around the world three times, of which he has won two of those races. Recently, while crossing the Equator during his solo challenge of circling the globe under sail, Brad sent his daughter a message in a bottle, which she had requested he do for her so that someday she would know where it traveled. Amazingly nine months and 2,000 miles later that bottle turned up on the shores of St. Maarten, on a beach in Guana Bay, and was found by a seven-year-old second-grader, who contacted Brad to let him know where the bottle landed.

For more information visit www.heinekenregatta.com.

Dates Changed for Puerto Rico Heineken Regatta

Carol Bareuther reports: If anticipation is half the fun, then this year's Puerto Rico Heineken International Regatta should provide double the enjoyment. Due to an island-wide primary election just announced in the first week of January and the subsequent closure of many businesses due to the vote, the Puerto Rico Heineken International Regatta will not be held from March 16th to 18th.

"We regret any inconvenience this may cause to sailors," says regatta director, Angel Ayala. "But we want to be able to offer the same high-quality racing and parties that always attracts competitors from throughout the Caribbean and the world."

Regatta organizers seek feedback from sailors about a new date and are tentatively considering the Memorial Day Weekend, May 26th through 28th. The venue, Palmas del Mar, will remain the same.

For more information or to provide feedback, contact info@prheinekenregatta.com, (787) 413-7702 or 785-2026.

Developing Les Voiles de Saint-Barth

As the third edition of Les Voiles de Saint-Barth, scheduled from April 2nd to 7th, draws closer, organizers continue to engage in a steady development, following on from the success of the previous two editions, with the same goal in mind: to offer sailors from around the yachting world maximum enjoyment out on the water and ashore.



CHRISTOPHE JOUANNY

—Continued on next page



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With the support of their faithful partners, the organizers are doing their utmost to ensure that as many sailors as possible will be able to take advantage of the exceptional sailing conditions on offer in the magical setting of St. Barth.

Gavin Brady, tactician on *Vesper*, says, "What I like in particular are the conditions you can find here. You battle against the wind and the sea around the island, but you also encounter a lot of very pleasant downwind sailing at more than 20 knots. Everything here is very balanced."

For more information see ad on page 12.

New Sponsor for Bequia Heineken Easter Regatta

The Bequia Sailing Club reports that regional banking and investment group First Citizens has been welcomed on board as a Premier Sponsor of the 2012 Bequia Heineken Easter Regatta (April 5th through 9th) with Easter Friday's full day of races and its daily prizegiving exclusively assigned to them.

With Heineken as Title Sponsor and exclusive sponsors of Easter Monday's yacht races, the Single-Handed Race and two of the local double-ender races, First Citizens joins longstanding regatta Premier Sponsors Mount Gay Rum and the SVG Tourism Authority, and major sponsors United Insurance, Mountain Top Water, the Frangipani Hotel and the Bequia Beach Hotel in offering generous support to Bequia's internationally renowned event.

Despite Easter's late date in 2011, Bequia saw a surprisingly healthy turnout, and all the signs are that with Easter 2012 ideally timed for many cruisers, this year will see a 50-plus entry for yachts.

Bequia's specially designed series of six races for the J/24 Class, including the United Insurance J/24 3-Race Challenge on Easter Saturday, and the award of the J/24 Southern Caribbean Champion Trophy to Bequia's overall J/24 winner, ensures that this is the one event that is able to attract J/24s from every nation in the region.

Although much increased in size and status, for 31 years the Bequia Easter Regatta has never lost its unique small island appeal. The sight of at least 30 locally built sprit-rigged double-ender boats competing with legendary skill on the same waters as 50 to 60 yachts of all shapes and sizes, has no equal. And with yacht races for Racing, Cruising I (CSA rated) and Cruising II (liveaboards and "fun" competitors), and the two One Design Classes — J/24s and the "Surprise" boats from Martinique — it's no "surprise" that the Bequia Sailing Club is looking forward to yet another record turnout for 2012.

For more information visit www.begos.com/easterregatta.



WILFRED DEDERER

Hot racing and a small island feel — Bequia Easter Regatta's winning combination

Enter Now: Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta

The 25th Anniversary of the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta will be held from April 19th through 24th. Preparations are being made to ensure that this year's regatta is the best ever. Several new sponsors, including San Pellegrino, have come onboard with Panerai, Mount Gay Rum, Ondeck, Portland Yacht Services, Lunenburg Shipyard Alliance and local partners. The Sail Maine party sponsored by several businesses from Maine will be a highlight, as well as the Singlehanded Race, and the Concours d'Elegance sponsored by the Lunenburg Shipyard Alliance.

The feature event will see the return of *Eilean*, the William Fife Ketch that resided in Antigua for many years, and has been rebuilt by Panerai, in Italy: she will be featured with a welcome party as well as displays and exhibits in and around the dockyard and marina before and during the regatta.

There are quite a few schooners in port this year, and we could be looking at a great schooner race. If you are entering a boat enter early, as free dockage is limited to those boats that are paid-up entries before April 1st.

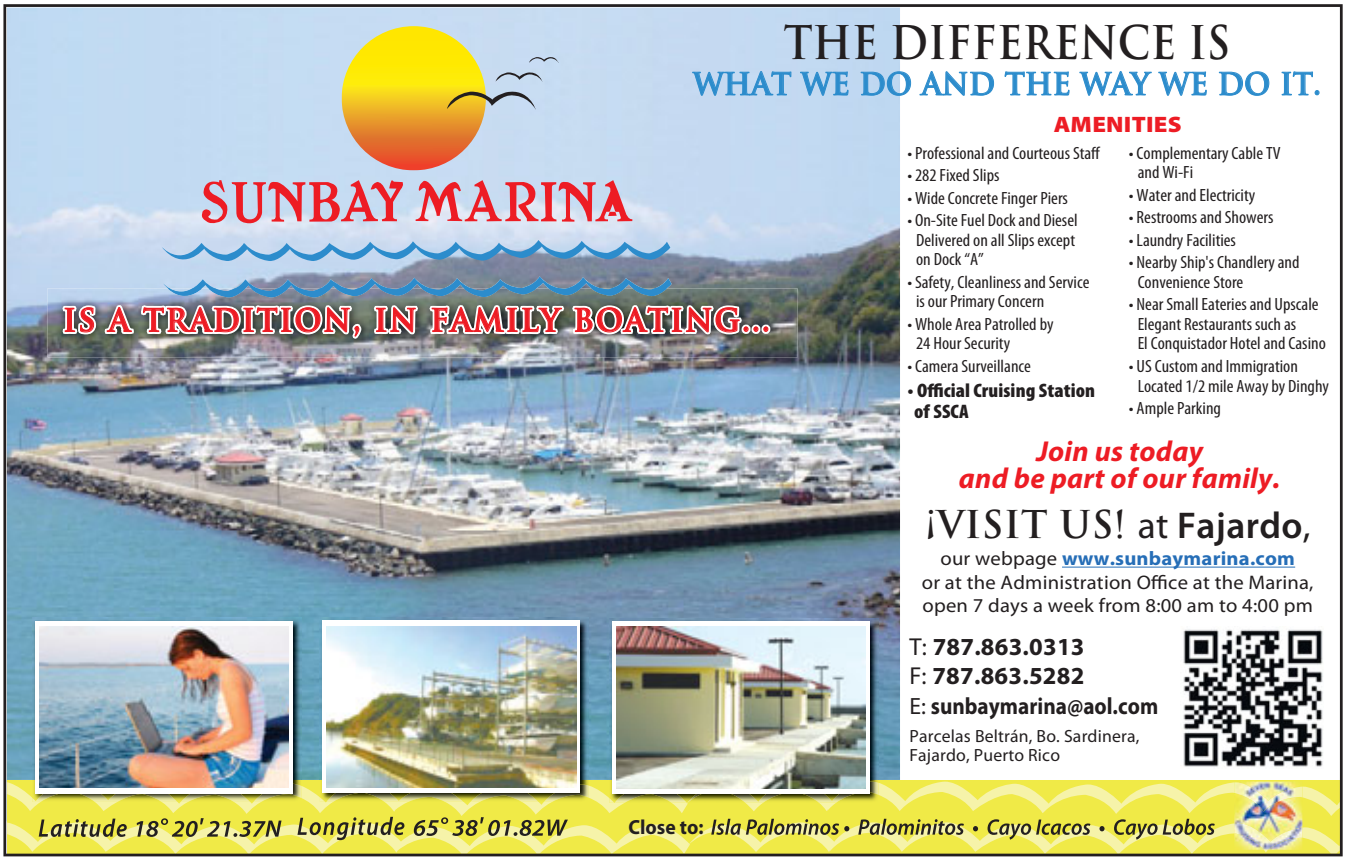
The Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta Program is now available online.

For more information visit www.antiguaclassics.com.

Sunsail Gold Sponsor of Antigua Sailing Week

Antigua Sailing Week has announced Sunsail as Gold Sponsor for its 2012 event, to run from April 29th through May 4th.

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With its continuing commitment to support sailing at every level, and with the recent launch of the new Sunsail Racing product range, Sunsail is a perfect fit with Antigua Sailing Week. Simon Conder, Head of Marketing for Sunsail said, "Antigua Sailing Week has undoubtedly been one of the 'must do' events on the racing calendar for many years; their commitment and future plans to further develop this event are very much in line with our strategy, which makes this a natural partnership. We are extremely excited to be a part of the plans and to be able to support this leading sailing event into the future."

Now in its 45th year, Antigua Sailing Week is held annually starting on the last Sunday in April and ending the following Friday. It offers five days of racing off the south coast of Antigua, with courses suitable for racing sailors of all levels.

For 2012, Antigua Sailing Week announces the return of the Yachting World Round Antigua Race, which will take place on April 28th, the day before Antigua Sailing Week officially begins. It will be open to all yachts, whether entered in Antigua Sailing Week or not.

For more information visit www.sailingweek.com.



TIM WRIGHT / WWW.PHOTOACTION.COM

The legendary Antigua Sailing Week provides world-class competition in spectacular conditions

Mount Gay in May: Barbados's Top Regatta

The Barbados Mount Gay Regatta 2012 will be held May 17th through 20th, in the waters of Carlisle Bay and the south and west coasts of Barbados, under the ISAF Racing Rules of Sailing 2009–2012.

There will be Racing and Cruising Classes, and one-design classes for Melges 24s and J/24s. The Current CSA Rating Rule will apply to Racing A and B, and Cruising A Classes. A local rating will be used for Cruising Class B.

For more information on the Barbados Mount Gay Regatta visit www.sailbarbados.com.

For more information on all Mount Gay-sponsored events see ad on page 17.

Cuban Yacht Club's 20th Anniversary Regatta

On behalf of the officers and members of Hemingway International Yacht Club of Cuba (HIYC), Commodore José Miguel Diaz Escrich extends an invitation to the international nautical community to visit Cuba during this winter and spring season, and especially to participate in the activities celebrating the 20th anniversary of HIYC, which was founded on May 21st, 1992.

One of the highlights will be the 20th Anniversary of Hemingway International Yacht Club of Cuba Regatta, on April 27th. The 18-mile course will run from the Almendares River to El Morro Castle of Havana, and then to Marina Hemingway. The leg parallel to Havana's famous Malecón seaside walk will allow the people of Havana to enjoy the sailing show.

The race is open to all cruising boats and there is no registration fee. HIYC of Cuba is located in Marina Hemingway, at the west end of Havana. While you are in Marina Hemingway, you will enjoy the same benefits as club members, as well as receiving information and assistance regarding any cruising you wish to make in Cuban waters, including the necessary coordination with the Cuban port authorities.

Even if you cannot participate in the race, you are invited to the gala festivities that will be held on May 21st at the HIYC of Cuba!

For more information contact Commodore Escrich at yachtclub@cnih.mh.tur.cu.





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Grenada	Jan 27 - 31	Grenada Sailing Festival 2012
BVI	Feb 2012	Sweethearts of the Caribbean Regatta 2012
St Thomas	Mar 1 - 4	International Rolex Regatta 2012
Virgin Gorda	Mar 14 - 17	Caribbean Superyacht Regatta & Rendezvous 2012
BVI	Mar 26 - Apr 1	Spring Regatta & Sailing Festival 2012
St. Barth	Apr 2 - 7	Voiles de St. Barth 2012
Grenadines	Apr 5 - 9	Bequia Easter Regatta 2012
Antigua	Apr 19 - 24	Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta 2012
Antigua	Apr 27	MOUNT GAY RUM RED CAP PARTY
Barbados	may 17-20	Mount Gay Rum Barbados Regatta 2012

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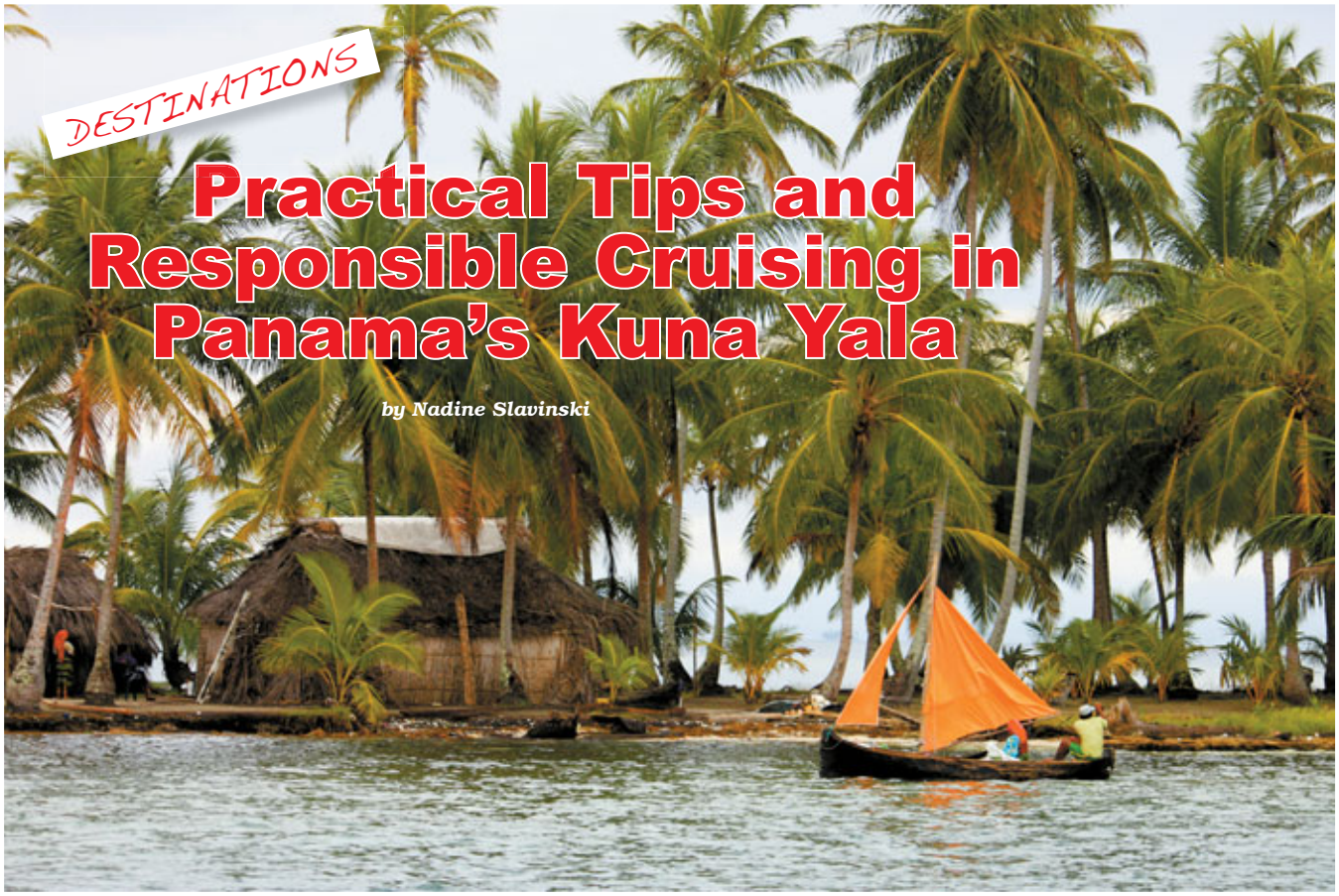
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DESTINATIONS

Practical Tips and Responsible Cruising in Panama's Kuna Yala

by Nadine Slavinski



It's no longer off the beaten track, but the San Blas islands aren't the Virgins either

No longer off the beaten track, the Kuna Yala — better known as the San Blas islands — is now a well-established cruising ground on Panama's Caribbean coast. What's the big attraction? Idyllic anchorages protected by palm-lined islets; hurricane-free, year-round sailing; plus the fascinating indigenous culture of the Kuna people. The destination has been well-covered by the sailing press in recent years, but articles sharing practical advice for cruising the region are few and far between. This article will help you maximize your enjoyment of the San Blas area and minimize any inconvenient surprises.

Thinking of heading for some of the best cruising in the world? A few words of caution. First of all, the secret is out: popular anchorages in the western San Blas islands shelter a dozen or more yachts at a time. Upon arrival aboard S/V *Namani*, our 35-foot Dufour sloop, we gaped at finding 37 boats clustered just in the West Lemon Cays, a well-protected anchorage close to the region's administrative center on the island of El Porvenir. Some sailors are just passing through, while many others are passing time — lots of it!

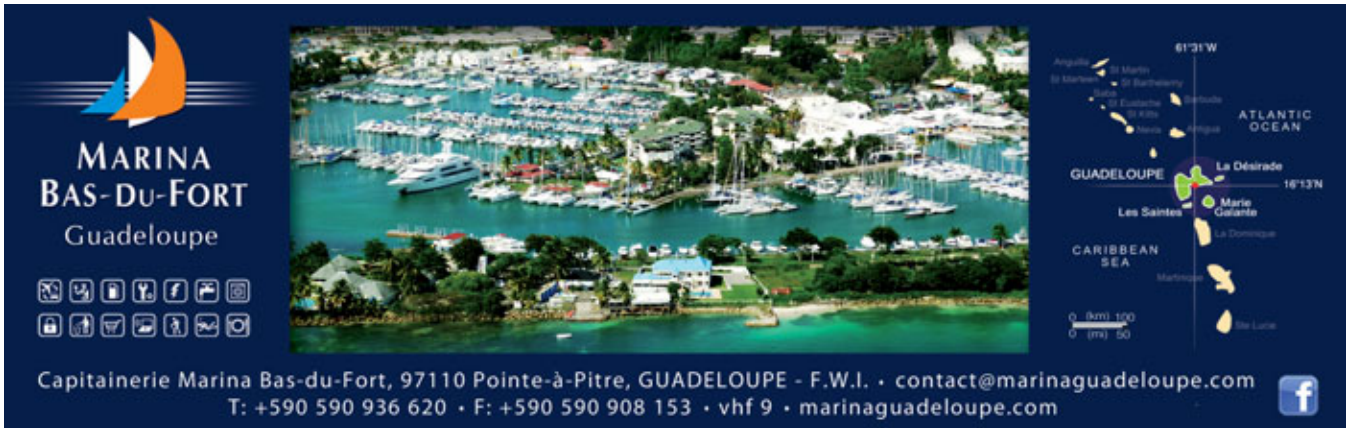
Social Life or Solitude?

It's not uncommon to find cruisers who remain in this island paradise for months, even years. It's an interesting, international bunch, with an active and helpful SSB cruiser's net that "meets" each morning with a weather report, position check-ins, and news (tune in to 8107 at 08:30). My husband Markus, our son Nicky and I were a little overwhelmed by the social aspect of the net (announcing yoga sessions, book swaps, and barbecues), but grateful for the practical information the experienced cruisers could share: where to find supplies, procedures for the Panama Canal, and so on. If you want solitude, head for the eastern San Blas, an area less frequented by outsiders, or avoid the main draws of the western San Blas (Chichime, East and West Lemon Cays, Cayos Holandés, and the Coco Banderos). These popular places draw so many visitors because they offer idyllic conditions and clear water, while the reefs of the eastern San Blas can be trickier to navigate in more limited visibility.

What To Bring

Panama uses the US dollar as its official currency, but there are no ATMs in the region, so bring lots of cash in small bills. Paying the Panama cruising permit fee of $193 (in cash only) will take a big bite out of your reserves. The good news is that cruising permits are now valid for one year and issued on the spot in El Porvenir. You can also expect to pay an Immigration fee ($30 for a crew of four) and a fee to the autonomous Kuna government ($20 per yacht and $2 per person); all these offices share one building on El Porvenir.

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In addition, you can expect to pay a $10 monthly charge in the most popular anchorages. This fee is periodically collected by a local Kuna representative. It's a well-regulated system: the collector will show you an official document confirming his authority to charge the fee, and give you an official receipt as proof of payment.

In addition to bringing lots of cash, you should also come prepared with charts of the region and the outstanding *Panama Cruising Guide* by Eric Bauhaus (including detailed charts and reliable waypoints).

You should also come stuffed to the gills with provisions. There are only three places to buy supplies in the western portion of the island group: Wichubhuala (just a dinghy ride away from El Porvenir), Carti, and Nargana (the latter two are islands immediately off the mainland). These towns have bakeries and small shops that stock a very limited selection of canned goods and bottled water. Finding fresh produce or meat can be difficult at times. Local fishermen will come around with their catch ($2 bought us a good-sized tuna), and a fresh-produce boat also visits popular anchorages periodically. However, their schedule is unreliable and the pickings are sometimes slim (the entire selection one week was potatoes and eggs; at best, the vendor will carry a variety of vegetables as well as chicken). Many cruisers monitor VHF channel 72 and will announce a sighting of the elusive produce man with the excitement of an old-time whaler hailing out a distant spout. Unfortunately, the produce man isn't as enterprising as the mola makers, some of whom paddle great distances to visit anchorages on a daily basis, rain or shine (more on molas below).

Trash Matters

Trash is a major problem, so think ahead when provisioning and establish a way to compact your trash on board until you can properly dispose of it. There are no reliable places to deposit trash in the Kuna Yala. NEVER give your trash to locals who promise to dispose of it properly, only to dump it into the sea around the next corner. There's nothing sadder than the sight of wrappers and plastic bottles floating through the otherwise pristine waters of this stunning archipelago. Much of the debris comes from the mainland, where the sea is seen as a fair dumping ground (and it was, back in the days when the only trash generated was coconut husks and fish bones). Long-term cruisers dump cans and glass into deep water, where they will eventually corrode; burn papers (do so only with permission from the local Kuna); and collect plastics until they visit a place outside the region with established trash-handling procedures. Even then, the "best" to hope for is that your trash ends up incinerated or in landfill: Panama has no recycling program to speak of. It's a sobering, worldwide issue.

Kuna Culture

There are many beautiful cruising grounds around the globe, but this area is unique thanks to the presence of the indigenous Kuna people. The Kuna are a folk under pressure of outside influences: this means you. The Congreso, their well-organized, self-governing body, seeks to protect Kuna culture with a number of laws that you should inform yourself of. The basics are that outsiders are forbidden to touch coconuts or pick fruit growing on the islands; scuba diving and power-driven water sports like water-skiing are banned, as is public nudity; and you must not buy under-sized fish, lobster, or octopus from local fishermen. The Kuna Congreso has also banned certain casual trade goods, including magazines and nail polish, innocent as they might seem. Rather than offering your new friends these intrusive items, bring a supply of quilting needles and thimbles instead. This gesture will win over local women who spend hours sewing masterful molas (exquisitely appliquéd fabric panels that are extremely popular souvenirs) without violating cultural norms.

In some places, cultural traditions have already faded: in Nargana or Wichubhuala, women wear normal western wear instead of the traditional mola, and thatched roofs are gradually giving way to corrugated-iron. Other towns follow the old ways, but remember, these are not open-air museums, but living communities, so consider what impact your presence will have. Some cruisers avoid traditional towns all together for fear of intruding on local ways. While the Kuna are extremely polite and tolerant, you should reciprocate with your best behavior if you do choose to visit. Dress modestly and don't even think about snapping a photo without asking for permission (which will usually be denied). Only the younger Kuna members speak Spanish; the older generation speaks the indigenous Kuna language: start with a friendly *Na* (hello) and *Nuede* (thank you). The outer islands are not permanently inhabited, but many are dotted with small Kuna camps of one or two huts. Villagers come out in shifts of a few weeks to fish and tend the coconuts; some will also visit yachts to sell their catch or molas.



Dugout canoes are still the vehicle of choice for the Kuna people

Molas

What exactly is a mola? It is an intricately sewn cloth panel that was originally designed as the midriff section of a woman's blouse; hence, they are usually about 15 by 12 inches in size. Patterns are made in deft appliqué techniques and range from traditional geometric designs to representations of animals or people, finished off with embroidered detail. All molas are eye-catching, but if you are in the market for a nice piece, examine each carefully. Check how straight the edges are (none are perfectly straight since they are made by hand while held on the lap) and examine the reverse side to see how tightly spaced the stitches are (small, close stitches are a sign of good workmanship). Molas cost from about $10 up; the more detail, the more expensive.



The reverse-appliquéd and embroidered panels called molas are the quintessential Kuna craft

The Kuna are generally a gentle and kind people, and security issues are rare. However, instances of petty theft and even armed robbery have been reported off larger villages such as Nargana, where it pays to take sensible precautions. In the outer islands, we felt very safe and didn't take our usual precaution of hoisting the dinghy on deck at night.

Navigation

Navigational challenges in this reef-strewn archipelago are considerable: don't trust your GPS blindly and stick to principal reef approaches, which are well described in the Bauhaus book. Reports of rough groundings are a weekly news item on the morning net; occasionally, boats even sustain enough damage to be declared a total loss. Don't let this island paradise lure you into letting your guard down!

Transportation

It is possible to receive visitors or pick up crew once you are in the region. The easiest way is for incoming friends to book a puddle-jump flight from Panama City to El Porvenir. However, the "airport" there is really just an airstrip; don't expect any staff to sell you a ticket on the spot. This airstrip was closed for repairs in December 2011 and expected to re-open in March 2012. It is also possible to reach the airport in Panama City via local *lancha* (a local power boat to Carti) and jeep in roughly five hours for about $50 per person.

Some cruisers sail 50 miles west to Portobelo, where there are frequent, easy-to-use buses to Panama City (two to three hours).

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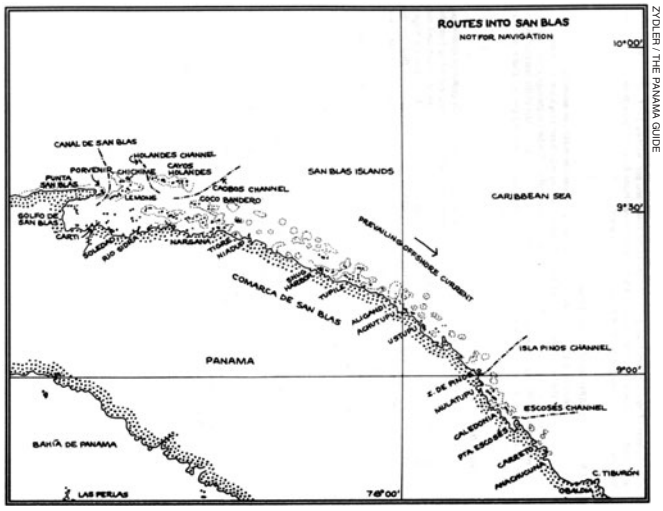
This is also a good place to make a major provisioning run: Portobello has a well-sheltered anchorage, an ATM, a few small food stores, and buses which will bring you directly to the large El Rey supermarket in Sabanitas in one hour (departing roughly every half hour; $1.30 one way). If you need tips on how to arrange such things, just ask on the cruiser's net and you will get excellent, specific advice (long-term cruisers seem to keep giant rolodexes of helpful local contacts).

Sabanitas is also the closest place to buy a Panamanian SIM card for your phone, though top-up cards may be found in the small Kuna Yala shops. Some San Blas islands even have public phones, which are listed in the Bauhaus cruising guide. The nearest marina to the San Blas area is Green Turtle Cay, 35 miles east of El Porvenir, with water and power but poor road connections. For an extended cruise in the San Blas islands, it goes without saying that your boat must be entirely self-sufficient in terms of power and water.

No matter where you point your bow, it's important to plan ahead and be prepared. This is especially true in a remote, fragile region such as the Kuna Yala. So stock up, head out, and cruise responsibly in one of the most rewarding cruising grounds of the Caribbean.

Nadine Slavinski is the author of Lesson Plans Ahoy: Hands-On Learning for Sailing Children and Home-Schooling Sailors
— see www.sailkidsed.net.

Clockwise from below:
A local fisherman in his canoe glides by yachts at anchor
Routes into the San Blas as shown in Zydler's The Panama Guide, *another useful resource*
A Kuna boy heads home after a swim



ZYDLER / THE PANAMA GUIDE



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Grenada's Boxing Day Music Jam

by Hope O'Hara







Clockwise from left:
Caroline from Petit Fleur *playing didgeridoo*
De Big Fish Singers
Urs, also from Petit Fleur, *on guitar*

What do you mean, a didgeridoo isn't part of your holiday tradition? How about a mandolin or a banjo? No? Perhaps a sax or a reggae band? If not, you aren't celebrating the holidays in Grenada.

Holidays are all about tradition; gathered family and friends, gaily-lit trees, seasonal music.

Cruisers, often far from home and family have learned to make their own traditions to welcome the holidays. Sometimes this means a wreath on the bowsprit or caroling in dinghies, it always means food and fun with friends, old and new.

In Grenada we celebrate Christmas with a new/old tradition — new in that it is different from landlife, and old in that this tradition is in its fourth year: a veritable lifetime in cruiser years. This year marked the fourth time cruisers gathered on Boxing Day (a holiday previously unknown to many of us) for a potluck dinner and music.

Back in 2008, Bela and Martin of *S/V Merlin* organized the first jam, held at Whisper Cove Marina. At that time, their son Adam was just beginning his guitar studies. This year, Adam fronted the backing band, and his Dad accompanied him on sax.

In 2009, the jam moved to De Big Fish Restaurant at Spice Island Marine in Prickly Bay. Cruisers bring dishes to share, along with their musical instruments and voices. Not only does the food reflect the many cultures represented in the cruising community, so does the variety of instruments. This year we heard an Australian didgeridoo played by Caroline of the Swiss-flagged *Petit Fleur*, followed by a flute and sax duet performed by Sue (of *Spruce*) and Gavin (of *Secret Smile*). Pete and Courtney from *Norna* brought a little mountain music our way and Samantha (*Msichana*) cooled things down with a little jazz clarinet. We had guitar and hand drums, singers and dancers, sea shanties and show tunes, and as a finale, the staff and crew of De Big Fish did a couple of reggae numbers, joined by nearly all in the audience. All told, over 25 musicians wielding ten different instruments shared their talents with over 100 holiday revelers.

We want to give a big shout out to Rikky and Kim from De Big Fish for organizing and hosting the Boxing Day Jam, and to Gylfi and Jomo, popular local musicians who sorted the musical portion of the day.

Make the Grenada Boxing Day Jam a part of your holiday tradition — you won't want to miss it.



Above: Gavin from Secret Smile *on sax*



Right: Courtney and Pete from Norna *added that 'high lonesome sound'*

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…your one stop marine centre in the Grenadines

Plenty to Celebrate in Prince Rupert Bay, Dominica

Yacht Security Group Rings in New Year in New Building

by Laurie Corbett

Prince Rupert Bay, Dominica, is becoming our favourite anchorage.

Although the Portsmouth Association of Yacht Security (PAYS) have been holding their in-season weekly charity barbecues for some time now, we were lucky enough to be on hand for the milestone of their first New Year's Party in their new structure, completed last season.



Yachtie magnet: the new PAYS barbecue and facilities building at Portsmouth

In all, 62 yachters were in attendance for the event, which included perfectly seasoned and barbecued chicken, great volumes of salads and rice dishes, a few heartfelt but short speeches, a disc jockey who knows his business, and an apparently endless supply of rum punch. A note about the punch: although it was explained that the types of juices vary with the seasons, I can vouch for the uniquely delicious taste on the last day of the year. Let me assure you that it is not innocent, and indeed can be very dangerous.

The attendees met old friends and made new, and most likely will be back next New Year's Eve.

PAYS is an organization of yacht service personnel, tour guides, restaurateurs, a dive shop operator, and transportation managers who set up the association early in the last decade to provide security for the yachtsmen and women who visit Portsmouth and Prince Rupert Bay in Dominica. The association counts among its assets their grand new building, ten or so new moorings, and the cooperative goodwill of its members. Although there are easily enough PAYS members in yacht services boats to provide daytime safety for yachts and visitors, both the profits from the barbecue and the low mooring fees are used to subsidize overnight patrols of the beach and anchorage area. They use a large red inflatable with a quiet, beefy engine, run by paid staff. We noticed



Chef Staford Joseph on barbecue patrol

the high-powered flashlight often during the nights of our stay in this well-sheltered bay. Although we are aware that there is reasonable safety throughout the Windwards and Leewards with a few exceptions, we also know how good it is to truly feel safe. This is the place for that, and apparently we don't pay anything extra for it, on an island that charges only EC$5 per person to check in (a little more on weekends).

These PAYS boat drivers, who compete in a gentlemanly manner for business on the water, are also a hardworking team at the barbecues. The majority of members of the PAYS group are those we normally refer to as "boat boys", although certainly they all are in or approaching middle age. These are intelligent, reliable, honest businessmen, getting most of their business from the charterers and mega-yachts in our midst, but providing appropriate services at appropriately economic prices to serve the live-aboard and seasonal cruiser. I guess you can tell I'm a fan.

The Dominican National Development Corporation, now known as Discover Dominica Authority, began providing training to these young men 20 years ago, and now ensures that those who carry their guiding credentials take a refresher course every two years. Such things as CPR and first aid, public relations, Dominican history and culture, Dominican nature and professional guiding are covered. An exam and minimum pass is part of every refresher to ensure a reasonable minimum standard. With government support, these young men organized as the Indian River Tour Guides Association, although it appears more business is done under the new PAYS organization, with the larger Portsmouth membership. These days, the organization coordinates service delivery, raises the money to provide the security, and even carries out annual meetings and van tours to promote a high minimum standard of service delivery by their members.

—Continued on next page



UPCOMING 2012 CARIBBEAN SAILINGS

MARCH: ST. THOMAS → MARTINIQUE → GENOA
APRIL: ST. THOMAS → PORT EVERGLADES → PALMA DE MALLORCA
MAY: ST. THOMAS → FREEPORT → NEWPORT → PORT EVERGLADES
JULY: MARTINIQUE → TOULON

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—*Continued from previous page*

Long gone are the "feeding frenzies" that used to occur when a new yacht was seen approaching. Today you will be approached by a lone PAYS member, and, after welcoming you to Dominica, he will offer assistance in many areas. You can accept his offer of assistance, or let him know you have a different guide in mind, or let him know you don't need any assistance; any of which will be received with good will and understanding.

Chris Doyle's Leeward Islands cruising guide provides a most complete coverage of these men and the services available, and great advice on how to get the most of this anchorage. Indeed, it is a necessary read with advice and cautions. Still, here is a quick overview. As the services vary in so many ways, most fees have to be negotiated for the specific conditions.

Mooring or anchoring

A guide will show you the area that is patrolled by PAYS. He will offer you one of the economical moorings maintained by the association (with the fees supporting the security effort). He can also escort you to areas of good holding in the depth you prefer if you wish to anchor.

Water taxi

After you have anchored, the guide will offer to drive you in his fast, dry boat the long distance to the Customs dock, and wait while you are cleared in through the recently simplified Customs procedure. He is also available by radio and phone for any trips into and out of town, and can provide a ride back and forth to dinner ashore that is quite superior to that of most dinghies.



Sixty-two happy yachties gather at supper in the new building to ring in the New Year

Access to land taxis

If you need a taxi to a specific location, such as the airport, the guide can, with a phone call, ensure you get served promptly.

Indian River tours

The specialty of the anchorage, this tour is provided for singles, couples, and boatloads. You are rowed up a narrow estuary that was used as the swamp scene in the Pirates of the Caribbean film, while your guide points out the flora and fauna that makes it unique. If organized beforehand, it can include a guided nature hike beyond the navigable waters.

Local and distant hikes

For those who want more local guided hiking, you can ask about the Indian River Source hike, starting at the town dock. Although doable without a guide, you may miss some of the natural attributes, including a pretty nice swimming hole. A second offering is the Chaudiere Pool hike, which includes transportation to the east side of the island to start.



Bounty, one of the more experienced Indian River Guides, visiting us aboard

Inland Tours

For singles, couples, or vanloads (make sure you specify if you want a private tour), the guides can take you to many interesting places, depending mostly on how much time you wish to be in a van. Their recommended trips include the complete island day tour; the north island tour with a dormant volcano, herb gardens, and scenic vistas; and the Syndicate Rain Forest (includes a significant hiking portion).

Snorkelling

The guides will take you to the marine park on both sides of the Cabrits, to a sea fan garden near Rollo Head, or a reef in Toucari Bay.

Scuba

Contact with Cabrits Dive Centre can be arranged for some unique deep Dominican dives.

Laundry

The guides will pick up and deliver your laundry. It is advisable to verify the total price, not the unit price, of laundry services.

Garbage Collection

Municipal rules no longer allow garbage bins or tips along the roads except on garbage day. It makes for much cleaner streets in Portsmouth, but it means you pay a PAYS member a small fee to take and store your garbage until the appropriate day. Some non-PAYS personnel have been causing trouble with yacht garbage of late, so take care.

General Information

The guide will provide general Portsmouth information, including buses, restaurants, rentals, dinghy docks and dinghy safety, and direct access to the commercial laundry services, for examples.

Note that not all service providers on the water are PAYS members, and among the non-members are both some good and some problematic persons. The PAYS guide can provide advice in this area as well.

Laurie Corbett and his wife, Dawn, are cruising the Caribbean aboard Cat Tales.



Dumb Line Cruising

by Frank Virgintino

Before the advent of chartplotters and GPS, standard equipment for cruising boats was a paper chart, parallel rulers and a few pencils. To prepare for a cruise, you would plot your course(s) calculating distances and anticipated speed.

With an eye to the weather and an understanding of what currents one might encounter, a rhumb line was drawn on the chart. It was understood that one would try to follow the course as best as one could and that one could tack if necessary or "sail higher" to discount any set and drift that might be encountered.

Along the way the charted course would be updated through Dead Reckoning, and then crosschecked by visual aids, radar, and whatever other means were available. No one ever gave any thought to actually "sailing the rhumb line."

You now see many boats with their mainsail in tight and the motor engaged... it seems as if 'getting there' has become more important than sailing

Rhumb lines are reference lines and NOT sailing lines! They refer to the course you plotted and not necessarily to how you sail your boat.

As time went by, more and more chartplotters and autopilots came into use and more and more cruising boats began to plot a course and then interface it with their autopilot. "If we could only stay on the red line, we would be fine!" says the Dumb Line Cruiser.

As a result you now see many boats with their mainsail in tight and the motor engaged, making good their course on the rhumb line. It seems as if "getting there", wherever "there" is, has become more important than what most cruising boats were designed for: SAILING!

Manufacturers have been installing ever-larger motors into what had been heretofore "auxiliary cruisers", so that many sailboats today may actually be classified as motor-sailers. To provide more power, many sailboat diesel engines are often short-stroke, high-compression engines that provide the desired horsepower from a "smaller package".

Why are we in such a rush to get where we are headed? Perhaps it is time or the shortage of it. Many of us are part-time cruisers and the time we have is admittedly limited. If your time is so limited that you need to get everywhere quickly, perhaps you need to reevaluate your commitment to sailing. There are many happy power cruisers.

The Caribbean, however, has all the ingredients necessary for a good sail. We have the tradewinds and reasonable distances between most destinations. We can utilize what we have rather than say, "We will sail next time," when the wind is stronger, or lighter, or more favorable. Every time we do that is one less time that we challenge ourselves to sail. A broad reach in good sea conditions and with just the right amount of wind is not something that happens very often.

We read of cruisers such as the Smeetons, the Roths or even today's Pardeys and it does not take long to realize that they are excellent sailors and that they rely little on their engines. In the case of the Pardeys, they do not even have an engine. I have always wanted to ask Fatty Goodlander how much he uses his engine but I am not sure that he has one either. Knowing how frugal he is I would not be surprised if he has rigged up an exercise machine for his wife, Carolyn, that connects to the propeller shaft, which explains why when he is coming into an anchorage Carolyn is rarely seen on deck (too busy pedaling).

Of course we assuage our consciences and say we had the engine on because we needed to charge the batteries and keep the beer cold! Truth is, we turn that engine on much too often and most of us do it today at the flip of a switch — the chartplotter and autopilot switch!

The root of the problem is "rhumb line cruising". Most times you cannot sail between point A and point B. To cruise under sail, you must have patience and you must have allotted enough time. When you plan your cruise it is not wise to add up the amount of miles you need to cover and divide by seven knots to determine how much time you will need. If anything, you should double the miles that you believe you have to cover and then multiply by four or five the amount of time you believe you will need. This way you will allow for adverse winds and days without wind. You must also allow for the need to tack to reach your destination under sail. (You haven't forgotten what tacking is, have you?)

Rhumb Line cruising is Dumb Line cruising because it robs you of your connection to the sea and the art of sailing. For most of us, a very big part of cruising is enjoying the art of sailing and having the ability to make port under sail using the elements of Mother Nature to work in our favor to get us there. What difference does it make if we get in one day or even a few days later than we planned?

There are stories of Don Street, the Dean of Caribbean cruising, being within a mile or two of port and not being willing to "hook up" his old outboard to power in. Before someone draws the conclusion that I am a diehard who refuses to turn on the engine, I can assure you that that is not the case. What I am saying is that all of us can get into a rut. One of the most frequent ruts I see today is sailors setting a rhumb line (dumb line) course and doing whatever is necessary to follow it. It has been a very long time since I have heard the order go to the helmsman to sail "full and by".

I have often written that we need to get off the "beaten track" and discover new areas when we are cruising. We must also stay conscious of how we do it as well.

If you enjoy making a landfall as much as the next cruising sailor, imagine how much more you will enjoy it if you arrive there under sail.

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

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TIME CAPSULE

THE CHANGING FACE OF THE CARIBBEAN



by Lars Hassler

As we approach the 200th edition of Caribbean Compass, *which will be published in May 2012, we take the opportunity to share with our current readers some articles from the past. This article by Lars Hassler was published in 1997. It is interesting to reflect on what has changed — and what hasn't — since then.*

After a five-year circumnavigation, we recently returned to the West Indies and completed a four-month, 3,500-nautical-mile-long, round-Caribbean tour. We sailed from Trinidad up the Lesser Antilles: Grenada, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Martinique, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Antigua, Saba, St. Maarten to the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, on to the Turks & Caicos islands, through the southern Bahamas to Cuba, and then south via the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Curaçao, Bonaire and back to Trinidad.

We cleared in and out through an incredible 20 jurisdictions — independent nations as well as colonies. This relatively small area is the most politically fragmented in the world.

We realized that the area is now developing service economies: tourism (including the yachting industry), offshore banking and... the drugs trade.

Banana Wars

The Caribbean islands have traditionally been dependent on the production of commodities like salt, sugar and bananas. Sugar, the "white gold", was by far the most important crop. For many of the small island states in the Lesser Antilles, the "green gold" — bananas — is now the most important cash crop. After their colonies gained independence, France and England gave preferential treatment in the European Union to their former colonies' bananas. However, the huge United States-owned banana plantations in Central America are considerably more efficient than those in the Eastern Caribbean. These "dollar bananas" would therefore out-compete the Caribbean bananas in Europe, were it not for the preferential treatment. The US government therefore sued in 1996 for unfair trade practices in the newly formed World Trade Organization (WTO), and won. This outcome puts the whole banana industry in the small island states in jeopardy.

Offshore Havens

To diversify their economies, some islands have long been havens for "offshore" activities such as banking, insurance, incorporation and ship-registration services. The offshore industries provide income with little infrastructure and investment. The leading offshore nations are the British colonies (partly due to the fact that British law is applicable). The Cayman Islands is one of the world's largest offshore centers, with over 500 banks, including 46 of the world's top 50. The Turks & Caicos, Panama, the Bahamas and Curaçao are also "old" havens. Relative newcomers include Antigua, the BVI and St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

An offshore entity, a bank or a company, is an entity that doesn't do any business in the host country; it is only "parked" there, sometimes having no physical presence but a mailbox (at some lawyer's or accountant's office). They can conduct any business they wish without interference from either home or host governments: no exchange controls, no or negligible income-, corporate- or capital gains taxes. The host country gets registration fees and some taxes, while the home country gets nothing. If "parking" thousands of registered offshore companies, income for the host nation could be millions of dollars per year, a major source of income.

The Drug Trade

Lying between Latin America and the United States, the Caribbean is a natural transshipment area for drugs moving from south to north. This trade route is estimated to carry 40 percent of all cocaine and heroin that enters the US. This traffic takes place in almost every island state or colony, and even some government leaders have been implicated. The amount of drug money in circulation and the ensuing corruption is immense. The US sees the trade in drugs, as well as illegal immigration, as a threat to its national security. To stop the trade, the US has put tremendous pressure on the Caribbean nations to permit unlimited access to their airspace and territorial waters in pursuit of drug dealers. This agreement, the "Shiprider Agreement", is seen by some of the United States' small neighbors as recolonization. Barbados and Jamaica refused for a long time to sign on.

We were once stopped during the night outside St. Lucia by a joint US/St. Lucia coast guard patrol boat. They shone large lights on us and asked our business, but never boarded.

Tourism

Tourism for many Caribbean islands is the largest foreign currency earner and sometimes also the biggest employer. Before Castro, Cuba was by far the region's largest tourist destination. Now Puerto Rico and the Bahamas are the biggest destinations, followed by Jamaica. In the much smaller Lesser Antilles, Barbados is the largest destination.

Caribbean nations used to fear that Cuba would export its revolution, as happened in Grenada from 1979 to 1983. Now, however, their fear is of a normalization between the US and Cuba. When that happens, the whole Caribbean will hear a big sucking sound as the tide of American tourism suddenly turns toward Cuba.

Another fear is the staggering increase in the cruiseship industry during the last decade. Almost ten million people a year now take a Caribbean cruiseship holiday, about the same as the number of tourists arriving by air. Most islands have built look-alike duty free ports for the cruiseship passengers. One of the most frequented destinations is St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands, where on some days there can be six or seven large cruiseships in port. This means some 10,000 tourists overrunning the small capital, Charlotte Amalie. The Cayman Islands for example, with only 40,000 citizens, gets one million tourists a year, 70 percent of whom are cruiseship passengers.

The local tourism industry, however, is up in arms and claims that cruiseship passengers hardly spend anything on the islands they visit. They complain that passengers eat, shop and gamble onboard, leave mountains of garbage behind, and buy little more than T-shirts ashore (although the governments collect a head-tax of US$5 to $15 for each passenger going ashore).

Lots of Yachts

One positive aspect of tourism in the Caribbean is the rapid rise of the yachting industry. Numerous world-class marinas have been built to meet demand. Trinidad's boatyards, south of the hurricane belt, are now capable of receiving over 1,000 yachts. In St. Vincent, a yard for super-yachts has recently been built, and St. Lucia's Rodney Bay Marina is one of the best in the Lesser Antilles. In Antigua, there are new marinas in both Falmouth Harbour and Jolly Harbour. A major new marina is planned for Fort de France, Martinique.

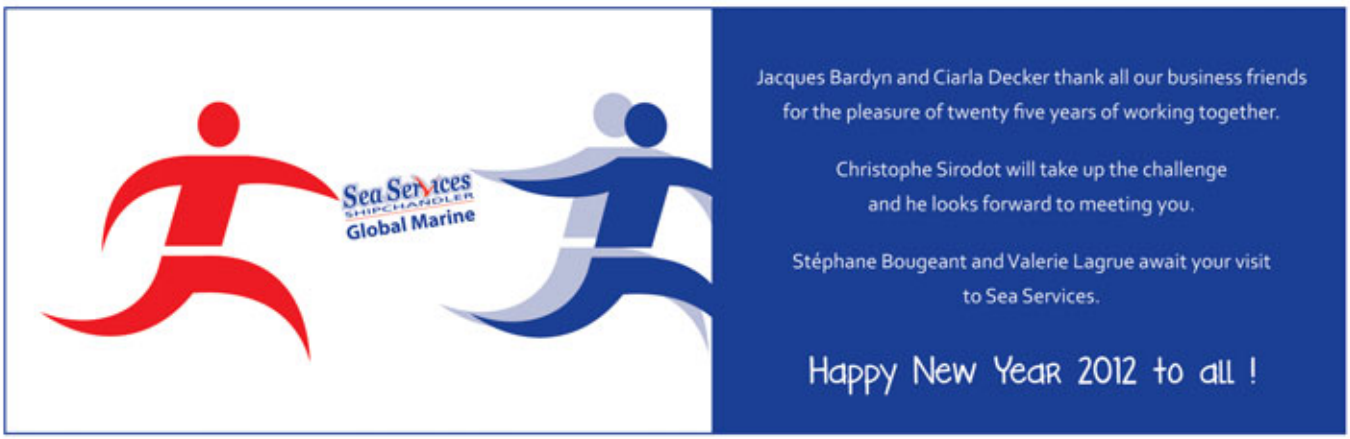
The various islands take different approaches towards the yachting community. For some governments, it took a long time before the potential in this sector of the tourist industry was recognized. Barbados is a case in point. Since 1986, Jimmy Cornell has organized the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC), with about 150 yachts sailing from the Canary Islands to the Caribbean. In the beginning, well-situated Barbados was the end destination. However, as yachting facilities there were found wanting, the ARC moved on to St. Lucia in 1990. The St. Lucian government had Customs and Immigration personnel working around the clock in order to clear in ARC yachts, and Rodney Bay Marina had just been completed. Too late did Barbados realize that millions of tourist dollars were lost.

Still today the islands have different approaches to visiting yachts. The French islands make clearance procedures easy, but some countries continue to make it complicated to clear in and out. St. Lucia has a good system, with the same form being used by both Customs and Immigration. St. Vincent & the Grenadines, however, still insists on using different forms, which is time consuming.

Many islands have created national marine parks. Saba, the British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Bonaire, Turks & Caicos, and to a certain extent St. Vincent & the Grenadines, put out buoys for yachts to use for moorings and/or diving. These are to protect the coral from boat anchors. Permission to dive in these places is mostly free or costs a small fee. On the other hand, Dominica, one of the poorest nations in the area, will not allow yachtspeople to dive without a local dive operator. This costs about US$60 per dive and gives the local dive industry a de facto monopoly.

Of the three categories of yachts — private cruisers, crewed charter yachts and bareboats — the bareboats have had a spectacular increase in numbers during the last decade and the catamarans are getting increasingly popular. It has now come to pass in the Eastern Caribbean that the bareboaters might be the largest single group. In the last Antigua Sail Week, which is the biggest regatta in the Caribbean, fully 45 percent of the 250 participants were bareboats. By next year they might be in the majority.

Lars Hassler is the author of Occupation Circumnavigator: Sailing Around the World, *published by Adlard Coles Nautical in 2009 (ISBN 9781408112014). Lars describes it as "a handbook for aspiring long-distance sailors." The book is available at Amazon.com and other on-line booksellers.*



'Yesterday' and Tomorrow:

Diving Around Montserrat

by Frank Pearce

Before 1995, when the Soufriere Hills Volcano in Montserrat began its current cycle of eruptions, I used to visit Montserrat every two weeks or so, skippering my friend Russ's supply boat, *Skutter*. At the deep-water harbour in Antigua's capital, St. John's, a large refrigerated lorry would be driven onto the aft deck of *Skutter*, loaded with 15 tons of frozen chicken destined for the Montserrat capital of Plymouth. Plymouth was a delightful Caribbean town back then, picturesque, always clean and tidy. Seven tons of chicken a week they ate!

After serious eruptions in 1995 and again in 1997, the town of Plymouth was obliterated by volcanic ash and debris, with only the upper floors of some buildings showing above the mudflow.

Recently I was planning to leave Antigua and sail down to the Grenadines aboard my 50-foot Sciareli-designed schooner, *Samadhi*. My crew, friends Jenny from Grenada and Patsy from Antigua, had an idea to visit Montserrat on the way. Well, it's not exactly on the way as it is some 35 miles southwest of Antigua. Prevalent winds at the time were southerly, so it seemed that we would have a broad reach to Montserrat and later, hopefully, have a close beat to Deshaies in Guadeloupe.

Setting off in the early morning we had a light-weather sail to Little Bay, now the only anchorage in Montserrat with some shelter that is outside the "Exclusion Zone" that is restricted owing to possible danger from the volcano. With the wind southerly, I was concerned as to whether there would be any shelter behind the headland. It was early June and the beginning of hurricane season. Tropical Waves could be expected every four days or so, and being somewhere with little shelter had me a tad nervous. Anyway, the anchorage was fairly smooth if a little swelly.

An evening on board, then off to clear in at Customs & Immigration in the morning. Meeting the officials came as a slight surprise as their uniforms are all British, the Police uniforms also British... well, Montserrat British. Of course they would be, as Montserrat is a British Overseas Territory, previously known as a Crown Colony. We felt very welcome; the lady Customs officer has a hire car business with her husband, so in no time at all we had wheels.

There's a slight contradiction to the Britishness of the island as it is even more Irish. So many surnames are Irish that the inhabitants call it The Emerald Isle. Although the national flag is a blue ensign, it is defaced with the "Lady Erin", a waif-like lady in a green (of course) flowing robe, carrying a harp (of course again). The villages have many Irish names: Kinsale, St. Patrick's and so on.

It seems that in the 1600s, when the Warner family colonized St. Kitts, they "imported" immigrants from an impoverished Ireland to work the land, only to persecute them for their Catholic faith in a Cromwellian Protestant English colony. Escaping from St. Kitts, the Irish found the lush unpopulated island of Montserrat. Later, slaves were brought from Africa to replace the rebellious Irish in St. Kitts and Montserrat itself became a "sugar Island".

Shortly after the catastrophic eruptions in 1995 and 1997, the British Government awarded the island some 12,000 pounds as assistance. The island of course needed much more and on being petitioned the then British Government Minister, Clare Short, apparently made the scornful comment "Next they'll be asking for golden elephants," which caused outrage, compensated for and remembered by the trinkets in the shape of elephants that are for sale here and there.

The residents were awarded British citizenship in 2002, and many moved to the UK.

The island is roughly divided in two, the northern half being relatively untouched by the results of the volcano, the southern end being devastated and in what is known as the Exclusion Zone where entry is restricted. The centre of the island north to south is a mountainous ridge, part of which is the volcano and so the debris of lava, mud and ash from the eruptions spreads both westerly, encompassing the old capital Plymouth, and easterly, completely covering the former airport and fanning out seaward. We drove down the eastern coast as far as we could and overlooked what had been a relatively modern airport; completely obliterated under debris, just the top of what may have been a conning tower sticks forlornly up out of the mudflow.

The northern half of the island is beautiful, very lush and green, with scattered shops, rum shops and small businesses by the roadside. En route to the largest village, Salem, a large elegant building comes as a surprise. It is a new Cultural and Community Centre with a stage, music facilities, games rooms and so on. This was funded through the efforts of the famous English record producer George Martin and a number of musicians, and mainly through the sale of lithographs of the original score of the Beatles' song "Yesterday".

George Martin, who had a recording studio in London, visited Montserrat in 1979 and apparently loved the island so much he set up a recording studio near Richmond Hill called AIR or Associated Independent Recording Studios. He is best known for his association with the Beatles, but recorded Eric Clapton, the Rolling Stones, Phil Collins, Stevie Wonder, Elton John, and more musical stars — all in Montserrat.



PATSY

—*Continued on next page*

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When we drove down the east coast, we went as far as the Exclusion Zone boundary, but a mile or so before that, looking for somewhere to eat, we were directed to a lovely colonial single-storey house with deep verandas and a park-like surrounding. Yes we could eat there; we did and it was lovely. Jenny, going into the house came back to us, "There are original black-and-white photos of Paul signed by Linda McCartney on the walls!" A very young Paul. We were in George Martin's villa just adjacent to his now unused studio. Who had trodden those boards before us?



ISHWAR PERSAUD

We headed farther southward towards the Exclusion Zone limit. The exact location of the boundary limit does move depending upon the predicted volcanic activity. At the time we were there, the boundary gate was open and we were able to drive over the hardened mud and volcanic rock debris that has filled the Belham riverbed. We stopped to pick up some pumice stones.

Where the south bank of the river would have been, the roof and upper-storey windows of a house were all that was showing, the lower story being completely covered in 15 feet of debris.

Having crossed the riverbed we now drove upwards. This hillside overlooking the old river and the sea had clearly been where the wealthier Montserratians lived, or maybe ex-pats. There were some truly beautiful villas, but they were all boarded up. Some were clearly being maintained, the gardens lush with flowers and color; others seemed to be abandoned. While we could drive there on that day, had there been a risk of volcanic activity, the exclusion zone gates would have been closed and no one able to go there, so living in any of the villas was not practical. Presumably, some owners were hopeful that the volcano would subside and they could move back. Other homes sported optimistic "For Sale" signs.

Up and up we drove, four-wheel drive needed, until on the summit of that hill we were overlooking what had been Plymouth. Such desolation; so much loss. But no loss of life I believe, unlike St. Pierre, the main town of Martinique in 1902 when the mayor assured the citizens of the town that there was no danger from their Mont Pelée volcano, only to get it tragically wrong with the result being that the entire population was killed, except for the one prisoner in a stone jail cell who survived.

Up we continued to the Volcano Observatory (www.mvo.ms) where a team of geoscientists constantly monitors the state of the volcano. In a small theatre there, a film shows the volcano in action, and also the emergency evacuation of Plymouth — trucks being loaded with possessions, businesses being barred up, forever.

I'm not clear how many people live in Montserrat now, somewhere between 3,000 and 6,000. The habitable half of the island is still bigger than all of Bequia (population somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000), for example, so there is plenty of space, it's not overcrowded and surely there is an opportunity to re-start businesses — the land is there, the willing workforce is there.

Turning a bad situation to one's advantage has always seemed to me to be a good philosophy if one can see how to do so. One company is doing just that and is excavating material from the bed of the Belham River and grading it for use in manufacturing concrete, as has been done in Guadeloupe using Soufriere ash in the same way. The result is good, lightweight concrete with no salt content.

Talking of willing workforce, this visit just reinforced my admiration for the stoicism of Montserrat's population, as can be said of other island populations that periodically suffer natural disasters, hurricanes and earthquakes, who somehow pick themselves up, dust themselves off (literally) and get on rebuilding their lives from scratch, again and again.

There is a daily ferry to and from Antigua and a new small airport with daily flights again to and from Antigua, and a reasonable anchorage at Little Bay. By ferry, plane or yacht, it's a worthwhile visit to make.

For more information on Montserrat visit www.visitmontserrat.com.

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

Previous page: A once verdant coastline is now a moonscape of volcanic debris

Left: The picturesque town center of Plymouth was completely covered after the 1995 eruption of the Soufriere Hills Volcano

Below: Although the volcano is currently dozing it is monitored constantly



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EXPLORING BARBUDA BY BIKE AND HIKE



Who says the Caribbean is crowded? This was the only other 'person' on the beach

Barbuda is one of the few islands in the Eastern Caribbean that remains largely untouched by development. The commercial attractions are few but the natural attractions are abundant and it is a wonderful place to spend a week or two at anchor. If you like lonely anchorages, miles of sand beach, friendly people and flat sandy roads for biking and hiking you might just fall in love with Barbuda.

Barbuda, pronounced bar-BOO-duh, is part of the twin island nation of Antigua & Barbuda. Codrington is the island's capital and where most of the 1,600 residents live. Land is held communally so outside developers cannot buy land and develop resorts that are not wanted by the residents — and Barbudians prefer to keep their island largely undeveloped. The main industries are fishing and sand mining and most of those two products are exported to Antigua. Tourism is also an import industry, but limited by the number of hotels and the number of people who really want a remote holiday.

The main tourist attraction on Barbuda is the Magnificent Frigatebird colony located in the island's northwestern lagoon and accessible only by boat. The opening of the Lagoon is in the north end far away from safe anchorages, so the most practical way to get to Codrington is to anchor at Low Bay, dinghy to shore, walk across the narrow beach and get a water taxi on the Lagoon side to take you into Codrington. My husband, Hunter, and I had arranged to meet our guide at the town jetty. You don't have to get up early to sneak up on the frigatebirds. Our visit coincided with young in the nest and when we arrived they were sitting on or near the nest, begging for food from their parents or just being young birds stretching or flapping around awkwardly.



Above: Hunter looking into the mouth of Darby Sinkhole

Right: You can rent bikes or kayaks from John

The sanctuary, which contains over 170 species of birds, is home to over 5,000 frigatebirds. Frigatebirds court in the late summer and fall and the chicks hatch out a few months later and remain in and around the nest for most of the winter. Courtship is spectacular. The male inflates his red throat patch and sits on the nest quivering his outstretched wings, waving his head back and forth, and drumming his beak, hoping to attract a female. Frigatebirds (*Fregata magnificens*) have the largest wingspan (four to five feet) in proportion to their body size of any bird in the world. They often steal food from other seabirds, such as pelicans, gulls and tropicbirds.

After our bird-watching expedition we decided to explore the northwest end of the island by bike. There are no traffic lights or speed bumps in Barbuda. Most of the roads in this 14 by eight mile island are dirt, sand or shell and the highest point is 125 feet, making this a perfect island to explore by bike. If you do not have bikes on board you can rent them from John (268 784-5717 or 268 773-9599) who lives in a large blue house on the corner of Ginnery and Teague Streets. He also rents kayaks. Much to our surprise, there are street signs in Codrington and you can get a map from the Tourist Information Office on Ginnery Street, not far from the Codrington wharf. Ask anyone — they will be delighted to help you enjoy their island. It is best to call or visit John in advance of the actual time you would like to rent a bike. His bikes are in good condition.

We biked to the Highland House Ruins (3.5 miles northeast of Codrington) and, from there, walked to the Darby Cave. The Highland House was built and occupied in the mid-1700s and although not much remains, it is clear that the house had a stunning view of Barbuda and the sea. The Darby Cave is a vertical sinkhole over 70 feet deep and about 300 feet in diameter. You can scramble on a rough trail to the cave floor. Palm trees reach up to the sun, topping the rim of the cave and giving the cave full shade at all times of day. White-crowned pigeons nest in the cave and provide a nearly constant sound track of "who took two" (say this with your mouth in the puckered O position). There are groups of bats hanging high above in shady overhangs and if you look carefully you can find the hives of honeybees. The cave is an oasis of tropical vegetation in the otherwise dry, scrubby island.



After returning to our bikes we headed back to the main road and pedaled the half-mile to Two Foot Bay. We left our bikes at the interpretive sign and walked down the sandy path. This is a popular place for locals to lime on weekends and holidays, but on the two occasions that we visited we were the only ones enjoying the spectacular sea views and exploring the caves.

—Continued on next page

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The caves are within the limestone escarpment on the southeast side of the sandy path. They are well hidden by the vegetation and we found the caves by following the small dirt trails to the cliffs. One of the caves has an entrance to the top of the escarpment and you can see the skylight of the topside exit. There are petroglyphs (rock drawings) drawn by the Amerindians or Arawaks in this cave.

After our bike trip we were delighted to find Grace's Roti Shop. Grace makes a darn good roti and provides simple furnishings for eating your roti in the shade. We were also able to restock on basic supplies at the grocery stores.

We explored the west coast of Barbuda from where we had anchored our Island Packet 45, *Arctic Tern*, in Gravenor Bay behind Palaster Reef. The Castle Hill Road on the southeastern coast provides good access to the Castle Hill cave that is used by locals for weekend camping and hunting trips. The islanders' predilection for capturing and eating red-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*), which is quite common on the island, can be seen by the pile of empty shells discarded in a corner of the cave entrance. Along the way you might find groups of donkeys that run wild on the island and are left over from the sugar cane industry. You can cross over the spiny vegetation on the dune for access to the windward coast and excellent beachcombing. We found a mystery piece of beach trash that had us all guessing incorrectly — it turned out to be an octopus trap. Barbuda is not about beach bars, restaurants and T-shirts; its attractions are its natural features and friendly folks.

Directions to Highland House and Darby Sinkhole

Leave Codrington on the River Road and after a few blocks take a left onto Highland Road. Stay on Highland Road for 3.5 miles and take the first right turn. The road forks — take the right fork. Within 0.5 miles you will see an interpretive sign about Highland House. Leave your bikes at the sign and walk the half-mile to the ruins.

The trail to Darby Sinkhole is a bit difficult to find and is not signed, but once you are on the trail it is very distinct. Walk to the east side of the terrace, which is slightly elevated. There is an old roadbed bordered by stones running north and south. Walk to the south end of the old roadbed up a very slight incline into the trees, where you will pick up a footpath. In less than a quarter mile the trail will pass through two stone pillars. The trail winds through brush and there are game trails veering off of the main trail. The trail substrate is either limestone bedrock or red soil, which has permanently stained the rock. If a side trail, used by livestock, confuses you, look for the red-stained rock and you will know that you are on the correct trail. In about 40 minutes you will get to the top of Darby Cave. If you walk around the rim a bit farther you will see a path down to the bottom.







Above left: Donkeys run wild on the island

Above right: Palms reach for the sun, topping the rim of the sinkhole and giving full shade all day

Left: Walking on the Castle Hill Road. There is little shade, so bring plenty of water

Basil's Bar Mustique

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MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2012

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!

February				**March**			
DATE	TIME						
1	1904	21	1147 (new)	12	0320		
2	1954	22	1232	13	0419		
3	2045	23	1315	14	0519		
4	2137	24	1358	15	0617		
5	2230	25	1441	16	0713		
6	2322	26	1525	17	0806		
7	0000 (full)	27	1610	18	0856		
8	0013	28	1657	19	1943		
9	0104	29	1745	20	1028		
10	0154			21	1112 (new)		
11	0245	**March**		22	1158		
12	0338	1	1835	23	1238		
13	0432	2	1926	24	1321		
14	0528	3	2017	25	1406		
15	0625	4	2108	26	1452		
16	0724	5	2200	27	1539		
17	0821	6	2251	28	1628		
18	0917	7	2342	29	1717		
19	1010	8	0000 (full)	30	1807		
20	1059	9	0034	31	1857		
		10	0128				
		11	0223				

WHAT ARE THE ODDS?

by Tom Scott

WHAM! I'm on my feet and running for the cockpit of my boat, even before I awake. It's 3:00AM, pitch black and questions are racing in my mind.

We had taken a mooring in Salt Whistle Bay, Mayreau, on the afternoon of December 23rd, 2011. I had checked the mooring thoroughly; the lines were good



Above: Monet II *underway*
Below: Our chart plotter image. From the top, the line at left is our track entering Salt Whistle Bay; the arrow at the end is the boat resting on the mooring. With the chart plotter turned off after arrival our dragging course is not recorded. After waking, I turned the chart plotter on and the track begins again — see how far into the reef we were. The squirrely track up the page is the result of 'Go left', 'No, go right'



and we had four feet of water under the keel. I was a little concerned about the possibility of northerly swells coming in during the night. The forecast was good, but the bay had just had a bout of northerlies that was subsiding when we came in. Forecasts can be wrong and I stayed vigilant. I had watched the swells until 1:00AM. The winds were strong out of the east-northeast and I felt we were in good shape.

Now what? Did someone hit us? Did the swells grow? Did the wind change and are we now in shallower water, hitting the bottom? Did we break loose from the mooring?

—Continued on next page

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Seconds after I reached the cockpit, my crew surfaced: Brad Richardson, Tim Mathis, Elizabeth Malinowski and Michelle Britton had gotten up and joined me. "What happened?" they asked. We looked around in the darkness and could not see a thing. Then again, WHAM! I started the engine, turned on the deck light and looked to see what was up. I ordered someone to go to the bow and check the mooring.

I could hardly walk. Just days before, I was in Bequia having Dr. Danny treat the worst infection I have ever had. My right foot had an insidious combined fungal and bacterial infection and was so swollen my crew had nicknamed me "elephant man".

"We are still on the mooring!" came a voice from the bow. I shone a light aft of our stern and my heart sank. We were on the reef and not far from breaking waves. The mooring had dragged, cement weight and all.

With the wind howling and the waves pushing us farther and farther onto the reef, I gave the order to release us from the mooring. With the engine revs at about 2,000 per minute, I tried to move the boat forward, gunning it every time I felt a wave crest. We would begin to inch forward but then would hit something (probably a coral head).

By this time the locals on the beach were up. We were giving them quite a show. Finally a couple of them came out with a small motorboat. We tried to hook the main halyard to the motorboat to heel *Monet II*, a 47-foot Beneteau, over enough to get over the coral head. As luck would have it, the main halyard was caught up in the deck light and under the circumstances it would have taken forever to get it off. Using the jib halyard was out of the question. Six months ago I had a spinnaker halyard



Tim, Elizabeth, the author, Michelle and Brad

installed, not primarily for flying a spinnaker, but for hauling the dinghy on the deck and other utility purposes. The spinnaker halyard saved the day. We gave the halyard to Roderick, the local with the boat, and I stayed on the helm with the engine running, ready to pounce. Time was of the essence; the waves were pushing us farther and farther into the reef. The first attempt was weak and we were still stuck.

By this time I'm thinking, "I'm ruining the engine," "I'm going to lose the boat," "If we don't get off soon, we'll have to abandon ship."

Then I heard Roderick's engine roar and got ready to give *Monet II's* engine all she's got, thinking, "I would rather ruin the engine then lose the boat on the reef." *Monet II* heeled hard to starboard — at least 40 degrees. "It's now or never," I thought and pushed the throttle forward as hard as I could, steering to port. The boat lurched forward with a roar and within seconds righted herself. I looked at the depth gauge: we had three feet of water under the keel.

I felt enormous relief, and in the darkness I slowly motored over to the other mooring lights. One of the locals was yelling at me, "Go left, Captain, go left!" Another in a panicked voice was yelling, "No, Captain, go right, go right!" This went on for sometime and I thought, "I will just keep the boat near the others in the bay, while monitoring my depth gauge incessantly." I gathered my thoughts, took a few deep breaths, and contemplated my next move.

The locals wanted to take me to another mooring. I yelled, "NO! I'm going over to Saline Bay to anchor." I was still worried about northerlies coming in and felt we were better off over there. In retrospect I think this was a bad decision. I had not assessed any damage yet and in the moonless night, moving to Saline Bay could be treacherous.

The locals, including Roderick, guided us over to Saline Bay. My GPS conflicted with their guidance and at first I vacillated between trusting them and trusting my GPS. The locals were still conflicted and I kept hearing, "Go left, Captain, go left" and another voice "No, Captain, go right, go right." Finally I thought, "Screw it, I'm following my GPS and chart plotter."

After an uneventful ride over to Saline Bay we anchored and the locals came aboard to present us with "the bill". We bickered and negotiated while they drank our rum and smoked our cigarettes and finally we came to an agreement. Then they told us that a Nine Mornings party, a local pre-Christmas tradition, was taking place on the island and invited us. My crew went with them and had a great time. I stayed on the boat since my foot was throbbing in excruciating pain. Besides, I did not want to leave *Monet II* alone after she had been through such a traumatic experience.

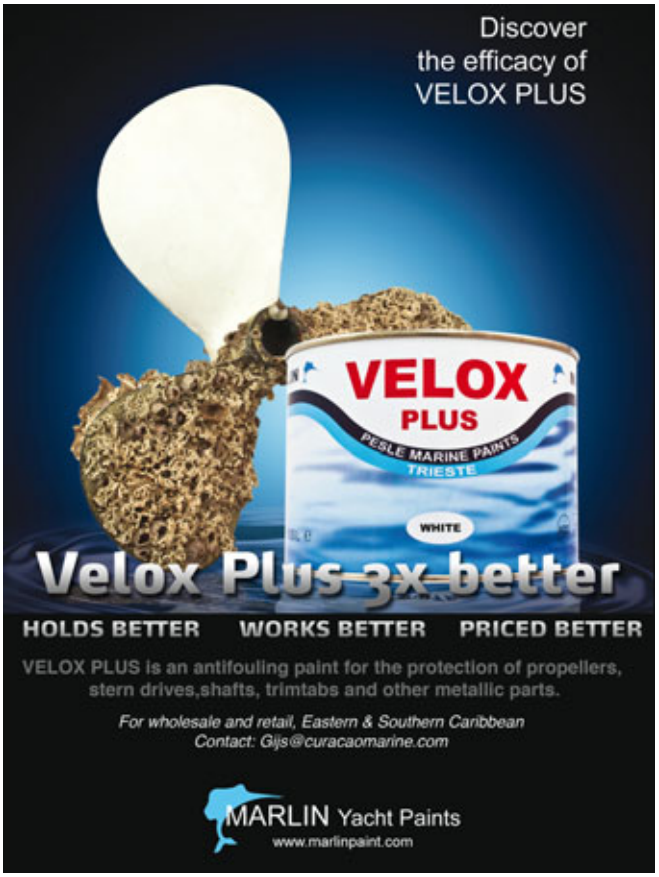
The next morning I put on a dive mask and assessed the damage. The hull was untouched except for some rub marks from Roderick's boat. The keel had some minor scratches but no sign of any stress. The rudder on the other hand was missing the bottom 18 inches or so. But, what remained of the rudder was solid; the shaft was still aligned perfectly, the shaft housing was completely intact, and we had no leaks.

Just ten months previously I had also been here in the Grenadines, sailing from Union Island to Wallilabou Bay on St. Vincent, and had hit a semi-submerged shipping container ten miles northwest of Canouan. That collision took out my rudder and put a small hole in the boat (see article in July 2011 *Caribbean Compass*). The rudder shaft had been forced out of alignment and the housing had ripped off the hull and we had a small leak. The damage had been repaired in St. Vincent at Ottley Hall. I can only say great things about Ottley Hall. Paul, the manager, and the workmen had done an excellent job making the repairs competently, on time and at a reasonable cost.

I wanted to take *Monet II* back to Ottley Hall for repairs now, but it was Christmas Eve and they were closed until the 28th.

We continued our cruise in the Grenadines and at every stop I re-checked the rudder time and time again for further damage and decided it would get us back to Rodney Bay with no trouble, which it did in spite of extraordinary conditions (30 to 35 knots of wind all the way to St. Lucia) on December 30th.

I have been cruising off and on in the Caribbean for over 30 years without a hitch worth mentioning. Then, in 2011, I seriously damaged my rudder twice — once from hitting a semi-submerged shipping container and then, ten months later, from using a less-than-adequate mooring. What are the odds?





Dinghy Lost and Found: MIRACLES *DO* HAPPEN!

by Kim White

If you have any doubt about miracles, read this story, and learn about ours. We feel very fortunate to know so many cruisers who were willing to lend more than a hand when the chips were down.

We are Kim and Doug on S/V *Gabrielle* and in mid-September of 2011 we were towing our AB RIB dinghy (minus the engine and fuel tank) between the archipelagos of Los Roques and Las Aves in Venezuela, a short day trip of about 30 miles. It was a nice day, a dead downwind sail, and all seemed well onboard. During the trip our towing system failed (read more about this in the Lessons Learned sidebar) and the dinghy went adrift.



Left to right: Ulrich Bertrand, Ryan Anthony, the author (holding the 'clue cap'), and Igmar Benschop. The wandering dinghy is in the front; S/V Gabrielle *is in the background*

Nearing Las Aves we discovered that the dinghy was missing and conducted an extensive search, but it was not found. A fair swell was running, and the dinghy had a dark blue cover, making it very hard see. A further search was made after arriving in Las Aves, and we waited, hoping the dinghy would catch up on a direct downwind path, and perhaps find its way home over the fringe reef.

Mary on *M/V Ms. Astor* came over and consoled us with skill and the usual libations. The next morning she conducted an extensive search throughout the many islets and cays of Las Aves Barlovento. Gary and Nora on S/V *Cordelia* notified the Venezuelan Guarda Costa the next day as they passed by Las Aves Sotovento, heading west. Several days later we traveled to Bonaire, and made the usual reports, and contacted the Dutch Coast Guard in Curaçao. We put an ad in the local English language newspaper, *The Bonaire Reporter*.

We got busy trying to find something to use as a dinghy. Several friends in Curaçao helped try to locate a dinghy for us there. We were fortunate to meet up with Eddy of *Double Eagle*, a fisherman friend from Bonaire, who loaned us the dinghy we had given him when we purchased our new (now lost) dinghy, so we were able to leave the Náutico dock.

After a couple of weeks with no news about our dinghy, two very sad sailors began the process of ordering and purchasing an identical replacement dinghy from Pam Werdath at Budget Marine Bonaire, where we had bought the missing dinghy less than a year before. Needless to say, a purchase of this magnitude is not something anyone would want to make twice in one year. Pam and the Budget team were very accommodating, but there would be a considerable delay of many months at the manufacturer's end. So we settled in with the familiar loaner dinghy, and kept up the search for an interim dinghy to buy.

Unknown to us, about two weeks after the dinghy was lost, during a camping visit on the beach at Rancho Amistad at Swat Mangel in southeastern Aruba, a group of citizens from Centro Colorado Nobo, a substance-abuse rehab facility in Aruba, discovered the dinghy washed ashore, and it was in good condition. What a valuable find this was! Although temptation to keep it was great, the group decided to notify the Aruba Maritime Police. This kind and caring act is a keystone of this story, and this group should be congratulated for making a hard choice.

The marine police then collected the dinghy, which had traveled about 200 miles. There were no names or other markings on the dinghy that identified who it might belong to, other than a manufacturer's serial number. An old cap found inside the bow compartment was from Bonaire, and offered the only real clue, so the detective work for the Aruba Maritime Police began. Recognizing the AB brand as being sold by the local Budget Marine store in Aruba, they contacted the manager there, Tony Waldron, to see if he had a serial number registry. No, they did not, but he offered to contact the Budget Marine headquarters in St. Maarten to see if they did, but again, no — they did not have a registry.

When the Bonaire cap was mentioned, contact was then made with Budget Marine in Bonaire. When Pam Werdath, the manager of Budget Marine Bonaire, got the call, of course she knew all about the missing dinghy, and said she knew exactly who the dinghy belonged to, and that she had the bill of sale with the serial numbers on it to prove it. She e-mailed this information to the maritime police and the case was solved!

—Continued on next page

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Pam then notified us, and we were understandably in shock but overjoyed at the good news. A few calls and it was determined that the dinghy was in fine condition, and then the process of reuniting with the wayward dinghy began. Sally on *S/V Zahe* was in wide. The team of Maritime Police — Ulrich Bertrand, Alex Henriquez, Igmar Benschop and Ryan Anthony — all had a hand in this successful conclusion. Many people helped us with dinghy transport in Bonaire and Curaçao during the dinghy-less time it took for this entire story to reach its very happy ending.



Gabrielle's *dinghy made an approximately 200-mile unmanned voyage from somewhere east of Islas de Las Aves to Aruba*

Aruba, and helped tremendously. She arranged dockage at the Nautical Club, and took me to meet with the Aruba Marine Police. The Marine Police went well beyond the call of duty — they cracked the case and then safely stored the dinghy, and even facilitated the officialdom required by Aruba Customs (the dinghy had, after all, attempted to import itself). Then they delivered the dinghy from Customs to us at the Nautical Club. A very nice group of conscientious and caring gentlemen, we were very glad to have the chance to get to know them. If you ever lose your dinghy, you can hope that these are the fellows who find it.

This is really not just one miracle of a dinghy lost at sea being found — it was several, because the dinghy was found by caring citizens who chose to do the right thing, and then the old Bonaire cap clue helped the conscientious Aruba Maritime Police to locate us, working with the Budget Marine organization, Caribbean

So it is a long series of miracles from start to finish, with much good work and many good deeds done by many caring people. We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone involved. We have learned a few lessons, which are shared in the sidebar; take a look and give a few moments consideration to any that might apply to you. Melodye Pompa has posted this same information on the News page of the Caribbean Safety and Security Net webpage, www.safetyandsecuritynet.com. You will find a variety of important and useful information there.

Lessons Learned

Safe Dinghy Towing

The short version of "safe towing" is: always use two separate lines, with capable hardware. We used carabineers, and BOTH failed. The convenience of clip-on is their problem. It does not seem possible for them to "unclip" themselves, but believe me, they can and do. In our case the primary (bow eye) one unclipped itself, and the safety-line carabineer, inside the lifting padeye, had the spring pop out when it took a side load (best guess). So we had two lines and two clips (one failed) and no dinghy. There is a screw type of carabineer, called a quicklink, that we will use from now on; it cannot come unclipped.

I would offer this same advice for folks and their safety harnesses — I know that it is less convenient, but safety is safety! It seems important to me to *know* the device will *always* do its job. All the harnesses we have seen have the same kind of carabineer we had come unclipped. Unusual side and shock loads seem to cause the problem.

There is a related issue of the dinghy's ability to be towed. On ABs up to ten feet long, they put two towing eyes (glued to hypalon, which does not seem like a great idea) plus a bow eye. On the larger ones like ours, there is only a single bow eye, and the owner's manual suggests installing a second pair if you plan to tow. Our safety line was clipped to an interior lifting eye. It seems that AB thinks anyone with a larger dinghy has davits or, for a big motor yacht, a crane. I have heard from others who have lost dinghies because of pulled-out bow eyes, and both were lucky to recover them. They then added additional towing eyes and beefed up the backing plates as well, similar to what is now suggested by AB. Personally I think AB and the other manufacturers should design and install proper towing hardware. Budget Marine has made this point to AB, but with no success so far. We are going to beef up ours now that we have it back.

Dinghy Recovery

On "recovery" — ours was mostly luck. There was nothing in the dinghy to identify it, not even the yacht name (since we no longer put it on), but it may not have helped anyway.

The Marine Police in Aruba contacted the Aruba Budget Marine store manager, knowing that they sold ABs, to see if he had any registration info from the dinghy serial number. They did not, but some manufacturers do. Having a bill of sale with the serial number from either the chandlery or the previous owner is critical to prove ownership. For backup, a photo is a good idea as well, especially if there is something distinctive about your dinghy, for example a patch, or added hardware.

So it comes down to what sort of info should be in the dinghy (and where). We have a bow compartment, so I plan to put something inside, with some sort of contact info, but what should that be? If we are offshore we can't get e-mail. I'm thinking I will put our yahoo e-mail address, the phone number and e-mail address of a friend in the US, and the e-mail address of Caribbean Safety and Security Net (safetyandsecuritynet@gmail.com). One or more of those should be able to get a message back to us in a timely way.

Kim White and Doug Hurst have been cruising together aboard Gabrielle, *a Peterson 44, for more than a decade.*





CRUISING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Harriet and Tom aboard their Dolphin 460 performance-cruising cat

by Tom ("T.L.") Linskey

For my wife, Harriet, and me, Caribbean cruising at its best is half challenge, half discovery. The challenges involve everything from ocean sailing from New England to the Caribbean and the often boisterous stuff between the islands to living aboard and maintaining our boat's equipment as we hop from place to place. As for discoveries, they're plentiful here in the Eastern Caribbean. A generous sprinkling of island gems, each with its own beauty and culture and history, along with an ever-changing cast of international cruisers and local characters. Yet it was only in the past few years, after sampling the Leewards and Windwards for over 30 years, mostly on charterboats, that we stumbled on a side of these islands — the real Caribbean — that we never knew existed.

We'd been bluewater cruising before. Back in 1986, we built a 28-foot Bristol Channel Cutter from a bare hull and deck and sailed it 15,000 miles, from Southern California to Baja California, Mexico, and then to the South Pacific, New Zealand, Australia, and, finally, a 47-day nonstop passage to Japan. While cruising through the South Pacific — the Marquesas, Tuamotus, Society Islands, Cook Islands, Niue, and Tonga — we were struck as much by the awe-inspiring beauty as by the near-poverty of the local people. As bluewater cruisers know, when you buy your provisions at the open market and fill your jerry cans at the village tap, you see the real life of the islands. Like many cruisers, we helped out where we could along the way, always more than repaid with smiles and an avalanche of fruit, but we had no structure in place that would let us make a lasting difference. So we'd say goodbye and sail on.

Fast forward to 2007, when we sold our house in Massachusetts, plunked the money down on a new Dolphin 460 performance-cruising cat, and began preparing to set out on our second round of bluewater cruising. But we'd already done a lot of ocean sailing, and we'd already seen a lot of beautiful islands. We needed new challenges and discoveries. This time, we wanted to both cruise and make a difference — a real difference — along the way. Before we left, we filed the paperwork for Hands Across the Sea, a US-registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit charity. But our focus was unclear. Girls' empowerment? Protecting the environment? Delivering medical supplies? Sure, all of those are good causes. But are any of them our causes? And whatever we decide to do, can two people make a truly significant impact, operating from a sailboat?

Then, while sailing from Aracaju, Brazil, where our cat was built, north through the Eastern Caribbean, we visited schools (Harriet is a former teacher) on Union Island, Dominica, and Nevis to see if we could help in some way. On each island, school principals and teachers told us the same thing: child literacy is a serious problem. At almost every school, reading books for children are in very, very short supply. Most children do not grow up with books in the home (too expensive), and many children are reading far below grade level. Schools have their own government-mandated textbooks and curriculum, but government budgets don't stretch to providing reading books — the kind of books that excite and engage kids, the kind of books that can help open the door to a lifelong love of reading. It deeply disturbed us to see such bright, eager children growing up without books, without a love of reading, and we wanted to do something about it.

The discovery — child literacy in the Caribbean — came with a challenge: how to give Caribbean kids access to high-quality, new and near-new books? Pondering all this as we sailed up to the US, we began imagining a way to get great books and vital school supplies to Eastern Caribbean schools on a wide scale. With fantastic help from corporate "angels" such as Harte-Hanks (warehouse services), AIT Worldwide (trucking), and Tropical Shipping (ocean shipping), all the while working with the nonprofit Boaters for Books, in 2008 we sent our first shipment, 25 boxes of books and ten boxes of teaching resources, to three Caribbean schools. Back then, it



Tom and schoolboys. Got books? Now let's build some bookshelves!

seemed like a lot — it was too much, after all, to carry on our boat. But we didn't realize that our journey with Hands Across the Sea was just beginning. There was a lot to learn about the challenge of child literacy, a lot to discover about how we could make a real difference in the lives of children in these islands. And we were on the road to find out.

We kept at it every year, refining and growing our mission, sailing between the Eastern Caribbean and New England, living aboard the whole time. We'd spend winters in the islands, leaving the boat every morning to hop on a bus or taxi and heading off to investigate schools we'd heard about.

—Continued on next page

GRENADINES SAILS & CANVAS • BEQUIA

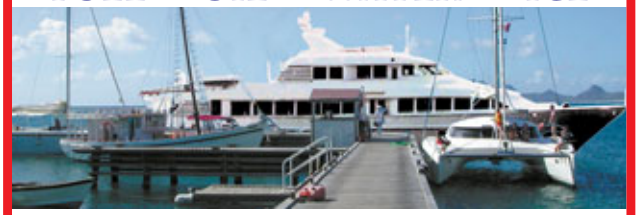


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—*Continued from previous page*

We'd listen to school principals, teachers, literacy advisors, remedial reading specialists, US Peace Corps Volunteers, and Ministry of Education officials, all of whom gave us a warm welcome and solid advice. And at every school we'd be thronged by kids, laughing, smiling, high-fiving, running, playing, singing. What an amazing



Primary students in St. Kitts reading books from Hands with a Peace Corps volunteer

discovery, this side of the Caribbean we'd somehow never seen! We'd come away convinced that there's no way anyone could visit a Caribbean school and not want to help out, not want to become a part of it.

Our part was getting needed school materials, from pencils to tempera paint to photocopiers and toner, to the teachers and getting top-notch books to the students. Every May we'd sail back to New England, where we'd spend the summer buying, sorting, and packing that year's shipment. Then, in late October, we'd sail back to the Caribbean and check in with our "adopted" schools — last season alone we visited over 60 schools, from Anguilla to Grenada. Our most recent shipment, in October of 2011, 51,470 new and near-new books and 95 boxes of teaching materials, weighed more than 19,000 pounds, filled an 18-wheeler truck, and went to 100 Hands-adopted projects.

So here we are in 2012, and Hands Across the Sea is now the largest public charity dedicated to raising the literacy levels of Eastern Caribbean children, from preschool to high school. We've shipped over 102,000 new and near-new books and 184 boxes of teaching resources to 178 schools, community libraries, reading programs, and youth centers, reaching over 37,000 children. We work on the islands of Anguilla, Antigua, St. Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and Grenada. For the 2011 shipment alone we coordinated with 41 US Peace Corps Volunteers and 94 school principals, department heads, or teachers, fulfilling their Hands Wish Lists of requested books and teaching resources. In 2011 the US Embassy selected us to create libraries for underserved high schools on six islands, and we partnered with The Sandals Foundation on several school library and youth center projects. And as Hands has grown we've learned three key things.

Send Great Books. First, we've learned that the "donation dumping" practice of charities that send throwaway books — library discards, worn-out, outdated, or inappropriate books — to Caribbean children is not only counterproductive but harmful. Hands Across the Sea purchases only new or near-new books published by Scholastic, Dorling-Kindersley, and Caribbean-niche imprints such as Macmillan Caribbean, LMH Publishing, and Campanita Books. Not only do kids respond to new, well-written and well-illustrated books with contemporary subject matter, the effect of "seeing themselves" in the books is powerful. Thus we are sending more and more books about the Caribbean, written and illustrated by Caribbean authors and artists.

Create Vibrant Libraries. Second, we've learned that books alone are not enough. We work only with schools whose staff are truly committed to improving literacy, and can draw on support from literacy coordinators and remedial reading teachers. The best way to make reading a part of children's lives is to create sustainable, high-functioning borrowing libraries, usually a school library. Doing so takes dedication and resources, along with substantial buy-in from school staff, parents, and members of the local community. Together with Peace Corps Volunteers in the region, we are developing guides for creating vibrant borrowing libraries in schools, often where no library existed before — in the school or the community.

Life is a Voyage. Third, Harriet and I have learned that cruising can still take us to new places. We never dreamed, for example, that we'd find ourselves in the front row of a classroom at Piaye Combined School in rural southern St. Lucia, being welcomed by a troupe of barefoot, costumed Creole dancers — yep, the students (Hands donated new books to the school's library, damaged by Hurricane Tomas). Or that we'd be wandering the playground of Fitz-Hughes Primary School in Chateaubelair, St. Vincent, as the entire school — teachers, too — joyously skipped rope (Hands donated five boxes of teaching resources, including jump ropes). Or, at the opening of the Hands-created Literacy Center at Isaiah Thomas Secondary School on Dominica, that we'd come suddenly face-to-face, eye-to-eye with a high school boy, tall and on the cusp of becoming a man, who fist-bumped us and then pressed his hand over his heart, rasta-style — *one love* — without saying a word. He didn't need to.

This Hands Across the Sea voyage, with all of its challenges and discoveries,



Harriet with young readers at the Stephanie Browne Primary School in Union Island

has been rewarding beyond anything we could have imagined. Harriet and I count ourselves lucky to be able to make a lasting difference in the Eastern Caribbean, this special place of beautiful islands and warm smiles. We count ourselves lucky to be able to slip behind the veil and become a small part of the life of the real Caribbean.

For more information visit www.handsacrossthesea.net.



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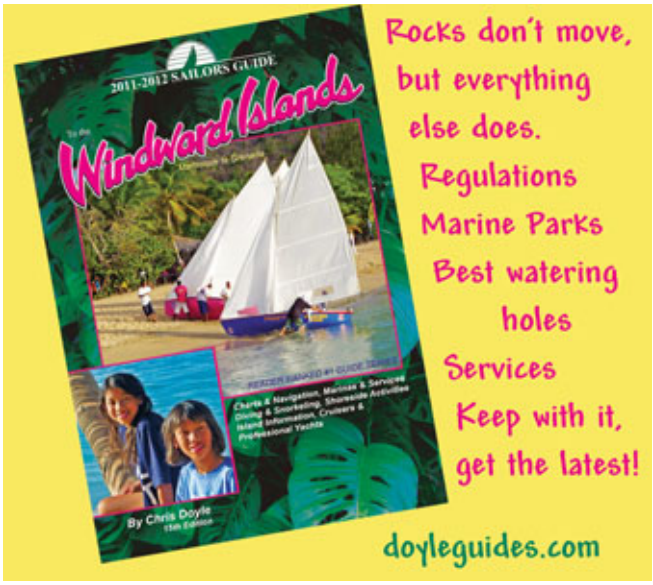
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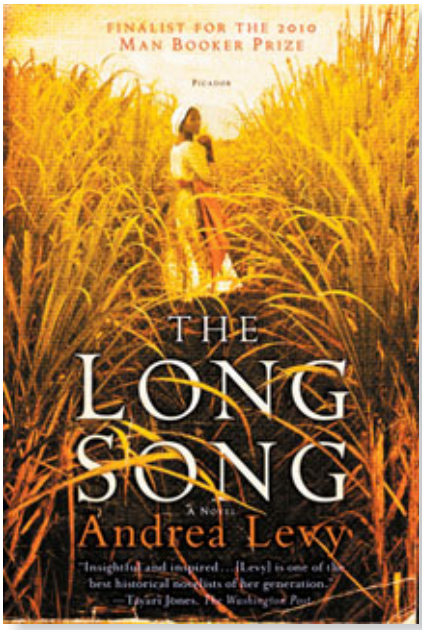
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BOOK REVIEW BY J. WYNNER

A FAMILIAR TUNE

***The Long Song**, by Andrea Levy. Picador 2010 edition, ISBN 978-0-312-57114-6.*

The Long Song is English-born Andrea Levy's rendition of a tune from a bygone era that people in the Americas and Caribbean region know only too well. The lyrics and arrangement may be somewhat different but the tune is familiar. In a story set in the birthplace of her parents, Jamaica, Levy recounts life during the closing period of slavery in the early 19th century on the Amity plantation, through narrator Miss July's storytelling.



The Long Song is a significant story about the ugly, brutal, oppressive institution of slavery; it is a book that has great value, but while reading it, I could not help but think that the author was knowingly and deliberately trying to weed out her reading audience as her narrator will attest to: "But before you slap this book shut in frustration at your storyteller having strayed so far from her tale, let me bring you back so you can find reason within this old woman's diversion".

Furthermore, Miss July regularly goes off key, interrupting the telling of her story to directly address the reader. "Reader, come with me to peer through a window of the great house." Not too many pages on, we again encounter, "Now, reader, although I have suffered hardships," and again further on, "Now, reader, it is not that your storyteller is indolent". These breaks in the flow of the story occur much too often, and can be irritating to some readers. Moreover, the drift between a third-person past and first person present did nothing to help this reader's attention span.

But these are not the only stressful distractions; the flow is additionally disrupted by the editorial advice of Miss July's long-lost son, Thomas Kinsman. The novel is presented as the memoir of his octogenarian mother by Kinsman, a well-off Jamaican printer who also penned the foreword and afterword.

But enough of these convoluted intrusions dear reader; except for the imposed writing style, the plot is a select one, with impressive character portrayals, chief of which is the spirited Miss July, child of Kitty, a field slave, and the churlish Amity overseer Tam Dewar's unwanted "rude act". Miss July grows up in the cane fields where she is taken every day by her mother. One day the child is spotted in the field by Caroline Mortimer, the recently transplanted widowed sister of Amity's owner, John Howarth. She is taken away from her mother to be renamed Marguerite and become Caroline's personal maid in the big house.

However, Miss July, or Marguerite, as Caroline calls her, soon hits the high notes: she becomes wise to the guiles of the slaves. They may be down, but they are not out, and they get back at their masters by means of passive resistance. When for the Christmas dinner the headman Godfrey instructs Miss July to put a bedsheet upon the table instead of the fine Irish linen tablecloth, "she began to smile, for she scented Godfrey's mischief."

The clatter the fiddlers played for the dinner guests was "unrecognizable as a tune". But they took all the right chords when they "played in the yard for the servants' gathering... no more clatter or unrecognizable tune — the sound of a sweet melody came whispering through the open window. For, like most slave fiddlers, it only amused them to play bad for white ears."

All told, Caroline's unfinished Christmas dinner turns out to be a comic fiasco, abruptly ending when the news arrives about the outbreak of the Baptist war and the male guests ride away to join the militia.

While John Howarth is away from Amity, Nimrod Freeman, a former slave and groom on the plantation, appears on the scene. He is fascinated by Miss July as much as she is with his purchased status. Miss July has their child soon after Nimrod is killed. She abandons the baby by the gate of the home of the Baptist minister and his wife. The couple gives the baby their name, Kinsman — Thomas Kinsman. When they return to England they take Thomas with them and provide him with a formal education.

Meanwhile back on the plantation, John Howarth returns from the war disgusted by the experience and commits suicide. Because his marriage was childless and his wife died shortly after his sister's arrival in Jamaica, Caroline assumes ownership of Amity. To help manage the estate — after the overseer, Tam Dewar, Miss July's father, is killed by her mother, Kitty, and a series of overseers prove unsuitable — Caroline finally settles on a clergyman's son, an Englishman, Robert Goodwin, who is brimming with noble ideals. Both Caroline and Miss July have their eyes on him. With this love interest in the book, the tale soars.

Except for the "dear reader" syndrome and offbeat timing, *The Long Song* is a noteworthy one, delivered by a sensitive voice.

This book is available at bookstores and on-line booksellers.

The Sky in February 2012

by Scott Welty

The Planets in February 2012

MERCURY - Will be at nearly maximum elongation (angular distance from the sun) at the end of the month. Look in the western horizon at dusk. If you see a 'star' on that western horizon it almost has to be Mercury. No other bright objects near it.

VENUS - Still a nice bright evening star in Pisces

EARTH - Feeling not so lonely these days

MARS - Rising between 2000 hours (early February) and 1730 hours and riding in Leo

JUPITER - Setting between 2300 hours (early February) and 2200 hours in Aries

SATURN - Rising an hour or two after Mars in Virgo



FIGURE 1

Sky Events This Month

7th - Full Moon

11th - Moon sandwiched between Saturn and Mars (Figure 1)

21st - New Moon

26th - Venus, Jupiter and the Crescent moon (Mercury, too?). (Figure 2)

28th - Moon and Pleiades

29th - HEY, it's a leap year (see below)

Leap Year

Yep, 2012 is a leap year because the number 2,012 is evenly divisible by four. Of course the reason for leap years is to keep the seasons in step with the earth's orbit. It takes the earth 364.2422 days to orbit the sun. If we just pretended that was 364 (or 364.25 like the Julian calendar did) we'd find the seasons getting out of whack with the calendar. Hundreds of years ago it was essential to know when it was time to plant your crops lest they get frozen at either end of the growing season. The decimal part is almost 0.25 so we add a day every fourth year to keep the seasons in line. But that's a little too much so every 100 years we should have a leap year but we do not — EXCEPT if that year is also divisible by 400. So 1900 was not a leap year but 2000 was. See?

Speaking of calendars, there is a proposed new calendar out there called the Hanke-Henry Permanent Calendar (Figure 3). Our present calendar is thanks to Pope Gregory in 1592! Time for a change? This new calendar features four sets of months of 30, 30, and 31 days. That makes 91 x 4 = 364 days. Close, although about

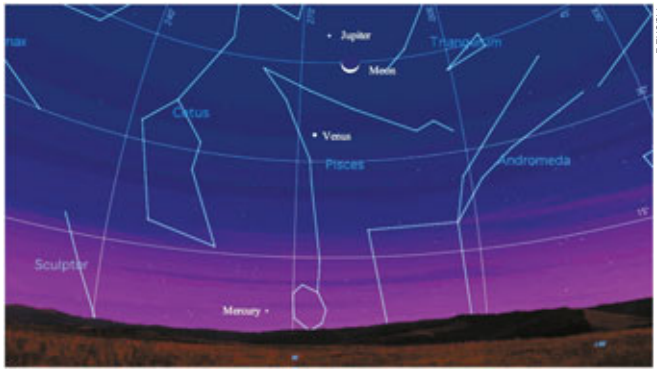


FIGURE 2

a day short, but what this does is guarantee that any particular DATE would always fall on the same DAY. For example July 12th would always be a Thursday. What about leap years and that missing day and change? Get this: every five or six years you insert an entire extra week! (Hmmm... could throw a spanner into sports schedules?) Stick it right on the end of the year and the whole planet gets either an extra week's vacation or an extra week of productivity. By inserting an entire week you

The Hanke-Henry Permanent Calendar

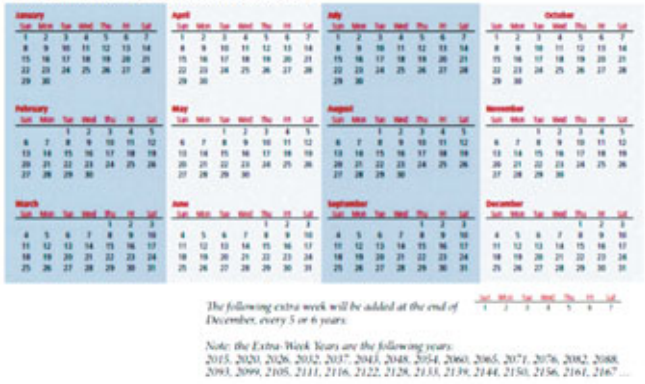


FIGURE 3

don't scramble the day-date connection. The authors point out that a more standard calendar would make financial dealings easier and save a pile of money. (For whom is unclear.) Oh, and the authors suggest we get rid of time zones and just have everyone use Universal time. So, when it's 7 o'clock it's 7 o'clock everywhere.

To Contemplate While Having a Glass of Wine on Deck

Speaking of time and rational calendars maybe it would make sense to mark years from the Big Bang instead of the birth of Christ, so this issue of *Compass* comes out on February 1st, 13,750,000,001. That might be a little cumbersome!

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





FEBRUARY 2012

♈ **ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)**
Venus enters Aries on the 8th to bring a high tide and fresh breeze to your love life. Give yourself up to some fun and relaxation and just enjoy it.

♉ **TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)**
This will be a light-hearted time for you and a good time to invest in cruising camaraderie. Get your friends together for a party on board for the full moon on the 7th.

♊ **GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)**
Time to hoist your creative sails and raise your verbal skills. There will be lots of opportunities to use both this month with positive results.

CANCER ♋ (22 Jun - 23 Jul)
Your love life may have to navigate some heavy swells this month, so strap on your harness and connect the autopilot; it may be a bumpy ride.

♌ **LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)**
Things will get hot and heavy in the romance department. Try not to burn yourself out in your enthusiasm for hogging the helm.

♍ **VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)**
Your energy will be wallowing in a trough of indecision so this could be a good time to set the hook and withdraw into a good book.

♎ **LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)**
Currents may be contrary in your love life so concentrate on your ingenuity and gift of the gab to keep you on a steady course.

♏ **SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)**
Hold your tongue this month or you could alienate crew and friends. Don't let inventive and communicative squalls blow you away; skies will clear and you'll get back on course in the third week.

♐ **SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)**
You will have light fluky winds on the course you have chosen, just enough to test your sense of humor but not enough to force you off course.

♑ **CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)**
There will be a few rain showers where romance is concerned after the 8th. Keep heading for your chosen landfall and work on finishing up boat projects to distract you from feeling sorry for yourself. Next month looks good for new interests and opportunities.

♒ **AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)**
Your creative juices are flowing. Crew and cruising pals are cooperative and will let you talk them into almost anything. You will make excellent headway during the first two weeks it you set your mind and your sails toward a specific goal.

♓ **PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)**
As romance sails out of the harbor your creative skills will be stimulated. Take advantage of this in the third week and your social life will be so busy you'll barely have time to mope.

Island Poets

Chanticleer

In other countries far away,
Cockerels crow at break of day,
But in these islands, all day long,
The cocks sing out their lusty song!

Are they dotish? Don't they know
That daybreak is the time to crow?
Not the middle of the night
When not a crack of dawn's in sight!

They shatter all my peace and quiet
With their unholy screeching riot.
Waking up and dropping off,
Erratic noise makes sleeping tough.

Maybe they think it turns on hens,
Perhaps it does, but then again,
I think the birds are making style,
Asserting presence, all the while

I'm plotting how I'll get a gun,
To shoot them, every single one!
Then I think with some contrition,
Are they worth the ammunition?

Perhaps some poison in their food?
But that would not do any good,
Hens would eat it. They would sicken,
What would I do without my chicken?

I like it roasted, boiled or fried,
Suppose my omelets were denied?
How I'd suffer! So I shrug
And go and buy some good earplugs!

— Nan Hatch



PASSAGES

Back on the mooring, we sit in the quiet
of the awning's darkening shade.
The waves are behind us now, in the wake
of the day's sail. No need for the cockpit drain
that spills the waters from the rain and spray.
We shift the gear to neutral and shut the engine
down. Silence, no rattling rpms to cover
Buffet singing from the weathered
speakers flanking the companionway.

The gel coat fades and ages in the evening
beneath the frayed flag, framed by the stays,
flying above the lazarettes's filigreed runes
that trace the days of errant years.
The jammer holds the molding sheet again,
the anemometer reads its gentle knots,
and the engine gauge measures a steady zero.
We swing about in the harbor's tides,
having come to port before the end of day.

When sailing, as in life, we need a compass
to chart the marks of our intended course
while sipping cabernet from plastic ware.

— by John Ranahan

jerry king



"I realize you love my boat, but you've been on it for nearly a month now. Do me a favor and go home."

CAUGHT AGAIN

by Lee Kessell

"You've got us both into trouble again, Trevor. What are we going to tell your uncle when he gets here?"

"Oh, I'll think of something, Ernie." But in truth Trevor was quaking in his shoes. If they had been in Barbados, Ernie's Uncle Solly would be easy to get around, but here in St. Lucia?

Trevor's Uncle Charles and his wife Marissa had offered to have Trevor and his cousin to stay with them for a week while Trevor's mum and dad took a week's holiday in Florida, but as usual, it wasn't long before Trevor's spirit of adventure had got them into trouble. It all started when Trevor asked his Uncle Charles if he and Ernie could take a transport down to Marigot Bay from Castries and spend the day swimming and poking about. Uncle Charles said it was okay, as Trevor was a year or so older than his cousin and appeared to be a sensible young man. He warned them to be home by 4:30 at the latest.

Trevor and Ernie set off with enough money to pay for their bus fares and to buy a bake and a soft drink for lunch. Once at Marigot Bay, a popular tourist resort with its beach and shady coconut palms, the boys hopped on a little ferry to the sand spit where they splashed about in the shallows, kicked water at each other and made a nuisance of themselves. They lay on their backs under the shade of a coconut palm and before long Trevor was hungry, thirsty and bored. He bought the bakes and fizzy sodas and wondered what else they could do. They had the whole afternoon before them.

Suddenly Trevor grabbed his towel, put on his flip-flops and said, "Come on, Ernie! We'll go on an expedition up and over the hill here and see what's on the other side. It's sure to be the sea, so we'll find a way down and catch a transport back from there."

Ernie didn't like the sound of this at all and said so. What if they couldn't get down to the sea and what if transports didn't run from there? But Trevor was always confident and said he was going anyway and Ernie could stay behind. Poor Ernie, he had to follow because how could he go back without Trevor?

The boys followed a trodden path easily half way up the hill, then it petered out and now Trevor led the way through a thicket of brambles, clinging vines and shrubs overhung by tall trees. Ernie stopped himself from complaining about the scratches and itches on his legs and arms or that his flip-flops kept on catching on roots and spiky things, throwing him onto his hands, and of course Trevor pretended he enjoyed it all and managed to whistle a tune or two.

At last they reached the top of the ridge, red in the face and dying of thirst but there below them was a little bay and the bright blue sea. They scrambled down beside the high, chain link fence that turned out to be the border of the Hess Oil Company tank farm, and threw themselves into the water.

"We've done it!" crowed Trevor, but Ernie wailed, "Where is the road? Where is the transport? We'll have to go all the way back again."

But Trevor refused to give up. "We'll sneak through the fence and get back to the road in a jiffy." So he climbed up along the fence until he found a break in the bottom of the chain link that some animal had undermined and pushed himself through. Ernie followed but he protested loudly, "We'll be caught for trespassing and get into a lot of trouble."

"Poof, what can they do, jail us?"

Well, Ernie was right and as the boys walked along behind a huge tank, a guard with a gun holster at his side came towards them, "Where do you think you're going?"

Trevor stammered out his story, but the guard took out his handcuffs, cuffed the two boys together and prodded them up to the main gate.

"Boys like you end up in criminal court. Who's responsible for you? Your dad?"

Trevor told the guard about his Uncle Charles and gave the man his telephone number and that's where our story began. When Trevor saw the thunderous look on his uncle's face he couldn't think of any excuse and the two boys had to listen to a lecture from the guard and then face the music from Uncle Charles. After they had climbed into the back seat of the car, they all sat in stony silence until they were almost back to Castries when Uncle Charles pulled off the road, turned around to face the frightened faces of the boys and gave them a tongue lashing that they would never forget. They were sent to a training camp for the rest of the week where discipline was strictly enforced. Trevor had ample time to repent and Ernie to ignore his cousin.

The only good part was that Uncle Charles said he would say nothing to Trevor's father because he didn't want to upset him and he warned the boys to do the same. Trevor was all for that and told his mum and dad what a great time they had at the camp, but could he stay with Ernie in Barbados the next time?

The End

A Tribute to Captain Hugh Mulzac

by Norman Faria

The St. Vincent & the Grenadines Coast Guard ship named after Captain Hugh Mulzac was recently decommissioned. The African Heritage Foundation of St. Vincent & the Grenadines made attempts to have his namesake ship converted into a museum rather than being scrapped. Who was Hugh Mulzac?

Hugh Mulzac was born in 1886 on Union Island in the Grenadines. He went to sea after high school, sailing on British vessels. He later attended the Nautical School in Swansea, in the United Kingdom, earning a mate's license. He sailed as a ship's officer in World War I, and went to the United States, becoming a citizen in 1918.

He was an important person in the early US civil rights struggles of "people of colour" which included Hispanics, Asiatics and native Indian peoples. He was the first African-American to obtain a US Master's License. This was the rank of Captain, which qualified him to skipper an ocean-going cargo ship. Captain Mulzac assisted immeasurably in opening the doors for a more equitable and just working environment for all races in the merchant marine service. This was at a time when the only jobs at sea for ethnic minorities were as cooks and stewards — in contrast with today when many large US navy and "cargo boats", as islanders refer to merchant marine vessels, are captained by non-white officers.

Captain Mulzac's early days in the US were frustrating. He got a job as a Mate on the aging tramp steamer *Yarmouth* belonging to Marcus Garvey's all black-owned and black-crewed Black Star Line. That line went on the rocks because of institutional opposition to the firm's owners, Garvey's United African Improvement Association. In 1922, Captain Mulzac went back to cook and steward jobs whenever they came along. It was hard, as he had a wife and four children to support.



Captain Hugh Mulzac (at center, wearing glasses) with fellow officers of the Booker T. Washington

At that time, the seamen's trade unions and other organizations had a fairly democratic system where seamen were hired through the union halls. Captain Mulzac got involved with the National Maritime Union, which was formed in 1937. Part of this democratic dimension was the union's multi-racial policies: both black and white seafarers were apparently treated equally by the labour body. Such a progressive outlook, however, did not extend to the hiring practices of most shipping companies.

It was easy for Mulzac to support multi-racialism, not only because his grandfather, a plantation owner who once cultivated cotton on Union Island, was white. A sensitive man educated at St. Vincent's Boys' Grammar School, Hugh Mulzac undoubtedly observed the injustices and discriminatory practices against people of colour in the US at the time. There was a shameful incident when the young (aged 21) Mulzac tried to attend church when his ship called at Wilmington, in the state of North Carolina. He was refused entry because of his colour. His involvement, which he always defended as his democratic right in the great traditions of the US, with the union channeled this hatred of racial discrimination along a constructive trajectory working for the unity of all the races.

In October 1942 during World War II, as the USA got more involved in the Allied effort to defeat Hitler's Facist regime, Captain Mulzac at age 56 was given command of the Liberty ship *Booker T. Washington*. At first, in keeping with the times where crew on both naval and cargo boats were segregated, the authorities wanted to assign only a black crew to the ship. Captain Mulzac refused to sail under what he called a "Jim Crow" arrangement. As he wrote in his autobiography, *A Star To Steer By*: "I wanted the most experienced crew the NMU could supply." For Mulzac, this meant crew of whatever race. The US Maritime Commission relented.

The *Booker T. Washington*, carrying vital war supplies such as tanks, aircraft and ammunition to the European front, made 22 successful round trips across the North Atlantic. Partly by skill and partly by luck, those on board managed to avoid being torpedoed by the German submarines. The subs sank hundreds of other cargo boats with the loss of many sailors. The efficient operation of Mulzac's ship was a model for others to emulate.

In 1947, after the War ended, the ship's owners laid up the vessel. Captain Mulzac was out of work. He was then 61. He tried his hand at painting maritime scenes and also started a wall-painting business.

At this time, the anti-left current in US politics known as McCarthyism unjustly blacklisted Captain Mulzac for his involvement in progressive and democratic causes. For example, Mulzac ran as a candidate for president of the borough of Queens in New York City on the American Labor Party ticket. He lost but received a relatively high 15,500 votes. The New York-based party was much like the social democratic Labour Party in the UK and later in the Caribbean islands. For this and other perceived indiscretions, he was blacklisted and his Master's license revoked. He could not, for instance, get a captain's job when the Korean War broke out, because he was deemed a "security risk".

He fought back and in 1960 a federal judge restored his license. He was then 74. He died in New York that same year.

I read Captain Mulzac's fascinating book during the 1980s and am indebted to most of the fresh information in this article to the Wikipedia website article on Captain Mulzac and various newspaper articles about him that have appeared.

We must remember Vincentian-born Captain Hugh Mulzac. Not only because of his record as a sea captain and his pioneer work in the US civil rights struggles, but also to remind us that immigrants to all countries are generally beneficial additions to a better all-round society.

The late Norman Faria was a recreational sailor, a seaman on the Geest line, and Guyana's Honorary Consul in Barbados.



by Liesbet Collaert

"I'm throwing a party this Saturday and you guys are more than welcome to join," Sep offers, while Mark and I sip from our rum and Cokes. "Oh, and feel free to bring your friends," he adds.

We are the only customers, this Thursday evening. After a meager barbecue meal at a restaurant by the water, we wanted to check out Nimrod's Rum Shop. It was hard to believe that we had never made the effort to visit, after hearing a lot about the place from other "local-minded" cruisers and reading about it in Ann Vanderhoof's book *An Embarrassment of Mangoes*. The stories were true: Woburn is a small Grenada town with grand hospitality and friendly people. Nimrod's is the prime example.

Owner Sep, epitome of friendliness, courteousness and relaxedness shares his stories, his smiles, his "bush rum" (wow!) and anything else he has his hands or lips on, while we take in the bar scene. His Rum Shop has a few shelves behind the desk, containing a small selection of dried and canned goods, sodas and eggs. People do shop here, but my guess is they need to visit at least ten more of these little shops to provision for the week. Most swing by for a glass of rum or a local beer and the owner "has to" participate frequently, which contributes to his happy state of mind. For people like us, Sep has some ice in his freezer, which he serves cut up in a tray, and small bottles of Coke to dilute the Special Dark. Above the door to another room hangs a sign: "Mind the Sep". He's a funny guy as well!

We convince our friends Sim and Rosie from *S/V Alianna* to leave their rolly "home base" in Prickly Bay and join us in Clarke's Court Bay for the weekend. The promise of free food, a local party, a calm anchorage and pretty environs, gets them to lift the hook and round the corner. When 5:00PM Saturday arrives and the afternoon rain showers diminish, the four of us make a move to Nimrod's, not quite sure what to expect. A welcoming Sheldon saying "How are you doing? Welcome to the party! Everybody say EEEYOOH!" sets the mood. During most of the evening, he will accompany us and entertain with famous songs and funny stories. Also during this evening our "quarter" bottle of rum magically remains full, being topped off by generous rum offerings…



Left to right: The author, with her husband, Mark, and friends Sim and Rosie at Nimrod's

Once our little group has ordered the first round of drinks, we take seats on the outdoor patio at the lower level of Nimrod's Rum Shop. We are the only white people around. The other visitors hang out by the bar or in the kitchen, where an oil down — one of Grenada's local and famed dishes — is being prepared in a big aluminum pot. We girls are invited into the den to follow the process. The pot is filled with root vegetables, dumplings, breadfruit, callaloo and meat. It will boil for an extended amount of time, before it is served to all present. When I jokingly ask whether the dish contains chicken feet or fish eyes, the answer is "Of course not! Our oil down is prepared with chicken necks, pig snouts and pig tails!" A conversation ensues about the difference between a pig nose and a pig snout.

—Continued on next page





Preparing Grenada's national dish: oil down. Callaloo (dasheen) leaves are added last
Inset: Yummy fish broth made with octopus and sea urchins

—Continued from previous page

When the music is cranked up, the boom boxes blare reggae, soca and calypso and we can't keep up any conversation anymore, our company moves to another table under the big breadfruit tree. Before long, the first dish of free local food is served. The darkness obscures any recognizable (and unrecognizable) shapes on our plates, so we gobble most of it up, appreciating the hospitality of our new friends. When a bite reveals something very fatty or boney, we have the solution in the form of a hungry stray dog sitting between our chairs. Our table consists of cruisers of four nationalities and all of us enjoy each other's company, the local setting and the abundance of food.



Mark and Sep at the well-worn bar of Nimrod's Rum Shop

While more stories and songs are being exchanged and more rum is being imbibed, another dish is in the making. It is called "fish broth" and (based on the bag of tiny particles the cook showed us earlier and the tentacles with suction cups we decipher from our flash pictures) involves sea urchins and octopus. It is too dark to see anything, but the broth tastes yummy. No begging four-footer needed this time, just a little bit of extra rum and Coke to help swallow the bits down. When "cruiser's bedtime" arrives, our full bellies, light heads and smiling Grenadian friends confirm a successful, fun and entertaining evening at Nimrod's.

The hospitality of the Woburn people exceeded all stories and the experience was one of a kind. After saying goodbye to our hosts, entertainers and cooks, we exchanged the land for the sea again, with a promise to come back. If it's not for a sip of *babash*, then it is for the island's best rotis, another Nimrod specialty worth mentioning! Most likely, we'll return for both....

Liesbet Collaert and her husband, Mark Kilty, are cruising the Caribbean aboard the catamarn Irie. *Visit Liesbet's blog at www.itsirie.com.*







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BVI ON THE CHEAP

by Mark Denebeim

In today's troubled economic climate it's good to know there are still some deals out there, even in the pricey British Virgin Islands. Of course, any time you anchor and snorkel and go ashore for a hike is free, but what follows is a list of good eats at good prices, and things to do that won't cost you much if anything, all in the beautiful BVI. (All telephone area codes are 284; prices are in US$)

Virgin Gorda

The Mine Shaft Café has great views west above the Valley and a rustic miniature golf course, inexpensive burgers, ribs and rotis. Tel 495-5260.



Happy Aaarrgh. Hangin' with the pirate at Saba Rock

SABA ROCK

Happy hour from 4:00 to 6:00PM, every day includes $2.50 Painkillers, Rum Punch and Carib Beers (it's normally $8.25 for the mixed drinks and $5 for the beer). Enjoy the hammocks and view on the east side, free. Tel 495-7711.

Every day at 5:00PM watch Josie feed the three-foot-long tarpon, free.

Grab a mooring for US$25 and get up to 200 gallons of water and a free bag of ice at their docks.

LEVERICK BAY

Tell them you want the Traveltalkonline discount and you get a spot on the dock for $30, which includes up to 200 gallons of water and a bag of ice. (You pay $25 on a mooring.) Swim in the fresh water pool. Tel 495-7421.

Michael Bean's one-man show, Monday through Thursday, 5:00 to 7:00PM. Jumby dancers and live band on Fridays, free.

THE BATHS

In addition to taking the normal trek through these amazing boulders, make sure to explore the far end of Devil's Bay (avoid Wednesday cruise ship day), then climb up to Top of the Baths and enjoy the spectacular view and swimming pool, free.

Jost Van Dyke

Anchor in White Bay and enjoy the cool beach bars and free ring toss at Soggy Dollar, or just hang out in the water with your own drink from the boat, free.

Enjoy the BVI's only Chip & Putt Two Hole Golf Course in front of Ali Baba's Restaurant, Great Harbor; chip on to the natural green from the world's largest sand trap and putt back and forth between the two cups with flags. Get clubs and balls from Ali Baba, free. Tel 495-9280.

Camp at White Bay Campground next to Ivan's: $65 for a cabin, $45 for an equipped tent, $25 for a bare campsite. Chill at Ivan's all day, free. Tel 495-9312.

Norman Island

Grab a mooring at the Indians, Pelican Island, The Caves or Privateer Bay and snorkel the best the BVI has to offer, free (park fees may apply). Anchor in the Bight on the east side just above the floating bar *Willie T*, free. Then enjoy the show at *Willie T*, free (unless you just have to have a drink or two!).

Tortola

ROAD TOWN/OTHER

There is decent Chinese food at Simply Delicious on Nibbs Road; $6 for two selections plus rice. Tel 494-8766.

The Chicken Shack in the parking lot across from Bobby's offers $3 chicken legs and $8 ribs.

Enjoy Reuben Chinnery on guitar at the Bananakeet, Carrot Bay, Fridays, 7:00PM, free. Tel 494-5842.

Listen to MJ Blues on guitar at Village Cay Marina, Wednesdays, 7:00PM, free.

Hike to the top of Mt. Sage National Park, elevation 1,780 feet, and enjoy the view. Pick magic mushrooms on the way down. The Park fee is $2, the 'shrooms are free if you find the right cow dung. Getting up the hill requires an expensive taxi, so try to hitchhike instead.

Captain Mulligan's Golf Driving Range and Nine Hole Mini Golf at Nanny Cay was expected to open as this issue of Compass went to press. Under $10 for a bucket of balls or nine holes. Tel 494-0602.

The Fish Fry in Apple Bay offers local grilled fish, cheap.

Watch the races at Ellis Thomas Downs horse track at Sea Cows Bay, once a month or so.

Check out Bomba's Full Moon Party at Apple Bay, free entry. Tel 495-4148.

Surf the point at Canegarden Bay, or try Brewer's or Apple, when there is a north swell, free.

Visit the JR O'Neal Botanical Gardens, Road Town, Monday through Friday, 8:00AM to 4:00PM, $3 visitors, $1 locals. Tel 494-4557.

CANEGARDEN BAY

Don't go when the cruise ships are in!

The Elmtones play live on Friday and Sunday nights at 7:00PM at the Elm, free. (Great barbecue also, but not cheap.) But the Happy Table will make you forget what we were just talking about!

Enjoy $3 beers (most brands) at Rhymer's. Burgers and hot dogs at Stanley's Welcome Bar are $2 to $5, all day. There are also Happy Hour $2 tacos at The Clubhouse at Frenchman's.

Trellis Bay

The best rotis in the BVI are at the Trellis Bar at the Trellis Bay Market: $6 for vegetable and $7 for chicken. Their $3 meat pies (baked, not fried) highlight this popular lunch spot for the local workers and others in the know.

Try the awesome $12 fish sandwich at Trellis Kitchen, and Jeremy is worth the price of admission. Try to follow him as he spews irrelevant quotes while you attempt to place your order… or are they irrelevant? Tel 495-2447.

Don't miss the Full Moon Party for the family at Trellis Kitchen and Aragon's, with Jumby dancers, music and fire balls, free.

Bellamy Cay

The Last Resort offers a unique one-man original music show on most nights in season, free, with free shuttle from shore to the island. Tel 495-2520.

Free WiFi

Free WiFi is available at Saba Rock and The Bitter End on Virgin Gorda; Cooper Island Resort; Pirates at Norman Island; Trellis Bay Market, de Loose Mongoose and the Last Resort at Trellis Bay; Foxy's, Ivan's Stress Free and the Soggy Dollar on Jost Van Dyke; Village Cay Marina and The Pub in Road Town; and at Nanny Cay Residences and Pusser's West End on Tortola.

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PEPPER HEAT

Caribbean cuisine is almost synonymous with hot peppers. Are you one of those who brag they can eat the hottest hot pepper and live to tell? Who decides which pepper is the hottest, and how do they do it?

Peppers are members of the Capsicum genus and capsaicin is the chemical compound that stimulates/irritates nerve endings in the skin, especially the mucus membranes of the mouth and nose. Because of this irritant ability capsaicin is also the active ingredient in riot control and personal defense pepper sprays, or Mace. When the spray comes in contact with skin, and especially eyes, it is very painful.

So how much capsaicin and "heat" does a pepper have? That can be measured by the number of Scoville heat units, which indicate the amount of capsaicin present (see chart below). Many hot sauces use their Scoville rating as an advertising gimmick. A solution of pepper extract is diluted in sugar water until the heat is no longer detectable to a panel of tasters. The degree of dilution rates each pepper type on the Scoville scale. Thus a sweet pepper, containing no capsaicin at all, has a Scoville rating of zero, meaning no heat detectable even undiluted. However, the hottest chillis, such as habanero, have a rating of 300,000 or more, indicating their extract needs to be diluted 300,000 times before the capsaicin is undetectable. The only problem with the Scoville Test is it relies on human subjectivity of the tasters.

Pepper heat is also measured by using high performance liquid chromatography known as the 'Gillett Method'. This identifies capsaicin chemicals and weighs them to the ability to produce a sensation of heat.

Both 'heat' testing methods are quite variable and, although a good subject for conversation, conjecture and comparison, neither can be deemed accurate or precise. Let your own taste buds determine what is hot and hotter. When you taste a pepper, especially with the seeds and inner membrane, it is common to experience a pleasurable, almost sweet taste initially. This might only last for a split second before the gag reflex takes over, and you rush for a heat extinguisher. Cold milk is the most effective solution against the burning sensation, and a cold sugar-water solution is almost as effective. The burning sensation will slowly fade away in no more than six hours if no remedies are taken.

Why do people love the taste and pain associated with the hot pepper? The pain caused by the capsaicin causes endorphins to be generated in the body. Endorphins are "pleasure chemicals", and their bodily response lasts longer than the heat/pain sensation.

Trinidad's Got the Hottest

What is the hottest pepper? According to the most recent Guinness Book of World Records, Trinidad's Scorpion Butch T pepper is the hottest pepper in the world. A laboratory test conducted in March 2011 measured a specimen of Trinidad Scorpion Butch T at 1,463,700 Scoville units. According to Wikipedia, this pepper is a strain of the Trinidad Scorpion named after Butch Taylor, the owner of a hot sauce company who is responsible for propagating the pepper's seeds. The peppers are called "scorpion" because the pointed end of the pepper is said to resemble a scorpion's stinger.

Want to have the hottest cockpit? Grow hot peppers in pots. Soil should be well drained with a pH of 7 to 8.5, with exposure to full sun and minimal water, just right for a boat's galley garden.



Did You Know?

The heat from a hot pepper is concentrated in the interior veins or ribs near the seed heart, not in the seeds as is commonly believed. Seeds taste extra hot because they are in close contact with the hot veins. Hot pepper and hot sauces can make foods safer because they reduce harmful bacteria on foods. A quarter of the people on planet Earth eat hot pepper every day.

A Jalapeño Eating Championship held every May in San Antonio, Texas invites the world's greatest speed eaters to consume as many jalapeño peppers as possible in eight minutes. Last year, Patrick Bertoletti ate 275 fiery peppers.

Health Note

Cayenne peppers are reported to reduce blood cholesterol. Chili peppers are said to inhibit the development of atherosclerosis. Capsaicin helps clear mucus from your stuffed up nose or congested lungs. More importantly, recent research has indicated that red chili peppers' capsaicin may reduce and even stop the spread of prostate cancer cells. Eating hot peppers can help you lose weight — all that heat after eating hot chili peppers takes energy and calories to produce! Hot peppers may also help reduce the risk of high blood levels of insulin associated with Type 2 diabetes.

SCOVILLE HEAT UNITS	PEPPER TYPES
15,000,000–16,000,000	Pure capsaicin
5,000,000–5,300,000	Law enforcement-grade pepper spray
855,000–1,463,700	Trinidad Scorpion, Naga Viper
350,000–580,000	Red Savina habanero
100,000–350,000	Habanero, Scotch bonnet
50,000–100,000	Byadgi chilli, Bird's Eye chilli
30,000–50,000	Cayenne, Tabasco pepper
10,000–23,000	Serrano
3,500–8,000	Jalapeño, Tabasco sauce
1,000–2,500	Anaheim, Poblano chilli
100–900	Pimento, Peperoncini, Banana pepper
0	Bell pepper



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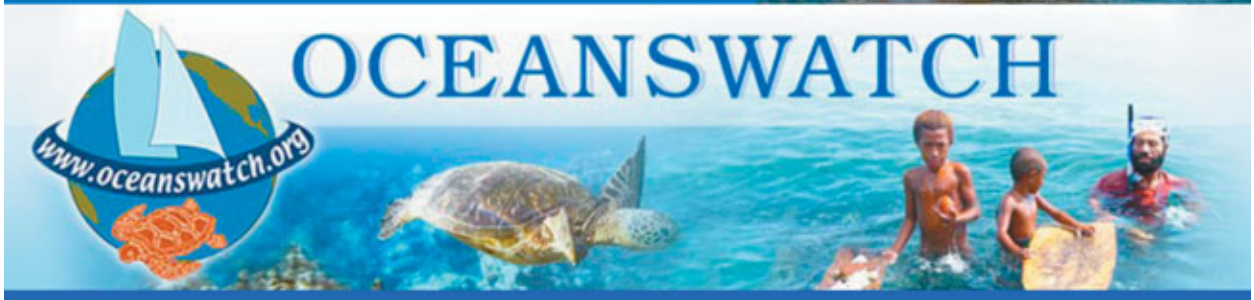
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Dear *Compass*,
I just read the article "Fiberglass Boats and Damage Control" by Hugo du Plessis in the November 2004 issue of *Caribbean Compass* and agree with his assessment that it will be impossible to get to the hull to do any type of damage control. So my question: When I think about damage control on my boat I start to think about a bigger pump to remove the water, but I think that's also flawed because I have no idea as to the volume of water coming through, say, a three-foot diameter hole at three feet under the water. Is there a chart showing the rate of flow of water through different-size holes at different depths?
Jerry Howard

Hi Jerry,
We forwarded your letter to Hugo du Plessis, marine surveyor and author of the comprehensive reference book Fibreglass Boats *(now in its fifth edition), whose response appears below.*
By the way, we wonder where you found a copy of the November 2004 issue of Compass*! Our on-line archive only starts with 2007. If any other readers would like a copy of Hugo's informative article, e-mail sally@caribbeancompass.com and we'll e-mail you a copy. Better yet, buy his book.*
CC

Dear Jerry,
Calculation of water flow through a smooth pipe is basic engineering technology. Any book of basic engineering tables will probably help. I bought my copy of the small *Pocket Book of Engineering Tables* by Professor Lowe, written in 1888, when a first-year engineering student and have referred to it often throughout my career. From this and other tables your answer is *approximately* 50 gallons a minute (proper Imperial gallons, of course).
But the most important part is that word "approximately". The calculation of water flow is so bound up with constants and allowances for different shapes that it is really not much help when dealing with any orifice other than a smooth pipe. And "another orifice" is what you will have in the event of damage to a fiberglass hull.
A nice round hole suggests a plumbing fault and any boat without accessible sea cocks (throughhulls) in working order — which few on survey ever are — is not safe to go to sea. (In any case, more boats sink in harbour through defective plumbing than shipwreck or storms.)
Fibreglass always fails by splitting (single or linked splits), like torn trousers. A hole can be formed only through multiple impacts such as result from pounding. Therefore you will usually be faced with a jagged split of unknown length and shape, ragged-edged and of unknown width, at varying depth, plus random impact from waves, all of which and more are relative. Your computer, which every boat (except mine!) nowadays cannot apparently put to sea without, would almost certainly be the first thing put out of action by the rising water.
I think you are looking at this from the wrong end. In practice I suggest you should consider the largest pump you a) can afford; b) have power for in any form including manual; c) have space to fit; d) can run for hours (e.g. what is required by an accident mid-ocean or on a coral reef); e) can back-up for failure, blockage, loss or exhaustion of power; and f) …plenty more.
Then accept that fate will always decree that the damage is worse than you have planned for.
Sorry I cannot be more scientific but this is not really a scientific question. There are just too many imponderable factors. Rules and regulations are only guidance to prevent builders fitting the least they think they can get away with.
Best wishes,
Hugo du Plessis
Lymington, England

Dear *Compass*,
In the May 2011 issue of *Compass* there was an absolutely interesting Letter of the Month from Stuart Dalgliesh, asking, "Is there an insurmountable rift between the sailing 'yachties' and the power boaters in general?"
You always have to see issues from both sides. I think the biggest problem between sailing and motor vessels is the use of a generator. For years, cruisers work on the principle of "going green", which means enjoying nature with all its beauty and using as little fuel as possible. Every one of us has to calculate how many amps will be needed to satisfy all our electrical needs. Therefore we equip our boats with solar panels and wind generators to charge up our battery banks.
But what is it with the motor cruisers? They run their generators 24 hours a day, as long as they are in any anchorage, explaining that they have a modern boat with all the electrical equipment that is available. This is only possible for Trinis and Venezuelans, where the cost for fuel is close to nothing. If they had to pay US$9 per gallon, as we have to pay in Martinique, for example, things would no doubt be completely different.
We cruising sailors live for many years on our boats. Don't think we are old-fashioned or poorly equipped. We live a modern and up-to-date life. We have a stove and oven, a fridge, some have a freezer; all of us have a computer and a radio running, and watch videos. A lot of us even have a watermaker and a washing machine. We also have a generator, but we don't have that cracker box running for 24 hours! And if we are, let's say, three and more weeks in an isolated anchorage — where should the fuel come from? Fact is that power boaters tend to be only short-term visitors in any anchorage. We cruising sailors have to show patience for them, and can easily await the moment when they have to go back to their fuel stations down south.
I ask the motor cruisers whether they would like it if someone parked his car in front of their house and let the motor run for 24 hours? Or the neighbour ran a gas generator day and night? Would you like that? If your answer is NO, then you have to think about endlessly using your generator on your boat!
On weekends the power boaters, especially in Trinidad, come out into the bays like bees from a beehive. They lay anchor, mostly with a line to the trees ashore. Fine, they are able to do so, because they do not have a six- to eight-foot draft like our sailing yachts have. Now comes the point I don't understand: the powerboat's engine is shut off, but the generator runs endlessly till the end of the holiday. These people come out to be in nature, but they don't hear the birds singing, the frogs croaking, all the other different sounds and the smells of the jungle. Although some of them have really nice and gentle music that we sailors can enjoy in the dark evening hours, others put the radio on at such high volume that the sound blasts the narrow bay from all sides. Maybe they need that noise level to drown out the noise of their generators.
Cruisers who have spent time in Trinidad have already gotten used to this phenomenon. We anchor somewhere else while the power boaters use their bays from Friday afternoon till Sunday evening — as noisy and smelly as they want. (I mention as well the huge amounts of small motor vessels, filled with people with beer and other alcoholic drinks in hand, coming into Scotland Bay on Sundays at about 5:00PM, to circle around at high speed and give their last hurrah. It gives to me the impression of the impulsive finale in a concert. I think that a wind generator on top of a powerboat doing 20 knots would charge quite a lot into the batteries.) We sailors then have the bays from Sunday night during the week till Friday with all of nature's silence, natural beauty, singing birds, climbing monkeys, croaking frogs, glow worms, and bats.
Looking at the theme from this trade-off perspective, the two groups get along quite well together.
I wish happy cruising and secure anchoring to all motor and sailing cruisers. Enjoy life, but not always at the expense of the nerves of others, and with a bit of acceptance of your neighbours — we are not alone!
To everyone, all the best for 2012,
Angelika Gruener
S/V Angelos

Hello *Compass*,
I just want to write to you about the so-proclaimed Marine Protected Area around Sandy Island in Carriacou. I know you have covered this issue already in your magazine quite often but I want to inform you and other readers about our experience.
The whole park is just a moneymaking thing out of us boaters. There is nobody who protects anything: the only reason is to collect money from us!
My wife and I came in the beginning of December to Carriacou and while we stayed there we also wanted to enjoy some time around Sandy island and go diving, as now, with the marine protected area, there should be more fish around — this is what we read in your magazine was the whole intention of this park.
One day during our stay around Carriacou we went across to Sandy Island and picked up a mooring buoy.
—Continued on next page



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—Continued from previous page

One hour later the patrol boat came and collected a US$10 fee for the day. Later this day when I jumped in the water to have a look at our mooring I was surprised to see that those moorings are way too short and not safe, as on our mooring line the splicing had already started to open up. The rest of the day we enjoyed our time on Sandy Island, which is really nice and has now a big park sign on the beach.

The next morning we woke up on our boat and were quite surprised that we saw a couple of local fishing boats anchored around Mabouya Island and also one on Sandy Island, because we thought that it is not allowed to fish or anchor inside the park. We had two dives arranged for this day with a local dive shop. We were told that there is now another park fee for divers of US$2 per day or US$10 for a year. When we got picked up from our boat at Sandy Island we went first with the dive shop out to the Sisters, which is supposed to be really great diving.



Protected or not? Fishing activities in Carriacou's Marina Park have visitors wondering

On the way out we saw three more fishing boats which were towing lines inside the park and another one circling around the Sisters.

The diving itself on the Sisters was spectacular with a shark and eagle rays. It was one of the best dives we have done in the Caribbean. After this dive we went to Mabouya Island for another great dive but on the way over we saw again one of the fishing boats we had seen earlier, still towing lines inside the park. We also passed two fish pots close to Mabouya. After we saw this we decided to leave the Sandy Island park and moved further on to Hillsborough.

The park doesn't protect anything, as the fisherman are still fishing as usual inside the park and the park rangers just might be coming out to collect the mooring fees. And if we dive inside the park we have to pay another fee on top. FOR WHAT? Those fees are definitely NOT for protecting the environment and reefs as nobody cares. We spoke also to other boats and they told us that they had complained already about this to the park rangers but they do not do anything about this issue. And the patrol boat comes out only for a couple minutes a day to Sandy Island to collect money from us yachts and that is it.

We will not stay inside the park in the near future. We are not willing to pay another dollar for unsafe moorings, which, by the way, are way too close to each other. And we also will not pay another dollar for diving or snorkeling inside a park that doesn't protect anything except maybe the fishermen who are fishing there every day. We are supporting marine parks by any means but as long as nobody really cares about the Sandy Island area, which is in our opinion really worth protecting, we refuse to pay another dollar!

Kind regards,
Calvin and Sheryl
Boat Name Withheld by Request

Dear Calvin and Sheryl,

We passed your letter on to Davon Baker of the Sandy Island/Oyster Bed Marine protected Area. His response appears below.
CC

Dear Calvin and Sheryl,

My name is Davon Baker, and I chair the volunteer, stakeholder board that has oversight for the Sandy Island/Oyster Bed Marine Protected Area (SIOBMPA). Your e-mail was forwarded to me by two receiving parties, including the *Caribbean Compass*. I am happy to take a few minutes to respond to your concerns.

When I first read your complaints, I spoke with one of our wardens. He explained that quite often, users are of the perception that absolutely no fishing is allowed within the MPA. SIOBMPA, however, does allow for traditional seine fishing, with some restrictions. This is because we understand the need to have a balance between conservation and the social and economic needs of a people who are very dependent on the sea for their livelihoods. The allowed seine fishing is not supposed to impact on the species we seek to protect.

Now, let me hasten to say that having reread your letter, the instances you specifically described I do not think all fall within the "safe" practice of seine fishing, which the SIOBMPA allows. And even in the cases where fishing activity is allowed, the boats should certainly not anchor within the protected area. Towing [a fishing line], also, should definitely not happen within SIOBMPA. I have personally seen towing happen, and have had a fisherman speak "fisherman's language" to us (Grenada's National MPA Coordinator and myself) when we intercepted his boat. I regret to know that not only does it happen, but that it seems to be quite prevalent. As an organization, we must not be seen as a body whose actions fail to match what we teach. I do understand the frustrations that may have led you to conclude that SIOBMPA is strictly about money. However, I can assure you this is certainly not the intent of the project and the declaration of a protected area.

At the same time we must remember that active MPA work in Grenada is fairly new, and we are learning as we go. SIOBMPA has been around for a mere 17 months. This project is slowly but steadily finding its legs, relying on very limited resources, both human and otherwise. However, it forges ahead, intent on protecting Carriacou's priceless marine resources. With the help of users like yourself, we can learn from our mistakes and redouble our efforts to achieve our conservation goals. We should, however, be careful not to suddenly expect "there should be more fish around". Marine conservation, I believe, takes time and hard but consistent work to yield very noticeable results. I am convinced we will one day get there, hopefully sooner rather than later. In the meantime, however, I will not leave you with excuses; instead, I would pledge that we would keep addressing those issues which are brought to our attention, thus ultimately making SIOBMPA more appealing, more attractive, much more irresistible — a true conservation haven.

I am happy to share with you the news that SIOBMPA, a month ago, participated in an MPA enforcement training program, held jointly with other protected areas in Grenada and Saint Vincent & the Grenadines. This we hope would have better prepared our wardens to address infractions, such as you described, happening within our protected zones. This was a follow-up effort to myself and other MPA colleagues participating in a Training of Trainers course in Belize, back in September 2011. We hope that as a direct result of this training effort, we would now be able to better protect the very dear resources we have been challenged to conserve. Additionally, SIOBMPA personnel received training to become certified ReefCheck Eco-Divers early in 2011 and conducted an initial survey right here at Sandy Island (see www.reefcheck.org/news/print.php?id=732). This underscores our commitment to keep learning marine protection best practices and to effectively apply such new knowledge to improve our conservation efforts. Our work has barely just begun.

With regard to the moorings, we have diligently sought to ensure that they are very safe, and that users are not placed in harm's way by using them. We are pleased to say that we have successfully eliminated past mooring issues, and have not had an incident in nearly a year. Again, I urge users to immediately inform us of any specific situation that may seemingly compromise your safety, so that it may be addressed and rectified. Together we can make this work.

—Continued on next page

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I am also very pleased that you enjoy Sister Rocks and rate it so highly. Thank you. We do hope that we can boast of other areas like this in years to come. And I do hope that you would return in person to see that we are indeed serious about protecting marine life. I wish that persons who are dissatisfied with our work, those who feel that complaints to our wardens fall on deaf ears, and especially those who have been threatened within the MPA, would contact the board directly at siobmpa@gmail.com and even copy it to me at dkmbaker@gmail.com. I wish that your sincere complaints would stir within all of us involved in this project the urgent need to steadfastly work towards our proposed goals. Thank you for helping to remind us where our focus needs to be.

I look forward to having you back and wish you great sailing in 2012.

Sincerely,
Davon Baker
Carriacou

Dear *Compass*,

On Sunday, the 27th day of November 2011, the skipper of *Baleeiro* passed away.

The mizzenmast of his ketch fell on power lines in a Trinidad shipyard, and he did not survive the high-voltage shock. He leaves behind a truly loving and faithful wife and mate, and a wounded boat, which undoubtedly was looking forward to seeing the Pacific waters.

Having been around at the time of the disaster, I can only say that I believe fatigue influenced that split-second decision that led to tragedy.

To whoever is eager to finally put their boat back in the water, as Geraldo was, and as I have been, let it be known that rushing to get rid of the amazing clutter and unbelievable mess piling up on deck, as well as around it and underneath it, asks for Murphy's Law. To all, fair winds, blue skies!

Alexandra
S/V Blue Wind

Hello *Compass* Readers,

The following describes an incident that cruisers should be aware of.

About noon on Saturday, December 10th, 2011 I had my wallet stolen as I was leaving the AFOO supermarket in Phillipsburg, St. Maarten. To my chagrin, it was taken by a highly professional team using techniques that go back centuries — techniques described in *Oliver Twist*, for example.

As my guest and I entered the store from the side entrance we noticed a number of people loitering about outside the exit. Since they were a mix of men and women and they just seemed to be waiting, we gathered the items we came for and went to the checkout stand. After paying for the goods and sharing the load between us we headed for the exit. There we had to work our way through the group as they were all but blocking the exit. As we passed, a scuffle broke out, and my guest and I were momentarily separated. At this point I believe my wallet was taken from my hip pocket — not that I realized it at the time. If I had noticed it, I expect it would have gone badly for both me and the unarmed security guard just inside.

I discovered the loss a few hours later and went back to the AFOO supermarket and asked if my wallet was found. The checkout clerks and the security guard expressed no knowledge of it. Neither of them seemed concerned about what happened outside the store.

The incident could have been prevented if the security guard had simply gone to the exit and either pretended to or actually taken pictures of the team with his cell phone. That would have dispersed them without confrontation.

Since I had prior experience with pickpockets, I had less than one hundred dollars in US currency in the wallet along with a debit card and an out-of-date driver's license. A phone call to my bank cancelled the card and when I receive a replacement some six weeks from now I will no longer carry it in my wallet. Currently I am wrapping a rubber band about my large bills and my last credit card and hiding them in a front pocket.

Karl on *Cochi*

Hi *Compass*,

I knew there was something missing in my life here in Puerto La Cruz recently, apart from cooking oil, milk, and nightlife — *Compass*!

So I made a connection and found it on line. Wow: I'm blown away!

This is great — so easy to use and with terrific quality images, plus the goldmine of unique information and knowledge stored in the archives. No more searching through piles of tatty clippings from old issues. Congratulations!

I am also going digital, I have put an e-version of my book, *A Small Slip*, on Kindle (available at Amazon.com) and am finishing a new e-book to follow it.

I'm sure *Compass* will have a very successful 2012; such excellence merits nothing less.

Best wishes,
Cris Robinson
Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela

Editor's note: A Small Slip *is the true story of how cruisers Cris and his wife, Anne, after their* Starlight of Mersea *was wrecked at Las Aves, ran a boatyard and marine railway on Isla de Plata, Venezuela.*

Dear Compass Readers,

We want to hear from YOU!

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

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

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—*Continued from page 9*

...Business Briefs

Cruisers interested in visiting Cuba and navigating the northern coast safely will be especially pleased at the availability of NV Charts' two regions, northwest and northeast, because they are simply not available anywhere else. Cuban charts certainly existed before, mostly surveys done by and for Soviet vessels, but one cannot easily locate or buy these charts.

Surveyor specialists from NV have been on the move surveying the Cuban coast in anticipation of more yachts making Cuba a destination. Having charted harbors, checked geo-referencing points and double-checked buoys and lighthouses, NV Charts has the newest cartography in both paper and digital format including navigation software for Cuba. NV Charts also covers the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, the entire Caribbean, Florida, and much more.

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Sandra Johnston reports: My husband Paul and I sailed for 23 years on our sailboat, *Quarterdeck*. We slowly made our way around the world. It's a wonderful life and a reasonably inexpensive lifestyle. I just published an e-book, *The World is My Oyster*, about our adventures through Amazon on Kindle. It's in the travel section. You don't need a Kindle: you can download it to your computer. I hope we can encourage you to explore further in your sails!

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Simply Carriacou is also a tourist services agency. These services include villa rentals, accommodation booking, car rental, tours and excursions

For more information visit www.simplycarriacou.com.

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear *Compass* Readers,

What Don Street says should not be taken lightly. He has an enormous amount of experience and is a highly accomplished sailor and writer. What he wrote in the January 2012 *Caribbean Compass* is wisdom that can only come from knowing the task at hand and having dealt with it any number of times and in many different ways. Nothing in my response to Don can rebuke or diminish the value of his point of view.

There are however, some caveats that should not be overlooked.

The entirety of the discussion and the pros and cons of various routes originates with the question, "What is the best way to go from North America to the Caribbean?"



There is, and has been for a very long time, a significant problem with this question. That problem is the definition of "What is the Caribbean?" Don has always defined the Caribbean as the Lesser Antilles: the Virgin Islands to Grenada. There is great support for that definition, notwithstanding that such a definition is based on preconceived notions of what the Caribbean really is. The Caribbean covers 1,000,000 square miles and includes the Lesser Antilles, the Greater Antilles, the southeast Caribbean (Venezuela and the ABC islands) and the southwest Caribbean (Colombia through Mexico).

Don has always made a case for the "offshore route to the Caribbean" which he defines as leaving the mouth of the Chesapeake at an appropriate time and heading for the Virgin Islands. The Caribbean 1500 uses that route, as well, through an organized rally.

Some cruisers try to get their "easting" out of the way by heading to Bermuda; another offshore route to "The Caribbean". There are also those who do not like offshore routes and follow what is called a "Thornless Path to The Caribbean". Bruce



Van Sant is savvy and knows this path like few others. His book is a milestone on traveling to the Caribbean by "island hopping" all the way and by using weather in our favor to get there. While Don Street does not like this method, I believe that for those who cannot go offshore for whatever the reason, the method makes a great deal of sense provided you want to get to the Eastern Caribbean without going offshore. All of these routes and points of view have one thing in common: *they all define "the Caribbean" as the Eastern Caribbean.*

The map shown at the top is excellent because you can see how vast the Caribbean Sea is. What is the easiest and safest way to come from the east coast of North America to the Caribbean? I agree with Don and also do not like the Bermuda route to the Caribbean. It is much too complicated and far too tricky! Whether you argue for spring, fall or, in Don's case, September, the Bermuda route is a route, but I cannot imagine why anyone would choose it.

Given the prevailing winds, if we redefine "the Caribbean" to be that part of the Caribbean *closest* to us, we can enter through the Windward Passage. Once through the Passage we *are* in the Caribbean Sea. We will no longer be in the Atlantic Ocean and no longer be on a lee shore.

—Continued on page 53

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

2 World Wetlands Day. www.ramsar.org
3 - 5 Club Náutico de San Juan International Regatta, Puerto Rico. Club Náutico San Juan (CNSJ), www.nauticodesanjuan.com
4 - 5 Around Martinique Race. Club Nautique Le Neptune (CNN), Martinique, tel (596) 51 73 24, fax (596) 51 73 70, www.clubnautiqueleneptune.com
4 - 6 Scotiabank Workboat Regatta, Grenada. www.grenadasailingfestival.com
7 FULL MOON
7 Public holiday in Grenada (Independence Day)
11 – 12 Interlux One Design Regatta, St. Maarten. St. Maarten Yacht Club (SMYC), tel (599) 544-2075, fax (599) 544-2091, info@smyc.com, www.smyc.com
11 – 12 Jolly Harbour Valentine's Regatta, Antigua. Jolly Harbour Yacht Club (JHYC), Antigua. tel (268) 770-6172, regattas@jhycantigua.com, www.jhycantigua.com
12 – 19 Holetown Festival, Barbados
17 – 19 Sweethearts of the Caribbean and Classic Yacht Regatta, Tortola. West End Yacht Club (WEYC), Tortola, BVI, tel (284) 495-4559
18 – 20 Martinique Carnival Regatta. CNN, www.clubnautiqueneptune.com
19 Sailors' & Landlubbers' Auction, Bequia. www.bequiasunshineschool.org
20 Start of RORC Caribbean 600, Antigua. www.caribbean600.rorc.org
20 Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI (Presidents' Day)
21 Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race. www.mountgayrumroundbarbadosrace.com.
20 – 21 Carnival Monday and Tuesday in most Dutch and French islands, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Dominica, Carriacou, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela, and other places
22 Public holiday in St. Lucia (Independence Day)
23 – 26 South Grenada Regatta. www.southgrenadaregatta.com
24 – 25 Around St. Maarten Multihull Race. www.multihullregatta.com
25 – 3 March BVI Kite Jam (kiteboarding). www.bvikitejam.com

MARCH

1 Gill Commodore's Cup, St. Maarten. www.heinekenregatta.com
2 Public holiday in Anguilla (James Ronald Webster Day)
3 Club Náutico de San Juan Club 420 Regatta. www.nauticodesanjuan.com
5 Public holiday in the BVI (H. Lavity Stoutt's Birthday)
8 International Women's Day
8 Public holiday in Guyana and Suriname (Phagwah)
8 FULL MOON
9 Public holiday in Belize (Baron Bliss Day)
9 - 11 St. Croix Yacht Club Hospice Regatta. St. Croix Yacht Club (SCYC), tel (340) 773-9531, fax 778-8350, stcroixyc@gmail.com, www.stcroixyc.com
9 - 12 Dark & Stormy Regatta, Anegada, BVI. WEYC, (284) 495-4559
9 – 14 Caribbean Arts and Crafts Festival, Tortola, BVI. dreadeye@surfbvi.com
9 – 18 St. Patrick's Festival, Montserrat. www.visitmontserrat.com
10 - 11 Banana's Cup Regatta, Martinique. Yacht Club de la Martinique (YCM), tel (596) 63 26 76, fax (596) 63 94 48, ycmq@wanadoo.fr, www.ycm972.org
10 - 11 Annual Laser Open, Antigua. Antigua Yacht Club (AYC), tel/fax (268) 460-1799, yachtclub@candw.ag, www.antiguayachtclub.com
10 - 11 Wahoo Tournament, Trinidad. http://ttgfa.com/events
12 Public holiday in Commonwealth countries (Commonwealth Day)
12 – 17 ClubSwan Caribbean Rendezvous. www.nautorswan.com/ClubSwan
14 Public holiday in St. Vincent & the Grenadines (National Heroes' Day)
14 – 17 Caribbean Superyacht Regatta & Rendezvous, BVI. www.superyachtregattaandrendezvous.com
15 – 18 Race Cayman Week 2012: 6th International Invitational J/22 Regatta, and Open & Western Caribbean Optimist Championship. www.sailing.ky
16 – 18 Puerto Rico Heineken International Regatta. www.prheinekenregatta.com
17 Public holiday in Montserrat (St. Patrick's Day). St. Patrick's Day Festival, Grenada
17 – 24 Russian Business Caribbean Sailing Week, Falmouth Harbour, Antigua. http://rusregata.ru/regata/winter2010
20 Vernal Equinox
20 Sunshine School Annual Jumble Sale, Bequia. www.bequiasunshineschool.org
22 – 25 St. Barth's Bucket. www.bucketregattas.com/stbarths
23 – 25 International Rolex Regatta, St. Thomas, USVI. www.rolexcupregatta.com
24 OECS Open Water Swimming Championships, Nevis. windsurf@sisterisles.kn
26 – 1 April BVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival. www.bvispringregatta.org
30 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Spiritual Baptist "Shouter" Liberation Day)

All information was correct to the best of our knowledge at the time this issue of Compass *went to press — but plans change, s o 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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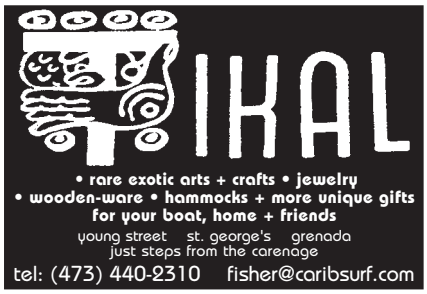
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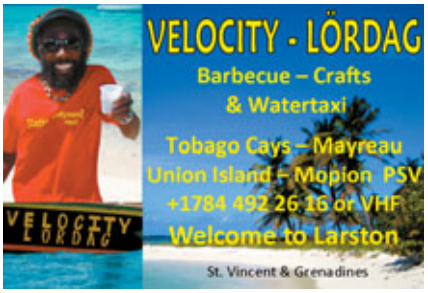
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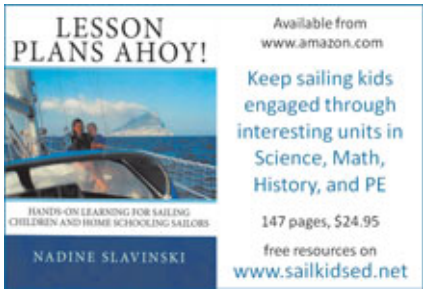






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—Continued from page 48 *...Letter of the Month*

We can use the Greater Antilles islands to protect us if we choose to go east and can count on their high mountains to create katabatic winds at night, which will stall the tradewinds and even perhaps give us a light offshore wind. There are numerous good stops along the way from Ile-à-Vache at the west end of Hispaniola all the way to Vieques and Culebra at the eastern end of Puerto Rico. Additionally, by using this route we do not have to cross the Mona Passage as when we pass from the east end of the DR to the west side of PR we will be south of it.

Our departure point can vary from the mouth of the Chesapeake to as far south as Hilton Head, South Carolina. I like Hilton Head because it puts me over 350 nautical miles closer to the tradewinds. Cape Hatteras is a factor and Don is correct to fear Cape Hatteras; it is a fearful place. Most boats can go farther south of the mouth of the Chesapeake by using the ICW and avoid the outside passage around Cape Hatteras. For the few boats whose draft or mast height prevents them from using the ICW, they can either depart from the mouth of the Chesapeake or wait for good weather and round Cape Hatteras.

The cruising community owes a great debt to cruisers like Don Street and Bruce Van Sant for all of their work and research in paving the way to the Eastern Caribbean. If I disagree with anything at all, it would be in a limited definition of "the Caribbean" and, as a result, the route to get there. The Windward Passage, as an entry into the Caribbean, has been overlooked by cruising sailors over the years for a variety of reasons that range from how we define the Caribbean to concerns about passing Haiti and Cuba. As a result, we have either opted for an offshore passage of over 1,250 nautical miles to get to Tortola or we have "hopped" through the islands with the tradewinds squarely on our bow and a hostile lee shore to our starboard. Instead, if we cross the Gulf Stream and head south we get a better sailing angle, much less time offshore, and shorter offshore distances as we skirt the Bahamas, and we route along the Caribbean side of the Greater Antilles without the concern of a lee shore and with an abundance of good harbors and anchorages to choose from.

Take a good look at Figure 1 on page 48 and let the diagram speak for itself. Take out your chart and your parallel rulers, if you still have them, and plot out the courses. See how they compare — not just as to distance but as to what waters are being sailed through, and what coasts are being transited. While any route that gets you there safely is a good route, for a cruising sailor, the best route is always the safest and easiest sailed route.

Frank Virgintino
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Read in Next Month's *Compass:*

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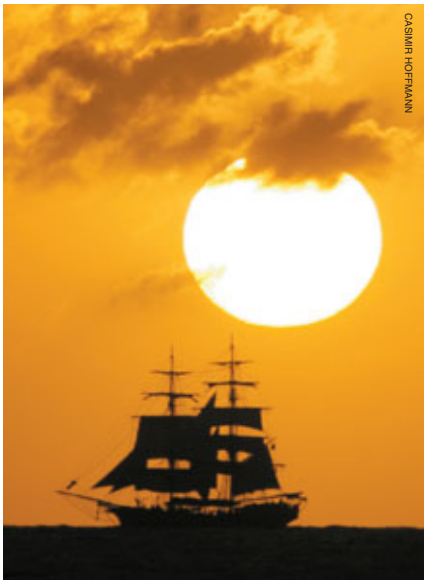
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MP = Market Place pages 50 to 53
CW = Caribbean-wide

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up to 40	$1.03	$0.93	$0.88
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up to 60	$1.24	$1.11	$1.05
up to 65	$1.39	$1.26	$1.18
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