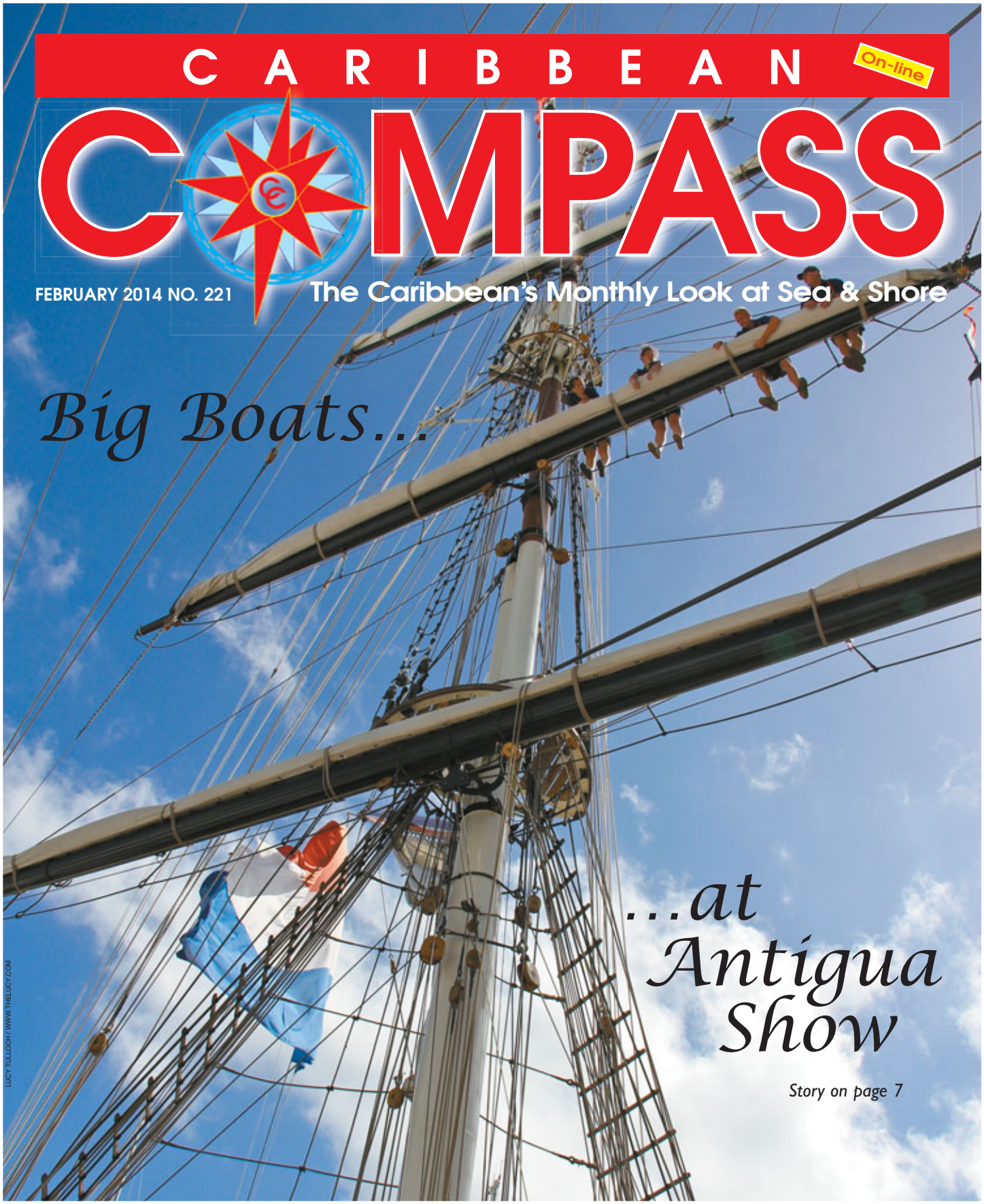
CARIBBEAN On-line
COMPASS
FEBRUARY 2014 NO. 221
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore



Big Boats...

...at Antigua Show

Story on page 7

LUCY TULLOCH / WWW.THELUCY.COM



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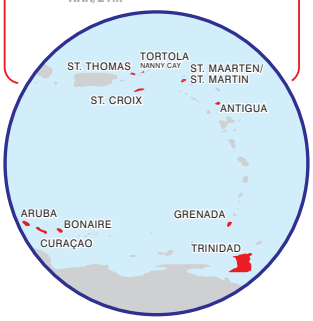
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FEBRUARY 2014 • NUMBER 221



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On the cover: The 250-foot three-masted clipper Stad Amsterdam *towered over Antigua Charter Yacht Meeting 2013, as seen in this Lucy Tulloch photo*



***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.**

***'Compass* is ALL about what it means to the boating community, both in the Caribbean and, in a larger sense, the worldwide cruising world. I've seen the *Compass* on salmon fishing boats in Alaska, Aegean-based charter yachts, and Volvo ocean racers. Latitude 38 magazine here on the West Coast called you "one of the finest maritime publications going".'**
— William Pringle
California

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

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Info & Updates

Grenada Extends Yacht Visitors' Stays

Two recent changes have been made which affect yachting visitors to Grenada:

• EXTENSION OF STAY

In recognition of Grenada's popularity as a base for all types of yachts, Grenada Immigration has changed its policy on extension of visas for yachting visitors.



SUNSAIL

A three-month stay is now generally granted on arrival if requested, and this can subsequently be extended up to 12 months.

Once the 12-month period has been reached, there is no requirement to leave and re-enter. If Immigration are satisfied that the visitor has the means to leave should the need arise, and has not violated the terms of their visitor's visa, their stay can be extended for up to another 12 months if requested, with ongoing 12-month extensions granted at the discretion of the Immigration department.

• EMBARKATION TAX

Embarkation tax is increasing from EC$1 to EC$20 (approximately US$7.50). This is paid on departure by yacht, and is levied on each person aboard who is not bona fide crew (i.e. it is levied on passengers and those not involved in the operation of the yacht). Typically this will not be levied on a cruising couple running their own yacht, but may be levied on any additional people on board at the discretion of the Immigration Officer.

In presenting the Bill to the legislators, Tourism Minister Alexandria Otway–Noel said that the measure will put Grenada's departure tax for persons on board a yacht on par with other regional territories.

For more information contact the Marine and Yachting Association of Grenada at mayagadmin2@gmail.com.

Yachting Infrastructure Grows in Martinique

In January 2013, the Martinique Yachting Association was born. It is led by its first President, Douglas Rapier. With more than 1,200 yachts in the bay of Le Marin all year round (and the 750-berth marina now constantly full) the MYA aims to unite the marine services and facilities that serve these yachts into a coherent offering. The association also intends to prepare the resources to be fully in line with new facilities that are expected to be in place by 2016.

At the Paris yacht show in December 2013, the European program ODYSSEA together with the French Federation of Marinas announced that Le Marin has been chosen to demonstrate the economic principal that a marina is a major contributor to the development of the economy and employment within an area of one hour's drive.

State funding has been approved for the upgrade of the existing dry dock facility in the bay of Le Marin. This will allow the creation of a travel lift facility for vessels of up to 45 metres LOA and 440 tons to haul out, with space for up to three such vessels. It will also allow the widening of the existing haul-out facility for up to ten-metre widths and 75-ton weights, plus the sealing and bringing into line of the entire surface area with the latest environmental norms. Works are expected to start in the first quarter of 2014 and be completed by the end of 2015.

In September 2013, funding for studies was approved and assigned to a group for the development of a mega-yacht facility and an upgrade to existing fishing facilities in the bay of Le Marin. The mega-yacht facility would handle up 30 super-yachts with a maximum of 120 metres LOA. The Town Hall expects the project to be delivered in 2016.

Finally, Douglas Yacht Services and Martinique Dry Dock have concluded an agreement to promote the use of their 180-metre float-in, float-out dry dock facility by super-yachts. Its facilities include a repair wharf of 140 metres with associated working warehouse facilities.

For more information contact douglas@yachtservices.fr.

—Continued on next page

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Our OCEAN PLUS sails are guaranteed for five years or 50,000 miles. Built by sailmakers dedicated to building the finest, most durable and technologically advanced sails possible.

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joanne@doylecaribbean.com

Antigua & Barbuda
Star Marine
Jolly Harbour

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Kapiteinsweg #4

Dominica
Dominica Marine Center
Roseau

Grenada
Turbulence Sails
New Spice Island Marina

Martinique
voilerie du marin
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Panama
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Panama City

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St Lucia
Rodney Bay Sails
Rodney Bay

St. Vincent
Barefoot Yacht Charters
Blue Lagoon

Trinidad & Tobago NEW
AMD
Chaguramas

USVI St Croix
Wilsons' Cruzan Canvas
Christiansted



—*Continued from previous page*

Second Trinidadian Woman Circumnavigator

Congratulations to Vidya Jeremiah-Pettersson, the second female Trinidadian to complete a circumnavigation of the globe by yacht. Her nine-year double-handed voyage with husband Kenneth Pettersson aboard the 33-foot El Cordero ended in Trinidad in December 2013. Kwailan La Borde and her husband, Harold, were the first Trinidadian yachting circumnavigators, closing their circle in 1973.



BETHANY SMITH

Vidya Jeremiah-Pettersson (at right) is the second Trinidadian woman to have completed a world circumnavigation by yacht. The former Coral Cove Marina employee first met her Scandinavian husband, Kenneth, an experienced bluewater cruiser, when he sailed in to Trinidad

Yachtsman Sentenced to Jail in T&T

According to reports in Trinidad newspapers, 67-year-old British yachtsman Derek Ide, a regular visitor to Trinidad, was sentenced in December to three years in prison after pleading guilty to a charge of "committing an act of serious indecency" against a ten-year-old boy. Ide was arrested in April last year at a marina in Chaguaramas, after the incident allegedly occurred aboard his yacht, a Beneteau 373 named *Buzzard*. The boy and his parents were staying at the marina aboard their own visiting yacht. Ide's lawyer reportedly intends to apply for his client to be extradited to the UK to serve the sentence.

Eight Bells

Sonnie Wade Rosenvahl of *S/V Anomaly*, age 63, died of cancer in Panama on January 8th after a period of hospitalization.

A former bodybuilder, locomotive engineer and avionics technician, he was also known as a musician, baker and dog lover. The US citizen was a cherished member of the Bocas del Toro cruising community.

His body was cremated and the ashes spread in Bastimentos Bay by friends on January 18th.

Yachtsman Killed in Vieux Fort

Roger Pratt, 62, a British yachtsman, died on the night of Friday, January 17th after attackers boarded his 41-foot yacht, *Magnetic Attraction,* which was anchored at Vieux Fort, St. Lucia. Roger was found in the water, and autopsy results indicated he died of drowning secondary to blunt force trauma. He was pronounced dead at St. Jude Hospital where his wife, Margaret, was given treatment for cuts and bruises. She released from hospital the following day.

Both life-long sailors, the couple had been on a yearlong cruise to celebrate Margaret's 60th birthday.

As of this writing four suspects have been charged with murder and the Major Crimes Unit of the Royal St. Lucia Police Force is investigating the case.

Margaret Pratt told the local press she was concerned at the misinformation in the media regarding the incident. She said contrary to reports she and her husband were never prohibited from leaving the island because of bureaucracy. She said they had always intended to visit Vieux Fort then head to Bequia.

"We knew when we left Soufriere that the Customs station in Vieux Fort was only manned Monday to Friday. We understood the regulation to be, if we signed out from Soufriere we could still leave from Vieux Fort as long as we left within three days. When we visited the Customs in Soufriere, the Chief Officer at the time explained that our understanding was not correct and that we needed to go within 24 hours. Because we wanted to go to Vieux Fort, we didn't sign out."

She said she and her husband had intended to sign out of St. Lucia on Monday and leave for Bequia the following day.

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Cruisers' Site-ings

• The CARIB Tails website has been launched! CARIB Tails is a citizen science project in which your photos can be used to identify and help study whales in the Caribbean. Check it out at ***www.caribtails.org***.

• Laura Smith reports: Finding crew in Grenada just got a whole lot easier with a new group on Facebook. "Crew Exchange Grenada" is an open group for anyone looking for crew in or around Grenada, and likewise those that are available to crew. Yachting in Grenada is growing at a rapid rate, with pristine waters, year-round sailing and increasing facilities and services for boaters. Crew websites are great, but often times messages get missed, and hence the opportunity. The founders hope that the new page will facilitate interaction between both local and foreign sailors in Grenada with the skill sets that yachts need short or long term. When charter companies need a replacement chef, captain or deckhand, especially when things get busy in the high season, finding that right person can be a challenge. This page affords an introduction to the individuals and they can privately message each other, and agree to their own terms. Visit ***www.facebook.com/groups/crewexchangegrenada***.

• Regatta organizers take note: The Caribbean Sailing Association (CSA) has a new tool in place on the website to submit your event date: **http://caribbean-sailing.com/caribbean-race-calendar/submit-event-dates**. This date gets submitted to the Calendar Committee, which will continue to monitor potential conflicts and work with regatta organizers to minimize conflicts in dates in order to give visiting boats the ability to participate in as many events as possible. Please note that on the CSA Race Calendar at **http://caribbean-sailing.com/caribbean-race-calendar/race-calendar**, the CSA is now trying to establish dates two to three years forward to enable boats to plan their campaigns. If you have not submitted your event dates for 2014 and 2015 please do so as soon as possible so that the CSA can review and help resolve any potential conflicts.

New Edition of Martinique Boating Directory Available

The ninth edition of *Ti'Ponton*, Martinique's free boating directory, is now available. *Ti'Ponton* has decided to have a new look for 2014 and is set to become the Martinique Boating Directory. Discover its sharper, clearer, more legible nautical design!

Ti'Ponton remains the boating business's most comprehensive information resource in Martinique and is packed, as usual, with practical information, useful addresses, the right contacts and all the things that help yachtsmen and their crew make the most of their Caribbean cruise.

Ti' Ponton is a free publication and can be picked up all around the island all year round. For the latest marine news visit www.tiponton.com.

For general tourist-related information, refer to Martinique Bonjour, available across the island or on the Smartphone and tablet app Click'n Visit Martinique Bonjour.

Saba Heritage Trail Open

The King of the Netherlands, Willem-Alexander, has opened a "new" trail on Saba, the Saba Heritage Trail. Along the Spring Bay trail, the remains of sugar boiling houses have been uncovered by archaeologist Ryan Espersen, who is doing his PhD research for Leiden University and takes a leading role in the Saba Archaeological Center.

At Spring Bay a plantation and boiling house were in operation from the late 1600s to the mid-1700s. The planted area was about seven hectares in size, and featured a cattle-driven mill for crushing sugar cane, plastered basins for holding cane juice that flowed down from the mill, a four-pot furnace for boiling cane juice and a two-story structure for the curing and drying. These are the largest standing ruins on the island.



JOHAN SCHAEFFER

King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands (at right) opens the Saba Heritage Trail

Another plantation and boiling house were uncovered, a little higher up, at the first flat of the Spring Bay trail. They were in operation from around 1730 to just after 1800. The planted area was only about two hectares in size, and also featured a mill, plastered basins, a two-pot furnace, as well as a curing house for separating sugar from molasses, a drying house for the crystallized sugar, the plantation owner's house and at least four huts for enslaved Africans. The "Big House" was perched on a hilltop, which allowed the owner to oversee operations at both the Spring Bay Flat boiling house and the Spring Bay boiling house at the same time.

Welcome Aboard!

In this issue of *Caribbean Compass* we welcome new advertisers Fajardo Canvas & Sails of Puerto Rico, in the Market Place section, pages 42 through 45; and Sammy's Boatyard of Antigua on page 33. Good to have you with us!



Bigger Boats Attend the 52nd Antigua Charter Yacht Meeting

by Lucy Tulloch



ALL PHOTOS: LUCY TULLOCH / WWW.THELUCY.COM



Above: Crewed charter yachts arrayed around Nelson's Dockyard at English Harbour

Right: Brokers viewed the luxurious interiors of nearly a hundred boats

Below: From the ultra-modern to the traditional, this annual event showcases the variety of vessels available for charter in the Caribbean



Some 40-plus knots gusted through the anchorage and from the heavens fell no less than 48 millimetres of rain in 48 hours over the weekend during Antigua's famous boat show, held December 6th to 12th.

But, as every year, Antigua's Charter Yacht Meeting was unaffected by inclement conditions and was a huge success with an upbeat and positive atmosphere throughout. Ninety-nine boats attended in total (an increase from last year) with the largest boat being the splendid Dutch-owned and built Clipper *Stad Amsterdam* at 250 feet overall. There were a staggering 27 boats over 150 feet.

Transport was efficient and readily at hand between the three marinas, Nelson's Dockyard, Falmouth Harbour Marina and Antigua Yacht Club Marina. Even umbrellas were provided!

The Welcome Party held at the Copper and Lumber Store was well attended and brokers and guests were entertained with a splendid Antiguan show of dancing and talent. Brokers enjoyed a wonderful evening of networking and meeting old and new colleagues in the industry. Attendance figures for the show were in the region of 260 brokers, the same number of non-exhibiting vendors, and over 30 press.

There were day tours as part of the "Experience Antigua" section of the show for early arrivals, including trips to Nonsuch Bay Resort, Harmony Hall, Barbuda and Curtain Bluff. Some boats, including *Stad Amsterdam*, took brokers out for a day sail at the end of the show, giving them a fantastic opportunity to get a first-hand feel of being at sea around Antiguan waters.

The popular chef's competition was also bigger than ever this year, displaying an extremely high standard of quality of food from all competing. Proud winners were from *S/Y Aurelius, M/Y Crowned Eagle* and *M/Y Altitude*. The 14th Concours de Chef was particularly demanding with a Vegetarian Raw Food theme.

Nor did the weather reduce the fun had by all at the Andreas Liveras Best Yacht Hop awards. Themed parties and wonderful fancy dress with music and cocktails to match entertained brokers and guests for three evenings of the show.

Early morning talks and seminars were well attended with subjects ranging from European and Caribbean Marinas to Charter Legalities, and from Asia Cruising to Interior Training.

The final Crew Party, held at the Interpretation Centre overlooking English Harbour, was said to be the best yet.

The faithful organizing team begin work on each annual show days after the end of the last one and with growing numbers deserve a big round of applause. The Antigua Show Management team is led by Sarah Sebastian and Afsaneh Franklin, and the show's board of directors includes Paul Deeth, Ann Marie Martin, Janetta Miller and Festus Issac.

Next year's show dates are December 5th to 11th, 2014. Here's to the next successful Antigua's Charter Yacht Meeting!





BUSINESS BRIEFS

Budget Marine Launches 2014 Catalogue and New Antigua Stores

The 2014 Budget Marine Catalog Launch, held on the parking lot of the Budget Marine Sint Maarten store, was a memorable event. Every year Budget Marine celebrates the publication of a catalog that has become bigger and better throughout the years.



The Budget Marine team celebrating the opening of their Jolly Harbour store

The store's general manager, Chris Marshall, had the honor to "launch" the new catalog in the water and christened it with a beer bottle. Catalogs are now available at all Budget Marine stores and you can download it from their website, www.budgetmarine.com.

Another celebration was held on December 10th, when approximately 120 persons attended the grand opening of the new Budget Marine Antigua locations. The ceremony took place in the garden of the new Jolly Harbour store. Antigua & Barbuda's Finance Minister, Harold Lovell, and other speakers focused on teamwork and partnership in taking the yachting sector of Antigua forward.

Country manager Louisa Norris made awards to staff including longest serving, Junieo Stevens-Benjamin, who also cut the ribbon to the new custom-built Jolly Harbour location. Antigua Marine Trades Association President Franklin Braithwaite advised the crowd that tax reform planning was underway that would deal with what is perceived as one of the major challenges of the sector. Ms. Norris noted that the company was celebrating 21 years of business in Antigua and that the new presence in English Harbour in particular would vastly raise the quality of service in the country.

Budget Marine Board Chairman Robbie Ferron pointed out that the new Jolly Harbor building was built in only seven months, which speed in no way detracted from the quality of the finished product.

Budget Marine is a chain of marine supply outlets operating 13 outlets in the eastern and southern Caribbean that offers the largest range of premium marine products with the highest level of product availability in the region.

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

Caribbean Sailing Association Welcomes Sea Hawk Paints Aboard

The Caribbean Sailing Association (CSA) is a federation of Caribbean territories and sailing clubs that collaborate to promote sailing activities in the Eastern Caribbean. As of this writing, the CSA now sanctions 36 sailing events each year. And the list is growing!

Sea Hawk Paints is proud to now be part of the CSA family and is helping to promote CSA sailing events at all boat shows and exhibits in which Sea Hawk Paints participates throughout the year. The Sea Hawk Paints exhibitor booth at the Miami International Boat Show, February 13th through 17th, will be sharing information about the CSA schedule of upcoming sailing events.

For more information on Sea Hawk Paints see ad on page 21.

Curaçao Marine Now Services Yachts up to 60 Tons

As of mid-January, Curaçao Marine has expanded their haul-out capacity with a 60-ton Roodberg trailer. With this top-of-the-line towed Roodberg trailer, Curaçao Marine can service larger monohulls as well as multihulls. Yachts up to 80 feet and weighing up to 60 tons can now be hauled out and serviced at the marina. Both the 40-ton trailer and the new 60-ton trailer will be operational to suit the sailors' needs.



The Roodberg 60-ton trailer offers the following maximum capacity and benefits:

- Maximum length of vessel: 80 feet
- Maximum width of vessel: 20 feet monohull/40 feet multihull
- Maximum depth of vessel: 7 feet
- Fully adjustable, durable and safe
- The specially designed suspension frame offers secure stability and protection for your yacht

The marina and boatyard offers safe harbour, secured storage and maintenance services on the premises. Another great advantage is their location outside the hurricane belt. With 15 years of experience you can be assured that your yacht will be in good hands.

—Continued on next page

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The Curaçao Marine crew looks forward to welcoming you! Follow Curaçao Marine on Facebook.com/curacao.marine to keep up to date on new and ongoing developments, destination tips and local events and to follow the arrival, installation and first haul-outs of the new trailer.

For more information on Curaçao Marine see ad on page 5.

Now: Parts & Power Alternator Specials

Parts & Power have a special limited-time offer on alternators:

The genuine Perkins OEM part fits Perkins Marine M65, M92, M92B, M135, M185C, M215C & M225Ti and is priced below the aftermarket replacements.

Also available are Motorola 6602/535, Perkins 2871A166 and Sabre 35361.

For more information on Parts & Power see ad on page 10.

New Dinghy Dock at Clifton Harbour, Grenadines

The Bougainvilla Hotel on Union Island has improved this year by making a better facility for visitors' dinghies. The new dinghy dock is well protected and makes



access easier for all yachtsmen who want to come ashore. Best of all, it's free! But don't miss the opportunity to have a drink or a meal at the hotel's harbourside restaurant, L'Aquarium.

For more information visit www.grenadines-bougainvilla.com.

Exceptional Diving in Dominica

On your next sail to Dominica, schedule a dive with locally owned and operated Island Dive Operations, located on the Portsmouth shoreline adjacent to the Blue Bay Restaurant, Bar and Grill. Island Dive Operations focuses on more than 20 unexploited dive sites in the northwest and northeast sectors of the Dominican coastline in order to capture a quintessential small island but larger-than-life adventure experience.

Whether you want to try scuba diving for your very first time, become a Master Scuba Diver or you're just looking for what's phenomenal under Dominica's calm, unspoiled waters, try Island Dive Operations. Local owner Fabien Honore is known for providing safe and affordable diving excursions in small groups geared at preserving the rich marine environment while simultaneously giving you a dive adventure like no other.

Get off the beaten path within small groups of family, friends or neighboring yachters to delve into this exceptional opportunity for that ultimate dive experience with Island Dive Operations.

For more information contact Island Dive Operations at fabi_15bits@hotmail.com or (767) 277-5673.

'Sea Monster' Sculpture Adorns Bequia Walkway

A unique sculpture now adorns Bequia's famous Belmont Walkway, in front of the Fig Tree Restaurant.

Recently, the huge old ficus or "fig" tree outside the restaurant of the same name had started to collapse, and it was decided to cut it down. The three resulting stumps were unsightly, so two regular visitors from the UK, having been impressed by the style of local woodcarver/sculptor Cordell "Mandela" Ollivierre at the Oasis Gallery, commissioned him to do some work on the stumps.

The brief was simply to carve a "sea monster" on one trunk and faces on the other two. The artist was given freedom of expression. Mandela gets inspiration from nature and has a unique Caribbean style, which evolves as he progresses. Some highlights were emphasized with paint and the effect is organic, depicting a sea monster attacking three spear fishermen. The monster kills a bad man and his soul descends to hell. The remaining two good men kill and eat the monster. There has been sadness about the loss of a significant tree, but the sculpture has made a positive out of a negative. The sculpture, dedicated to Nelson Mandela, has created interest at home and abroad.

For more information on the Fig Tree Restaurant visit www.figtreebequia.com. See more of Mandela's work at the Oasis Gallery's new location behind the Porthole Restaurant, www.oasisbequia.com.

The Moorings' Tortola Base Hosts Dive Shop

Sail Caribbean Divers, a PADI 5 Star Dive Center with 14 years of service to recreational and professional divers in the British Virgin Islands, has signed a contract with The Moorings to open a complete diving, retail and rental facility for its charter guests at the Mariner Inn and Marina on Wickhams Cay II in Tortola. The Moorings and Sunsail base offers five-star facilities and the most environmentally friendly charter base in the Caribbean.

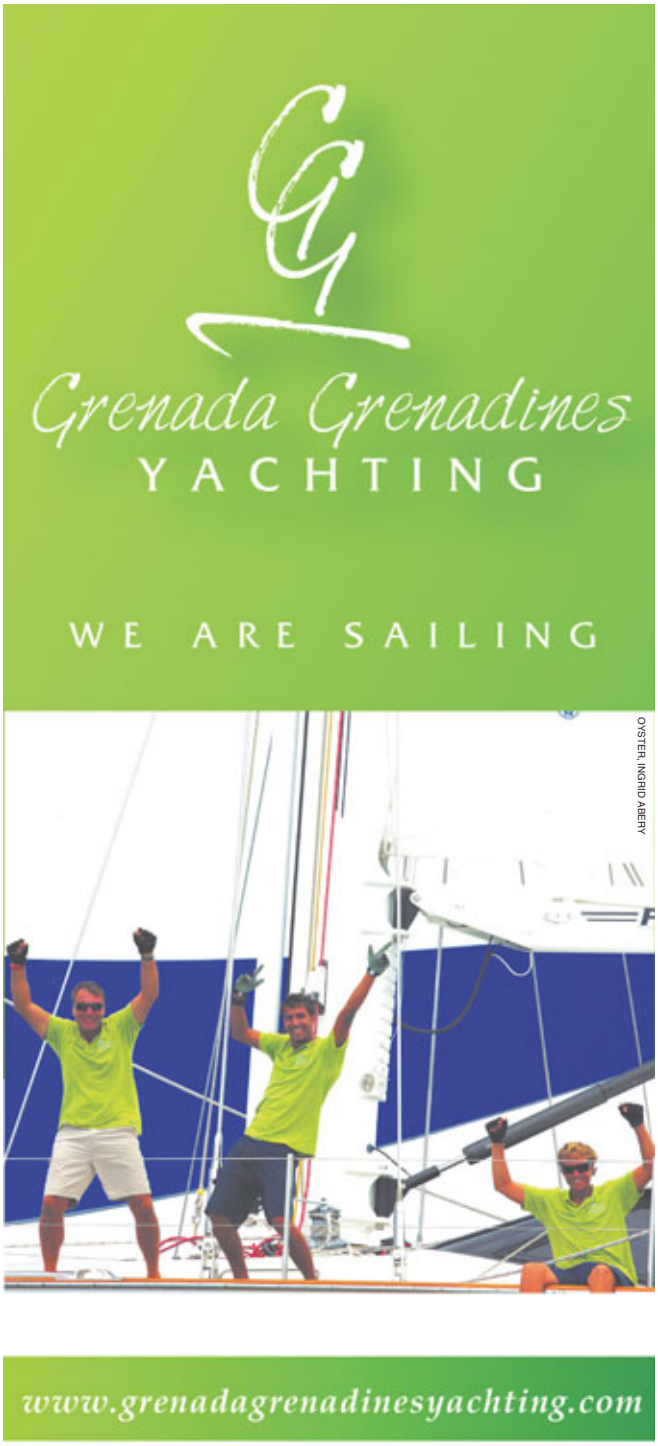
For more information visit www.moorings.com/new-moorings-village-on-tortola.

New Cruisers' Hangout in Dominica

The new Peanut Farm Bar & Grill, located at Barb Wire Bungalows in Picard, Dominica, boasts amazing views of Prince Rupert Bay. Come visit from Wednesday through Saturday, noon to 11:00PM, and make yourself at home. Enjoy sweeping Ross, Cabrits and Guadeloupe views from the all-local wood "tree" house and deck set amidst a lush garden.

The Peanut Farm Bar & Grill offers a "small plate" or tapas menu, specialty cocktails including the famous Painkiller, and bar games. Your hosts are Captain Mark Denebeim and Darnelle "Pnut" Little. Currently only cash is accepted there "in the bush", but soon they hope to have a credit card machine. Cruisers can phone (767) 295-1323 or 295-2502 for a free ride up the hill from Picard or Portsmouth.

For more information contact captainmark@oceanbreezetours.com.





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REGATTA NEWS

St. Lucian in 2013 Kite Racing World Championships

Beth Lygoe represented St. Lucia at the 2013 Kite Racing World Championships, held in Hainan, China from November 18th through 24th, 2013. Here is her report:

The format of racing is very similar to Olympic sailing, racing windward/leeward courses, with four races scheduled each day over the first four days, with the top ten going into medal races to decide the final results. Day One saw 14 to 20 knots of wind; a varying and gusty wind means kite size selection before each race is



important. The bay was a little small for the windward/leeward course, which meant the windward mark had to be dropped on the upwind reef, making for a challenging starboard layline inside the breaking waves! I had a good, safe first day of the regatta with finishes of 7,7,6 in the first three races.

Day Two had a nice 15-knot gusty breeze blowing, with fast racing. Due to Typhoon Haiyan passing through the Philippines and up the coast of Hainan a week earlier, there was still a lot of debris in the water (trees, plastic bags, coconuts, etcetera), meaning that on the downwind legs, riding fast and on the edge, you needed a bit of luck to keep your fins clean. In Race Six, I caught a plastic bag on my fin, which stopped the board in the water while traveling downwind at over 20 knots. Capsizing is not the fastest way around the track!

After two safe days of racing for me, staying out of the protest room and racing clean, I decided on the third day to push a little harder: in particular, to take my Laser Radial racing knowledge (I competed in the 2012 Olympics in the Radial Class) and put it into practice to get some good starts. Just think of kite racing as three-dimensional sailing and everything else is the same, including the rules. So I was super happy with the rest of my starts, as I was always on my transit, on the front row with a good gap to leeward to work with.

After 14 races over four days, I placed eighth overall on equal points with seventh and two points behind sixth going into the last day's top ten medal races.

Unfortunately, no wind on the last day meant no more racing, a shame as I was getting faster throughout the regatta, learning from the best in the world. I've taken away some extremely valuable experience at my first kite racing world championships, and feel my progression up the fleet. I have some new techniques learned from the top racers, so that I can now come back to the beautiful Caribbean waters and train harder to go faster.

My next racing event will be the South and Central American Championships in San Andres, Colombia in this month, followed straight after by an invitational event in Grand Cayman. I represent St. Lucia and the whole Caribbean with pride when I compete in every racing event, and would warmly welcome people to support me in my journey to the top and help with my airfares to events. Anyone who could see some benefit to some sponsorship support can contact me at bethlygoe@hotmail.com.

Time to go to Cas en Bas beach and have fun training and riding fast on the water!

For full 2013 Kite Racing World Championships results, visit www.internationalkiteboarding.org.

Wilson Wins 6th Carlos Aguilar Match Race

Carol Bareuther reports: He had never sailed in the US Virgin Islands, or in an IC-24 or with this combination of crew. Yet Chicago's Don Wilson won the 6th Annual Carlos Aguilar Match Race, held November 22nd through 24th, 2013, defeating the USA's Dave Perry 2-1 in a "first-to-two-wins" final.

Wilson and his crew — tactician Jordan Reece, trimmer Willem van Waay, bowman Josh McCaffrey, and two Antilles High School students who served as floaters, Teddy Nicolosi and Amanda Engeman — led right out of the gate. Wilson is ranked 24th in the world and is the number-one ranked US match racer as well as founder of the sponsoring Chicago Match Race Center.

With the score 1-1 in the first-to-two-wins Finals, it was the third match that proved the decider. "Dave was tight going towards the committee boat at the start," explains Wilson. "So we hung there to windward of him and eventually he luffed head to wind. We felt that he actually was tacking when he went through head to wind, and then we tacked and bore off and extended. I think it was pretty close to him getting a penalty there, but he didn't. Fortunately we were able to come off the line with much better speed and then the team did a great job of finding the puffs and extending."

Sailors competed in IC-24s, a local adaptation of a J/24. "I barely sailed the boats just enough to get the hang of it by the final day," Wilson says. "We look forward to coming back and racing next year."

Perry, a four-time winner of the US Match Racing Championship and most recently rules advisor to Artemis Racing in the 2013 America's Cup, used his podium appearance to praise organizers' foresight in adding youth sailors aboard each boat. "I've talked about doing this for years and all I hear is about how it can't be done," says Perry. "Giving young sailors this opportunity is critical. They are the future of our sport."

For full results visit www.carlosmatchrace.com.

Ten Compete in Jolly Harbour Regatta

Ten boats competed in Antigua's Jolly Harbour Regatta 2013, held November 24th and 25th and raced in two CSA classes: Cruisers and Racers.

In lighter than normal winds on Day One, Tanner Jones' J/30, *Blue Peter*, had the edge on Geoffrey Pidduck's 6 Metre, *BiWi Magic*, in Racing Class while John Wills' Sweden 42, *Ocean Harmony*, won all three races in Cruising Class.

Day Two, with lighter winds, an unusual wind direction and an unexpected squall, saw *Ocean Harmony* getting strong competition and *BiWi Magic* gaining the upper hand in her class. After six races, the prizegiving ceremony was at Jolly Harbour Yacht Club, with *Ocean Harmony* and *BiWi Magic* collecting trophies and prizes for winning their respective classes.

Jolly Harbour Yacht Club's next regatta is the famous annual Valentines Regatta on February 5th and 6th.

For more information visit www.jhycantigua.com.

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Grenada's PCYC Hosts Rush 10 Match Races

CJ Martin reports: The Petite Calivigny Yacht Club hosted a day of match racing on November 30th, 2013, but instead of their usual Hobie 14s, this was a day of team match racing on ten-metre (33-foot) Rush 10 catamarans.

With a limit of eight teams but an abundance of sailors wanting to experience Rush 10 racing, the team list filled quickly, ranging from serious racers and cruisers, to island residents, visitors and families with youngsters. The races centered on the spectator/committee barge stationed in the middle of Clarkes Court Bay, which provided superb viewing and a festive atmosphere.

Congratulations to first-place winners Team Sail Caribbean and Team Staudt in second. The PCYC thanks everyone who raced and watched, with special thanks to Chris Long of RUSH Chocolate Trading Ltd. who provided the two Rush 10 catamarans, and Le Phare Bleu Marina for providing the race barge and shuttle services.

For more information visit www.pcycgrenada.com.

Last ARC Boat Arrives on Christmas Day

The last Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) 2013 boat to arrive in St. Lucia made its way into Rodney Bay Marina on Christmas Day after 31 days at sea. The double-handed crew from the German-flagged Van de Stadt 36 *Beagle*, Ulrich and Alice Zenneck, had provisioned for 30 days and had plenty of water on board so were not concerned with their long passage time. At one point during the transatlantic crossing they were becalmed for about four days.

Although they missed all the parties and even the prizegiving, Ulrich and Alice arrived to a pontoon full of cheering onlookers. The festive atmosphere continued as mooring lines were secured and they received their welcome hamper and the ice-cold rum punch from representatives of the St. Lucia Board of Tourism and ARC organizers, World Cruising Club.

See a full report on ARC 2013 in last month's *Compass*.

For more information visit www.worldcruising.com.

Globe-Girdling World ARC Starts in St. Lucia

In World Cruising Club's fourth round-the-world rally, 31 boats started from Rodney Bay, St. Lucia on January 11th, sailing to San Blas for the first leg. World ARC is a circumnavigation rally for cruising boats, with a mix of organized stages and free cruising. Seminars, safety inspections and social events in Rodney Bay ensured crews were prepared for the 15-month adventure. A further nine boats will join the rally before the fleet transits the Panama Canal.

The diverse fleet ranges from the Manta 40 *Free & BrEasy* to the Amel 64 *Tulasi*. Boats are sailing under 13 national flags, with 20 countries represented amongst the crew. Ten children aged under 18 are sailing and the crews are a mix of families, people taking a couple of years away from work, honeymooners and those who have sold businesses or taken early retirement.

For the first time, World ARC is now an annual event organized in consecutive years and so far 24 yachts are set to join the next edition of the rally.

For more information visit: www.worldcruising.com/worldarc2014.

ON THE HORIZON…

Inaugural Antigua Dragon Yacht Club Challenge

Antigua's Harmony Hall Yacht Club, with support from the Antigua Yacht Club Marina and The Inn at English Harbour, will host the inaugural Antigua Dragon Yacht Club Challenge. Nine races will be held from February 2nd through 9th on identical Petticrow Dragons, with eight teams, each representing a yacht club from around the world.

Courses will be both short inshore and offshore on the south coast of Antigua, with one day saved for a 24-mile offshore distance race. The series will culminate with a double scoring Medal Race. Expressions of interest have been received from Mike Toppa of Fort Lauderdale Yacht Club, Corinthian Dragon World Champion Poul Richard Hoj-Jensen for the Royal Yacht Squadron, Mauro Pelaschier of the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda and local representation from Harmony Hall Yacht Club.

For more information contact info@mainstaycaribbean.com.

One-Design Interlux Regatta in St. Maarten

The 2014 Budget Marine Interlux Regatta, to be sailed in the Simpson Bay Lagoon on February 8th and 9th, is organized by Lagoon Sailboat Rental and hosted at the Boca Marina restaurant. The Lagoon regattas have been active since 2002, providing easy and competitive access to one-design sailing. The boats, Jeanneau 20 daysailers, do not require specific technical expertise, resulting in highly competitive racing between local sailors, regional visitors and crews of visiting yachts.



For more information visit http://sailboatrental.org/regattas.

RORC Caribbean 600 Entices Top Offshore Racers

An international fleet of some 50 yachts will be on the start line in Antigua on February 24th, to race the 6th edition of the RORC Caribbean 600. Over 500 sailors are relishing the prospect of racing around 11 islands against highly competitive opposition. The 203-foot schooner *Athos* will be back after making modifications to increase her competitive edge.

The 600-nautical-mile course starts from English Harbour and heads north as far as St. Martin and south to Guadeloupe, passing Barbuda, Nevis, St Kitts, Saba and St. Barths. Racing will be in five IRC classes. George David's RP90, *Rambler*, returns to race in class IRC Zero. In 2012 *Rambler* was leading until the 214-foot carbon fiber ketch *Hetairos* gunned *Rambler* down at the bottom of the course. Andrew Budgen's Volvo 70 canting keel, *Monster Project*, which broke the Round Barbados record in January, could take line honours.

Several yachts await classification, including the famous Olin Stephens-designed 1929 *Dorade*. She has been lovingly restored by Matt Brooks and Pam Rorke Levy, who bought *Dorade* in 2010. After success at a number of regattas, *Dorade* finished off 2013 by winning the 2013 Transpac overall.

For more information on the RORC Caribbean 600 visit http://caribbean600.rorc.org.

Budget Marine Match Racing Cup Next Month

The 6th Budget Marine Match Racing Cup invitational will take place March 4th. This one-day race sails in the protected waters of the Simpson Bay lagoon on one-design Jeanneau SunFast 20s. The teams consist of three persons including helmsman. If you think you have what it takes, contact *regatta@heinekenregatta.com* and submit your sailing CV and qualifications for consideration.

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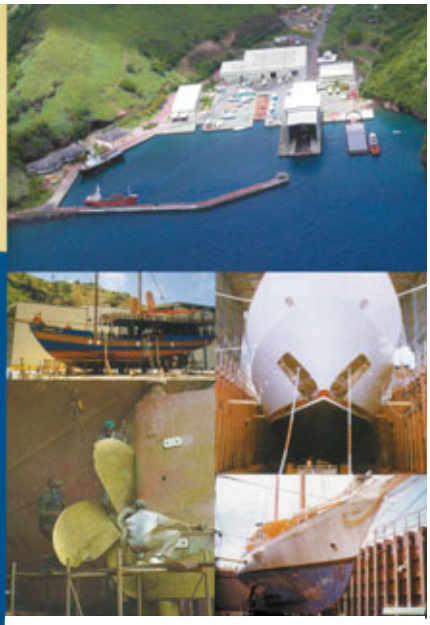
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The 34th St. Maarten Heineken Regatta is offering a new class, The Inshore, which also will be raced in SunFast 20s. Boats are available for a five-day charter, including a practice day and three days of racing March 7th through 9th. Racing will take place inside Simpson Bay Lagoon, outside in Simpson Bay, or in Marigot Bay, depending on the weather.

For full information visit www.heinekenregatta.com.

New Courses for South Grenada Regatta

The 6th Annual South Grenada Regatta will be based at Le Phare Bleu Marina from March 5th through 9th. Fleet races take place on March 7th and 9th, and three of the four title-cup courses are new this year (see http://southgrenadaregatta.com/racecourses.html). With Lay Day Match Races on Rush 10 catamarans, this year's regatta is sure to appeal to serious racers and competitive cruisers alike.

Participating boats get free berthing at Le Phare Bleu Marina during the regatta weekend.

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

Dark and Stormy Fungatta, BVI

Jock Tulloch reports: Come and participate in the 2013 Dark and Stormy Fungatta in Tortola!

The 2014 edition starts with a sign-in on March 7th at Trellis Bay Kitchen, Trellis Bay, Tortola. On the Saturday there is a race to Anegada. Sunday is a fun day at the Anegada Reef Resort, with horseshoe throwing, kite flying, sandcastle building and much more. Each boat gets a poker card for events entered, and another for winning an event. Monday is a pursuit race to Nanny Cay, Tortola for the closing party.

It's a race, a poker run and a fun weekend, so if you're around the BVI, come and join us!

For more information contact martin@sailsistership.com.

Strong Sponsors for St. Thomas International Regatta

Organizers of the four-decade-old St. Thomas International Regatta, formerly the International Rolex Regatta, announce that the US Virgin Islands Department of Tourism will step up their long-time sponsorship support in 2014. The regatta will be held March 28th through 30th.


DEAN BARNES

"We feel it's important to the sailing and marine industries to keep this regatta, so we increased our support," said Commissioner Beverly Nicholson Doty. "The regatta shines a global spotlight on the US Virgin Islands and at the same time welcomes hundreds of visitors to the territory."

Over 1,000 sailors, plus families and friends, attend the St. Thomas International Regatta annually, directly impacting the island's economy, adding about $1.1 million dollars to the territory's treasury from this three-day sailing event.

Bellows International, distributor of Captain Morgan Rum, is also on board as a major sponsor. "The sponsorship of Bellows International and Captain Morgan allows us to treat our competitors and volunteers with the best there is to offer in a sailing event," says regatta director, Bill Canfield. "This is especially important in this year of transition from Rolex to a new group of supporters. We are now ensured that our regatta will continue to be able to offer a similar atmosphere that has set us apart from other Caribbean events."

For more information visit www.stthomasinternationalregatta.com.

BVI Spring Regatta & Sailing Festival

The BVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival is one of the top three Caribbean sailing events, with about 120 entries per year. About 80 percent of the competitors are from overseas.

Two notable early entries to this year's event, which runs from March 31st through April 6th, are Irving Laidlaw's RP52, *Highland Fling*, and Piet Vroon's Ker 46, *Tonnerre de Breskens*. Laidlaw's series of *Highland Fling* racing yachts have won world championships and grand prix events on both sides of the Atlantic. Vroon has competed in 25 Fastnet Races over a career spanning five decades. His latest charge has won Key West and the RORC Season's Points Championship two seasons running, and was voted RORC Yacht of the Year.

The BVI Spring Regatta & Sailing Festival has something for everyone: racing, cruising or coming for the party! Starting at Nanny Cay, the Sailing Festival will start with The Round Tortola Race, followed by a relaxed Island Race, with a Beach Day/Layday Thursday at Nanny Cay. The BVI Spring Regatta follows the festival with three days of highly competitive racing.

For more information visit www.bvispringregatta.org.

Don't Miss the Season's Last Big Regatta

It is estimated that more than 2,000 yachts sail across the Atlantic each year, and more come to the Caribbean from farther afield. For many, Antigua Sailing Week is the Holy Grail. One of the early entries this year, Robert Dates' Reichel Pugh 52, *Scarlet Runner*, will be one of the boats to travel the farthest. The Australian yacht raced nearly 4,000 miles in the Cape to Rio Race before sailing another 3,000 miles to the Caribbean.

The 47th annual Antigua Sailing Week will commence with the Yachting World Round Antigua Race on April 26th and conclude on May 2nd. The series includes five days of competitive racing off the south coast of Antigua, plus an optional race around the island.

Considered to be one of the Caribbean's most prestigious regattas, ASW usually sees more than a hundred entries. Caribbean yachts are well represented. Antiguan sailing legend Sir Hugh Bailey has competed at every Antigua Sailing Week since 1968. Peter Morris' Frers 43, *Jaguar* will be sailing from Trinidad, and Alex Johnstone's *Blue Water Sailing* from Grenada.

For more information visit www.sailingweek.com.

Stokey Woodall Atlantic Circuit Cancelled

The Stokey Woodall Atlantic Circuit (SWAC), which aimed to be an annual sailing rally beginning in October 2014, has apparently been cancelled. The event's website, www.atlanticcircuit.com, states, "Atlantic Circuit SWAC Ltd has ceased trading as of December 10th." An informed source says, "It seems they've had to call an end to the efforts for the time being, and look to secure additional support to restart the process in the future." The Caribbean leg of the SWAC was to have included stops in Barbados and Trinidad.



WATCHING IT HAPPEN

by Jim Hutchinson

The Grenadine Islands enjoyed a pleasant hurricane season 2013, no storm threats, good rains, and usually enough breeze for a pleasant sail, conditions that continued right through November. Now it is December. The breeze freshened some days back, today's forecast calls for the high side of 20 knots and nearly as much for days to come. The winter tradewinds have returned.

It is Saturday. The kids of L'Esterre Junior Sailing are on the bay aboard a fleet of five prams and two Topaz go-faster dinghies. Twelve kids showed up, so some are on the beach waiting their turn. (The club could use more boats.) None of the kids have sailed this much wind for many months, some, never.

The five prams (three Optimist prams and two look-alike Mosquitoes) are the boats with which the club began in August of 2012, basic boats to get kids started. They were old boats then, seasoned veterans of kids sailing, the lesser half of a fleet that got divided. Many of the kids who sailed them before are grown. One, Akim, is now an instructor in the club.

In the beginning and as it became LJS, half a dozen yachties had been involved in resurrecting the fleet and its infrastructure and keeping the program operational until finding a local team to take over. They were Jim and Ellen of *Boldly Go* (www.boldlygo.us), Bob and Debby of *Chimayo*, Mina of *Cassiopeia*, and me.

The fleet had been improvised with what was available. Some of the spars were plumbing pipe, one of the rigs was bamboo. Most of the sails were shot. Cleats were worn out, there was a strange assortment of tillers, and the whole fleet could've used a paint job. But they all became operational and were out there doing their job: they were getting kids out on the water.

The lifejackets were an old and varied lot. Mina, a Canadian grandma experienced at leading kids into adventure and bringing them back alive, kept an eye on the lifejackets and ordered the destruction of any that were suspect.

Then all of us yachties sailed away and it was just the local team, Allison, Olando, Akim, and Kirshaun.

Saturday after Saturday the sailing went on with lots of kids, sometimes too many. I told Allison that if the program never went beyond this I would be a happy man and deem it a success.

On the other hand, there is *so much more* that a kids' sailing program might accomplish, especially for kids growing up on a small Caribbean island. But just to give kids a chance to learn basic sailing, whether to seriously pursue it or just as an experience to add to their samples of life, is worthy in itself.

Visually, the scene today, 15 months later, is little changed. I am at one of the shaded tables scattered along the beach at Off the Hook Bar and Grill where the club is based, looking out over L'Esterre Bay into a picture-postcard view and watching the kids sail. All five of the original prams are out there, still doing their job. Allison is still in charge, Kirshaun and Akim are still doing escort and coaching.

But that is not to say that things have not changed.

Early on, a donor realized what was happening and contributed some new rigs and sails and a full complement of new lifejackets. And there are now two Topaz boats, one on loan, the other a club boat by virtue of a fundraiser many months back. The escort, formerly a sailing/rowing dinghy, is now an outboard powered RIB, which can get around to a scattered fleet better... and makes towing in a disabled boat *much* easier.

Both Kirshaun and Akim are now certified Grenada Sailing Association Level One sailing instructors.

Bob and Debby, *Chimayo*, are back and lending a hand. Debby has adopted the kids en masse. If she seems a bit proud of them, that's just how she feels.

I'm fairly proud of them too. When I began working with the program seven years ago, then on Tyrrel Bay, it was a kind of chaos of kids, hectic. But kids who wanted to sail got their chance, so I reckoned it was good. The kids in the current edition of the club behave much differently. They show up on time. They act as a team setting up the fleet and putting it away. They pay attention to lessons and follow instructions. They show respect, for which they receive respect. They appreciate the opportunity, which they also earn.

Dinghy sailing is fun. In today's wind, it is exciting fun. The boats sail fast and there is a risk of knockdowns; a sailor needs to pay attention and move quickly. This much wind is more interesting for spectators, too. The downwind mark, which the boats must jibe around and where there is sometimes a crowd, is right off the beach. Out on the bay, watch the gusts crossing the water towards the next sailor to be tested.

The two Topaz boats can run away from the pram fleet under mainsail alone, which is how they usually sail. Today their crews, not wanting to waste this abundance of wind, have decided to fly jibs as well. As you know, if one boat does, so must the other — they are sailing against each other. After a couple of rounds and several knockdowns, one Topaz lands to take off the jib, then the other. In this wind, the mainsail is plenty. Then away they go for more.

Some of the prams are knocking down too. When a Topaz knocks down it comes up essentially dry. When a pram knocks down, it comes up half swamped. So all of the prams have a bailer clipped in. Not only that, the kids have to pass a minimal swimming test, wear lifejackets, and have learned self-rescue. Even so Kirshaun, driving the escort dinghy, gets a workout. In one instance he has two down at the same time drifting downwind of the practice area, one of which needs a tow in. Akim and Bob help empty dinghies that land too swamped to pull up the beach. In tropical waters, this is great fun.

Today there is also a surprise Christmas treat for the sailors. Once everything is put away, the club goes for pizza. After the pizzas are devoured, the kids are asked how many had knocked down. At least seven hands went up, but I couldn't be sure, they came right down again. That's when the ice cream arrived.





DESTINATIONS

Leaving Our Hearts in Ile-à-Vache

by Brenda Webb



The fluttering sails of tiny Haitian fishing boats made a spectacular sight as we headed into Haiti's Baie des Cayes at dawn, aiming for the safe anchorage on the north side of Ile-à-Vache.

The early morning light cast a lovely magenta hue on the sails but as we got closer their shabbiness became apparent. Many were badly patched, some even made from plastic shower curtains or black polythene. The sight made us glad we'd researched Ile-à-Vache and had come prepared — *Bandit's* lockers were groaning.

David and I had had a fairly lively sail down through the Windward Passage but were then forced to motor the final hours along Haiti's south coast. There was a land breeze close in but also dozens of fishing pots so we stuck to the deep water, not wanting to foul our prop.

Everyone knows Haiti is poor but the scenes of abject poverty that greeted us on Ile-à-Vache were heartbreaking. There is no power, no running water, no roads or vehicles and the small homebuilt houses are absolutely basic with little furniture. Despite the poverty, the islanders were amongst the friendliest and happiest people we've met in eight years of cruising.

Their smiling happy faces became a regular sight peering over *Bandit's* capping rail from their dugout canoes and old surfboards. In fact the first welcoming party arrived before we'd even dropped anchor.

In recent years Ile-à-Vache has become a popular and safe cruising destination. Locals eagerly await every new arrival knowing they mean food, work and hopefully supplies.

—Continued on next page

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ALL PHOTOS: DAVID MORGAN

—*Continued from previous page*

This can get tiring. It's incredibly hard to turn away these people knowing that for most, the few dollars we give them for cleaning or polishing work is perhaps all they will earn until the next boat arrives.

We found ourselves finding all sorts of unnecessary jobs but in the end we simply had to say no. *Bandit* was gleaming and there was nothing more to do! The islanders weren't put off, insisting they take us on guided walks (which they did), sell us fruit (we bought) or host us for a local meal.

The meal we had at Jonjon's, who is trying to start a restaurant, was basic but absolutely delicious. We opted not to have crayfish, as all of those we saw were well undersized, instead asking for "local Haitian dishes". We thoroughly enjoyed our fried breadfruit, curried conch, spiced cabbage, rice and beans — eaten in the dark as the generator had run out of fuel.

It was hard to know how much to reward the locals for their work as we found they were shy when discussing money. We asked the Port Morgan Hotel what they paid their staff and after much discussion opted to pay US$10 for a day's work which is dirt cheap by our standards but a huge amount by theirs. And the lads were delighted. We also made sure they were well fed and watered during the day.

Our visit was always planned to be a mercy mission and for several years we'd saved our good used clothing, shoes, excess toiletries and out-of-date but still good medicines. Initially these were bound for Cuba but after spending six weeks there last year we soon realized that Cubans under the Castro regime need little, unlike their Haitian neighbours.

Our "Cuba bags" became "Haiti bags" and during our summer in the States the collection gradually grew, thanks to cheap dollar shops. In St. Augustine, Florida we talked the owner of Sailor's Exchange into giving us a second-hand sail to add to our cause.

Three quarters of Haiti's 10 million people live on less than US$2 a day. The mainland is one of the most violent countries in the world, with rising rates of serious crime. Children suffer from shocking Third World illnesses, with waterborne diseases, such as cholera, and intestinal parasites rampant.

Beautiful Ile-à-Vache seemed a world away from the violence, however poverty is omnipresent. Our visit to the island's orphanage, L'Oeuvre St. François d'Assises, in nearby Madame Bernard rammed that home.

The gut-wrenching sight of severely handicapped children lying helplessly on damp mattresses was an emotional drain. There are no funds to provide disposable nappies and to donate them knowing they will ultimately be disposed into the sea presents a moral dilemma.

Run by a diminutive French nun, Sister Flora Blanchette, the orphanage provides a home for 73 abandoned, handicapped or orphaned children — many of whom remain there well into adulthood. Government funding for the orphanage is non-existent and Sister Flora relies on donations, especially from cruisers, and is always desperately short of items such as milk powder and medical supplies. She was delighted with our bags of clothes, rice and milk powder.

We timed our visit to the orphanage to coincide with market day in Madame Bernard, which was a pitiful sight; barefoot women selling a handful of produce, emaciated donkeys being forced to carry heavy loads, and pigs and dogs scavenging in the rubbish. The foreshore was nothing short of a rubbish tip.

It's a nice two-hour walk from the anchorage to Madame Bernard but in the heat we opted for the 20-minute tender ride and, after stocking up on fruit, we were pleased we did.

—*Continued on next page*



Above: Clives, one of Brenda and David's favourite helpers, collects his allocation of rice from designated distributor Sam while Pepe keeps a list of names

Left: Colourful local boats on market day at Madame Bernard, the town on Ile-à-Vache



'The orphans at Sister Flora's stole my heart'

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—Continued from previous page

We'd made the mistake of only having large Haitian notes and our backpacks were soon loaded with mangos, avocados, bananas and passionfruit as vendors refused our requests for change, simply pocketing the money and insisting we take more fruit!



Wanting to contribute a little more to Ile-à-Vache we decided to take *Bandit* to Les Cayes on the mainland and visit the market there. You can go by local boat but as our plan was to buy in bulk, we opted to go under our own steam taking two of our "workers", Pepe and Colby, with us as guide and guard respectively.

The anchorage was rolly but safe and we landed the tender at the Coast Guard base. We'd met the Coast Guard a few days previously when we helped them pull a seized drug-running boat off the shore on Ile-à-Vache.

With Pepe negotiating, we bought sacks of rice and beans and containers of oil for the villagers and orphanage. Pepe seemed genuinely touched by our gestures and offered to write a list of the neediest villagers who assembled at a certain shop to receive the food. It was humbling to see the line of grateful villagers.

Cruisers are encouraged to carry out such donations and engage workers through the local representative of an international cruising association, but we were not entirely convinced about this. We did give our spare used ropes and the spinnaker to him, and asked to be present when it was handed out. The fishermen were so genuinely thankful it brought tears to our eyes, but we noticed the best and longest piece of rope was missing. When we asked him he said he'd given it to his father, who may well be deserving, but the father wasn't there so we didn't get to meet him to judge for ourselves. Also, the spinnaker we took was "unsuitable" according to the association rep, who said he would use it for covers. However on our trips by tender to Madame Bernard we saw small dugouts with flimsy plastic sails — the spinnaker material would have been perfect for them.

Left: Although boats and buildings on Ile-à-Vache are basic, 'the people are amongst the friendliest and happiest we had met in eight years of cruising'

Below left: David with Ile-à-Vache fishermen, who appreciated small donations of rope



It also would be good to spread the benefits from the cruising community a little wider. The families near the anchorage seem better off than those we saw in more isolated parts of the island. But those are minor issues and our advice to cruisers is to make up your own mind when you are there.

We were genuinely heartbroken leaving Haiti, having grown attached to the locals and the island itself. The delightful orphans at Sister Flora's stole my heart, but it was time to move on. If we'd stayed we may never have left. Ile-à-Vache has that kind of effect on you.

Brenda Webb and husband David Morgan are sailing their Moody 46, Bandit, *through the Caribbean to New Zealand.*

TIPS FOR HAITI

- Take old sails, rope, clothing, milk powder (soy milk is especially needed at the orphanage), children's toys, shoes, and pens and paper.
- We cleared in and out through the Port Morgan Hotel and it cost US$20 per person plus a $10 anchoring fee.
- Take lots of small US notes. The locals love getting US money and sometimes $1 is all that you need to give for a guided walk.
- You can change money at the Port Morgan Hotel but make sure you get small denominations.
- The Port Morgan Hotel has internet but it wasn't working during our stay.
- The fruit and produce market at Les Cayes is much bigger and better than the one at Madame Bernard.



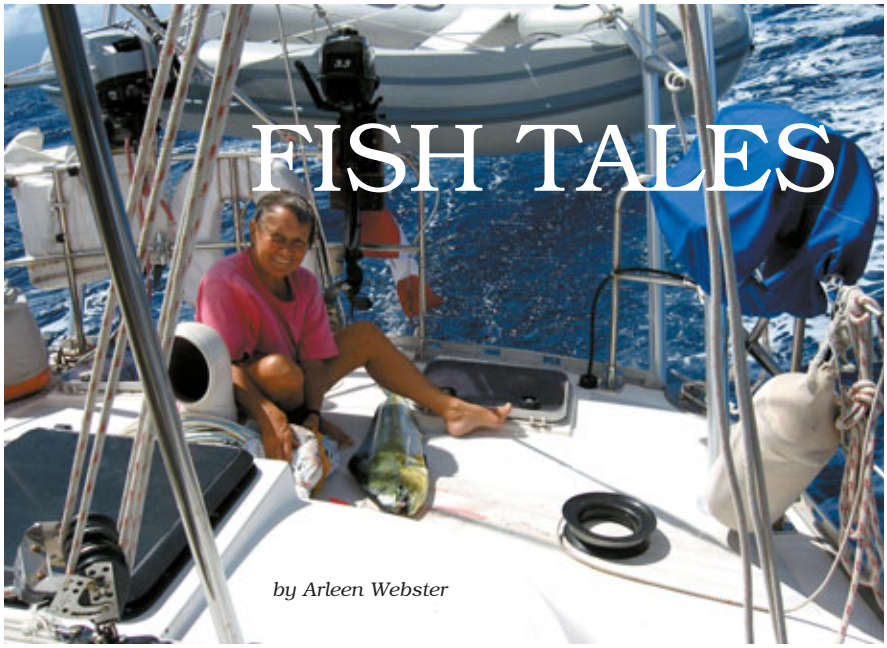
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FISH TALES



by Arleen Webster

Above: Off the coast of Venezuela I was able to catch Dorado on a regular basis

Right: One half of a Cero mackerel — neatly chomped

After 20 years cruising in the Caribbean, I still like to trail a fishing line behind the boat while sailing, but now I prefer to do this when the seas are benign and the sailing is smooth. In other words, not very often.

Fishing was not a part of my childhood experiences. It was only after I was married, with two sons, living in Ontario, and sailing in the Great Lakes, that I was introduced to fishing. I watched as my husband, Denis, taught our sons how to thread a worm onto a hook and to cast. When we went on our summer sailing trips, my sons taught me the basics of fishing, but they were more successful and patient than I was.

Just before Denis and I finally retired and headed south to the Caribbean in the early 1990s, I read an article in a sailing magazine about catching fish while sailing. It was a simple system using a plastic hand spool with a squid lure, double-pronged hook and 120 feet of 200-pound-test monofilament line. This was for me — no casting, no jigging — just pay out the line, clip it to the lifeline and wait for a strike. Virtually effortless.

The first fish I caught was with a slight variation of this configuration. I didn't have a squid lure in the Bahamas, but I was told that making a "pretend" squid lure out of a plastic bag would probably be an acceptable substitute. It was quite exciting to catch my first Dorado just before we entered the harbour at Georgetown, Bahamas. Being new at this kind of fishing in the tropics, we were not aware of how much a large fish can thrash about in a small cockpit after being landed. How naïve we were! Did we think it would just lie down and expire? We both freaked out. Denis tried to subdue it with a winch handle, to no avail. The fish continued to thrash about, breaking the engine control cover into many pieces. Nevertheless, my first ocean fish was hooked — and so was I. Later as I was regaling fellow cruisers about my fish story, I learned about the cheap-booze-in-the-gills solution as an instant fish killer.

As we started down the island chain, I continued to trail a fishing line but it seemed that I was only catching barracuda. We were concerned about the ciguatera risk so we released any we caught in the northern Caribbean. At one point, I had a strike on my line and as I pulled it in I noticed that it was a barracuda. I quickly opened up my guidebook (I think it might have been Doyle's in 1993), and I read that barracuda were probably safe to eat if you were south of Saba. I asked Denis, "What is that island abeam of us?" He replied, "Well I think that looks like Saba." Goodbye, Barry!

It was only when we were sailing off the coast of Venezuela that I was able to catch Dorado on a regular basis. I'm certainly not an avid fisherperson, especially since my husband doesn't particularly like to eat fish, but it is a thrill to catch one occasionally and to share it with other cruising folks, and of course have a good feed of it myself.

Usually when I see that I have a Dorado on my line, I'm already contemplating how I'm going to prepare this delicious fish. On one occasion, however, I broke protocol. I had a strike and as I was reeling the fish in toward the boat, I noticed that this small Dorado was being accompanied by another small one, swimming close by. Fortunately for these little Dorado, my maternal instinct kicked in while observing this interesting, and rather poignant phenomenon. There was no way I could bring myself to relegate this little fish to the galley. I carefully removed the hook and placed him back into the water beside his buddy and watched them swim away.

The next fishing area was in the San Blas Islands and Panama. This is an area where there are considerable Cero mackerel to be caught. On one occasion when I had a strike on my line, I started to pull on it and thought to myself, "This feels like a nice-sized fish — not too large." Just as that thought passed through my mind, the line suddenly tightened to the extent that I could barely hold it. My next thought was, "This fish is teasing me, and it's a big one!" Suddenly, it became manageable once again. I waited for the next big pull on the line, but it never came. As the line shortened and I saw what was on the end of it, the mystery was solved. The half Cero had been very neatly severed by something enormous and with very sharp teeth.

Our first sailboat in the Caribbean was a Tayana 37. Since this boat is a double-ender, (pointy at both ends), it was more convenient to deploy my fishing line from the side — usually the leeward or low side — to facilitate easy landing of the catch. The Tayana had a rather interesting scupper arrangement in the cockpit. Not only were there drainage scuppers in the cockpit floor, but also another two, leading from the side decks and across the cockpit seats. The rationale for this design was that there should be swift and plentiful drainage in the event that you were pooped by following seas.



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The 'Back Street' Route from Grenada to Antigua

by Don Street

Are you in Grenada and dreading the long haul up to Antigua to race in the next regatta, or to meet friends, or to stage your trip to Europe or the East Coast? There's a more interesting way to do it than the typical island-hop in the lee of the Windwards. Try sailing up the windward sides of the islands.

Grenada to Carriacou in a Week?

First, head up the east coast of Grenada, and rather than sailing one long hard day to Tyrrel Bay, spend several days casually cruising off the beaten track to Carriacou. First, it is a five- to six-mile beat depending on your south coast anchorage to Lascar Cove, Petit Trou or Requin. Start early, before the wind really starts to blow, and you are anchored in a deserted cove by 1100 hours.

The next day, again start early for the six miles or so to Grenville. While in Grenville organize a full day's shoreside expedition. Start at Grenada Chocolate Factory's fermentary at Belmont Estate, a 400-acre working estate. Take a tour, enjoy a big Grenadian lunch, and stock up on organic chocolate, homemade preserves and goats' cheese. Follow that with a tour of the unique River Antoine Rum factory, a 200-year-old distillery whose power is provided by a water wheel.

The next day it is a short reach to the uninhabited, undeveloped Sandy Island (not to be confused with Carriacou's Sandy Island). The following day, check the tidal information on the back of all Imray Iolaire charts and leave on a weather-going tide for a 14-mile close reach on a course of 035° magnetic to the south coast of Carriacou.

(If you are in a hurry, leave your anchorage on the south coast of Grenada shortly after dawn. Work your way up the east coast to Sandy Island and anchor for the night. The next day, check the tides and leave on a weather-going tide as mentioned above.)

Clear out in Tyrrel Bay; you should leave within 24 hours of clearing. Explore the south and east coasts of Carriacou. Watering and Grand Bay are behind four miles of barrier reef. At the village of Windward see traditional wooden boat building. Also test some Jack Iron, rum so strong that ice cubes sink in it.

From Windward, clear into St. Vincent & the Grenadines waters at Clifton on Union Island and head north through the Grenadines. See my article "Three Cruises, All in the Grenadines" in last month's *Compass* for details of visiting some out-of-the-way anchorages there.

Bequia to Martinique

Once Bequia is reached, one option is to take the milk run up the lee coast of St. Vincent and on to St. Lucia. The anchorages on St. Vincent are well described in Chris Doyle's *Sailors' Guide to the Windward Islands*, with good information about shoreside explorations. You can clear out at Wallilabou or Chateaubelair if you haven't already done so in Bequia. [*Editor's note: There was severe flooding in the northwestern part of St. Vincent in December 2013. We have not heard that this causes any specific issues for visiting yachts, but many people in the area lost their homes and livelihoods. Persons on yachts visiting the leeward side of the island of St. Vincent and wishing to assist can deliver donations to Ms. Dora James of the Red Cross at the Chateaubelair police station.*]

WILFRED DEDERER



Bequia. From here, one northbound option is to take the milk run up the lee coast of St. Vincent

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The channel crossing from St. Vincent to St. Lucia can be a tough one. Check the tidal information. If at all possible, do the run from the northwest corner of St. Vincent to the Pitons with a weather-going tide.

Alternately, from Admiralty Bay on Bequia head northeast up the Bequia Channel. If the tide is running west, short-tack up the Bequia shore then sail up the windward side of St. Vincent, or possibly stop at Anse Chemin or sail on to the uninhabited isle of Baliceaux. From Baliceaux take a straight shot 45 miles on a course of 030° magnetic to Vieux Fort. In the spring months the wind is often south of east, giving you a reach — perhaps a tight reach but a fast one. Clear in and out at Vieux Fort; you'll have 72 hours to leave. [*Editor's note: Important! See "Yachtsman Killed in Vieux Fort" in this month's Info & Updates, pages 4 through 6.*]

From Vieux Fort you can sail north up the lee side of St. Lucia or, with the wind south of east a beeline from the southeast corner of St. Lucia direct to Ste. Anne on the south coast of Martinique is possible. For the first 15 miles the course is 030° magnetic — with the wind slightly south of east this should be a tight fast reach — and then it is eased sheets on a course of 010° for the next 30 miles.

If you have sailed up the lee coast of St. Lucia, take off from Rodney Bay or Pigeon Island and head directly to Ste. Anne, 22 miles on a course 030° magnetic. Check the tides and try to cross the channel on a weather-going tide.

The French Islands

Anchor in Ste. Anne and take the dinghy to Cul-de-Sac du Marin to enter with Immigration and Customs. Tie the dinghy at the shipyard, walk up the hill, and stock up with French cheeses, wine and real Heineken beer direct from Holland. Take a taxi back to the dinghy.

The next day depart early, before it really begins to blow, and sail around to the windward coast of Martinique. Make your first stop at Islet Hardy, anchor just west of the island and explore the shoal water inside the barrier reef. This is the area the Martinicans refer to as "our Tobago Cays". There are numerous anchorages farther north, enough to keep a crew happy for a week or ten days. In 1963 *Iolaire* was the first foreign yacht to cruise and explore this so-called "dangerous" coast. The crew consisted of myself, my late wife Marilyn, and our 14-month-old daughter Dory. Over the years the east coast of Martinique became the Street family's favorite cruising ground.

By now you're probably late, so put on your seven-league boots and from the windward coast of Martinique sail 75 miles on a course of 350° magnetic to Marie Galante, sailing east of Dominica. This should be a hull-speed reach. Marie Galante has mile after mile of almost deserted white sand beaches. Anchor anywhere along the lee coast. Rent a car and explore, as Marie Galante has been largely bypassed by tourism.

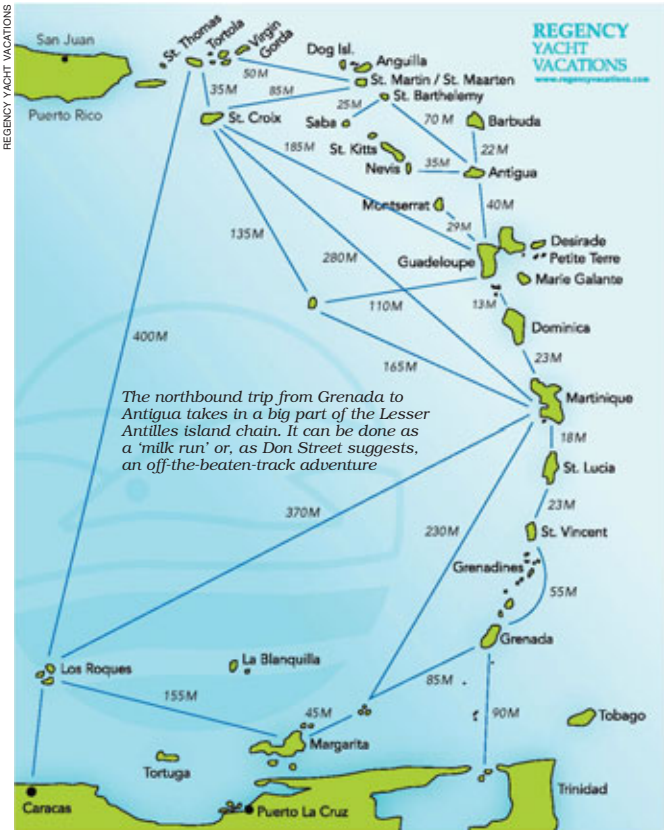
From Marie Galante it is 30 miles hard on the wind to Desirade, so you may decide after 15 miles of beating to stop at Petite Terre. At Desirade both the channel and harbour of Grande Anse have been dredged to seven feet. On Desirade you will discover the clock has been turned back 30 years.

The Home Stretch

From the channel between Guadeloupe and Desirade it is usually a broad reach of 60 miles on a course of 335° magnetic to the English Harbour and Falmouth Harbour area — a glorious "Nantucket sleigh ride".

You can experience some unusual cruising and some exhilarating sailing by taking the windward way north up the island chain. Get off Main Street and try it for yourself.

REGENCY YACHT VACATIONS





CARIBBEAN 3G PHONE AND INTERNET ACCESS

by Ian Hopkins

"Will my cell phone work in the Caribbean?" "Can we get internet there?" These are common questions for newly arrived cruisers in Paradise. Even old salts, if they see barefoot local kids talking and texting on mobile phones and their own phone does not work or they have patchy WiFi in the anchorage, may need to revisit these questions. Because the answer to both these questions is yes. Everyone can get very good phone and internet service almost everywhere in the Caribbean and at reasonable prices. The solution can be very straightforward and works way beyond the Caribbean. The reason why, as I see it, comes in two parts, the mobile (cell) phone system and the wavebands available.

It begins with the two main mobile/cell phone systems operating around the world, CDSA and GSM. CDSA is mainly found in North America. Yet, even there, AT&T and T Mobile use the GSM system. The two systems are incompatible. Phones made for CDSA are permanently dedicated to one provider. However, virtually identical phones may be manufactured for another CDSA provider or for the GSM system. GSM uses SIM or mini SIM cards. These fit into a slot in the phone, often under the battery.

GSM phones are the most common phones worldwide. A GSM phone supplied by any telecoms provider will be locked to that provider, but this lock legally cannot be permanent. Locked phones can be unlocked. GSM model phones bought from third parties like Amazon, Apple stores and independent high street retailers should come unlocked and accept any providers' SIM card. Some phones come with more than one SIM card slot, which can be useful. Mini SIMs are just cropped SIM cards. Phone stores can do this by hand.

The Caribbean is predominately GSM. I have found the most prominent GSM provider, with dedicated stores in most towns, is Digicel. Based in Jamaica, it also operates GSM mobile/cell phone services in Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Aruba, Barbados, Bermuda, Bonaire, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Dominica, French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Haiti, Martinique, Panama, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago and Turks & Caicos, as well as other places around the globe. This article is based on experience in the ABCs, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica and use of pre-paid (a.k.a. PAYGo — pay as you go — Gofone) options.

> *Getting a new SIM for each country avoids roaming charges… and international texting is always cheap*

Have an unlocked GSM phone? Then just join the line at a Digicel phone store and buy a SIM. Take your passport for ID and know your marina address, just in case. Typically, a phone SIM is free with a prepayment for minutes of around US$10 in local currency. A prepayment balance can be maintained by topping up your account with amounts from as little as $5, using cards sold in many shops, and from street top-up vendors or via Digicel's internet site or their stores. You can always check your balance with a free call. Getting a new SIM for each country avoids roaming charges. The SIM phone number is said to remain active for about three to six months if left unused. There is a choice between storing contact numbers in the phone memory or on the SIM. And international SMS (texting) is always cheap.

A top-up to a phone is a "money for minutes" transaction. There are bonuses for spending more, making regular top-ups and using the internet to top up. Digicel has an app for phone top-ups. Registering online with Digicel allows one to top up any Digicel phone number in any country using any designated bank account located anywhere.

Digicel sold its Central American operations to América Móvil. América Móvil is probably the world's largest telecommunications corporation outside China and the major telecoms operator in Mexico. It operates mainly GSM mobile/cell phone networks usually called Claró throughout the countries of Central and South America except Venezuela. It also operates in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic using both GSM and CDSA systems. From our experience in Colombia, where there are many top-up street vendors, buying GSM SIMs and top-ups from Claró follows the same pattern as Digicel. Data top-ups are similar too.

In addition to Claró, in the Dominican Republic, there is Orange. Orange is a large European telecommunications company with global operations. In the Caribbean, as well as in the DR it operates in Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Barthélémy, St. Martin, French Guiana and Dominica. We heard it provided better coverage in the DR's rural areas, although neither Claró nor Orange covered everywhere along sparsely populated parts of the south coast of the DR. Venezuela also had GSM prepaid options several years ago but getting a SIM in a shopping mall there then involved being fingerprinted, which seemed excessive.

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Not only are phones manufactured for either GSM or CDSA but they are also made to operate on the frequencies, the wavebands available in different countries. The most useful phones operate on the four most common bands used in Caribbean countries. These quad band GSM phones operate on 850, 900, 1800 and 1900 MHz. Faster services, 3 and 4G, in the Caribbean usually use available bandwidth at these frequencies, while 2100MHz has been allocated as a Penta band in Europe for more and faster services.

In the Caribbean, Digicel uses 900MHz 1800MHz and 1900MHz as well as 850MHz on some islands, while 850MHz and 1900MHz are Claró's common GSM bands. European countries use 900MHz, 1800MHz and 2100MHz.

There are many basic GSM unlocked quad band phones available. For example, from Amazon there are several for less than $30. Many smart phones (internet data, text and talk) models are GSM. Some are quad band, some others Penta band. But faster, more expensive phones using more bands are not always better. 2100MHz is not used in the Caribbean. In the USA, some 4G phones use 1700MHz. AT&T use 1700MHz, in conjunction with former TV channel 55 in the 700MHz band range for 4GLTE. But, these bands are not used elsewhere.

In the Caribbean there are pre-paid plans available for Blackberries and smart phones with data and talk time bundled together. Also, there are pre-paid SIMs for data heavy, non-phone devices like laptops, USB modems and 3G capable tablets. The benefits of quality internet whenever in sight of land can make these more expensive options worthwhile. Our 3G iPad 2 from the Apple Store came unlocked. It operates on common bandwidths and accepts any mini SIM. The Digicel phone stores sell data SIMs with prepaid data for a day, weeks, or several GBs for a month. Yes, GBs, around 5GB for less than $50. The store staff will crop the SIM, fit it and activate it.

Online there is a dedicated Digicel self-help website for users of laptops, USB modems (dongles) and tablets. It is here, when you are registered, that you can check the balance of GB and days left on your prepaid account. However, top-ups for data and smart phone top-ups are not possible directly from this website. Also, the cost of data top-ups may not match the values of the top-up cards or online top-up options available. In our experience, data top-ups are best done at the phone store.

To use a locked or CDSA phone which has WiFi capability, another solution may be to use a mobile internet "MiFi" hotspot device. These are GSM. They use SIM cards and can provide WiFi for several devices including laptops. An example is a Huawei Mobile WiFi E5331. It is quad band 850, 900, 1800 and 1900MHz. It is mobile, lasting for several hours on one battery charge. It might also suit people with several devices who tend to be boat based. From Amazon, for example, it can come unlocked and costs around $65.

I have not mentioned all the competing telecommunications operators in the Caribbean even though they operate GSM. Many of them are long established and now often have new stylish names like LIME and Chippie. I have not overlooked them because they provide less, I just have not had experience with them.



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'Everyone can get very good phone and internet service almost everywhere in the Caribbean and at reasonable prices'

Useful websites:

To buy GSM phones and Prepaid SIM Cards before leaving the USA, go to a site like Telestial. www.telestial.com.

A list of Caribbean mobile (cell) phone companies and their systems is at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Caribbean_mobile_phone_companies.

Ian Hopkins sails with his wife, Westa, aboard Marsha Claire *in the Caribbean in the winter months.*

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What's a Net Worth?

by Laurie Corbett



Currently, the Mississauga Maritime Net Controller is VO1DD, Doug Card

It was Christmas 1995, while visiting John Fallon aboard *Stopp Knot* in the British Virgin Islands, that I was introduced to the Ham radio, and in particular, to the Mississauga Maritime Net (MMN). No matter what wild foolishness we were up to the night before, John would tune up his Kenwood TS50 at 7:45 each morning, and give his name and location to a crowd of gentlemen listening through the white noise of the radio. The rest of the crew would lie in bed and listen while other cruisers around us, across the Caribbean, and up the continental coast checked into the net. Some would ask for separate conversations with other cruisers on nearby frequencies, some would ask for telephone patches to friends in Canada, others would be there just to exchange pleasantries with the net operators.

When the magic of the Caribbean visits to John and *Stopp Knot* had done their job and my wife, Dawn, and I were convinced we needed to follow in this lifestyle, it seemed obvious that I, too, needed to be a Ham operator; so I added the local courses on radio and Morse Code to the many Canadian Power and Sail Squadron courses I began to take.

When we found our little catamaran, *Cat Tales*, in Martinique in 2002, I not only brought John with me to sail her home to New Brunswick, Canada, but I had my own Kenwood TS50 tucked in the luggage. We made excellent use of the MMN to get our position and welfare reports home to our loved ones during the three-week trip home with the boat. Each morning, we'd check in and ask Ron Dubros, VE9 SQ, to relay our progress as we jumped from Martinique, to the BVI, to Morehead City, and on up the coast to Canada. They provided moral support and offered more as we faced bad weather, running out of fuel, and almost being run down by the US Navy.

These radio personalities were again "on board" in 2004, as Dawn and I sailed *Cat Tales* back to the Caribbean, again in 2006 when we sailed home to Canada, and once more in 2008 when we returned to the islands. Most importantly, the members relayed messages to Dawn's parents, who worried about the two of us in a small boat in such a large ocean.

The Mississauga Maritime Net was an important part of every day for Dawn and me, back in 2004-2005, when we crawled along the Caribbean one new harbour at a time. We would make inquiries of the MMN regarding personal security, anchor holding, eating places, boat storage, and repairs. One big source for us was VE3VHT, Therisia Van Hattem (Teri) and her husband Pat aboard *S/V Slowpoke*. She had input in almost every decision we made, before she succumbed to the call of her grandchildren and sailed back north.

One memorable incident for us was during our first visit to Martinique, when we were at anchor in Petit Anse d'Arlet. VA3DOM, Dominique Molin, aboard *S/V Pei Hu III*, called in to say they had caught more mahi mahi than they could possibly eat, and asked if anyone wanted some. Although I had little hope in finding Dominique in the vast Caribbean, I called in and said I had yet to catch or taste any. When he said he was located in Grande Anse d'Arlet — the next cove over! — I said I'd be alongside in 12 minutes. I think it surprised us both when we pulled *Cat Tales* alongside *Pei Hu III* just minutes later and used a boat hook to trade some local wine for our first mahi mahi.

The Mississauga Maritime Net was founded by Doug Last VE3NBL and Ernie Meyer VE3EGM – SK and began SSB operation in 1981 to allow Canadian boaters who often went offshore to places such as Bermuda and the Caribbean to maintain communication with friends and families on a daily basis. Position reports, weather outlooks, telephone patches, general chatter and even medical emergencies were all part of the net operations. Less often, but most importantly, the MMN has monitored vessels in distress and helped arrange rescue at sea. Many operators from different locales participated and if, owing to propagation, the Net Control couldn't copy a boat, someone else on the net could.

Current technologies like the "SPOT" system, satellite phone and Winlink have made some of the services of the Net obsolete, and further technologies like omnidirectional WiFi antennas and the "dongle" have allowed onboard internet in most harbours to replace the social aspects of the net. However, there is still a need as is evidenced by the boats still continuing to avail themselves of that "friendly voice from Canada" every Monday through Friday at 1230 hours Zulu on 14.122.50 (20 meters) and if requested, coverage on the weekends for lengthy bluewater passages with position reports, weather and at the very least an "all well on board".

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More than that, some of us still recall when, in November, 2006, the Saint John-registered 44-foot vessel *Magique* got into trouble in foul weather a few hundred miles north of Bermuda on her way south, after two low pressure areas inexplicably joined up and drifted out from the Carolinas. The rudder split and disappeared at 3:00AM, the mainsail went to shreds at 4:00AM, and two of the motor mounts sheared off before the sun came up. With the assistance of the MM Net and others, an LNG supertanker arrived and attempted a rescue. The disastrous attempts were described by one crewmember as "eight different ways to kill yourself in 15 seconds". The supertanker agreed to stand down and hold position, and the crew was ultimately removed by US Coast Guard helicopter. (*Magique* was ultimately found by the crew, towed into Bermuda, and is presently enjoying the ABC islands.)

Will we always hear such drama while tuned into the Net? Thankfully, no, but the MMN is there for us. After hearing *S/V Sittatunga* checking in while off Dominica each day for three windless days in 2009, while they pondered their broken propeller shaft, the Net Controller organized a tow into Roseau to drinking water and local capable mechanics.

The MMN was there as well, in 2008, when members maintained contact with the 34-foot *S/V Tyhina* while it retraced Roald Amundsen's 1903-06 transit of the Northwest Passage on *S/V Gjoa* (www.tyhina.com).

The primary purpose of this article is to invite all Hams afloat in the Caribbean and elsewhere to check in to the MMN from time to time. You can track other Hams, enjoy the news and camaraderie, or just brush up on your microphone skills. These days, the Net Controller is VO1DD, Doug Card, located in Heart's Delight, Newfoundland. He is assisted at times by VE3FIT, Ken Grant, in Toronto; VE9ME, Henry Drew, located in Moncton, New Brunswick; VE9SQ, Ron Dubros, now in Saint John, New Brunswick; and VE0FJ/VE1SY, John Fallon, of Saint John, New Brunswick and/or aboard *Stopp Knot* in St. Lucia; and possibly 6Y5DA, Don Ashdown in Jamaica. Of course, this list of reliable operators might include you. Once again, try 14.122.5, at 1230h Zulu.

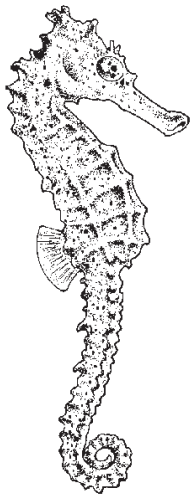
Laurie and Dawn Corbett are presently sailing Cat Tales *through the Windward and Leeward Islands. They maintain a web presence at www.flowers-cove.ca/CatTales/index.htm.*

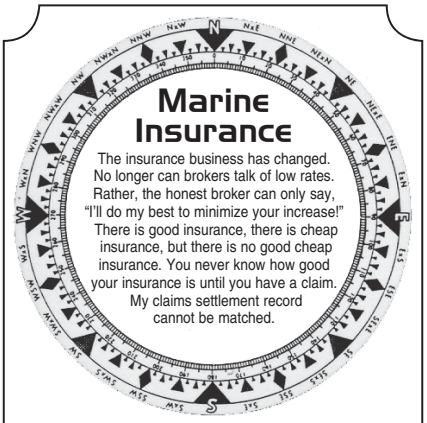
The author and the editor invite other cruisers in the Caribbean to tell Compass *readers about their favorite SSB, Ham, or VHF net. Send a note to sally@caribbeancompass.com.*



John Fallon (left) and the author (below) on Ham







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Pitch Lake and Pointe-a-Pierre Wild Fowl Trust:

TWO UNIQUE EXPERIENCES IN TRINIDAD

by Anne McMillen-Jackson

Asphalt and oil refineries. Was this really how I wanted to spend a day in Trinidad?

My husband and I had signed up for a trip to the Pitch Lake and Pointe-a-Pierre Wild Fowl Trust with Members Only Maxi Taxi Service (www.membersonlymaxitaxi.com). We've done numerous tours with Jesse James, owner of Members Only, and always had a terrific time, so we put ourselves once again into his competent hands and hopped into the van.

In less than two hours, we had passed from the steep, forested hills of Chaguaramas through busy Port of Spain and along the edge of the central valley to the rolling grassy hills of southwest Trinidad. There are no facilities in this region for cruisers, so many never visit, though it is well worth the effort.

The Pitch Lake

Approaching the pitch lake through the village of La Brea, the jarring ride draws your attention to just how bad the roads are. They lump, they dip, they seem to have been laid with no regard for the contours of the land. At one spot, the two lanes are vertically offset by more than five feet. The problem is due not to poor road maintenance, but because the village itself sits on the outskirts of the pitch lake. When pitch is harvested from the lake, the contours of the surrounding land shift. Abandoned wooden houses with broken pilings dot the area. New concrete houses are built on "floating foundations" of sand, the only feasible method in this malleable terrain. In front yards, lush patches of vegetation are interspersed with hard expanses of black pitch that have oozed from the ground.

The lake itself doesn't look like much from a distance, perhaps a poorly tended extension of the visitor center's parking lot. But Areema, who has been guiding tours here for 20 years, showed us that it is much more than that as she leads us out onto the lake.

Walking here is disconcerting. The matte-black surface yields slightly beneath your feet. To truly understand how soft it is, stop and stand for a while, then look at the impressions your shoes leave in the pitch. Areema peeled the top off of a bubble. The locals, she said, call this "elephant skin". Beneath the skin is the glistening, near-liquid pitch.

This pitch lake is unique in this solid topping. Only two other pitch lakes exist — the best-known being the La Brea Tar Pits in California, USA — but those are liquid pitch. Try to walk on a liquid pitch lake, and you will be sucked down to the bottom. This fate is possible at the Trinidad Pitch Lake if you stray from the known paths. Areema pokes a stick into a seemingly solid area that is, in fact, liquid. At the visitor's center is a picture of a fellow who wandered the lake without a guide and sunk chest-deep before being rescued. A gruesome fate for the unwary.

This liquid pitch, however, is vital to the continued life of the pitch lake. Oil from subterranean deposits picks up water and clay as it rises, becoming pitch. Called "Mother of the Lake", it replenishes the lake. Once on the surface, the volatiles in the pitch evaporate, and it solidifies.



Above: 'The lake area teems with life drawn by the water that accumulates on the surface'
Left: 'Look at the impressions your shoes leave in the pitch'
Below: Areema shows that beneath the 'elephant skin' is near-liquid pitch. Sir Walter Raleigh this substance to caulk his ships

More than just a curiosity, the pitch from the lake has been used by man for hundreds of years. The Amerindians sealed their canoes with it. Then, in 1595, Sir Walter Raleigh "discovered" the lake, and declared the pitch "excellent good" for



caulking his ships. Unfortunately, early harvesting methods — removing the pitch from one area of the lake's edge — didn't allow the lake to renew itself. Areema points up toward the road; the lake used to be at the same level.

Modern-day harvesting techniques were designed to conserve the lake. Bulldozers peel off the top five to six feet of solid pitch from a small patch of the lake, shifting their harvest to a new area every day. Constant motion is the key to preventing the heavy machinery from slowly sinking into the pitch. Processing at the small refinery onshore is simple. The pitch is melted and filtered to remove water and impurities — 180 tons of pitch yields 142 tons of refined asphalt — then pelletized and shipped worldwide for use in manufacturing and road and airport runway construction. At this rate, geologists estimate that the 95-acre, 250-foot-deep lake will last another 400 years.

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The pitch lake has been nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its geological and cultural significance.

Despite its foreboding appearance, the lake area teems with life drawn by the water that accumulates on the uneven surface. Bright green algae grows within the ponds and rivulets, water lilies bloom atop, and grasses mass along the edge. Birds peck and probe the vegetation. Even humans benefit. The objects I spied in the distance, mistaking them for birds, were actually the heads of tourists lounging in the sulphurous waters, which are said to aid a multitude of ills. Those of our group with the foresight to wear bathing suits slipped into the warm waters for a soak.



Tramping back across the lake, ever careful to walk only where Areema walked, we saw bubbling where gases escape the pitch. Unfortunately, since we had hit heavy traffic on the way south, we didn't have time to explore the visitor center. Next time, perhaps.

After a delicious lunch of hot rotis and cold beers at a local restaurant, we headed back along the coast road, past beaches, a swamp, and pretty residential areas with yards festooned with colorful flowers and Hindu prayer flags. More than half of the Trinidadian population is ethnically East Indian, and that influence was evident when we passed the Shore of Peace (Shanti Tiram). Pyres are available here for cremation in the traditional Hindu manner, and nearly all were in use. Mourners gathered in small clusters, women in long white saris, men in traditional dress, also white, or black pants and white shirts. At this time of day, most of the tall wooden pyres had already burned down to smaller bonfires. For our group of North Americans and Europeans, it was an exotic sight, though Jesse said that this was a frequent practice in Trinidad.

The Wild Fowl Trust

From a distance, we spied the tall flame-tipped towers of the Petrotrin refinery complex, the incongruous home of the Pointe-a-Pierre Wild Fowl Trust (www.papwildfowltrust.org), and our next destination. I didn't know what to expect — a soggy ditch amidst the industrial buildings with a few birds paddling about? We were more than pleasantly surprised when the van, after passing the guard station and weaving through the roads of the complex, entered a lush, forested area. Company houses, some occupied, some not, were tucked under the trees. The pretty house belonging to the president of Petrotrin sat atop a knoll.

Beautiful foliage lined the route to the Trust's Learning Center. We perused the exhibits in the small museum, peeked at the two live boas, and read about the Amerindians who used to inhabit this area. Then our guide led us out to introduce us to the local flora and fauna. With more than 20,000 species of plants and 72 species of birds, there is a lot to see. Colorful painted tiles set at intervals around the lake identify some of the species.

The first beautifully tall tree our guide pointed out was the ylang ylang, which contributes its essence to the floral scent of Chanel No. 5 perfume. Green and gold "star fruit" dangled from a carambola tree. Another outstanding specimen was Pride of Barbados, a tall shrub with striking red and yellow flowers, locally called "dead man's flesh" in deference to the brown seedpods. Arrowhead-shaped dasheen leaves are an essential ingredient in the local cuisine, used to make callaloo soup or side dish. It was fascinating to hear about the medicinal and culinary uses of many of the other trees and shrubs.

My favorite water plant was the lotus. The leaves are round, like a water lily, but instead of merely floating atop the lake, they perch high above the water on long stems. The fist-sized pink blossoms open into flowers, then develop distinctive seed-



Above: 'Perching on fallen logs, the black-bellied tree ducks lived up to their name'

Left: Painted tiles identify some of the 72 species of birds found at the Pointe-a-Pierre Wild Fowl Trust

pods. Every part of the plant is edible. Just a few methods of preparation include cooking the leaves like cabbage, eating the dried seeds like nuts, serving the stems in salad, and boiling the roots like a vegetable. Also, within the lotus stem are strong fibers traditionally used to make thread and fabric. Finally, the dried seedpods are terrific for plant arrangements.

Of course, there were plenty of the namesake wild fowl about. The black-bellied tree ducks lived up to their name, perching on tree branches, and also on fallen logs, nest boxes, you name it. Muscovy ducks waddled along the shore. Kingfishers flitted across the lake. Brilliantly colored birds such as the yellow-and-black oriole, the yellow-headed blackbird, and the aptly named red-topped cardinal, flashed between the trees. Though we stuck to the lakeside, there are several trails you can take through the forest.

The Trust conducts a breeding program for endangered wild fowl, including the scarlet ibis and blue-and-gold macaw, and these breeding birds are maintained in aviaries. Thousands of offspring have been released into the wild. In fact, the Trust was initially established in 1966 at the request of a petrochemical worker who noted a decline in the local duck population, and thought that a breeding program would be beneficial.

The Pointe-a-Pierre Wild Fowl Trust currently encompasses 75 acres of land and two lakes. They provide guided tours and educational programs, and have a separate guesthouse for retreats, seminars, and get-togethers. It's a beautiful place to just stroll, relax, and enjoy nature.

We were all pretty relaxed on the van ride back to Chaguaramas. We topped off the trip with delicious homemade ice cream from a vendor on the boardwalk, eating it while we watched the sun set. Though we had learned a lot today, this was pure pleasure.

So, back to my original question: Did I really want to spend a day with asphalt and oil refineries? Absolutely. And next time we're in Trinidad, we just might do it again.

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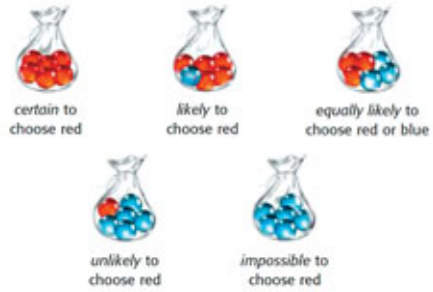
DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP!

by Frank Virgintino

I was aboard my boat in Trinidad a few months back, when good friends happened by and came aboard. They are a wonderful husband and wife team, which is so often the case on cruising boats. The wife is a board member of a prominent sailing association and has spent years cruising the Caribbean.

During the course of the conversation she asked whether I thought that cruising was still worth it.

I thought that perhaps they had begun to find costs mounting on a limited budget, an issue that often initiates this question. However, in their case, the question had nothing to do with the cost of boat ownership. Her question was based on concern about rising levels of crime in the Caribbean, and in particular violent crime against cruising boats.



A picture of probabilities. If the red marbles represent instances of crime, which 'destination bags' would you choose to increase your probability of cruising safely?

The week prior, a boat had departed from Chaguaramas, Trinidad, whose captain had advertised on the morning boater's net for "serious cruisers" to buddy-boat to Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela. The boat that decided to go along with them was a US-flagged boat with a very experienced 74-year-old skipper and his mate.

The latter boat had just approached the northern side of the Peninsula de Paria, Venezuela, a few miles off, when they were overtaken and boarded by pirates (thugs) who proceeded to rob and pistol whip both skipper and mate.

This incident, as well as others, had prompted the question that was put to me. Actually what it raised was not a question so much as a sharing of a sense of fear coupled with a feeling of helplessness. No one wants to be pistol-whipped or watch their mate, family or guests being a victim of such violence. The story evokes deep-seated fears. So much so that seasoned cruisers such as my friends are considering "abandoning ship".

The essence of their question is how to cope with something that one has no absolute way of coping with. When we deal with a challenge beyond what we can reasonably prepare for, we become frustrated. I have sat with many fellow cruisers and when the subject comes around to how to cope with violent crime, there is a great deal of discussion, but somehow you always come away feeling incomplete. One fellow shares that he will carry what amounts to an arsenal on his boat and that he will give the thugs their come-uppance. (I always imagine my 100-pound wife, Sylvester Stallone-style, toting whatever heavy machinegun this fellow has, shooting at a pirogue full of husky, mean-looking men armed with similar weapons. For that matter, I cannot even imagine me having the necessary training to execute the use of the type of firearms that would be necessary to ward off five men in a fast boat, all of whom are carrying automatic weapons.) Others speak of a strategy of being passive and not putting up any resistance, not provoking the boarders so that they will not do you any harm. It is sound advice, but the strategy does not calm our spirits, as we cannot predict the outcome.

The very thought that most cruisers have of being on a boat where one is boarded creates terrible images. It is always the thought of being helpless that causes the greatest fear. It is not like you can say, "I have had enough of this ride; I want to get off."

Let's go back to the question. Should we continue to go cruising? Is it worth it? My answer is DEFINITELY YES. It is worth it for all of us who love the sea and love the never-ending challenges of the sea, as well as the joy of making a safe landfall, arriving at a perfect anchorage and watching a great sunset.

It follows that the important point is the "safe landfall". Increasingly, our ability to make a safe landfall has improved. Today we have weather forecasting that is far superior to what we had 20 years ago and even a decade ago. We also arrive safely because we can navigate better owing to the technology at our disposal.

Where is the technology that will prevent us from being victims of crime? The only way to eliminate crime is to eliminate what provokes it, but we have very little, if any, control over those factors. We can, however, avoid crime and violent crime especially by being very conscious and very careful, on land and at anchor. Underway offshore there is only one method that can work effectively and that is avoidance. As mariners we avoid shoal water and dangerous reefs. Why not avoid dangerous people?

The first time I suggest this, most respond, "The idea is great, but how, specifically, does one avoid violent crime? If we knew conclusively how to do that, we would not feel so helpless and so frightened."

The cruiser who asked for a buddy boat to go to Puerto La Cruz did the opposite of avoiding crime: he went right to it. Perhaps he did not believe what has been said about his proposed route or perhaps he did not think it could happen to him, that somehow he could beat the odds. Venezuelan waters — especially off the north coast of the Peninsula de Paria — are dangerous and the danger is very well documented.

There is a large difference between a "one off" happening at an anchorage in Honduras or Tobago (as recently happened) and a recurring situation. When violent crimes continue to happen in a given place over and over, it is not courageous to sail through the area, it is foolhardy. There are many ways today that one can check on crime, its type and frequency.

Avoidance is all about the probabilities. Noonsite (www.noonsite.com) and the Caribbean Safety and Security Net (www.safetyandsecuritynet.com) both have excellent "police blotters" that record reported cases. If we review those records for certain areas we can know what has happened there. We can also find out what is probably going to happen and where it is going to happen by using probability analysis. That is what the increasingly popular Caribbean Security Index does (register for the Caribbean Security Index at freecruisingguides.com/caribbean-security-index-csi). It does not tell you what has happened; the index gives you the probability of what *can* happen in different areas. Is it foolproof? No, it is not, but knowing the probability of something happening makes a big difference. Would the cruiser who was boarded by thugs off of Venezuela have been boarded by thugs off the Virgin Islands? Highly unlikely!

If I were to leave Trinidad to go west to the ABC islands, I would first head north to stay off the Venezuelan coast by 20 or more miles before turning west. Is that too careful? It is not, because a pirogue with twin engines can cover 20 miles in 30 minutes. The farther off of the Venezuelan shore I go, the greater the probability is in my favor that I will not have a problem.

We can also apply the technique of avoidance to anchorages where there has been a high number of break-ins. We can avoid those anchorages and go where the chance of a break-in is historically low. We can vote with our anchors and sails. Let those countries where there is not a demonstrated modicum of safety know that we are not going to stop and we are not going to spend our money.

To remove the fear and sense of helplessness that many of us feel when we think about violent crime, or even the sense of violation that comes from having our boats (homes) broken into, we must know that we have a reliable method that we can count on that will protect us. If we take the time to realize that probability analysis is used for many things in life, from actuarial tables to games of chance, we learn that we really can, in almost all cases, avoid that which can hurt us or cause us damage. We can do so by avoiding those areas that are known to be "shark-infested waters".

Do your homework, take care of all that you can and leave the rest up to God — and don't give up the ship!

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



Love in the Middle of the Ocean

by Tor Pinney

I was sailing east on 26 north, then south on 65 west,
Taking a delivery to the islands I like best...



Thus begins a tune and a tale of love in the middle of the ocean. The song is upbeat West Indian in the old scratch band calypso style. The year is 1978...

I was young, adventurous and armed with a new captain's license when I scored my first paid yacht delivery. The boat was bound for the Virgin Islands charter trade, and so was I — the beginning of my years as a Caribbean charter and delivery skipper. I was well prepared for the offshore passage, and equally unprepared for what the ocean held in store for me on that serendipitous voyage.

With a crew of two I set sail from Fort Lauderdale and followed the classic delivery skippers' route: across the Gulf Stream, through the Bahamas via Tongue of the Ocean, and then due east into the Atlantic, keeping to the Horse Latitudes north of the tradewinds to avoid fighting those relentless easterlies. And avoid them we did, motoring for days in light airs and calms, burning up nearly all our fuel reserves to reach the 65th meridian where we would at last turn south to pick up the tradewinds on the beam. After that we wouldn't need fuel, having earned with our easting a final, sweet reach south to the islands.

We were nearing longitude 65° west, 800 nautical miles east of Miami in a flat calm, when we spotted another sailboat, the first we'd seen in a week. She was several miles ahead, seemingly hove-to under a flat-sheeted mainsail. As the song recounts,

Well, I picked up the VHF and I called on Channel 16,
You there off our starboard bow, this is the yacht Tortola Queen.
How are you and where you from...

The skipper answered, saying they were a 57-foot Swan out of Annapolis, bound for the BVI. They had stopped for a swim and invited us to come by for a cold beer. Having no refrigeration aboard our bareboat and it being a hot, windless day, we were glad to accept the friendly offer. We caught up to them and laid to half a boat length off, close enough for them to toss over several ice-cold cans of Heineken. Oh, nirvana on the high seas!

But as I was about to discover, that wasn't the only gift that sweet Swan had in store for me.

Half a dozen men were crowded around the cockpit when we arrived, and up on the foredeck sitting all alone was a woman. Not just any woman, but a beautiful young Eurasian woman, and as I stood gaping at her I could've sworn she smiled at me.

All at once and just ahead in the middle of the sea
I saw a girl on another boat and she was smiling back at me.

Fair complexion, almond eyes, auburn hair tinged gold by the sun... Friends, it was love at first sight!

And I found love in the middle of the ocean
Filled my body with emotion
As the two boats passed
I found love in the middle of the ocean
And I got a funny notion
That this one is gonna' last.

But surely, I thought, she must be with one of the men aboard that boat.

Both vessels resumed motoring, heading south to find the tradewinds. The big Swan soon vanished over the horizon ahead of us, taking the mysterious lady with it. We found our wind, relished a few days of perfect sailing and before we knew or wished it, made landfall in the British Virgin Islands. The song laments,

Funny how these things occur
For three more days I thought of her
As I sailed into Jost Van Dyke
With her nowhere in sight...



I brought the boat around to the charter company in Road Town, Tortola and there in a marina slip sat the Swan. My delivery completed, I stopped by to say hello and thank them again for the beers, and (oh, by the way) inquire about their beautiful shipmate. It turned out none of those guys that we'd seen aboard were hooked up with her. She was the owner's hired boat-sitter, nothing more, and when he'd decided to bring the boat to the Virgins she had agreed to come along with it. The owner and all his buddies were now flying home to wives and work, leaving lovely Debbie Liu to care-take the boat. At the moment, they said, she was "ashore somewhere." Hmmm, it seemed like a good time for me to go ashore, too.

Then it was in old Road Town
I finally tracked that woman down
And held her in my arms all through the niiiiight!

YES! Find her I did, and the very next day I wrote the song, played it for her, and won the fair lady's heart as surely as she had won mine. And we lived happily ever after for many years, at first moving aboard a retired St. John's ferry turned houseboat in Compass Point, St. Thomas. Whenever I was off skippering charter boats Debbie worked as a waitress at an upscale restaurant in the marina. In between we explored the islands and each other, and sailed many offshore deliveries together. Later we lived for a while on a deserted tropical island, and eventually ran a big charter sailboat as captain and mate. We were young and in love and life was grand, and hardly a day went by that we didn't thank Mother Ocean for bringing us together.

Well, now we sail in company, my new first mate and I
Sailing for Antigua from Tortola, BVI
Making love every night and sailing every day
Making me so happy when she turns to me and says,
I found love in the middle of the ocean
Filled my body with emotion
As the two boats passed
I found love in the middle of the ocean
And I got a funny notion
That this one is gonna' last
Filled my body with emotion
As the two boats passed
And I got a funny notion
That this one is gonna' last.

To hear the song, "Love in the Middle of the Ocean," visit www.tor.cc/love.mp3. The complete lyrics are at www.tor.cc/love.htm.

Writer/photographer, marine industry consultant and lifelong cruising sailor Tor Pinney (www.tor.cc) has logged about 150,000 nautical miles under sail since his remarkable encounter in the middle of the ocean, but has never been quite that lucky again. Today his articles appear in boating magazines worldwide and his authoritative book, Ready for Sea! - How to Outfit the Modern Cruising Sailboat *(Sheridan House), is available in nautical bookstores and online. Tor is presently revisiting the Caribbean aboard his 42-foot ketch,* Silverheels.



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MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON



FEBRUARY - MARCH 2014

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 2014		20	0352	11	2035
DATE	TIME	21	0442	12	2120
1	1339	22	0535	13	2205
2	1433	23	0630	14	2249
3	1524	24	0728	15	2333
4	1615	25	0827	16	0000 (full moon)
5	1704	26	0926	17	0017
6	1753	27	1024	18	0103
7	1848	28	1121	19	0150
8	1931			20	0239
9	2019	**March 2014**		21	0331
10	2107	1	1216	22	0425
11	2154	2	1309	23	0522
12	2240	3	1402	24	0619
13	2324	4	1453	25	0716
14	0000 (full moon)	5	1544	26	0812
15	0008	6	1634	27	0908
16	0052	7	1724	28	1002
17	0135	8	1814	29	1056
18	0220	9	1902	30	1147
19	0305	10	1949	31	1239

Crucial Questions for Prospective Crew to Ask

by Gail Isaacs

For years, ever since my very first sailing lesson, all I could dream of was sailing to exotic ports. The question was always "where do I want to start this adventure?" How could I pick any place in the world other than the Caribbean, with its clear water, sunny skies, beautiful beaches and warm tradewinds? Why would I want to go anywhere else?

I sold all of my worldly possessions nearly five years ago and I declared that the sailing life was meant for me. All I had was a passion for sailing, some basic sailing classes and some time on the water with friends through my sailing club. I didn't know anyone personally who was living this lifestyle, I had no source of references. Some people were so excited about living vicariously through me, and then there were others who thought that I must be crazy — and, yes, some people simply stopped associating with me. I believe that my choice to live differently from what society accepts as the "norm" made them aware of how unhappy they were with their own lives. All I can say is follow your heart, live life large and dance with your shoes off. That's my motto at any rate!

So how do you get started? There are many crew websites online. You can try FindaCrew, 7knots, Crew Finders and many more (see below). First define what your needs are. Are you looking for a professional paid position, a shared expense situation or a romantic involvement? Once you're clear in your own mind, create a profile about yourself, your experience and what you are looking for.

Easy enough, just sit back and wait for the e-mails to come rolling in, right? Ah, not so much. You will receive responses but you must also be proactive. There are various ways to be proactive: look at profiles of the types of boats and locations that they are sailing in. Do you want to sail to the Caribbean and Central America or would you rather sail in the South Pacific? Have a plan!

I found a boat that was in Trinidad and whose plans included sailing to Grenada, Bequia and St. Lucia, none of which I had ever been to… but years ago a friend of mine sailed to St. Lucia and once I saw the pictures of the Pitons I was hooked!

I thought I had a forthright agreement with the captain/owner of a beautiful Shannon 38 who repeatedly — via e-mails, Skype and then again in person — expressed his utmost appreciation that I would crew for him. And then he became an octopus! I was totally taken aback by this. He of course apologized and I thought that would bring an end to his behavior — but it didn't. I will say that I never felt threatened that he would become aggressive or violent; he would always back off and I did stay on board. But when this behavior continued after his wife arrived I just had to leave. I didn't want to be in a situation where I would have to confront him in front of his wife, which could possibly threaten their marriage. I didn't feel compelled to be their marriage counselor. I knew that I hadn't perpetuated this behavior — but I did start thinking that perhaps I should have asked better questions.

Throughout these past few years, I've come up with a list of questions that you might want to use when interviewing a prospective boat captain/owner. Yes, you have a right to know as much upfront as possible about people you are going to be spending a lot of time with in a close, confined area in a large body of water. Use your resources available, communicate via e-mail and, best of all, Skype.

- What kind of experience do they have? Are you experienced enough to sail with someone who just bought their first boat?
- What are their/your monetary expectations? Get that out in the open and written down, especially if this is a professional job.
- What are the cabin/sleeping arrangements? Be clear about this.
- What do they expect from you? For example, standing watches, cooking, boat maintenance.
- How seaworthy is the vessel and what type of maintenance is performed on a regular basis?
- Do they do their own work or do they hire professionals? This is a double-edged question: you want to know that they can afford to keep their boat maintained well, but let's remember that there are no plumbers at sea. Can they take care of a problem while out at sea? Do they have spare parts for electronic and mechanical equipment on their boat?
- Have they had any accidents or incidents? Do they practice safe boating?
- Do they use paper charts or rely totally on electronics? Be aware, electronics go out and you want to be able to navigate the old fashioned way.
- Do they spend most of their time at a marina, mooring or at anchor? I ask this for a number of reasons; if they only go to marinas and you are sharing expenses this can really add up quickly. If they are experienced picking up mooring balls and anchoring, you'll probably sleep a lot better at night feeling confident that they have experience.
- If the boat is usually on a mooring or at anchor and you want to spend time on shore, will they let you take the dinghy (depending on your experience) or are they willing to run you to shore and pick you up at a designated time? I find that it's best if, through your interview process, you select a boat and captain/owner whose lifestyle you are comfortable with. If you are a party animal and the captain/owner is a teetotaller and early-to-bed kind of person, you'll probably very unhappy.
- How would he/she describe their demeanor? What kinds of things do they like to do?
- Get references! If they don't want you to speak with people they have sailed with before, that could be a red flag.

Finally, if you don't feel safe, whether it's owing to the condition of the boat, the captain/owner, or any other crewmember, get off the boat at the next port of call. Your safety always comes before the adventure.

These are just some of the questions that I've found have worked for me. My best advice is to follow your own feelings. When you feel confident that you have found the right boat for you, make sure to exchange emergency contact information with each other and then relax and enjoy.

This article was "written while on the hook" by Gail Isaacs, a self-described travel writer and adventurer. Visit Gail's blog at www.gailisaacs.wordpress.com.

Some Free Crew Websites

www.7knots.com
www.desperatesailors.com
www.floatplan.com
www.crewbay.com
www.sailopo.com
www.crewseekers.net
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/world-cruising
www.sailingnetworks.com
http://ssca.org
www.ssca.org/forum/viewforum.php?f=9&sid=1fca61ab97f7e3d90c715f80623d0295
You can register for free to access the Seven Seas Cruising Association (SSCA) Forums without buying a full membership.
Thanks to Tor Pinney for this list of sites.

THE SALT SOLUTION

Salty is a humpback whale that loves to jam and sing. Every the winter he swims throughout the Caribbean Sea and sings songs. He doesn't need a passport because he's an international citizen.

Since he lives in the salty sea all his life, where do you think he gets fresh water?

As any sailor will readily point out, a person who drinks seawater will become even thirstier. To prevent *dehydration*, the *salt* contained in the *water* must be excreted by the *kidneys*, thus depleting the body's fluid level even further. Seawater has a much higher concentration of salt than that found in the body fluids of most animals, including mammals and birds; therefore, when seawater is ingested, the osmotic balance of these animals is upset.

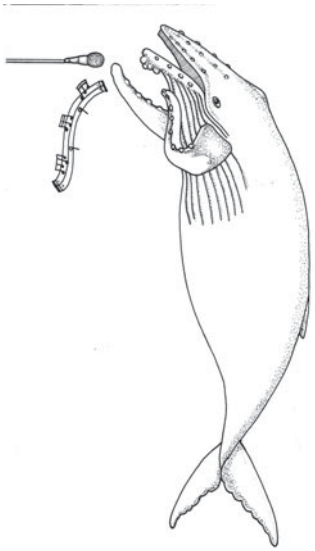
Water, Water Everywhere - And Not A Drop To Drink

Seabirds, whales and dolphins, sea turtles, sea snakes and marine lizards whose ancestors dwelt on land, now find their homes often hundreds of miles from any source of fresh water, yet all of these animals rely on salt water to live. Indeed, they must limit their concentration of salt in their body fluids and blood to about one percent — less than a third of the concentration in salt water. Without fresh water, dehydration of body tissues ensues, and in most cases, death follows.

If they drink seawater, they must find some way to get rid of the excess salt; but if they do not drink seawater, where do they obtain the water their body tissues require?

Salt Glands

Most air-breathing vertebrates are unable to tolerate drinking seawater, but some are less restricted than others. Seabirds drink salt water but have a special gland located behind each eye that filters out excess salt from their blood, and channels it to the nasal passages. These glands secrete a concentrated salt solution through the ducts of the nasal cavities. In most species, the salty fluid flows out through the nostrils and drips from the tip of their bills, which explains why seabirds are often seen shaking their heads and appearing to have a runny nose — they are actually ridding themselves of the salty droplets.



Salty Tears

Like the Mock Turtle in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, sea turtles also weep, through tear ducts that constantly pump the salt out of their body! Similar to humans, turtles' kidneys are useless for the purposes of drinking saltwater. Their kidneys can't produce pee that is concentrated enough to excrete the enormous amounts of salt acquired through drinking saltwater and eating very salty foods like algae and jellyfish. As with many other marine reptiles, sea turtles have giant modified tear glands, one behind each eyeball. These glands are rather large. They're much bigger than the turtle's brain. Therefore, they're able to drink salty seawater without dehydrating or becoming sick.

Extraordinary Kidneys — Nature's Filtration System

The salt content of the blood and other body fluids of marine mammals is not very different from that of terrestrial mammals or any other vertebrates: it is about one third as salty as seawater. Because a vertebrate that drinks seawater is imbibing something three times saltier than its blood, it must get rid of the excess salt by producing very salty urine. Investigations of whales and dolphins indicate that marine mammals remove salt from their systems in a more conventional manner. Apparently these animals do not drink seawater, but satisfy their need for water with the fluids contained in their diet of plankton, fish or squid. In this case, they produce needed fluids internally from the metabolic breakdown of food (water is one of the by-products of carbohydrate and fat metabolism). Additionally, extra food gets converted to blubber, which also contains fresh water for the whale's body to draw on in times of need.

The water inside the prey that whales eat is still not pure water. It's going to be saltier than fresh water, but still not as bad as gulping down sea water. Whales and dolphins' kidneys are many times more efficient than our own. Salts are extracted and excreted in urine with a much higher concentration than seawater itself. The more concentrated the urine the greater the amount of freshwater the animal can gain. Additionally, their slower respiration rates limit water loss and their lack of perspiration (whales and dolphins don't have sweat glands) also helps retain liquids. Baby whales get the moisture they need to stay hydrated from their mother's milk.

***Adaptations* — Nature at Work**

Other animals in the sea have their own ways of getting rid of excess salt. Sea snakes are able to avoid excess salt accumulation from seawater using a salt excreting gland that sits under the tongue. Marine iguanas that live in the Galapagos, for example, use glands in their snout to sneeze out salt. Sharks have rectal glands; their salty wastes exit through their "rear end". All these adaptions have allowed marine animals to adapt more readily to their marine environment. Nature at work!

Fun Facts

• Did you know that your body is 70 percent water? That means a person who weighs 100 pounds (45 kilograms) is made of 70 pounds (32 kilograms) of water! That's almost 8.5 gallons (32 liters). You can figure out how much water you are made of by weighing yourself and then multiplying your weight by 0.7. Weigh yourself and calculate how much of your weight is water.

• Why is water precious? Despite Earth's appearance of watery abundance, less than one percent of the water on Earth is actually fresh and usable. Nature's water-recycling process, known as the water cycle, has kept the amount of water on Earth about the same for millions of years.

• What is *mariposa*? Hint: Shipwrecked sailors facing severe thirst at sea were taught not to indulge in mariposa — the voluntary drinking of sea water — because the momentary refreshment gained by a quick drink of seawater inevitably leads to further dehydration due to high levels of salt. Human kidneys can only make urine that is less salty than salt water. Therefore, to get rid of all the excess salt taken in by drinking seawater, you have to urinate more water than you drank. Eventually, you die of dehydration even as you become thirstier.

Word Scramble

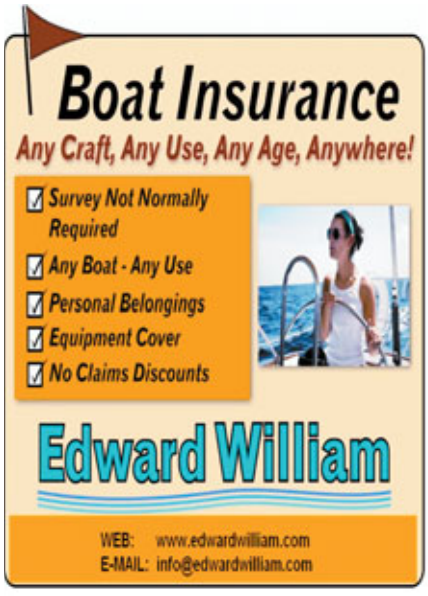
Rearrange the letters below. What words do they make?
Hint: All these words are in *italics* in the story above.

1) tasl
2) twear
3) smaproia
4) yinkdes
5) ddaethnyior
6) asadottinap

Answers: 1) salt; 2) water; 3) mariposa; 4) kidneys; 5) dehydration; 6) adaptations.









FEBRUARY 2014

♈ ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)
Although you are feeling the fair winds of inspiration, problems in finding a smooth course through the turbulent waters of your love life and a lack of sense of humor about the situation could make life in the main cabin uncomfortable.

♉ TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)
Concentrate on sailing to your romantic landfall and don't let outside negative influences and occasional squalls slow you down.

♊ GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)
This month holds great possibilities in creative progress, and if you stick to your set waypoints you should see positive results before its end.

CANCER ♋ (22 Jun - 23 Jul)
While your life this month is generally spent tacking in shifting winds, you will reach a profitable port in business in the third week.

♌ LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)
February starts out with negative vibes in the captain's cabin but that aspect will wane while positive aspects in commerce will pick up a breeze and give you something to feel good about.

♍ VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)
Steer a romantic course and focus on your love life before mid-month, as your verbal skills could ebb after that and take your creativity along with it.

♎ LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)
The Sea of Love could get choppy in the third week and this will be, in part, due to your lack of humor the week before. The balance of the month will see fair winds in ingenuity and communication skills, so don't take yourself too seriously and you will sail through to clear weather.

♏ SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)
The ability to take a joke will serve you well in boat business during the second week, so steer towards new financial prospects and don't worry about countercurrents in your creativity and communications.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)
This month is relatively aspect free, so you are free to sit on the hook, hang the hammock, and just recharge your batteries.

♑ CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)
The potential for headwinds along the course of love will occupy your attention for the next few weeks. Failure of your sense of humor could be the tiny tear that ultimately rips your mainsail. Ease your mainsheet and try not to be so serious about minor issues.

♒ AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)
Your inventive breezes will be blowing, so hoist the sails of imagination and let the winds of inspiration propel you towards success. Your verbal acuity will be a great help.

♓ PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)
Give your humor free sheets and it will be of great assistance on your economic heading. The Sun moves into Pisces in the last week and so your creative potential will be high.

Island Poets

Distant Cry of a Cruising Grandmother

Missing a grandson is a terrible thing,
not replaced by bobble, treasure or bling.
This *probleme*, it is new. It is real. It is tough,
more so than reef, riptide or magnificent puff!

Born in a far away land,
our Caribbean community still withstands.
Life aboard is home for us.
Now planes, phones and Facebook are a must.

Since Blake came along, there is something amiss.
What can be done to ameliorate this?
A child of my blood has been born miles away.
There's got to be action to take. Send me into the fray!

The laughter of West Indian children lessens the blow,
so does affectionate mate and endorphins that flow.
These hormones bring calm when I hike, noodle and row.
So, turn the winch handle and bosun the mast,
dinghy sail, dive on the anchor, swim very fast.

What else can be done the *Long Distance Blues* to stun?
Let me count all the ways melancholy waylaid.

Dominoes, friends, laughter and brew,
teaching sailing and swimming, lime with a few.
Caripes and blue fin, then ceviche, seared steaks,
delectable distraction always makes.
Picking produce, prepping pico de gallo, roasting granola will help,
but they're brief and they're passing — a fleeting yelp.

Blake's parents are great. They shower love and skilled care.
He's got uncles and aunts and other grandparents there.
These things I know in my head but the heart,
it tugs and tugs, pulling logic apart.

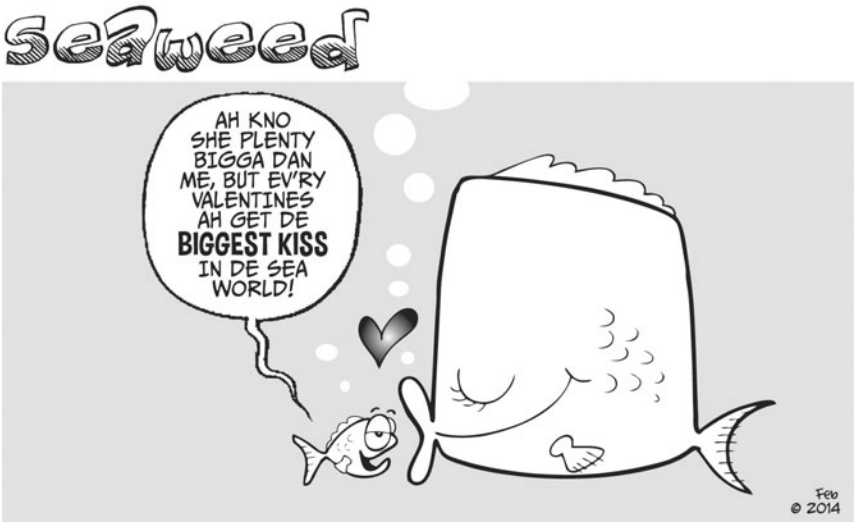
Reduce the *probleme* of missing Blake?
I nuzzle screen-saver of his life-sized face.
We do Skype. We do postcards. We imagine embrace.
What else can be done short of leaving this place?

The Caribbean is home. It's where the boat is.
I chose this. I want this. It's where I fit in.

Loving and living, we really can't choose
who will be born, who will die. We must await the news.
Acquiescent, we hope that our loved ones feel in their heart
our love though many miles cast us apart.

Cooing for him with stinging heartache,
it is part of Cruising Grandma missing Blake.

— Ellen Birrell



TREVOR AND THE KITE

by Lee Kessell

Trevor was back again enjoying his school holidays in Barbados with his younger cousin Ernie, together with his Uncle Solly, Aunt Josephina and Ernie's little sister, Nyna, in the cottage that overlooked the wild Atlantic coast.

After a few days of swimming down in the bay, Trevor grew bored and so he began to think up a new adventure.

"Let's make a kite big enough to carry a boy!" Trevor declared one morning.

"Let's just build a big kite," Ernie corrected because he knew which boy Trevor had in mind and he wanted no part of it.

Trevor thought it best not to argue so he said nothing and the two boys set about the task. The design of the kite was to be a simple cross, covered with brown paper and carrying a long tail for balance. They rummaged around in Uncle Solly's workshop and found two long pieces of stout wood and bound the two pieces together with strong cord, then as Aunt Josephina always saved brown paper, they looked in the kitchen cupboards and found a big piece and hurried back to the workshop where they cut the paper to size and glued it on. For the tail they tied bits of rag on a long line, and to pull the kite they took a coiled up length of rope. It had taken half the morning and the boys were anxious to test their kite.

At the bottom of the road leading to Uncle Solly's cottage were high cliffs above the ocean and on windy weekends, people often flew their kites from the top. All you had to do was hurl the kite over the cliff and the updraft carried it aloft and out to sea. This is what the boys did now and the kite flew off. At length Trevor pulled the kite back to the top of the cliff and he grinned at Ernie, but how was he going to get Ernie to agree to take a ride? Nyna, unsuspecting, solved that problem. The annoying little sister had followed the boys and she demanded, "I saw you flying that kite. Why is it so big?"

On windy weekends, people often flew their kites from the high cliffs above the ocean

"Because Ernie is going to be the first boy to ever fly over the cliff, aren't you Ernie?"

Ernie didn't want to back down in front of his sister, who stood with her hands on her hips waiting, so shaking all over he said, "Yes."

After lunch, Trevor, Ernie and now bossy Nyna, carrying belts and straps, went back down to the cliff edge. Trevor strapped his cousin underneath the kite and poor Ernie staggered to the edge while Trevor supported the kite.

"Okay Ernie, jump!"

But Ernie was rooted to the spot with fright. Now no one had seen that one of the bad-tempered goats had followed the children and upon seeing such a devilish creature in front of him, the goat put his head down and butted Ernie clean over the edge. Did Ernie fly? He certainly did not. He dropped like a stone and Trevor just managed to hold onto the rope, while Dandy, the old dog who had joined in the fun, barked furiously. Another curious onlooker who had joined the party was the brown cow.

"Oh God!" wailed Trevor, "Nyna, take the end of the rope and tie it tightly around the cow's horns and get her to pull back. I can't hold on much longer and Ernie's going to die if I drop him!"

Nyna didn't need Trevor's urge to hurry, she grabbed the rope, twisted it around the cow's horns, tied it as tight as she could and pushed the cow back, at the same time pulling on the rope with all her might. Slowly, Ernie was pulled up and over the edge, his brown face now as white as chalk. As far from the edge as they could get him, Trevor unbuckled "the boy who was going to fly" and when they had all recovered, the whole procession went home. Neither Uncle Solly nor Aunt Josephina ever knew how close they had come to losing Ernie, which was just as well for all concerned.

That night in bed, Trevor grinned in the dark. "I have a great idea for another kite, Ernie, and this one is sure to work. We'll make it much bigger and stronger and instead of paper, we'll cover the frame with canvas."

"Yes, I like that idea a lot Trevor," agreed Ernie, "because this time we'll strap YOU to the kite and see YOU fly!"

From that moment Trevor lost all interest in kite making and the rest of the holiday was as peaceful as could be.

THE END

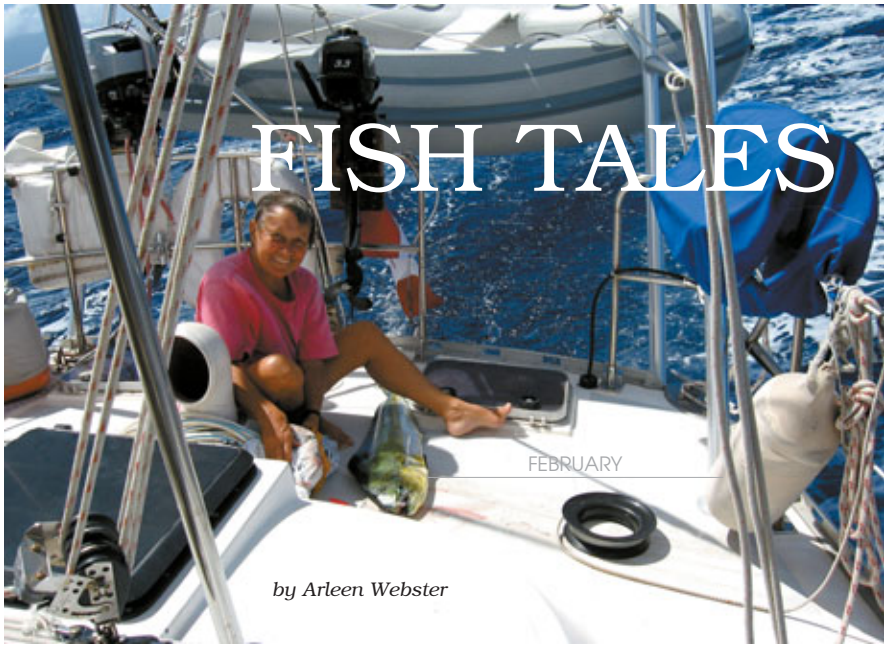






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FISH TALES

FEBRUARY

by Arleen Webster

Above: Off the coast of Venezuela I was able to catch Dorado on a regular basis

Right: One half of a Cero mackerel — neatly chomped

After 20 years cruising in the Caribbean, I still like to trail a fishing line behind the boat while sailing, but now I prefer to do this when the seas are benign and the sailing is smooth. In other words, not very often.

Fishing was not a part of my childhood experiences. It was only after I was married, with two sons, living in Ontario, and sailing in the Great Lakes, that I was introduced to fishing. I watched as my husband, Denis, taught our sons how to thread a worm onto a hook and to cast. When we went on our summer sailing trips, my sons taught me the basics of fishing, but they were more successful and patient than I was.

Just before Denis and I finally retired and headed south to the Caribbean in the early 1990s, I read an article in a sailing magazine about catching fish while sailing. It was a simple system using a plastic hand spool with a squid lure, double-pronged hook and 120 feet of 200-pound-test monofilament line. This was for me — no casting, no jigging — just pay out the line, clip it to the lifeline and wait for a strike. Virtually effortless.

The first fish I caught was with a slight variation of this configuration. I didn't have a squid lure in the Bahamas, but I was told that making a "pretend" squid lure out of a plastic bag would probably be an acceptable substitute. It was quite exciting to catch my first Dorado just before we entered the harbour at Georgetown, Bahamas. Being new at this kind of fishing in the tropics, we were not aware of how much a large fish can thrash about in a small cockpit after being landed. How naïve we were! Did we think it would just lie down and expire? We both freaked out. Denis tried to subdue it with a winch handle, to no avail. The fish continued to thrash about, breaking the engine control cover into many pieces. Nevertheless, my first ocean fish was hooked — and so was I. Later as I was regaling fellow cruisers about my fish story, I learned about the cheap-booze-in-the-gills solution as an instant fish killer.

As we started down the island chain, I continued to trail a fishing line but it seemed that I was only catching barracuda. We were concerned about the ciguatera risk so we released any we caught in the northern Caribbean. At one point, I had a strike on my line and as I pulled it in I noticed that it was a barracuda. I quickly opened up my guidebook (I think it might have been Doyle's in 1993), and I read that barracuda were probably safe to eat if you were south of Saba. I asked Denis, "What is that island abeam of us?" He replied, "Well I think that looks like Saba." Goodbye, Barry!

It was only when we were sailing off the coast of Venezuela that I was able to catch Dorado on a regular basis. I'm certainly not an avid fisherperson, especially since my husband doesn't particularly like to eat fish, but it is a thrill to catch one occasionally and to share it with other cruising folks, and of course have a good feed of it myself.

Usually when I see that I have a Dorado on my line, I'm already contemplating how I'm going to prepare this delicious fish. On one occasion, however, I broke protocol. I had a strike and as I was reeling the fish in toward the boat, I noticed that this small Dorado was being accompanied by another small one, swimming close by. Fortunately for these little Dorado, my maternal instinct kicked in while observing this interesting, and rather poignant phenomenon. There was no way I could bring myself to relegate this little fish to the galley. I carefully removed the hook and placed him back into the water beside his buddy and watched them swim away.

The next fishing area was in the San Blas Islands and Panama. This is an area where there are considerable Cero mackerel to be caught. On one occasion when I had a strike on my line, I started to pull on it and thought to myself, "This feels like a nice-sized fish — not too large." Just as that thought passed through my mind, the line suddenly tightened to the extent that I could barely hold it. My next thought was, "This fish is teasing me, and it's a big one!" Suddenly, it became manageable once again. I waited for the next big pull on the line, but it never came. As the line shortened and I saw what was on the end of it, the mystery was solved. The half Cero had been very neatly severed by something enormous and with very sharp teeth.

Our first sailboat in the Caribbean was a Tayana 37. Since this boat is a double-ender, (pointy at both ends), it was more convenient to deploy my fishing line from the side — usually the leeward or low side — to facilitate easy landing of the catch. The Tayana had a rather interesting scupper arrangement in the cockpit. Not only were there drainage scuppers in the cockpit floor, but also another two, leading from the side decks and across the cockpit seats. The rationale for this design was that there should be swift and plentiful drainage in the event that you were pooped by following seas.



—Continued on next page

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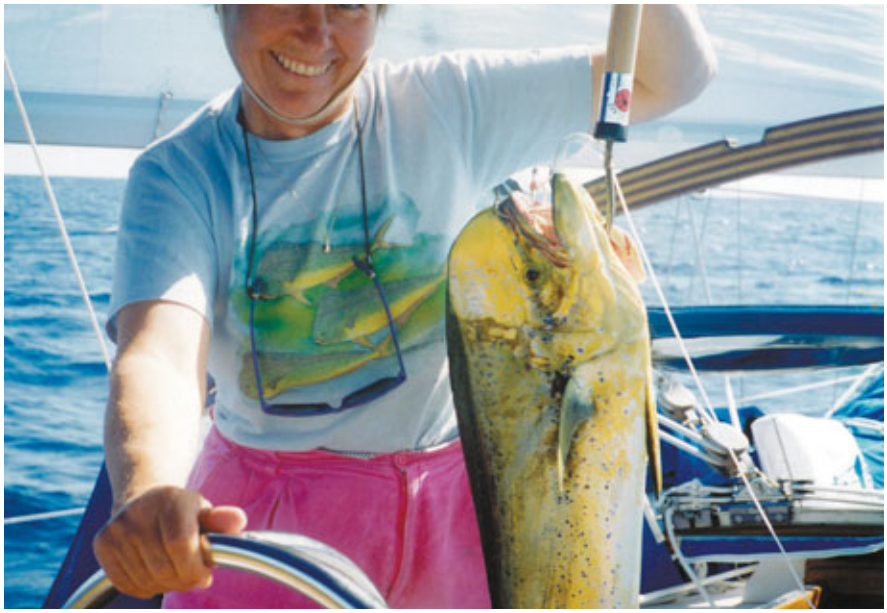
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—Continued from previous page

The downside of this arrangement was that you couldn't sit hunkered down in the cockpit corner under the dodger without having your butt soaked in seawater that came washing through from the side decks. Tayana owners called this quirky design feature "The Tayana River". The usual remedy was to create removable plugs for these scuppers, and these were used during passages. On one particular voyage, we had 25-knot winds and since the leeward rail was buried, I decided it would be safer to deploy my line on the windward side. This time, the fish that struck was a tuna — my first one.

I had been hoping to catch a tuna, thinking that it might change my captain's mind about enjoying fish, since tuna has a more "meaty" rather than "fishy" taste. Well, that scenario was not to be! As he gaffed the fish and flopped it onto the side deck, the tuna began to produce copious amounts of blood (as only a tuna can do). And of course since we had those clever scupper plugs inserted, we were standing in a swirling mass of tuna blood and seawater. I guess my attempt at humour in saying, "Sushi, dear?" was not well received. The captain, who was already slightly queasy with seasickness, was, to say the least, not amused. There was some salty language from the captain, as he prepared to tack in the heavy seas to rid the boat of the bloody mess. From that time on, I never fished from the windward side again!





Above: The first Dorado I caught in the Bahamas

Left: 'Scaling' down... During the past few years, my fishing has produced smaller fish, such as this wahoo

On our three-day passage from Panama to Providencia, I landed a big Dorado. It was too large to cut up on the side decks or the cockpit, so I decided to do the job on the larger foredeck area. To avoid getting clothes soaked with seawater and fish detritus, I removed my clothes for the task at hand. The seawater washed away the debris, leaving a clean deck and only my salty body to wash. It seemed like a practical solution at the time, but now I can't believe that I did such a foolish and dangerous thing.

Probably the most difficult fish to bring in with my hand spool was a marlin that struck my line on our passage from Mexico to Florida. It took about half an hour of winding, one painful turn at a time. When the captain saw this six-foot-long beast with its built-in sword, he wasn't too thrilled about bringing it on board. I said, "I'd like to cut the line and let him go, but unfortunately that's a stainless steel hook in him." With some strong rum splashed into the gills, it became subdued enough to be brought on board. Since we had a few more days at sea before reaching Florida, I cut up some to eat and then vacuum-sealed and refrigerated the rest. After we docked in Fort Myers, we took the fish to a nearby smokehouse and shared smoked marlin with friends for weeks. Even Denis had to admit that smoked marlin is pretty tasty.

During the past few years, my occasional and fair-weather fishing has produced smaller fish. It's interesting that fish strike more often when the seas are the roughest. I even managed to hook the wing of a stupid booby bird while sailing north of Grenada. Denis pulled him alongside the boat and carefully removed the hook while giving him a stern reprimand, and then sent him on his way.

These days, more often than not, our lure isn't a squid, but rather some paper currency of whichever island we happen to be visiting.

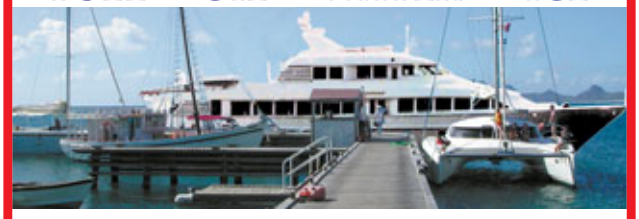
Denis and Arleen Webster have been sailing in the Eastern and Western Caribbean since 1991, first on a Tayana 37, Tiger Lily, *and then since 2000 on a Hylas 47,* Tiger Lily II.

B & C FUELS ENTERPRISE

Petite Martinique

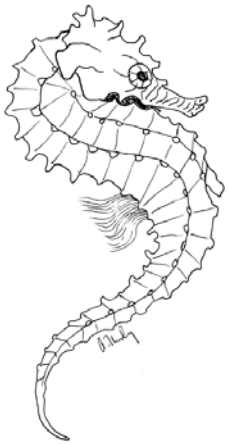
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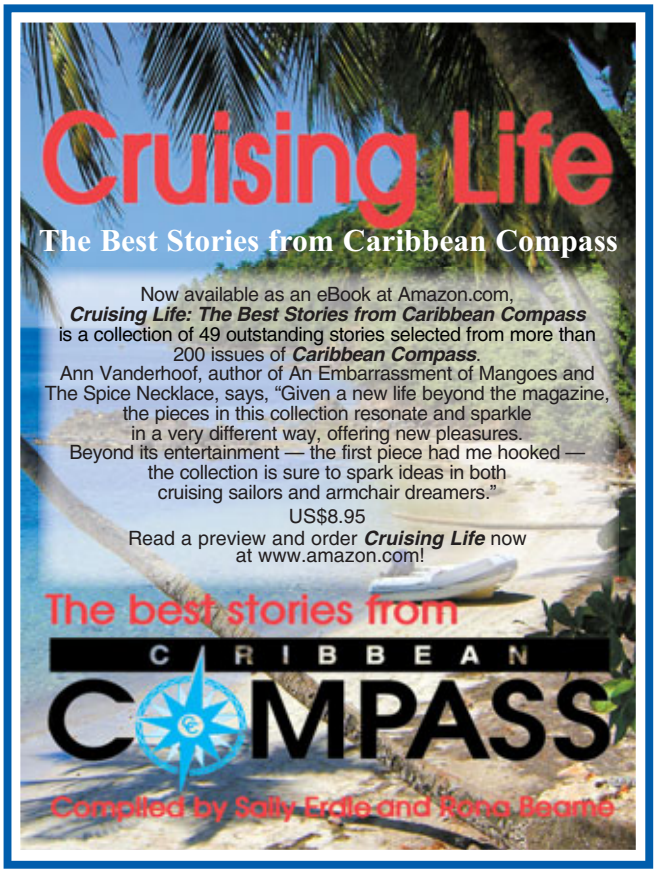
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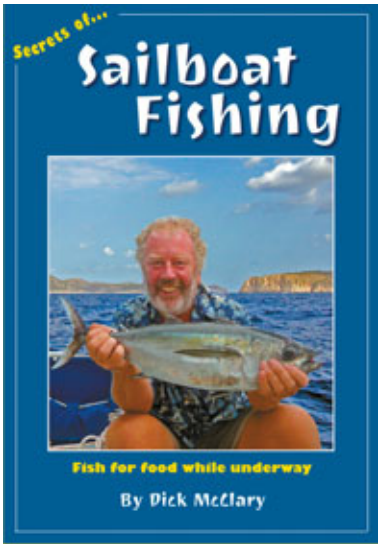
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BOOK REVIEW BY SALLY ERDLE

Gather Ye Dinner While Ye May

Secrets of Sailboat Fishing: Fish for Food While Underway, by Dick McClary, ©2013. Published by Books for Sail in association with sailboat-cruising.com. 93 pages, e-book format, color photos and illustrations. ISBN: 978-0-9576615-1-6. US$4.99.



Longtime Caribbean cruiser Dick McClary has some questions for you. "Got a sailboat? Like to go cruising? Have time on your hands while the boat sails itself? Then why not catch a few fish while you're sailing towards your destination?"

"Why not" indeed? Often because of lack of knowledge or owing to the mistaken belief that saltwater fishing is an expensive and arcane endeavor. This book dispels the myths and shows you how you can add catching fish to your repertoire of sailing skills. Dick says, "I've met many sailors who don't catch as many fish as they'd like to, and I'm sure that they'll find my book will change their luck."

Dick McClary has been a cruising sailor and avid fisherman for more than 35 years. Together with his partner, Mary Swift, he has cruised and fished on both sides of the North Atlantic and in the Mediterranean on their sailboat, *Alacazam*. They live aboard in the Caribbean for much of the year but, having suffered at the hands of Hurricane Ivan in 2004, now scuttle back to their Plymouth, England home at the onset of the hurricane season, leaving *Alacazam* tucked up safely ashore. While not sailing and fishing, Dick has written many magazine articles, including several for *Caribbean Compass*, and books such as *RYA Offshore Sailing* and *RYA Fishing Afloat*. This, his latest, is a nearly encyclopedic "how to" specifically for the amateur fisherman who has to work around a sailboat's backstays, booms, mainsheets, self-steering gears, outboard motors, barbecues and dinghy davits.

Chapters cover getting started, knots and crimped connections, artificial lures, trolling with natural bait, lines and leaders, rods and reels, hooks and swivels, fishing jargon, safety tips, and much more — not forgetting how to scale and clean your catch and turn it into perfect fillets or steaks.

Dick's prose is straightforward and his instructions are easy to follow. His style is informative without being pedantic, and is occasionally light-hearted without being silly. The book's graphics are a real plus: color illustrations and diagrams by Andrew Simpson are clear and useful, and well-chosen photos round out the visual presentation of information. Abundant use of sidebars, bullet points and sub-headings make each page easy to navigate, and also facilitate finding the information you're looking for — a refreshing change from the reams of dense text encountered in some equally comprehensive how-to books.

Jim Boos, who has caught more fish from yachts than anyone else I know, says, "This book is very thorough… For the cruising sailor, whom the book is targeted at, it is more information than one would ever need. But it does seem accurate and McClary addresses some relevant points you don't find elsewhere, like ciguatera and some common situations one finds oneself in when fishing on a boat that is not really set up or intended for fishing."

A key issue for fishing from a yacht underway is speed. Dick tells us, "Unlike 'proper' saltwater fishermen who adjust their trolling speed to suit their target species, we cruising yachtsmen — more intent on sailing efficiently towards our destination — must adjust our trolling technique to suit our boat speed." He then explains how to get the best fish-catching results at typical passage-making speeds.

Whether you're a complete fishing geek, a charter crew who wants to offer guests the world's freshest seafood, or a budget-minded cruiser hoping for catch of the day rather than cans of the day, this book is a gem. You'll feel smarter — and eat better — after reading it. At a price of US$4.99, *Secrets of Sailboat Fishing* will pay for itself when you sit down to eat your first catch, but Dick McClary is so confident you'll love it that he offers a money-back guarantee if you're dissatisfied with the book in any way.

This book can be downloaded at www.sailboat-cruising.com/secrets-of-sailboat-fishing.html.

BOOK REVIEW BY SALLY ERDLE

PREPARING FOR CUBA

***Yacht Pilot's Cruising Guide to Cuba, Volume One: Varadero to Trinidad**, by Cheryl Barr ©2013. Yacht Pilot Cruising Guides, 224 pages, soft cover, color photos and sketch charts throughout. ISBN 978-0-9731659-3-7. US$59.95 plus shipping.*

Something's definitely in the air… cigar smoke borne on a fresh breeze, perhaps?

Thanks largely to the efforts of Commodore Jose Miguel Diaz Escrich of the Hemingway Yacht Club of Cuba, nautical tourism in the Caribbean's biggest island has been gradually gathering way over the past decade. Recently, the VMG has surged. Cuba hosted an international workshop in 2012 to discuss the direction of yacht tourism in that country. Its focus on marina development is already bearing fruit: in 2013, the Cuban state company Grupo Gaviota SA announced a project that will expand Marina Gaviota Varadero to an eventual capacity of nearly 1,300 boats. When workshop participants mentioned bureaucratic obstacles, the government was listening: Cuban law now allows foreign yachts to stay for up to five years.

In December we published a review of Frank Virgintino's *Free Cruising Guide to Cuba*, the first comprehensive guide to Cuba published in a decade.

Indications are that Cuba's time is coming.

Now adding to the development of the critical mass that could make Cuba the next big thing in Caribbean cruising is Cheryl Barr's *Yacht Pilot's Cruising Guide to Cuba*. This large-format print volume covers routes, charts, anchorages, currents and weather, and offers up-to-date information on marinas, provisioning and points of interest and more.

The author, who holds a 200-ton Yacht Masters license, is an experienced navigator and marine biologist and has made numerous cruises to Cuba aboard her family's Herreshoff schooner. Her other cruising guides include *The Down East Circle Route* and *The Canadian Maritimes*.

In the book's foreword, Cheryl says, "Cuba caters to two types of cruisers: those who prefer extended stays in locations with easy access to services and those who seek remote, isolated places that are well off the beaten path. Going 'off the grid' for extended periods means being well equipped. For both types of cruisers, Cuba has a lot to offer. *Yacht Pilot's Cruising Guide to Cuba* will help you find what you're looking for and see that you go prepared."

As Cheryl wrote in the Nautical Mind blog (http://blog.nauticalmind.com), "Having sailed to Cuba more than a dozen times, I am frequently asked, 'Why do you go to



Cuba year-in, year-out?' The quick answer is 'It is warmer than Canada in the winter, it's an easy sail across the Gulf Stream, and Cuba has amazing "theatre of the street".' But Cuba is so much more than this. Cuba's land area is greater than half the Caribbean islands combined and it has a population of 11 million. As a result, it offers so much more than anywhere else in the Caribbean.... Cuba's more than 2,000-nautical-mile coastline has numerous anchorages in close proximity to the next and each one is very secure during a passing cold front.

"Swimming and diving is excellent with plenty of opportunities to get fish and lobster as Cuba has extensive coral reefs. Cuba's corals happen to be the most pristine in the Caribbean.

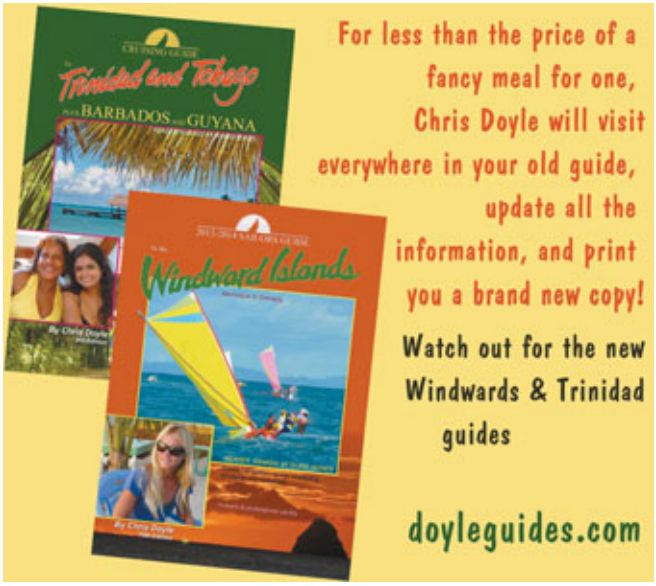
"Other reasons to spend the winter in Cuba include the cost incurred at a Cuban marina. The fees are modest compared to all other mainstream locations. It is a large agricultural country, so fruit and vegetables are good, cheap and readily available. Beer and rum are cheap as well as being good quality and locally made. The Cuban people are very welcoming and friendly, their music is beautiful and it is heard everywhere. This flamboyant old-style Spanish culture is very dynamic by our standards and it's so easy to have contact with the local people. There is so much to see and do on the island of Cuba that after a single trip you, too, will no doubt return year after year."

Cheryl's enthusiasm for sharing this cruising ground is reflected in her book, which is filled with color chart illustrations and photos; detailed descriptions including pertinent GPS co-ordinates for harbors, anchorages and inside passages; crucial information about weather, route advice and passage planning, hurricane holes and much more. The navigational research and data is well written and presented in an easy-to-read format.

Volume One: Varadero to Trinidad covers the western half of Cuba with detailed information for the coastal waters from Varadero westward around to Cienfuegos, including such better-known Cuban destinations as Havana and Marina Hemingway, Isla de la Juventud, Las Jardines de la Reina and the historic city of Trinidad. We look forward to the publication of *Volume 2: Casilda to Varadero*, covering the less well-known eastern half of the island.

This book is available from www.cruisingincuba.com.





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CARIBBEAN Street CRUISING GUIDES

The Sky in February 2014

by Jim Ulik

There are quite a few events in the night sky of February — unfortunately many are too distant to be seen with the naked eye or through binoculars! The month of February is generally not very good for meteor observers; there will be seven minor meteor showers, two of which occur during the day. But go ahead and check for shooting stars, you might just see some.

It's a good month for stellar personalities, though. Galileo Galilei was born 450 years ago on February 15th, 1564. Galileo was considered to be the first human to use a telescope to study planets and stars. Nicolas Copernicus was born February 19th, 1473 and was the first astronomer to formulate a scientifically based theory that removed the Earth from the center of the universe. He would be celebrating his 541st birthday. Sonny Liston reportedly saw stars with a TKO by Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) 50 years ago on February 25th, 1964.

Saturday, February 1

Mercury is only visible a few times a year, so take a look in the west just after sunset. Mercury will be positioned just below the thin waxing crescent moon on this day. Mercury will reach its closest orbital point to the Sun on February 3rd.

Sunday, February 2

This marks hump day for winter. It is a cross-quarter day or the midway point between the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox. This halfway point is also celebrated with Groundhog Day. Groundhog Day originated in ancient European weather lore using a badger ("On Wisconsin!" – my home the Badger State). In the 18th and 19th centuries German immigrants settled in Pennsylvania with some staying in an area known by Native Americans as Punxsutawney, meaning "land of the sandflies". I would suggest that it was time to move on but they "settled" anyway, continuing the seasonal custom and replaced the badger with a groundhog that today is named Punxsutawney Phil. If Phil sees his shadow there will be six more weeks of winter weather. (So, would that mean two more months of Christmas Winds or maybe three months?) If Phil does not see his shadow there will be an early spring.

If you happen to be up before sunrise, look towards the southwest and up about 60 degrees. Red Mars will be positioned four degrees from bluish-white Spica in the constellation Virgo. Spica looks like one star but is at least two stars that are only 11 million miles apart. Spica is almost four times hotter and 2,200 times brighter than our Sun.

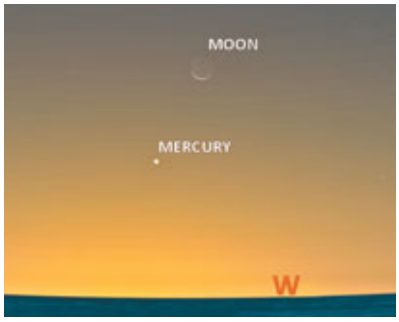
Tuesday, February 11

Jupiter and the Moon will make a close approach at 0109 hours*. Jupiter rises at 1505 hours so it will not be visible in the eastern sky until dusk. Moonrise is at 1542 hours.

Friday, February 14 – Full Moon

The Moonrise is at 1805 hours. At 1953 hours the Moon will be directly opposite the Sun. One name for this month's Full Moon is the Snow Moon or Full Snow Moon. The reason given is that the heaviest snow usually falls during this month.

While you are contemplating the Full Snow Moon and thinking about how glad you are not to be shoveling snow, look for Jupiter. Jupiter will rise before sunset at 1454 and set at 0338 hours. Jupiter will be in the constellation Gemini. Jupiter will actually be in Gemini all month but as it is Valentine's Day, you might as well have a look tonight while you're sitting on deck with a glass of Champagne.



Mercury appears below the Moon just after sunset



Red Mars and blue Spica adding color to the night sky



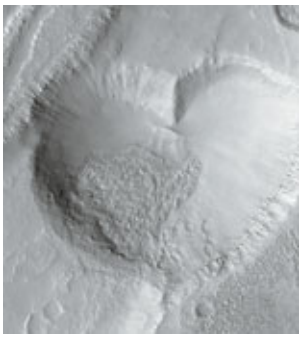
The Moon and Jupiter in the western sky at 0203 hours

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, February 25 – 27

Venus, the Moon and Mercury will meet in the night sky over these three days. The waning Moon will go from 20 percent down to 4.5 percent illumination over these three days. The Moon will move from a position above Venus to just above Mercury.

Wednesday, February 26

There will be about 17 known near-Earth objects this month. Of those 17, one asteroid named 2 Pallas will make its closest approach to Earth on this day. This second largest known asteroid is sized at 354 by 326 by 265 miles and was once considered to be a planet. 2 Pallas will be at its brightest lying opposite to the Sun in the constellation Sextans. This will be difficult to see without a telescope.



Happy Valentine's Day from Mars!



Three days of the Moon with Venus and Mercury

From the ancients studying the stars to Galileo and Copernicus through the discovery of 2 Pallas in 1802 up until present day, astronomers are continuing to make discoveries that redefine our perception of the universe.

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

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

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GRENADA'S REVOLUTIONARY CHOCOLATE

Grenada's organic chocolate has become famous, and deservedly so.

The Grenada Chocolate Company was founded by the late Mott Green and his partners Edmond Brown and Doug Browne in 1999. The original principle was to revolutionize the cocoa-chocolate system that typically kept cocoa production separate from chocolate making, and therefore took advantage of the cocoa farmers. The new co-operative wanted to ensure that the cocoa farmers benefited as much as the chocolate makers.

The Chocolate Company had to create their own processing methods and design their own machines, often refurbishing antique equipment to meet the requirements of a unique situation. The designs of most of the machines are based on those of the early 1900s, a time when quality had precedence over quantity in chocolate making. To take full advantage of the plentiful Caribbean sunshine, the factory is solar powered, which ensures that chocolate production has the minimum impact on the environment.

The Grenada Chocolate Company and Belmont Estate in the Parish of St. Patrick, along with ten other members of the Grenada Organic Cocoa Farmers Co-operative, grow their cocoa organically, without the use of any chemical pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers, on more than 250 acres. Producing chocolate right where the cocoa grows not only gives a real advantage in creating the finest, most complex taste from the beans but also provides a livelihood for many local people. The store called Bonbon Chocolates at Belmont Estate sells a wide variety of delicious bonbons that are produced on site by combining chocolate with the many local fruits and spices.

This strong community-based alliance works with ethical trading and eco-friendly retail outlets such as Waitrose in the UK and Rococo Chocolates in London, for whom chocolate is produced from cocoa grown on their own Grenadian estate, Grococo. The chocolate is also sold in many stores in the islands. Partnership projects such as that with the sailing vessel *Tres Hombres* also ensure this award-winning chocolate can be tasted far and wide.

The Grenada Chocolate Company won Silver Medals in the Best Dark Chocolate Bar category at the Academy of Chocolate Awards in 2008 and 2011.

The recipes below are from the book *Grenada Chocolate Recipes* (www.grenada-chocbook.com), compiled by Wendy Hartland. In this book the organic dark chocolate and the organic unsweetened cocoa powder used in the recipes are both manufactured by The Grenada Chocolate Company.

Melted Heart Chocolate Cakes



2 three-ounce (85 g) bars 71% chocolate
6 ounces (175 g) butter
4 eggs
3 ounces (75 g) granulated sugar
7 ounces (200 g) baking flour

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Grease a small muffin tin. Place heatproof bowl over saucepan of barely simmering water. Add chocolate and butter to bowl and melt until smooth. Whip eggs and sugar. Add flour to egg mixture and mix until smooth. Slowly add chocolate mixture to flour mixture and mix thoroughly. Place mixture in muffin tin and bake for 7 to 8 minutes. The chocolate in the centre of cakes should be molten.

This delicious dessert is one of the specialty desserts of the beautiful restaurant at Belmont Estate. The luscious filling just oozes out of the heart's shell as you watch! Makes 8.

Mocha Jumbie



6 ounces (175 g) butter
2 ounces (56 g) shortening
6 ounces (175 g) cocoa powder
3 eggs
1 pound (450 g) granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
8 oz (225 g) flour
4 ounces (110 g) chocolate chips

Melt butter and shortening and combine with cocoa powder in a mixing bowl. In another bowl mix eggs, sugar and essence. Combine both in a large mixing bowl, add flour and chocolate chips and mix thoroughly.

Pour into a greased pan and bake at 300°F (150° C) for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Cut brownies into triangular wedges.

To serve, stack two brownie wedges at right angles. Add a scoop or two of ice cream and top with whipped cream.

Chef Philippe de Montbrun of Umbrellas restaurant on Grande Anse Beach created this dessert. Serves 8.







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Read in Next Month's *Compass*:

Breaking the Ice in Bocas del Toro
Seeing St. Maarten Afresh
The Caribbean Foods of Love

... and much more!



DIFFERENT SHIPS, DIFFERENT LONG SPLICES

Dear *Compass*,

Regarding Frank Virgintino's article "Happy Tradewinds New Year" in the October 2013 issue of Compass, his graphs regarding wind are excellent and illustrate what I have been saying for over 50 years. In my *Cruising Guide to the Lesser Antilles* (available from orders@iUniverse.com), the book that is regarded as the guide that opened the Eastern Caribbean to the cruising yachtsman and made bareboat chartering possible, I pointed out that May, June and July are the best months to cruise the Eastern Caribbean as the wind is the steadiest of the year.

Frank is correct in saying that during the winter it will blow like hell but then drop off to light airs or calm. Boats that come for the mid-February-to-May racing circuit and rate with their 135 genoa rather than the 150 will be caught out in one or two regattas that will have light airs. Also it is guaranteed that sometime between early April and the first days in May there will be a three- to five – (sometimes seven-) day calm period. What causes it and when it will come I do not know, but it always happens. Many sailors say the above is nuts, but 50 years of sailing without an engine makes one remember calm spells.

However, the Christmas Winds do not always arrive in December; some years they are late. In December 2002 the trades were light or non-existent. [*Editor's note: In 2013 the Christmas Winds arrived around mid-December — with a vengeance — and blew hard well into January.*]

Rather than cruising clockwise around the Caribbean and fighting your way from the Virgins across Anegada Passage and on to Antigua (210 miles to windward in a straight line, sailing distance probably 300 to 400 miles depending on the windward-going abilities of boat and crew), as Frank suggests, I recommend heading from the Virgins directly to Grenada, 420 miles on a fast close or beam reach. (Or head southeast from St. Thomas on a very tight reach and see where you end up, then cruise slowly south towards Grenada.) From Grenada, work your way northward along the island chain in easy stages, taking advantage of the weather-going tide in the passages. Conditions permitting, go north via the east coasts of Grenada, Carriacou, and Martinique (the Street family's favorite cruising ground now that Venezuela is taboo) on to Marie Galante, Antigua and Barbuda, and westwards to St. Thomas. Then proceed north to the US East Coast, or to Bermuda and back to Europe, or, if staying in the Caribbean, west along the south coasts of Puerto Rico and Hispaniola, to Jamaica then south through the islands of the western Caribbean, and then on to Colombia or Panama — south of 12°N and out of the hurricane box.

You don't have to spend hurricane season sitting in Grenada or Trinidad. You can continue cruising the area from Martinique southward, but check the weather for hurricanes brewing, faithfully twice a day. If a hurricane approaches, head to Grenada or Trinidad as fast as you can. See "Cruising During Hurricane Season" at www.street-iolaire.com.

Different ships, different long splices.

Review the above, review Frank Virgintino's article, look at your boat and the size and skill of your crew, consider your sailing and physical abilities and your particular interests, then make your decision as to your Caribbean cruising itinerary.

Good sailing.

Don Street
Glandore, Ireland

FIRST, DO NO HARM

Dear *Compass*,

The article "Myth Busting, Cruiser Style" by Lynn Kaak and Ken Goodings, about flare guns as a defensive weapon (December 2013 issue of *Caribbean Compass*), says they "would not work... [because]... the person would not be harmed."

That is precisely why flare guns are excellent defensive weapons. They change a situation without harming, injuring, maiming or slaughtering the attacker.

With practice, reloading a flare gun is so quick that a rapid rate of fire can be well aimed at an attacker on deck or in a faster boat. Their range is excellent and the trajectory, when fired horizontally, quite flat. At night the shooting flare looks like a tracer bullet and the smoke they issue in daytime looks like a much bigger weapon; its bang sounds like a large enough gun to get the attention of any attacker.

The article states a flare projectile won't pierce a sweatshirt when fired at a range of 20 feet. That's great! But it will still give the attacker one hell of a thump in the chest. At 20 feet it gives you a chance to reload and for the assailant to reconsider his attack and go for an easier target somewhere else. At cockpit range it's quite accurate. You don't even need to hit the target: a flare zipping close by someone's head will have the same effect — a fast change of the attacker's plans.

So why advocate not killing an attacker? Some are just kids. The alleged offender in the *Rainbow* machete attack (see Info & Updates department in the November 2013 issue of *Compass*) was hooded but turned out to be just 15 years old. If he had been killed, a young life, possibly able to be rehabilitated, would have been lost, but also the cruiser would have been in deep trouble, not only with the locals and local media perhaps taking the contrary opinion backing the deceased, but the police. The cruiser would be jailed until the legal system could work out if a murder trial's self-defense argument would lead to a complete dismissal. Remember, in most countries "self defense" is only a defense at trial, not some trick where you never get charged at all.

If one mistakenly believes his boat is some sovereign property that allows lethal force protection, then what happens if some boat boy mistakes your boat when selling coconuts and climbs aboard yours and you blow him away? Or someone leaves the bar late at night and mistakes all those other white-hulled, swim-platformed boats... Is it worth your anguish for life by taking someone else's? Certainly there's no defense of "self defense" when you kill an unarmed jovial drunk clambering mistakenly onto your boat.

We are more intelligent than the criminal mind and we can use our intelligence and creativity to defend ourselves in front of the most heinous attacks. There are many non-lethal, non-harming weapons on our boats right now... Flares of all types; smoke canisters, which do an excellent job of taking the initiative from an attacker, especially at night when the smoke appears opaque; also a hand-held flare thrown into their pirogue. Or visit the hardware store for wasp spray (it fires 20 feet). Pepper spray is legally sold in French islands: velcro it to your companionway. Against fast-moving pirogues, aim at the guy on the outboard, not the boarders up the bow, and aim off so the flare passes close in front of him. The boat will alter course.

The best defense for boats as discussed in the security meeting in Grenada after the *Rainbow* attack is simple, inexpensive and doesn't hurt anyone: cockpit lights that you can turn on from below and by your bedside. If you hear a noise, flood the cockpit with light and then make it more untenable for a criminal to stay aboard with pepper spray and shooting flares. No one injured and you don't spend 15 months in a jail waiting to prove yourself.

Mark Jensen
Sea Life
Currently cruising the Northern Caribbean

Mark has completed a circumnavigation including a harrowing transit of the Gulf of Aden past Somalia in 2010 where he witnessed a pirate attack on a container ship and daily approaches from suspicious high speed skiffs. Read about it at www.ourlifeatsea.com.

'THAT'S NOT A KNIFE...'

Dear *Compass*,

I read with interest the article written by Lynn Kaak and Ken Goodings in the December 2013 issue on flare guns and the use of them for defence. I was reminded of the time we used to cruise in remote parts on the South American coast, in particular along the shores of Venezuela. I enclose a picture of the flare guns we had on board at that time for distress — I believe we probably could have used them as defence "weapons" in an emergency. One flare gun (made in France) had a "double flare" release barrel, for a spread distress flare pattern. The other had a standard wide barrel taking an enormous seven-inch metal flare cartridge. Both these flare guns had considerable power and muzzle velocity — I doubt they are legal now, or at least not without a firearms licence. They are definitely not permitted in Europe anymore.

In the film "Crocodile Dundee", the lead character played by Paul Hogan is confronted by a hoodlum who threatens him with a (somewhat small) knife. This leads to the legendary line "That's not a knife — *this* is a knife!" as he pulls out a massive Bowie blade.

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I am reminded of that line looking at the plastic pop pistol that was used in the flare gun test. Anyone who has seen a professional firework display can tell the difference between a squib and a banger! Hopefully no one would seriously consider plastic flare guns sold in chandleries today to be any sort of effective defence weapon. In retrospect it should not be forgotten that there have been several deaths recorded as a result of people being struck by a parachute flare, including one notorious incident that took place some years ago at Cowes Week in the UK. Flares and flare guns can be lethal, but it probably depends on the type.



'That's not a knife...' Our flare guns in 2002 — I doubt they are legal now

PS Other than for the photograph (taken in Laguna Grande, Venezuela 2002), in 50,000 miles and ten years' cruising our flare guns were never taken out of their cases — for any reason. Before returning to Europe we donated them to a fellow traveller heading south and "off piste". I am pleased to report he has never had the misfortune to need them either!

With kind regards,
John Burnie
S/Y Indaba
www.yachtindaba.com

KUDOS FOR GRENADA POLICE WORK

An Open Letter to ACP Martin of the Royal Grenada Police Force
Dear ACP Martin,

The Marine and Yachting Association of Grenada (MAYAG) has been contacted by a yachtsman who had his boat moored near the edge of the Lagoon in St. George's. On January 3rd his yacht was broken into and items stolen. The police were called and statements taken.

Acting on information, the police identified and apprehended the perpetrator on the same day. He was charged and brought to court on January 6th, where he was found guilty. All the stolen items have been recovered.

The yacht owner is delighted with the response of the RGPF and the Grenada judicial system and grateful for their effective and prompt response to this incident. He asked MAYAG to ensure those responsible are thanked for their outstanding support. In addition, The Marine and Yachting Association of Grenada would like to express our appreciation for the assistance shown by the Royal Grenada Police Force to this yachtsman and others who choose to visit Grenada.

Best regards,
Anita Sutton, President
Marine & Yachting Association of Grenada
www.grenadagrenadinesyachting.com

LET YACHT VISITORS STAY LONGER

To Whom It May Concern,

I write this letter with the hope that the present administration will change the law limiting yachting visitors to one-month initial entry permit into St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

In the past, Admiralty Bay and other Grenadine harbours had many more "snowbird" liveaboards and charter boats used to base themselves there for months at a time, thus benefiting various St. Vincent & the Grenadines' communities. These yachts and other newcomers have respectively now located in neighboring islands Grenada and St. Lucia, which both realize and benefit from the substantial financial impact the yachting sector has on local taxpayers in business.

Both the administration and their citizens could benefit immensely by extending the length of stay to at least three months, if not six. Prorated fees could simply be collected upon departure — as in truth, it is most inconvenient and uncomfortable to relinquish one's travel documents inter-island for an extension.

Sincerely,
Alan Weeks

SUPPORT JUNIOR SAILING ON FEBRUARY 22ND

Dear *Compass*,

For those of us who keep an eye open for good projects to support, looking for meaningful ways to repay the friendly hospitality we receive in these islands, Carriacou, in the Grenadines (which gives some of the best hospitality, Grenadines style) has become fertile ground. The Carriacou Children's Education Fund, which provides school meals, uniforms and scholarships for needy kids, and Camp Kayak, which provides a variety of summer programs for youth, are well established and have been doing good things for years.

New to the scene are two fledgling organizations that extend the mission of helping youngsters to have access to otherwise unavailable opportunities and, of course, to have fun. These are the Carriacou Music Foundation, launched with Carriacou's Ky-Mani Marley Charity Concert in April of 2013, and L'Esterre Junior Sailing School (LJS), which began operations on L'Esterre Bay in August of 2012. The Music Foundation needs more instruments. Junior Sailing needs more boats.

The occasion of this notice is L'Esterre Junior Sailing School's fundraiser beginning at noon Saturday, February 22nd. It will happen at the club's base, Off the Hook Bar and Grill on L'Esterre Bay, Carriacou. The kids will be sailing; you'll see them in action and see just how much has been accomplished in a short time. And, of course, there will be food and drink.

LJS is a good club, operated with a quiet enthusiasm and teaching sailing skills as well as the discipline that the sea demands. The kids appreciate what is being offered them and they show it. Several are of the kind that one might expect to see running the show in the future or may go on to make their livelihoods in the marine industry. It is that mixture of Saturday-morning fun and serious skill development that may go on to greater things that is the mission of the organization. *(See related story on page 13.)*

The club began with five Opti-like primary trainers, a kid and a boat. They have since acquired two go-faster Topaz boats (one on loan, as is one of the Optis), two kids on a boat: captain and crew. LJS now aspires to a boat that is a next step up in both the skills that are needed and the requirement for crew cooperation and interaction. So, the main focus of the fundraiser is a boat that is the racing evolution of local open fishing boats, an 18-foot double ender, which takes a crew of four and could also carry the instructor. It fits the bill as a boat that requires the next level of seamanship and crew training, and also provides a transition into the local adult regattas in traditional craft. It has the other advantage of bringing some competition for Bequia!

LJS could also use another Opti and some power tools to help maintain the fleet.

So, come by early enough to see them in action, see what you think they are worth. Then dig deep — these are pricey dreams.

Alan Kingsman
S/Y Jab Jab

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Dear* Compass *Readers,

We want to hear from YOU!

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

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

Send your letters to:
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CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

1 Diamond Dash Race, St. Lucia to Martinique and back. St. Lucia Yacht Club (SLYC), tel (758) 452-8350, managerslyc@gmail.com, www.stluciayachtclub.com
1 – 2 United Insurance Work Boat Regatta. www.grenadasailingfestival.com
2 Hobie Cat Match Races, Grenada. Petit Calivigny Yacht Club (PCYC), info@pcycgrenada.com, www.pcycgrenada.com
2 World Wetlands Day. www.ramsar.org
2 11th Annual Rainforest Party, St. Croix. Fundraiser for Haiti. (340) 244-4792, haitisupport@gmail.com
7 Public holiday in Grenada (39th Anniversary of Independence)
13 - 16 Jolly Harbour Valentine's Regatta and Rum Festival, Antigua. Jolly Harbour Yacht Club (JHYC). tel (268) 770-6172, regattas@jhycantigua.com, www.jhycantigua.com
14 – 16 36th Annual Sweethearts of the Caribbean and 32nd Annual Classic Yacht Regatta, BVI. West End Yacht Club (WEYC), tel (284) 496-8685, martin@sailsistership.com
15 FULL MOON Parties at Trellis Bay and West End, Tortola, and at Pinney's Beach, Nevis
16 Sailors' & Landlubbers' Auction, Bequia. www.bequiasunshineschool.org
17 Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI (Presidents' Day)
22 Public holiday in St. Lucia (Independence Day).
22 Round St. Lucia Race. St. Lucia Yacht Club (SLYC), tel (758) 452-8350, managerslyc@gmail.com, www.stluciayachtclub.com
22 - 23 Cruzan Open Dinghy Regatta, St. Croix. St. Croix Yacht Club (SCYC), tel (340) 773-9531, fax 778-8350, stcroixyc@gmail.com, www.stcroixyc.com
23 Public holiday in Guyana (Republic Day)
24 RORC Caribbean 600 starts from Antigua. http://caribbean600.rorc.org
25 – March 3 BVI Kite Jam. www.kitejambvi.com
28 – 2 March St. Maarten Multihull Regatta. www.StMaartenMultiHullRegatta.com
28 – 4 March Semaine Nautique Internationale de Schoelcher, Martinique. www.cnschoelcher.net
28 – 4 March St. Barth's Carnival
TBA Carnival Regatta, Martinique. Club Nautique Le Neptune (CNN), tel (596) 51 73 24, fax (596) 51 73 70, cnn.leneptune@wanadoo.fr, www.clubnautiqueleneptune.com

MARCH

1 Royalist Regatta, Barbados. Barbados Sailing Association (BSA), sailbarbados@gmail.com, www.sailbarbados.com
3 Public holiday in Anguilla (James Ronald Webster Day celebrated)
2 – 5 Tobago Festival of Winds (kite boarding, windsurfing, paddle boarding)
2 – 9 Curaçao Youth Championship, Curaçao. http://ysco.org
3 Public holiday in BVI (H. Lavity Stoutt's Birthday)
3 – 4 Carnival Monday and Tuesday in most Dutch and French islands, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Dominica, Carriacou, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela, and other places
4 Budget Marine Match Racing Cup, St. Maarten. www.heinekenregatta.com
5 Public holiday in many places (Ash Wednesday)
6 Gill Commodore's Cup, St. Maarten. www.heinekenregatta.com
6 - 9 34th St. Maarten Heineken Regatta. www.heinekenregatta.com
6 – 9 6th Annual South Grenada Regatta. www.southgrenadaregatta.com
7 - 10 Annual Dark & Stormy Regatta, Anegada, BVI. WEYC
8 International Women's Day
8 – 9 Antigua Annual Laser Open. Antigua Yacht Club (AYC), tel (268) 460-1799, ayc@yachtclub.ag, www.antiguayachtclub.com
8 – 12 Caribbean Arts & Crafts Festival, Tortola, BVI. dreadeye@surfbvi.com
8 – 17 St. Patrick's Festival, Montserrat. www.visitmontserrat.com
10 Public holiday in BVI (Commonwealth Day)
10 Public holiday in Belize (Benefactors Day celebrated)
12 – 16 Caribbean Fine Art Fair, Barbados. www.cafafair.com
14 Public holiday in St. Vincent & the Grenadines (National Heroes' Day)
16 FULL MOON Parties at Trellis Bay and West End, Tortola, and at Pinney's Beach, Nevis
17 Public holiday in Montserrat (St. Patrick's Day); St. Patrick's Day Festival, Grenada
17 Public holiday in Guyana and Suriname (Phagwah)
19 - 22 Caribbean Superyacht Rendezvous, Virgin Gorda. www.loropianasuperyachtregattaandrendezvous.com
20 Vernal Equinox
20 – 23 Puerto Rico Jazz Fest. http://prheinekenjazz.com
23 Powerade Regatta, St. Maarten. St. Maarten Yacht Club (SMYC), tel (599) 544-2075, info@smyc.com, www.smyc.com
27 – 30 St. Barths Bucket Regatta. www.bucketregattas.com/stbarths
28 – 30 St. Thomas International Regatta, USVI. www.rolexcupregatta.com
30 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Spiritual Baptist "Shouter" Liberation Day)
31 – 6 April BVI Spring Regatta & Sailing Festival, Tortola. www.bvispringregatta.org
TBA Banana's Cup Regatta, Martinique. Yacht Club de la Martinique (YCM), tel (596) 63 26 76, ycmq@wanadoo.fr, www.ycm972.org
TBA Spanish Town Fisherman Jamboree & Wahoo Fishing Tournament, Virgin Gorda. www.bvitourism.com

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

WHAT'S ON MY MIND

Learning To Go Solo

by Angelika Grüner

Last year I had a strange conversation. After telling a 72-year-old marina neighbor in Trinidad that ever since my husband passed away two years ago it has been a challenge for me to sail the boat alone, I encouraged him to talk about that situation with his wife. He answered, "No, I can't do it!" Guess what? They recently came back to Trinidad after cruising up to the Virgins and back down — and put the boat up for sale! Maybe he took my advice and his wife decided she'd never be a solo sailor; therefore that was their last sailing trip. It must not always end like that.

For the first couple of months after Richard's death it was like falling into a deep hole — and I had to climb out of it. I energetically kept myself busy learning "men's" jobs, reading books about diesel engines and electricity. Our boat, *Angelos*, is steel, and I had to get accustomed to using the terrible angle grinder. The bed beside me was empty with no one to hold me back, so I jumped out at 5:30AM to get to work. It was a big change to do all the boat maintenance myself.

One of my first projects was changing *Angelos*'s manual windlass for an electric one. Because we have a 12-millimetre chain I purchased an Italian electric windlass with a 12-millimetre gypsy. It came from Germany to Trinidad by courier, and once the windlass was on board, of course it did not fit on the old mountings. I had a stainless steel plate cut to fix it on the previous place, with new holes to fit the new windlass. Of the two electricians that I asked to install the windlass, the first one did



not turn up at all after three phone calls, the second one just wanted to talk to me. Finally I took the matter into my own hands, and managed to do all the electrical and mechanical installation by myself. It took me four weeks in total, including the time the two electricians kept me waiting.

Before, I never dealt with any kind of electricity. Richard was an electrical engineer; when I asked him to explain to me how electrical things work he always told me not to worry about it; he'd take care of it. I can't tell you how many sleepless nights I had, just thinking about how to run the wires for the windlass. The relays sent with the windlass had two faults, plus the windlass was not assembled correctly by the factory. But after a long time of going deep into the problem, I purchased new relays in Trinidad and suddenly everything was working perfectly. I even installed a second switch for the windlass in the cockpit. In the end I was very proud! But when I tried the new windlass I found out that the 12-millimetre chain bought in Martinique did not fit into the new gypsy! I bought 65 metres of new 12-millimetre chain that was manufactured in Italy, the same as the windlass.

Further electrical business was to check all the boat's wiring. I labeled the wires and made coloured drawings of which wire came from which battery, solar panel or wind generator, and went to where. *Angelos*'s electrical system is 24 Volts, mixed with 12 Volts for the radios and autopilot. That was quite a job, and cost me a lot of sweat! After I had done that, things became much clearer.

Meanwhile a new exhaust manifold with a new exhaust pipe was ready to be installed by a mechanic. But first, the old exhaust pipe had to be cut out of the steel hull — with that terrible angle grinder. I asked a workman in the boatyard. He promised to do it. After a couple of days I asked him again. Like the electrician, he never turned up. I asked two times; the third time is my time! I put on the gloves and protection glasses, drilled four holes and grasped the angle grinder — then the workman ran along, "I'll do it, I'll do it!" "No, now it's my turn!" This workman and the electricians taught me a good lesson.

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After ten weeks working hard on the hard, *Angelos* was launched, with me now a singlehanded cruiser. Immediately I went along the coast towards Tobago, reaching there at midnight. The following morning I reanchored — very easy now with the electric windlass — and when I reached the new spot the engine stopped… by itself. I restarted the engine to go in reverse for setting the anchor well. Then the engine quit again. Like a bloody fool I did not realize the enormous amount of oil in the bilge. Normally there is always some oil sloshing around, but that time it was much more. All the male readers will know by now what happened:
I wrecked the engine by running it without oil. Such a nuisance can only happen to a woman — but only once!

I sailed back to Trinidad. It was not easy to start under sail in Store Bay, but finally I picked up the wind, and got a wonderful sail to the Boca. On the way to Trinidad, Jan from *Bollemaat* by chance phoned me and I explained my situation. When I arrived at the Boca the wind calmed down; no chance of sailing through. Jan called and said he would come out to tow me in. Meanwhile the sea became turbulent — instead of flowing in, it was flowing out! It was not easy when Jan arrived to get a line over to *Angelos*. I feared the boats crashing together in that rough roiling water. When we had organized the line it was very tough to tow *Angelos* in the whirling water through the second Boca; we hardly made any progress.

To make a long story short, the engine had to be taken out. While lifting it, one hook broke and the engine fell down, fortunately still hanging on one hook, squeezing into the cockpit! Our son, Angelus, flew in from Germany to take the engine apart together with Raymond, the mechanic. It turned out that the oil screw on the bottom of the oil chamber had come out. It did never did fit — the screw hole had a completely different thread! We went for 25 years around the globe and never had a problem, but when I was sailing alone for the first time, the screw must fall out of the oil chamber?!?

Fortunately the engine is an old Ford Thornycroft, quite common in Trinidad. Therefore the spare parts were available. Thanks to Raymond, the engine was back after six weeks. It was also nice to have Angelus back on the boat and in Trinidad. After the break-in time I had to do an oil change for the first time in my life. Therefore I decided to anchor right in front in Chaguaramas so I could call the mechanics if I failed or the engine would not start again. I have to learn; don't laugh. And from now on, for sure before starting the engine I check the oil! I will always have spare oil with me.

> *'I want to continue the same life as before, even if it is much harder'*

So, last season was not much about sailing, rather it was an education for me in electricity, engine repair and maintenance. So far everything is fine.

Now quite often I hear the question, "Why are you sailing now at all, and alone?" People cannot understand that I want to continue the same life as before, even if it is much harder: double the thinking and double the work. New partners don't fall out of the sky. Usually I reply, "And what will you do if your partner leaves you? Sit in an armchair, watching TV?" Up until now I seldom get any kind of answer; the people just look at me frightened and speechless.

I pass that question on to you, readers: "What will you do if…?" This theme will come up for all couples, at sea or on land. Frequently men pass away earlier than women. I advise all women wanting to sail farther on to get as much information as possible about navigation, electricity, mechanics, and so on from your beloved. You should make plans together. Make decisions early; don't be shy to speak about death.

I had to learn to think more in detail, thinking of everything that could happen on a boat. If you are a couple living a long time on a boat each person has his or her area of responsibility. Now I have to learn what Richard was always thinking about: hatches closed, fridge switched off, batteries looked after, oil checked! With any kind of repairs, what is the best sequence so I don't have to do the whole thing twice?

It is not easy, but it is possible to sail alone as a woman. As long I can keep my head up I'll enjoy sailing, swimming and walking, and even practise kitesurfing.

All in all, it is better to go alone than not to go at all!

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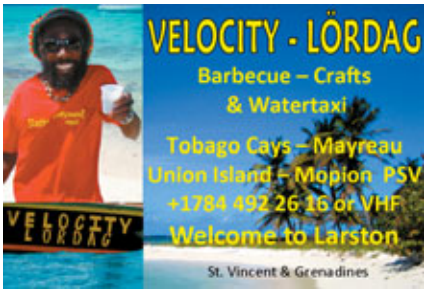
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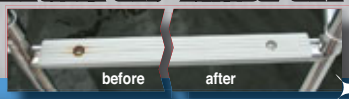
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Clippers Ship	Martinique	MP	Grenadines Sails	SVG	32	Renaissance Marina	Aruba	6			
Crown Foods	St. Lucia	MP	Harmony Apartel	St. Lucia	MP	Rodney Bay Sails	St. Lucia	MP			
Cruising Life	SVG	34	Iolaire Enterprises	UK	23/35	Sammy's Boatyard	Antigua	33			

MP = Market Place pages 42 to 45
C/W = Caribbean-wide

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