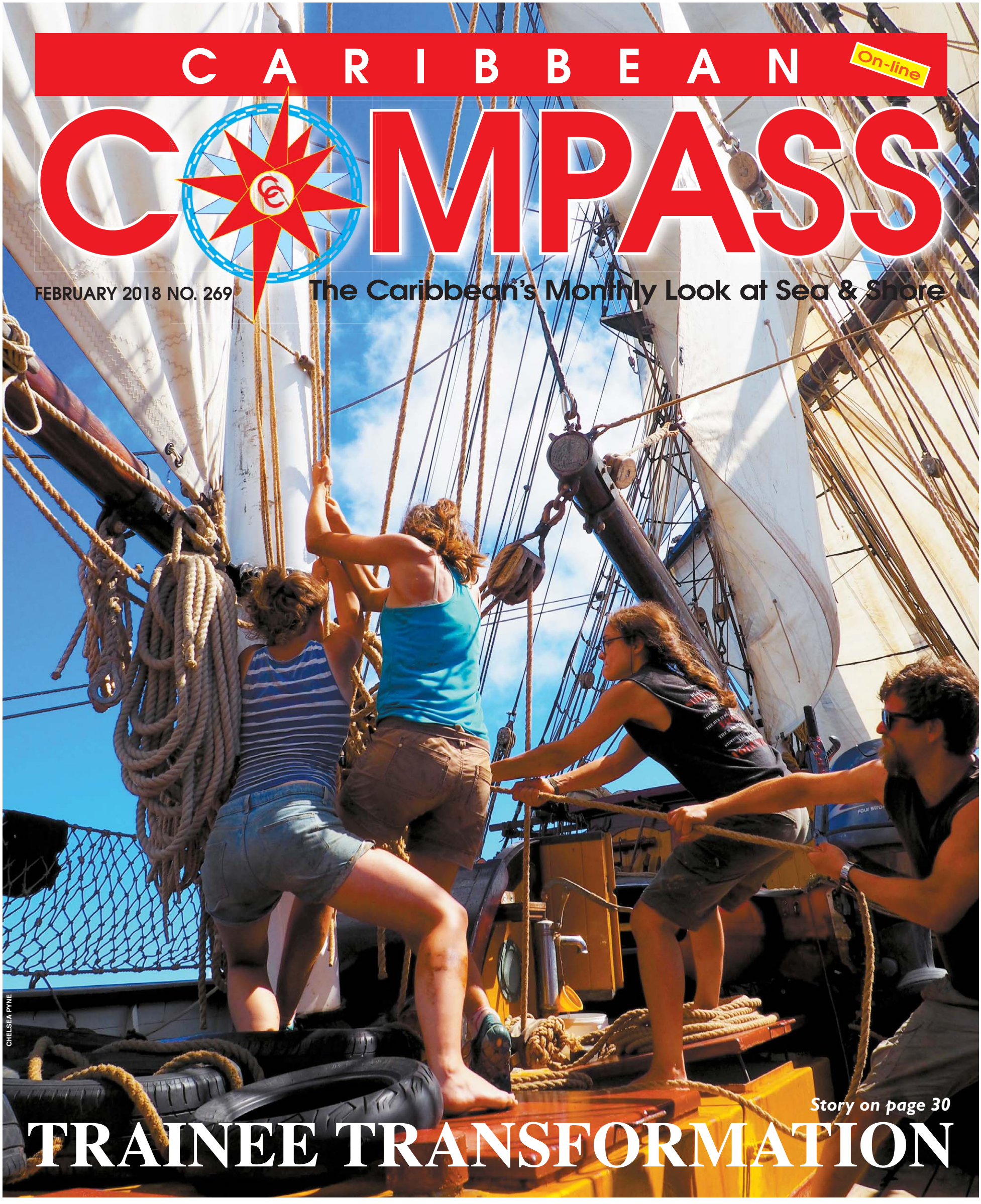
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FEBRUARY 2018 NO. 269

The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore



CHELSEA PYNE

Story on page 30

TRAINEE TRANSFORMATION

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FEBRUARY 2018 • NUMBER 269



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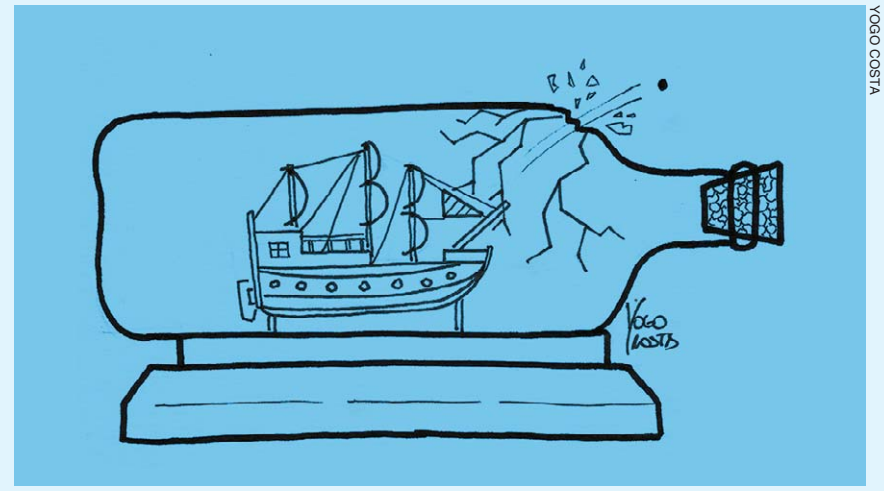
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Tel: (784) 457-3409, Fax: (784) 457-3410, compass@caribbeancompass.com, www.caribbeancompass.com

Publisher.....**Tom Hopman**
tom@caribbeancompass.com
Editor.....**Sally Erdle**
sally@caribbeancompass.com
Assistant Editor.....**Elaine Ollivierre**
jsprat@vincysurf.com
Art, Design & Production.....**Wilfred Dederer**
wide@caribbeancompass.com
Administration.....**Shellese Craigg**
shellese@caribbeancompass.com
Advertising
compass@caribbeancompass.com

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ISSN 1605 - 1998

On the cover: 'My experience on Tres Hombres *helped me realize where I can take my own sailing abilities' writes tall ship trainee Chelsea Pyne. See story on page 30*



Info & Updates

Many hurricanes have come and gone across these waters during those centuries but Prince Rupert's Bay has weathered well and resumed its role as a sailor's haven every time. The canoes, caravels, galleons, frigates, whalers, brigantines, sloops and schooners have always returned once the skies cleared and the swells subsided — please join them.

Eastern Caribbean Cruisers' VHF Nets

All times are Atlantic Central Standard Time

- In St. Martin, participate in Mike's ("Shrimpy's") popular net from Monday to Saturday on Ch-10 at 0730 hours.
- From English Harbour Radio, Antigua, you can often hear weather and other announcements on Ch-06 at 0900.
- Rodney Bay, St. Lucia enjoys a regular Monday-to-Saturday weather and security net. It's held by volunteers in the marina on Ch-68 at 0830.

—Continued on next page

History Sails On in Dominica

Lennox Honychurch, who spearheaded the restoration of Fort Shirley in Dominica and is the author of *Dominica's Cabrits and Prince Rupert's Bay*, reports: The 18th century military complex of Fort Shirley, which was carefully restored some years ago, survived Hurricane Maria undamaged. This was due, it is felt, to the traditional methods of reconstruction and craftsmanship. The hiking trails around the Cabrits National Park have been reopened by the staff of the Dominica Forestry & National Parks Division so that visitors can once more access the spectacular viewpoints on the twin hills of the Cabrits and walk by the remains of Georgian buildings which cover the 250-acre site.

The park's bar and cafeteria, Prince Rupert's Tavern, is up and running and the dive shop housed in the 18th century Provision Store is ready for action. The Cruise Ship Berth, however, was badly hit and will require a total overhaul.

This sheltered anchorage of Prince Rupert's Bay with its reef-free sandy bottom has witnessed the arrival of centuries of seafarers beginning with canoe-loads of Amerindian settlers from South America. A caravel from Columbus' fleet circled the bay during the admiral's second voyage to the Caribbean in 1493 and from that time it became a favourite 'wood and watering' trading base for adventurers entering their new-found world.

The bay was visited by Spanish galleons, marauding pirates and English 'sea dogs' such as John Hawkins, Sir Francis Drake and the Earl of Cumberland as well as the cavalier Prince Rupert of the Rhine after whom the bay was officially named.

Lord Nelson sailed in regularly while based in Antigua. Southern Confederate ships broke the Union naval blockade here during the US Civil War by trading at Portsmouth town, and Yankee whalers used the bay as a depot until the 1920s. The first woman to cross the Atlantic singlehanded under sail (Ann Davison, in 1953) made her landfall here.

LENNOX HONYCHURCH



The view from Fort Shirley: Prince Rupert's Bay in Dominica has witnessed the arrival of centuries of seafarers, from Amerindian settlers to pirates to naval heroes to today's yachtspeople



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DOYLE CARIBBEAN

—*Continued from previous page*

• From Bequia's Admiralty Bay, Cheryl Johnson at The Fig Tree restaurant runs an informative net every morning on Ch-68 at 0800.
• The Grenada Cruiser's VHF Net is held from Monday through Saturday on Ch-66 (International VHF Band Plan) at 0730. This net originates from various volunteers on yachts in Grenada. The net utilizes a powerful VHF repeater in Grenada that transmits on Ch-66 Duplex and has a large coverage area. Ensure that your VHF is set to International Band Plan, not Canadian or US.
• In Trinidad, participate in the cruiser's morning net, seven days a week on Ch-68 at 0800.
• In Venezuela, the Puerto La Cruz VHF net is at 0745 on Ch-72 as available.
• Curaçao's VHF net is at 0745 on Ch-72 Monday through Saturday.

SSCA Adds an HF Radio Service

Glenn Tuttle reports: During this time of year when many cruisers are in the Bahamas and may be without WiFi service or inexpensive cellular service, Jim West (KJM) and I (KPK), who run the SSCA HF Radio Service, are going to offer our services twice each morning.

The first SSCA Net will remain at 0715 hours EST (1215 hours UTC) on SSB frequency 8.104 immediately following the Coconut Telegraph Net. The intended audience for this net is primarily Caribbean cruisers.

The second SSCA Net will begin at 0815 hours EST (1315 hours UTC) on SSB frequency 8.104 — 15 minutes before the start of the Cruiseheimers Net. The intended audience is primarily Bahamas and East Coast cruisers.

The primary purpose of both nets will be to provide current news updates of interest to cruisers from such sources as the Caribbean Safety & Security Net, Noonsite, The Salty Southeast Cruisers Net, *Caribbean Compass*, Bahamas Chatter, etcetera, as well as providing our land-based resources to cruisers. We can provide radio checks, float plans, telephone patches to family and friends in the United States; calls to medical, veterinary or mechanical professionals; internet searches, or any other assistance we may be able to provide.

Although these nets are a service provided by the SSCA, all vessels are encouraged to participate. Any vessel having emergency or priority traffic which we are not copying is advised to contact the Cruiseheimers Net, which begins at 0830 hours EST on frequency 8.152, and/or the Doo Dah Net at 1700 hours EST on frequency 8.152.

In a true emergency, anyone with or without an Amateur Radio license, may use any frequency including the Maritime Mobile Service Net on frequency 14.300. This frequency is guarded by dedicated net controllers beginning at 0700 hours EST until approximately 2300 hours EST and trained to assist vessels with emergencies.

Suggestions and comments regarding the SSCA HF Radio Service may be sent to Glenn at KPK@ssca.org or to Jim at KJM@ssca.org

Eight Bells, Nick Philp

Lucy Tulloch reports: "Solid friend, man of principles, master craftsman." "A very fine man, who always had a tale to tell." "Always ready to help." "If Nick was at the helm, you slept well." "The most honest man I have ever known." These are just a few of the things people have said about Nick since he passed away in December in England, following a battle against cancer — a battle he fought with strength and integrity.

Nicholas Raymond Philp was born November 4th, 1949 and grew up in Croydon, England. He learnt his lifelong skill of printing at Watford College of Technology in 1972, going on to be founder and director of the successful printing business Camden Colour Print Ltd. with his cousin Carl, in London from 1980 to '85.

In around 1985, he bought and over five years, restored and converted a Martello tower in East Sussex, which he later sold. At about the same time, he bought the Mirage 37 *Victoria George,* which he sailed in the English Channel, the Greek Islands and Canaries before crossing the Atlantic with the ARC rally to Barbados.

Reaching the Caribbean, he quickly became a passionate racing man and was much sought-after on the foredeck of competitive yachts in both Bequia and Antigua.

—*Continued on next page*



LUCY TULLOCH

Nick Philp raced and cruised in the Caribbean, and after a circumnavigation aboard his 34-foot S&S sloop, Scalpay, *returned to Antigua to run a top printing and framing shop*

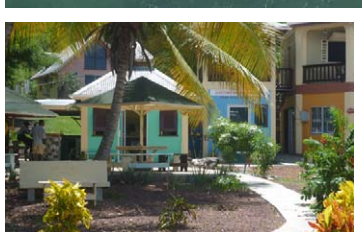
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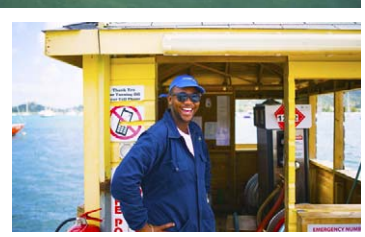
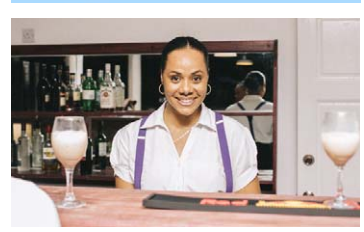
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—*Continued from previous page*

Paul Savino writes: "He ran the bow (of *Stormy Weather*) perfectly and carefully calculated every sail change and pole maneuver. He was always calm, comfortable and confident up there."

I raced the Fastnet in 1993 with him on *Stormy Weather,* the famous 54-foot 1934 Sparkman & Stephens yawl, in a gale. The main had pulled the track from the mast and after rounding Fastnet Rock, Nick went aloft to screw it back so that we could hoist the full main for our downwind leg to the finish line. As watch-leader, he put me on the helm for this agonizingly long half an hour. Just when I was feeling rather chuffed that he had chosen me, I realized he had done it so that he could continuously curse expletives at me for the entire 30 minutes!

It was around 1996 when I picked him up from the airport one day and he asked if we might pop into Crabb's Marina at North Sound on the way to English Harbour. "Be delighted to," I grinned. "I've just bought a boat there." And so, by some crazy coincidence, had he! His beloved 34-foot S&S *Scalpay of Rhu* stood alongside, mere feet away from *Bourree*, which I had bought that very same week. Gradually, in his inimitable style, he began to refit and prepare her for his circumnavigation.



LUCY TULLOCH

'Sailing with him was a blessing... If Nick was at the helm, you slept well'

Meanwhile, Nick did two seasons as a carpenter at Woodstock Boatbuilders in Antigua. Founder Andrew Robinson says, "Nick contributed to the success of Woodstock. In the early years, his practical approach and 'only the best is good enough' standard is something we've strived to build on."

He set off with Matthieu in May 1998, sailing straight to Colón to prepare for going through the Panama Canal. From Panamá they sailed to the Galapagos, where they anchored at Santa Cruz Island. One morning, Matthieu tells me, they were both hung over, and Matthieu said to Nick: "It's time to go, I tell you!" Nick cracked up laughing. That saying followed them for many miles, way beyond their long Pacific crossing. "Every time we were talking since then, one of us would say it."

They sailed to Pitcairn Island, the Gambiers, Tahiti, Bora Bora, the Cook Islands and Niue, where the Niue Yacht Club organized a cruisers' regatta; locals were invited to embark on the boats and *Scalpay* won. Tonga and Fiji were their last tropical stops before New Zealand in October the same year. They left New Zealand in 1999 reaching Brisbane, Australia, in September. Nick worked as printer in Papua New Guinea for a year, learning to digitize his skills and learn Photoshop and modern printing.

After all those days and weeks and months at sea, Matthieu writes, "Nick is one of the few who mark my life. We never argued; sailing with him was a blessing".

Returning from his circumnavigation, Nick bought The Frame Shop in English Harbour and set up what many artists agree was the best printing and framing shop in the Caribbean. He was meticulous and creative. He would make frames by hand, match existing colours or finishes with complex mix of varnishes or stains or with the tiniest of brushes. It was quite normal for him to work all night for a client. He never let you down.

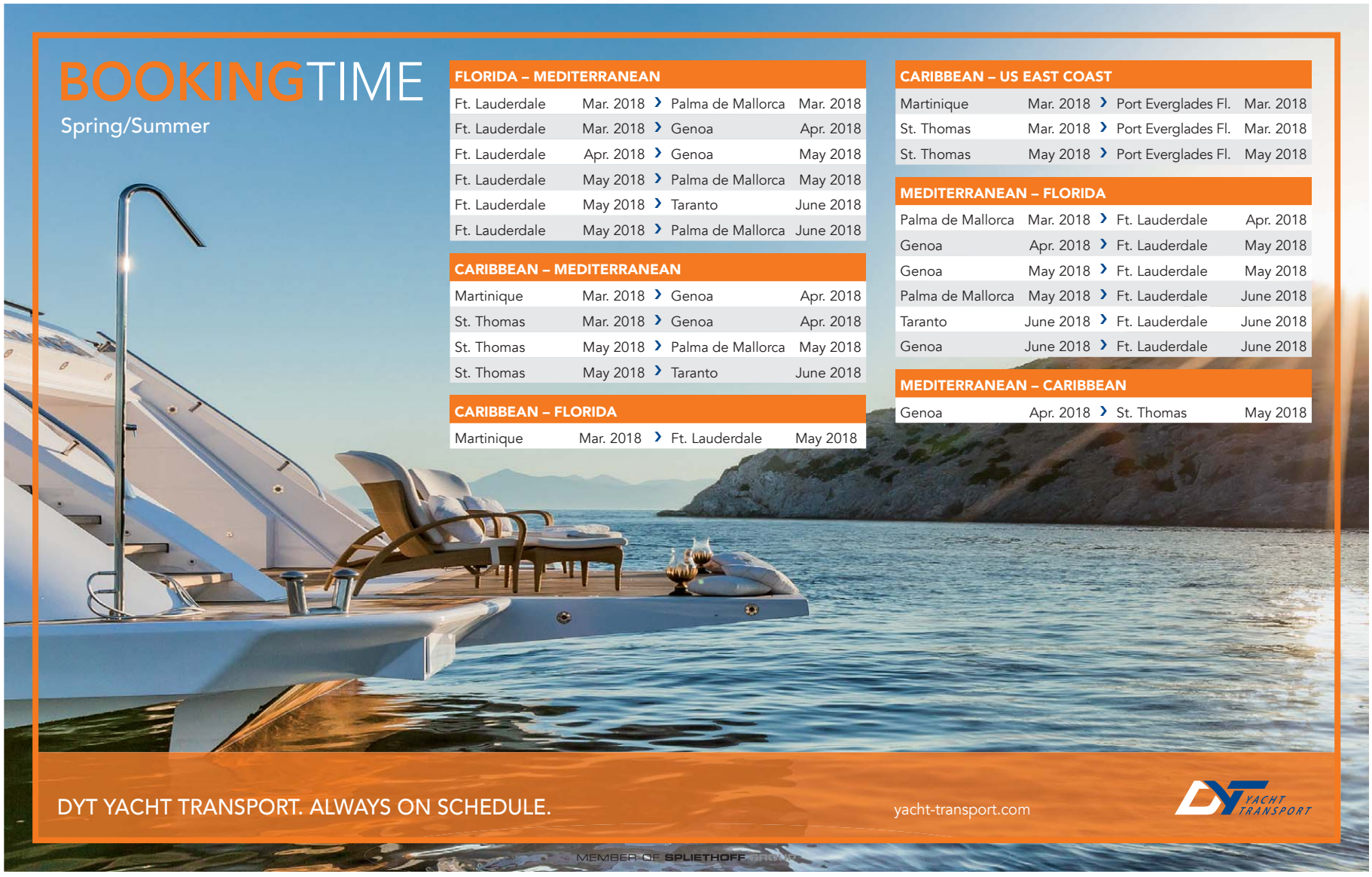
Paul Savino again: "His best work was making a copy of one of the best-known, detailed drawings of Antigua from around the mid-1700s. It required putting together four large sheets from a pilot book and then joining them together as one big map, around three by three feet, and then sealing this into archival glass. It hung on the wall in the Museum of Antigua."

"He was infuriating at times, a grumpy old curmudgeon, but had a heart of gold and would move a mountain to help anyone in need. So really, the best sort of friend," says Clare Cupples. Many say Nick was at his best in a crisis. He stepped in, immediately, did exactly what was needed, nor for thanks or accolade. Many years ago, when Peter Hutchinson fell from his boat *Rainbow* whilst on the hard, Nick completely took care of the boat for him during his recovery. More recently he helped Peter bring his narrowboat from York to Maidstone along the canals of England with his close friend John Robertson, with whom Nick lived during his cancer treatment in the UK and who was a solid and supportive friend up to the last.

He was a private man with no time for social media. When my time comes for me to see him "on the other side" — as he put it a couple of weeks ago — I'm going to get a right proper telling off for writing all this!

Get Your Compass in Antigua!

Pick up your copy of *Caribbean Compass* in Antigua at all Budget Marine stores — Jolly Harbour, English Harbour, and North Sound Marina.



BUSINESS BRIEFS

Budget Marine St. Maarten Fully Operational

Nicole Corvellec reports: Budget Marine was the first chandlery in St. Maarten to open after the passing of Hurricane Irma. The building was hardly damaged by the hurricane but five break-ins followed by looting caused problems that have all been resolved. The Service Center is also fully functional for your outboard and dinghy repairs and access to our premises is as easy as ever, both by dinghy and by car.



In addition to having the usual full range of chandlery items available, Budget Marine St. Maarten has an even greater focus now on reconstruction materials to supply boats in need of repairs. This includes high-quality marine plywood, polycarbonates, core materials, and reinforcing material resins including epoxy and polyester. Budget Marine St. Maarten is offering custom pricing packages to those yachts reconstructing after Irma.

Come and visit the Cole Bay location to learn more about these packages or to browse their fully stocked shop with competitive pricing. See you in St Maarten!

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

Curaçao Marine Continues Developments

Curaçao Marine reports: Since our last News Flash in this column, where we shared a long list of improvements, Curaçao Marine didn't sit still! The improvements and developments at the yard have continued steadily. We promised to keep you up to date:

Equipment maintenance: Our machinery is the core of our business, therefore the second round of maintenance on our tractor and trailer has been carried out.

Arrival by boat: The visibility of the shallow spot in front of our marina has been improved.

Yard capacity: 665 boat stands have been delivered. We can now offer long- and short-term storage on the hard to about 80 more yachts.

Shuttle service: Our partner, Caribbean Handling & Commerce, offers customers of Curaçao Marine a shuttle service to Customs and Immigration at a small fee.

Product shipment service: Caribbean Handling & Commerce also offers another special service to clients of Curacao Marine — transportation of goods from St. Martin to Curaçao. Ideal when a certain item or special paint is not available on our island, you can buy it online and they ship it to Curaçao for you! Ask about this service at our reception or via our contact form online.

Car rental: We have added a few more cars to our rental fleet; it's as easy as 1-2-3 to step off your yacht and be on your way to get provisions or to go sightseeing.

And we are not stopping here — big improvements and investments ahead!

For more information on Curaçao Marine see ad on page 26.

Horizon's Partnership with Cummins-Onan Expands Services from Clarke's Court

Horizon Yachts Grenada has recently cemented a new relationship with Cummins-Onan to supply and install generators, and has already completed three very different projects for clients.

The first job undertaken was to install an 8kW unit as a back-up generator on a 67-foot charter catamaran. The client required a smaller, quieter unit that could be run at night and still support the boat's central air conditioning system. With the use of "Smart Start" units on the compressors, greatly reducing the initial start-up current required, this considerably smaller generator is able to run two of the three compressors on the AC plant. The generator is extremely quiet and fits the client's specific needs perfectly.

The second project was the installation of a 7.5kW generator and new battery bank on a 50-foot monohull. The owner had not had a generator on board before, but now wanted to be able to run air conditioning while off the dock and improve the overall power management on board. The boat is very well fitted out, so power consumption is very significant and the new generator is proving easily able to handle the loads required. The generator has been installed in the stern of the boat to minimize the sound aboard when running.



An upgrade replacement of a 7.5kW generator from a smaller 5kW unit on a 47-foot monohull was the third job undertaken to date. The previous unit had been unreliable and was not big enough to run all the systems that were needed. The new power plant easily manages all the air conditioning systems and battery charger, as well as all the other power requirements on board.

All three units have been installed with a "dry exhaust" system, so that the cooling water is discharged underwater — putting an end to the continual splashing noise as water exits the exhaust.

—Continued on next page

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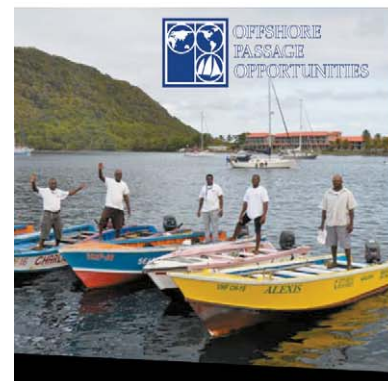
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- Sporting activities: soccer and cricket
- Hiking and tours to hot spots such as the famous Indian River, Trafalgar Falls, Middleham Falls, world famous Boiling Lake and the Waitukubuli National Trail.
- Lion Fish cookout
- President's dinner at the Fort
- Experience Dominica's hot natural sulphur springs.

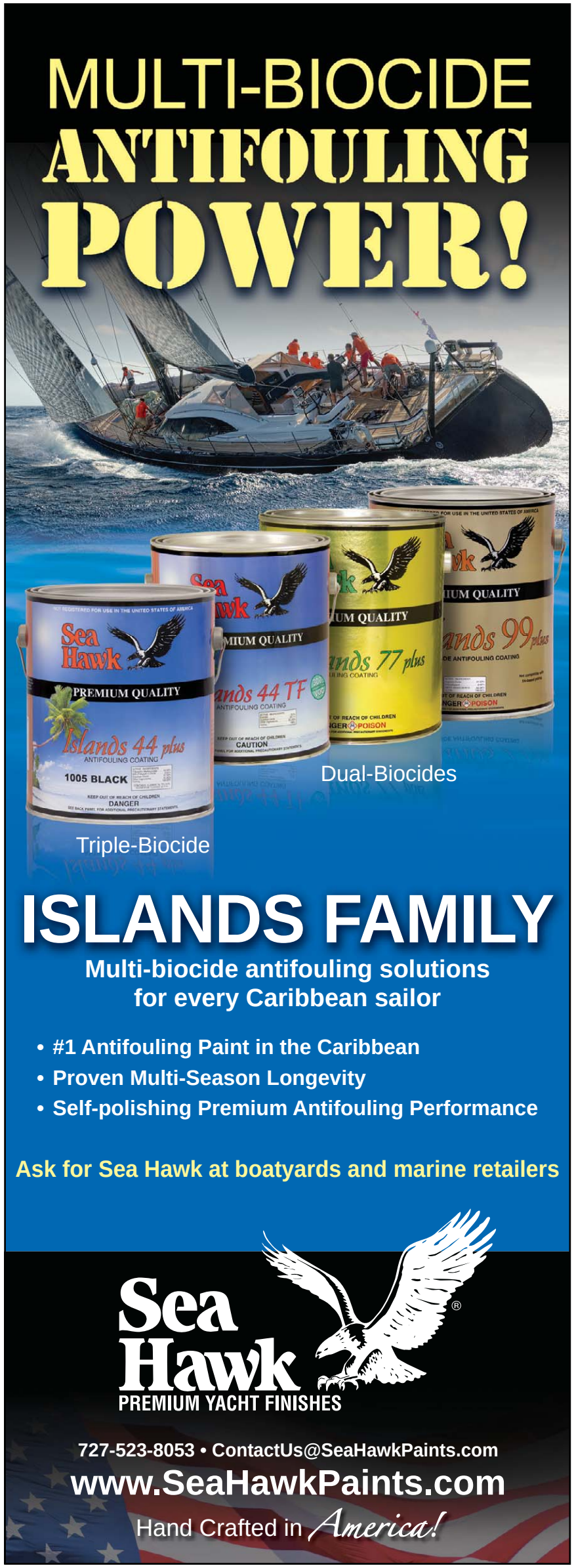


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—Continued from previous page

To discuss any generator installation requirements or any other management or maintenance projects, contact James Pascall (473) 439-1000, or Gary Haynes (473) 415-0431.

For more information on Horizon Yachts Grenada see ad in the Market Place section, pages 42 to 44.

Marina Puerto Del Rey Illuminated

The largest marina in the Caribbean provides its clients with power during uncertain times.

Following a 90-day period without full power for its nearly 1,000 wet- slips, 750 dry-stack spaces and 15 acres of land storage, Marina Puerto Del Rey in Puerto Rico is now fully electrified. The undertaking was the result of careful planning and implementation with RIMCO, the Caterpillar distributor in Puerto Rico; PREPA, the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority; and the Port of Jacksonville.

Although the generator had always been a key component of developer Nicholas Prouty's vision of pairing super-high capacity generators with his US$10-million investment in solar power, Hurricanes Irma and Maria accelerated his plans with the installation of the very powerful Cat generator.

"I am very proud to offer double redundancy. We are now living in a world of rapidly changing weather patterns and unfortunately these weather events will continue to happen. What can change however is how we plan for them in the future. Never again will an asset as important to nautical tourism and the economic recovery of Puerto Rico be sidelined. Puerto Rico will prove its resiliency and as members of the private sector, we fully support that ideal," says Prouty, CEO of Putnam Bridge, the company that owns the marina.



"We recognize that PREPA's first priority is to restore power for essential services and homeowners, so it was with that in mind that we decided to move up the timetable with Caterpillar and PREPA," said Prouty. "Aside from the great pleasure our boaters take in being a member of our family oriented marina, Puerto Del Rey, let us not forget that it is also the primary source of employment for nearly 1,000 hard-working Puerto Ricans in Fajardo and Ceiba, so no power has also meant no work for our skilled journeymen, painters and electricians. Now they will be getting back to work and that fact more than any other makes my decision so satisfying."

The new 1,500Kw generator will offering Puerto Del Rey's clients a stable power source.

Marina Puerto Del Rey was purchased out of bankruptcy in 2013 by Prouty's firm, Putnam Bridge, and since then has undergone a massive investment in infrastructure.

The new infrastructure investments over the past three years have made Puerto Del Rey well prepared for a hurricane. Millions were spent on the breakwater, on repairing and reinforcing the concrete docks and on building the most sophisticated hurricane tie-downs. Highly detailed Hurricane Plans were created. When it was clear that Hurricane Maria would make landfall, marina CEO Carolina Corral declared a "code red" status and every employee was activated and called in to prepare. As a result, less than three percent of the boats had major damage after the catastrophic Category 4 hurricane, and that is something to be proud of.

To learn more about Marina Puerto Del Rey, call (787) 860-1000, e-mail customerservice@puertodelrey.com, or visit www.puertodelrey.com

Multihull Company Offers Classes, Charters on Balance 451 Cat



The Multihull Company, in partnership with LTD Sailing School in Grenada, is pleased to offer sailing school classes and skippered charters on a Balance 451 catamaran. This is a beautiful owner's edition model with the addition of a small office space/single cabin. Come take a look at this perfect balance between performance and comfort in a blue-water performance cruising catamaran.

Visit the Grenada branch of The Multihull Company one dock over from Secret Harbor Marina, call (473) 457-3245 or e-mail Chris@multihullcompany.com.

For more information on The Multihull Company see ad on page 44.

Island Dreams Launches Boatshed Grenada Yacht Brokerage

Boatshed is expanding its yacht brokerage presence in the Southern Caribbean with a new location in Grenada. Island Dreams will be part of a team of about 120 specialist Boatshed brokers, agents and representatives operating from 66 locations in 18 countries and supported by a central HQ team of 14 professionals. The new Boatshed Grenada office joins offices in St. Vincent & the Grenadines, St. Lucia and the BVI to strengthen the group's overall reach in the Caribbean. Over the coming months Boatshed is intent on increasing coverage across the Caribbean giving full coverage for cruising and charter boats in transit throughout the Islands.

Anita Sutton, co-owner of Island Dreams, says, "We have been involved in various aspects of boat sales over the years, and we feel the time is right in Grenada for the type of full service international brokerage presence Boatshed offers." Island Dreams and Boatshed combine nearly 40 years' experience of the yachting industry in the Windward Islands with an international organization accessing top-level expertise.

Island Dreams has been providing yacht maintenance and management services in Grenada since 1999. With its main office at Port Louis Marina, and a satellite office at Clarkes Court Boatyard, the company is well placed to offer advice and support to owners wishing to sell their boat.

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Boatshed is one of the largest, most successful international yacht brokerages in the world, specializing in the sale and purchase of second-hand sail and motorboats. The business has grown into a major international business and a well-known cornerstone of the yacht brokerage industry in the UK and overseas.

For more information contact Anita at anitasutton@boatshedgrenada.com or visit www.boatshedgrenada.com

For more information on Island Dreams see ad in the Market Place section, pages 42 to 44.

World Cruising Club Team Welcomes Andy Bristow

There's a new hand at the helm of World Cruising Club's events team.

World Cruising Club, the organizer of the ARC sailing rally events, has welcomed aboard Andy Bristow as its new Operations Director. Andy has sailed for as long as he can remember and joined the WCC team in September 2017, following a full military career specializing in communications that saw him promoted to become the British Army's Signals Officer in Chief. He also completed the 1989-90 Whitbread Round the World Race, managed and skippered the British Army's Offshore Racing programme and skippered the British Army Antarctic Expedition, which sailed from the UK to Antarctica and back. On board his own classic sloop he has enjoyed many single-handed, double-handed and fully crewed voyages including an expedition to Arctic Svalbard. His logbook records over 250,000 miles and 15 transatlantic crossings, so he is well placed to join WCC's team of experienced ocean sailing enthusiasts.

Visit www.worldcruising.com for more information on World Cruising Club events.

Cornell Odyssey Rallies Come to an End

Jimmy Cornell reports: In 2013, almost exactly 15 years after I had stopped my involvement with the ARC (Atlantic Rally for Cruisers), I decided to launch the Atlantic Odyssey, the aim of which was to bring back the original spirit of my earlier rallies. A dozen more transatlantic rallies have followed since then, the various Odysseys, such as the Atlantic and Caribbean Odyssey, and the Islands Odyssey, being a great success among cruising sailors and attracting mostly families.



Caribbean Odyssey yachts moored in Barbados

As a cruising sailor myself I knew very well what sailors needed before and during an ocean passage. From pre-start seminars and practical demonstrations to cultural visits and activities for children, each Odyssey was characterized by a joyful atmosphere of camaraderie.

Over the years I have been fortunate to meet many outstanding people among the sailors taking part in my rallies and many have become close friends. It is indeed the people whom I met that have been the main source of satisfaction in organizing these events, and this is what I shall miss most.

But, as with everything else in life, there comes a point to stop. Having achieved my aim of recreating the spirit and atmosphere of my earlier rallies, the moment has arrived to close this chapter in my life. The Caribbean Odyssey starting from Tenerife on January 6th, 2018 will be the last.

ARC USA and ARC Europe Rallies 2018

ARC USA makes a real cruise of the passage from the Caribbean to the East Coast of the US. Sail in company from Tortola, BVI to Bermuda, then on to Portsmouth, Virginia or other East Coast ports, or from Tortola to Fort Lauderdale, Florida via the Old Bahama Channel.

ARC Europe is a cruise in company from the Caribbean to southern Portugal, exploring Bermuda and the Azores on the way. This rally has two starts; from the Chesapeake on the US East Coast, and from Nanny Cay, Tortola BVI; with the two fleets meeting in Bermuda. Then on to cruise the Azores before the final voyage to Europe.

The World Cruising Club team is with you in every port, helping you make the most of your time ashore with parties and tours, advice and support.

Both ARC USA and ARC Europe 2018 depart Tortola, BVI on May 5th.

Visit www.worldcruising.com for more information.

New 'Atlantic Back Cruising' Rally: Guadeloupe-Azores-Europe

François Séruzier reports: Every year hundreds of boats cross the Atlantic from east to west, individually, racing, and in rallies. The prospect of sailing with the wind and arriving under the hot sun of the Antilles attracts thousands of British and European sailors every year and is the realization of a dream for many.

And then, after a season of exploring the Caribbean, it's time to think of the return voyage.

Some people choose to return their boat by cargo ship, but most return by sail. Many owners and crews wish to have an organized west-to-east rally with an organizing body that ensures that each participant is tracked all the way from their departure from the Caribbean to their arrival in their homeport.

Scheduled to start on May13th, the new Atlantic Back Cruising rally allows a crossing with a maximum security factor with a stop in the famous archipelago of the Azores.

A friendly welcome awaits Atlantic Back Cruising rally participants in Guadeloupe, with tourism opportunities and support for your preparation a week before you depart. A stop at Horta in the Azores provides a few days rest and allows you to enjoy the island of Faial, before leaving on the day you wish for your final destination.



The Atlantic Back Cruising Organization is happy to provide this unique event, organizing a crossing that is sociable and friendly but most importantly as safe as possible.

The organization team will be in Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Barth and Antigua in early February. If you are cruising in these areas, don't hesitate to contact us at contact@atlanticbackcruising.com and it will be a pleasure to meet you.

Visit our website at www.atlanticbackcruising.com

For more information on the Atlantic Back Rally see ad on page 11.

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REGATTA NEWS

CSA Retains Focus on Sailing Development

The 2017 Caribbean Sailing Association's Annual General Meeting was held November 29th 2017 in Antigua. Members present were joined electronically by 21 other members from across the Caribbean to discuss the business of Caribbean sailing and to elect officials for the coming year.

Without exception, sailing development continues to be the biggest focus moving forward, outside of the CSA Rating Rule and promotion of the sport of sailing in accordance with the organization's mission statement.

The focus on sailing development was launched during the 2013 Regatta Organizers Conference in Puerto Rico when delegates discussed the trends in participation of the sport of sailing and the relative decrease in numbers of people entering the sport. It was agreed that the CSA had a part to play in supporting sailing programmes and schools throughout the region. The more structured and effective the programmes are, the more they encourage youths to get on the water. This helps grow the sport and eventually the regional regattas.

Continued involvement from yacht clubs and programmes and Member National Authorities is bringing benefits in sharing ideas, opportunities and challenges, helping the region to move forward with a united voice.

Kathy Lammers, re-elected as President for a third and final term, expressed her concern to all the islands affected by recent hurricanes. The attendees shared their challenges — aside from loss of boats for youth programmes, the lack of priority for sailing when compared to essential services means that it will take time to get programmes back up and running. The CSA through its Sailing Development Committee is looking at how it can support the programmes going forward.

About the coming year Lammers said, "In a season which has had such a challenging start, 2018 will be about consolidation for many of the programmes and events around the region. Internally we are focused on implementing new procedures with respect to the CSA Rating Rule and improving our efficiency for visiting yachtsmen applying for a rating."

Existing board members Michael Green of St. Lucia, Pam Fuller of the BVI, Mark Theron of St. Kitts & Nevis, Alison Sly-Adams of Antigua and Peter Holmberg of St. Thomas are joined by newly elected directors Jaime Torres from Puerto Rico and Bob Hillier from the US and St. Maarten.

Caribbean 1500: 'Nanny Cay was Wonderful'

The 28th Caribbean 1500 yacht rally started on November 5th, 2017 from Virginia, USA, with 18 boats bound for Tortola, BVI, loaded with hurricane relief supplies. After 11 days of ideal conditions, winds turned to southerlies. For the quicker yachts, that was not an issue because they were in Tortola's Nanny Cay Marina by the time the winds had turned to the south. The latter half of the fleet tacked upwind for a few days. "In the years that I have been involved with the Caribbean 1500, I have never seen sustained winds from the south for this long" said longtime C1500 sailor Miles Poor. All participants arrived safely.

But Hurricane Irma hit Tortola hard in September — what would the sailors find on arrival in November?

Peta Cozier, event manager of C1500's organizing body, World Cruising Club, says, "Nanny Cay Marina was wonderful. Within three weeks of the storm, they said, 'You can come ahead'. They worked so hard to be ready. Two docks were in good condition, which could accommodate the fleet. Night arrivals had to stand off; the marina didn't want to risk them coming in at night."

—Continued on next page

WORLD CRUISING CLUB



Just over two months after Hurricane Irma hit Tortola, Caribbean 1500 sailors were well received at Nanny Cay Marina



MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2018

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 2018

DATE	TIME
1	0040
2	0137
3	0230
4	0321
5	0409
6	0456
7	0542
8	0627
9	0714
10	0801
11	0848
12	0936
13	1024
14	1111
15	1159
16	1245
17	1331
18	1416
19	1502
20	1550
21	1639
22	1730
23	1825
24	1922
25	2022
26	2122
27	2222
28	2319

March 2018

DATE	TIME
1	0000
2	0015
3	0107
4	0157
5	0245
6	0333
7	0420
8	0507
9	0554
10	0642
11	0730
12	0818
13	0905
14	0953
15	1036
16	1126
17	1212
18	1259
19	1346
20	1436
21	1527
22	1621
23	1717
24	1815
25	1913
26	2012
27	2108
28	2203
29	2255
30	2345

—Continued from previous page

She adds that the C1500 2017 sailors "were a very good crowd. They brought solar panels, batteries, school supplies, purification tablets to be distributed by the chandlery — everything they could think of. They were all happy to be able to help in some way. Everyone who could volunteered to help clear up the museum in Road Town."

At the marina, Peg Legs restaurant was gone, but the outdoor barbecue area was largely undamaged, and another get-together was held at Gennikers, which was also okay. Although an 11:00PM curfew was still on, so staff had to leave and parties ended earlier than usual, Peta says, "We had a blast. Nanny Cay proved that Tortola wasn't beaten."

Visit www.worldcruising.com/Carib1500 for more information.

25 for St. Lucia's Mango Bowl 2017



The St. Lucia Yacht Club's 6th Annual Mango Bowl Regatta took place from November 24th through 26th off Reduit Beach. With 25 boats registered — four in Racing Class, eight in Cruising Class, and 13 in the combined J/24 and Surprise Class — more than 150 sailors from Barbados, Grenada, Martinique, Antigua and St. Lucia took part. Commodore Gene Lawrence remarked on young sailors' participation throughout the event being a good sign for the future of sailing both locally and in the region.

Day One provided three races each for the Racing and Cruising Classes while the J24/Surprise Class sailed five races for the day. On the Sunday, Racing and Cruising Classes completed two races in their half day, while the J24/Surprise group completed another three. Eight young local sailors being coached by SLYC's Freddy Sweeney came out for Optimist races on the Sunday afternoon.

Jean Michel Figueres' Farr 40 OD, *Perseverare Diabolicum*, from Martinique, took first place in Racing Class; and Sandy Mair's First 35, *Cricket*, from Antigua, topped the Cruising Class. Robbie Yearwood's *Die Hard* of Grenada won first prize among the J/24s, with Vianney Saintenoy's *Digilife* taking first place in the Surprise Class as well as the combined J24/Surprise Class. Each class winner received a hand-painted Mango Bowl sponsored by the St. Lucia Sailing Association.

Greening the Caribbean and Wayne Neale worked diligently to aid the promotion of "Clean Regatta" through the Sailors for the Sea program.

'Christmas Winds' for High Tide Series in Antigua

The Budget Marine High Tide Series, held in Antigua from December 21st through 26th, 2017, was highly competitive with the closest finish eight seconds apart. Tradewinds of 14 to 19 knots in the first two days were followed by winds gusting to 24 knots inside the harbour and 30 knots along the coast, with the seaway running up to two or more metres in the final day of racing.

The clear winner was the Melges 24 *Regardless* in the Racing Class, with Richard Archer at the helm, who took home the series win. Second place went to Carlo Falcone, who had to pull out of Race 5 with a damaged traveler, with his *Caccia Alla Volpe*, a 1970s Valacelli design out of plywood. Third place went to Geoffrey Pidduck on the 6 Meter *Biwi Magic*.

Cruising Class was won by Bernie Wong who abandoned his usual hi-tech racer for the very old but solid *Huey Too*, a modified Cal 40, followed by Sandy Mair on the Beneteau First 35 *Cricket*. Visiting yacht *Topaz*, a modern classic, rounded out the entry in cruising and was also awarded the Jack Patterson prize.

Organizer Richard Archer emphasized at the final awards that the intention of the AYC is to maintain the level of local sailing at the Antigua Yacht Club with a solid program in the coming season. Sponsor representative Robbie Ferron explained how this dedication of the AYC motivates the Caribbean Chandlery Group Budget Marine to continue sponsorship of this longstanding Christmas event.

World ARC Rally Departs St. Lucia

On January 6th, 33 yachts began their round-the-world sailing adventure from Rodney Bay, St. Lucia in the World ARC 2018-19.

—Continued on next page

RALLY

BACK TRANSAT / TRANSAT RETOUR

DEPARTURE : MAY 13th 2018

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ATLANTIC BACK CRUISING

GUADELOUPE - AÇORES - EUROPE

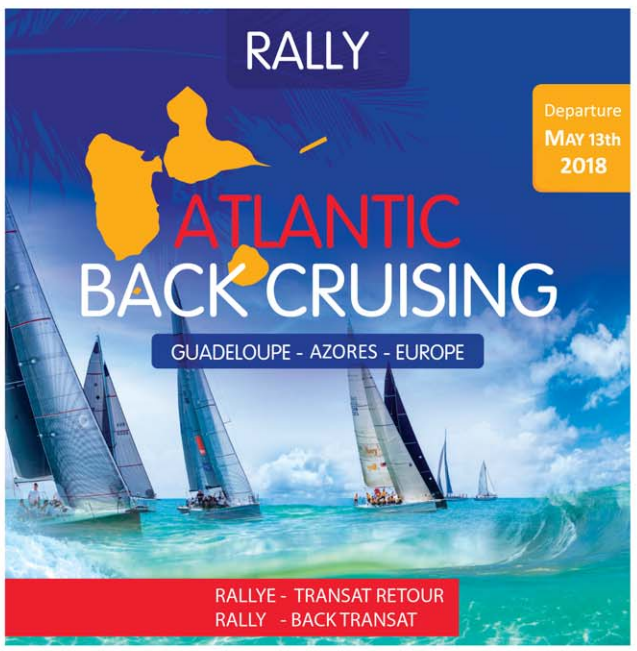
La transat retour / The back cruising

SIX DAYS BEFORE DEPARTURE :
(from May 7th 2018)
All the boats are in the marina
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Final registration
Briefings : safety - communication
Safety controls on board

Festivities :
Cocktails - Music - Tourism offers

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- Fleet position
- Routing
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Horta Marina Faial Açores

Marina Bas-Du-Fort Guadeloupe FWI

—*Continued from previous page*

The German yacht *Lunatix*, an X-Yachts Xp50 skippered by Friedrich Biehnert, led the fleet past the first and only mark of the course, a turning mark situated near Castries Bay. Four late starters will follow on their 815-nautical-mile passage to Santa Marta, Colombia once technical problems have been resolved. Marina Santa Marta on the Caribbean coast of Colombia is one of the most popular stopovers on the World ARC route.

In total, 45 boats will sail with the World ARC 2018-19 rally in the next 15 months; some sailing the full 26,000 miles, others joining for the Panama Transit, sailing to Australia before taking a year out to further explore the Pacific or re-joining from a previous edition of the rally. World ARC is an international event, with boats sailing under the flags of 14 different nations, and crews coming from more than 20 countries.

The preparations programme in St. Lucia before the start ensured that crews were prepared for their adventure. It has been supported by IGY Rodney Bay Marina hosting the fleet, as well as the St. Lucia Tourism Authority, and Events Company St. Lucia.

World ARC sets sail from St. Lucia every year and so far 21 yachts are set to join the next edition of the rally departing from Rodney Bay in January 2019.

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



Gran Prix del Atlántico competitors in Lanzarote before embarking for Martinique

Gran Prix del Atlántico en Route to Martinique

The Gran Prix del Atlántico race started from the Canary Islands on January 10th, bound for the Cape Verde Islands and then onward to finish at Le Marin, Martinique. The Spanish all-amateur race attracted nine entries, including newcomers to the Atlantic crossing as well as experienced skippers such as Juan Antonio Martín, who will be sailing his 14th transatlantic on the Oceanis 34, *Vagabundo*.

The fleet reported sustained northeast winds of 20 to 25 knots, gusting to 35, and waves up to five metres on the passage from Lanzarote to Mindelo. As this issue of *Compass* goes to press, all but one of the boats had made a pit stop at Mindelo for technical repairs and were now continuing onward across the Atlantic.

ON THE HORIZON…

Grenada Sailing Festival: 25 Years of Workboat Racing

It will be a Silver Jubilee weekend when the Grenada Sailing Festival stages its Workboat Regatta on February 3rd and 4th on Grand Anse Beach.

This, high-action, high-fun Festival has been a "must go to" event on Grand Anse Beach for 25 consecutive years and welcomes big crowds of spectators — local community supporters, visiting yachtsmen and cruisers, as well as hotel guests who have the chance to experience a unique traditional sailing experience.

For more information follow Grenada Sailing Festival on Facebook.

Antigua 360° Race Open to All

The third edition of the Antigua 360° Race will take place on February 16th, providing a 52 mile anti-clockwise circumnavigation of Antigua. Organized by the Antigua Superyacht Challenge committee, the race is followed three days later by the RORC Caribbean 600 offshore classic, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2018.

New for 2018, the Antigua 360° is open to all boats, whether racing in the RORC Caribbean 600 or just wanting to take a crack at the record. Stan Pearson, who conceived the Antigua 360º and is a co-founder of the RORC Caribbean 600, says, "The race around Antigua offers many of the conditions and wind angles seen on the 600, and some of the legs are even actually part of it, such as the start and the finish."

Line Honours for both the Monohull and Multihull Classes will be awarded a barrel of rum, with an additional barrel for a race record. The overall winner of the race, for yachts racing under IRC, will also receive a barrel suitably filled.

Visit www.antigua360race.com for more information.

Early Momentum for 38th St. Maarten Heineken Regatta

Anticipation is building for the 38th St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, scheduled for March 1st through 4th out of the St. Maarten Yacht Club, with a number of world-class maxi, multihull and monohull teams having signed up early to race. At least five teams are returning to defend their 2017 class wins

"The St. Maarten Heineken Regatta is a big destination regatta for racers from the US," said Jordan Mindich, who will be returning with his J/105, *Solstice*. "Up in Long Island, we generally race one design, but down in the Caribbean we always race under CSA handicap, which we find to be competitive and very even. That, coupled with consistent breeze and great weather, makes for a great time."

The racing starts on March 1st, with the Gill Commodore's Cup. The optional event is scored separately. On the Friday the fleet embarks on the event's 26-nautical-mile Around the Island Race before taking on a series of windward-leeward races on the Saturday and a single coastal race on the Sunday.

Visit http://heinekenregatta.com for more information.
Visit http://regattaguru.com/heineken/100237 to register.

PAM CLAY



Racing in St. Croix International Regatta 2016. See news on the upcoming 2018 event on next page

—*Continued on next page*

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—Continued from previous page

25th St. Croix International Regatta for March

Anne Salafia reports: In the wakes of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the St. Croix Yacht Club has rescheduled its 25th St. Croix International Regatta for March 9th through 11th. The St. Croix International Regatta is usually held in November.

The SCYC will launch the event with its famous rum party on March 8th. Music and dancing that night set the stage for a weekend of serious racing, challenging courses, nightly entertainment, and great Crucian food. Three days of races commence March 9th with big boats racing in the Buck Island Channel and smaller one-design boats competing in Teague Bay. Coach Tino and his staff will hold an Opti clinic that day.

In celebration of the regatta's 25th anniversary, Regatta Chairman Karen Stanton and Race Committee Director Julie San Martin are expecting contenders from all over the USVI, the BVI, and Puerto Rico and are awarding adult sailors more prizes than ever before. As per tradition, winning skippers in classes of three or more boats take home their weight in Cruzan Rum. Skippers perch cross-legged on one side of the great scales as cases of rum are loaded onto the other. (Top Optimists win their weight in Gatorade.)

"We expect to see a very competitive class from the Rhodes 19 sailors, along with the bigger boats as well," said Commodore Stanton. All bets are on the Rhodes 19s for the biggest and most competitive class in the regatta. Expect tight competition among the kids this year, too. The SCYC has added a 420s class for high school sailors. The 25th St. Croix International Regatta is an ISAF Youth World qualifier for the 29er class.

Visit www.stcroixyc.com for more information.

It's Back to the Good Old Days of Caribbean Racing!

Carol Bareuther reports: If you enjoyed Caribbean racing in the 1970s and 1980s — or have heard the stories and wished you were there — this year's St. Thomas International Regatta (STIR), set for March 23rd through 25th, is the place to be!

After some tough soul searching, STIR organizers at the host St. Thomas Yacht Club realized it would be unfair to promise a full-scale regatta without our dock and deck covering. So, the next best thing was to turn back the clock to a simpler era.

"It's all about simpler times, more fun, no worries and a chance to just come and enjoy the sailing," says regatta director Bill Canfield, who has been involved in STIR for all but one of its 45 years and can attest to the great low-key island vibe in the early years. "We will of course offer wonderful sailing 'around the rocks', with our veteran PROs, great beach parties, cold rum and hot music."

STIR 2018 invites CSA Racing, Cruising and Bareboat Classes; plus Multihull, Beach Cats and One-Design Classes with a minimum length of 20 feet. The hot, hot, hot class will be the one-design IC24s, with more than 20 expected on the start line and as many as 12 races over three days.

Bring your own boat or charter! Chartering especially makes it easy to fly in, jump on a race-ready yacht and set sail.

See the updated NOR on yachtscoring.com/emenu.cfm?eID=4422. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/stirvi, Twitter @stirvi and Instagram #STIRVI

Pre-Registration Open for Bequia Easter Regatta

Preparations are well advanced by the Bequia Sailing Club for this year's Bequia Easter Regatta, to be held March 30th through April 2nd. Pre-registration is now open at www.bequiaregatta.com.

Bequia Easter Regatta is rightly famous for its unique blend of local double-ender racing, yacht racing, shoreside activities and Bequia hospitality. An Optimists fun race day is being planned for Easter Sunday 2018 and is open to visiting Optimist sailors who can provide their own dinghies.

For more information see ad on page 10.



DEAN BARNES

It will be 'back to the good old days' at the St. Thomas International Regatta next month

OCC Curaçao to Panama Rally

The Ocean Cruising Club is planning a rally from Curaçao to Panama to start in November 2018 and run to May 2019.

The rally will make a stop in Aruba, then proceed to Colombia with stops at Santa Marta, Cartagena (for Christmas and New Year), and some of the Colombian islands. From there, the route will go to the San Blas islands, the coast of Panama, and the Bocas del Toro archipelago.

Each boat must have one OCC member onboard: see https://oceancruisingclub.org for membership requirements.

Contact Suzanne Chappell at suzanne.chappell@icloud.com for more information.

Jimmy Buffett is Les Voiles de Saint-Barth Ambassador

The ninth edition of Les Voiles de Saint-Barth is scheduled for April 8th through 14th, and organizers guarantee sailors another epic year, despite the passage of Hurricane Irma this past September. The island welcomes back legendary musician and sailor Jimmy Buffett as the regatta's official US ambassador.

"We all love our special island and we're moving on from the wrath that Irma brought, and nothing signifies the recovery to me more than the return of Les Voiles de Saint-Barth," said Buffett who owns a villa on Saint-Barth. "All the boats and teams return this year to support the rebuilding of our island and have a little fun as well."

Since its inception in 2010, the regatta has attracted top competitors from around the globe with world-class competition and vibrant shoreside entertainment. The ninth edition comes with not only the return of classes dedicated to classic and traditional yachts, but also the addition of a fifth day of racing.

—Continued on next page



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—*Continued from previous page*

"It has been four years since we've hosted classes for classic and traditional yachts and we are looking forward to these competitive teams to join in the fun again this April," said Les Voiles de Saint-Barth Race Director Luc Poupon. "With the famed Antigua Classic Yacht Race scheduled for late April on a neighboring island, it is the perfect opportunity for these period yachts to double up on the competition."

Visit www.lesvoilesdesaintbarth.com/us for more information. Visit www.lesvoilesdesaintbarth.com/voilesregister to register,



CHRISTOPHE JOUANY

Left: Classic and traditional yachts will return to Les Voiles de St. Barth this year

YOUTH SAILING NEWS

International Opti Regatta, Clinic & Team Race

Carol Bareuther reports: The Caribbean's largest and longest international regatta held exclusively for Optimist dinghy sailors and their families will take place in June. The Clinic takes place June 11th to 13th, followed by the Team Race, June 14, and International Optimist Regatta, June 15th to 17th.

Over 100 junior sailors, including some of the best in the sport, are expected to participate in this Caribbean Sailing Association-sanctioned regatta. Sailors can compete in Advanced Red (ages 13-15), Blue (ages 11-12) and White (ages 10 and under) as well as Beginner Green classes.

Trophies will be awarded to the top five finishers in the Red, Blue and White classes and top three overall as well as the top place female. Participation awards will be awarded to all Green fleet sailors. Additional awards include the Peter Ives' Perpetual Trophy (superb sailor/individual) and the Chuck Fuller Sportsmanship Perpetual Trophy.

The IOR is sponsored by EMS Virgin Islands, the US Virgin Islands Department of Tourism, TOTE Maritime and K3 Waterproof Gear.

For charter boats, request and confirm online a www.optistuff.com. Deadline to reserve charter boats is May 18th. Assistance with locating housing for the event is available.

For more information, call (340) 513-2234 or e-mail internationaloptiregatta@gmail.com. For Notice of Regatta, Registration Form and other information, visit www.styc.com or www.regattanetwork.com.

Please also visit the International Optimist Regatta on Facebook!

Below: Scores of junior sailors participate in the annual International Opti Regatta, Clinic and Team Races in St. Thomas



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up to 50	$1.22	$1.10	$1.04
up to 60	$1.33	$1.20	$1.13
up to 65	$1.48	$1.33	$1.26
up to 75	$1.53	$1.38	$1.30
up to 80	$1.68	$1.51	$1.43
up to 100	$1.73	$1.56	$1.47
For longer stays and vessels above 100ft, please contact a member of the marina team			

All rates are quoted in US Dollars and berthing fees are payable on arrival. The rates are based on a vessel staying and paying for the berth for a consecutive number of days as indicated. Catamarans charged at 1.5* the advertised rates. A deposit of 10% of the value of the booking (Min US$100) is required to secure a berth. Deposits are refundable up to 30 days prior to the booked arrival date.

Caribbean Racer Explains:

How *CQS* Took Line Honours in the 2017 RORC Transatlantic Race

by Marissa Nieves



RORC / ARTHUR DANIEL

A warm welcome at Port Louis Marina to the CQS *crew. Vincentian-born sailor Philip Barnard is third from right in the bottom row*

Experienced pro-sailor, skipper of Team Sail Caribbean and Adventure Sports Ambassador for St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Philip Barnard, joined Ludde Ingvall's Australian Maxi *CQS* in Lanzarote, Canary Islands for the 3,000-nautical-mile 2017 RORC Transatlantic Race to Grenada. *CQS* finished on December 6th to take Monohull Line Honours in 11 days, 3 minutes and 8 seconds.

The start of the RORC Transatlantic race on the south side of Lanzarote saw drifting conditions that soon turned into westerlies blowing as high as 35 knots. Most of the boats cracked off to the northwest looking for an easier angle in the strong winds and building seas. *CQS* was off to a quick start and led the fleet out from under the island. But by staying hard on the wind to keep a southern route as an option, she soon saw her lead disappear after leading the fleet for over 200 miles.

After beating into high seas, team *CQS* decided to take the southern route, diverging from the rest of the fleet and building up a hefty deficit. But *CQS* had her reasons for her decision and were in it for the long haul, not early gains.

CQS committed early to this southerly route and attacked a ridge of high pressure sitting to their south and slowly expanding. By taking on the high early they hoped to break through and get the consistent tradewind on the other side. After gybing their way down the African coast they emerged into 15-knot easterly winds and began the trip west after a week off Africa. "The routing took us quite far south and we were south of the latitude of Grenada at one point," Philip explained.

This route took *CQS* into a more unstable area with lots of convection. Going through heavy lightning storms and several squalls with one particularly challenging 40-knot squall. *CQS* suffered damage to its electrical system that caused a complete blackout in heavy conditions on a particularly dark night. Later, a heavy knockdown damaged the 98-foot Maxi's mainsail, causing them to have to drop sails to make repairs.

"We were sailing with no instruments when we attempted a gybe in the veering winds in an effort to get back on an acceptable course. The engine stalled, causing the keel to fail to cant to the new side and we were laid down in maybe the worst knockdown of my career. The mast and mainsail were skimming along the surface of the ocean and probably stopped us from going further over as we went into the maneuver at 20 knots boat speed," Philip said.

At the time of the knockdown, *CQS* was more than 400 nautical miles ahead of the fleet and chasing the transatlantic world record. Despite these challenges, they still managed to threaten the race record and finished a full two days ahead of their closest rival for line honors.

By the morning of the 11th day of the 2017 RORC Transatlantic Race, the crew of Ludde Ingvall's Australian Maxi, *CQS*, sighted Grenada, on their way to taking monohull line honours and receiving the IMA Transatlantic Trophy.

We asked Philip what it was like to sail in the most recent RORC race and how they moved through the challenging conditions:

Why compete in the RORC?

Philip: "RORC are known for their stellar events such as the RORC Fastnet Race and the newer RORC Caribbean 600, so when I was looking for an event to do over winter this seemed like a good one to be involved in."

What was it like to sail into Grenada on the 11th day?

Philip: "Bittersweet. I really wanted the record, however sailing into Grenada and the Caribbean was still a unique experience for me. In a racing career that has spanned my entire adult life and some of my teenage years, I have never had the privilege to finish an ocean race here. Arriving into such a beautiful island as Grenada in particular was incredible. We could smell the nutmeg, and excitement built as we rounded Point Saline. The warm welcome complete with a water show from the Fire Brigade at Port Louis Marina was amazing. Arriving at the dock and seeing my wife, sister and friends waiting for me is a feeling I will always remember. I have never had that before as I normally sail far away from my family and friends in places where I don't usually know anyone off the boats."

Why sail on this particular Maxi yacht?

Philip: "Ludde Ingvall, the owner and skipper of *CQS*, has always had an eye out for the next generation of sailors. Through his Big Boat academy Ludde has helped hundreds of sailors to realize their dreams. He did so for me years ago as a bowman and returning now that I am a skipper he has continued to help me there also. It was the sort of reunion that I really enjoyed."

How did the team cope with the challenging weather conditions?

Philip: "In a word, teamwork. The most important piece of gear on any race boat is the crew and this boat has an exceptional crew. We were challenged and met those challenges head on. There was never a moment of hold back, we pushed hard from start to finish."

Teams from nine different countries took part in the 2017 RORC Transatlantic Race, including Australia, Canada, Belgium, Chile, France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands and the United States of America. *CQS* took the line honours and the International Maxi Association Transatlantic Trophy and Eric de Turckheim's French Nivelt-Muratet 54 *Teasing Machine* won on handicap and received the RORC Transatlantic trophy.

"This was an exciting race from start to finish and a great effort by my crew and also the entire fleet," added Phil.

Visit rorctransatlantic.rorc.org for full results of the RORC Transatlantic Race.



Puerto Rico's José Berrios and Y Sailing, Part I:

THEN

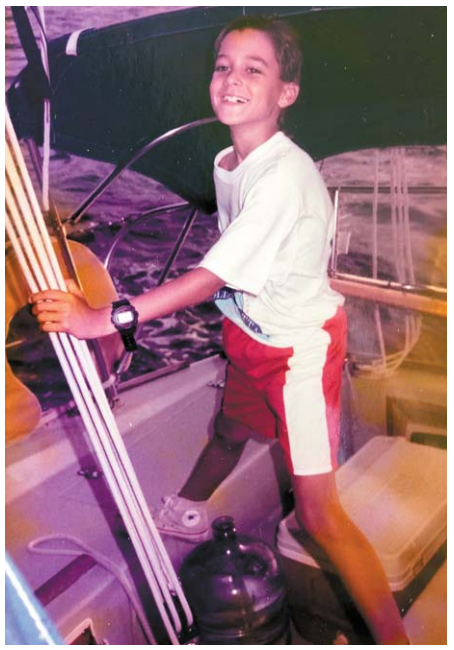


ALL PHOTOS COLLECTION OF JOSE BERRIOS

Youth2Adult — Y2A — is a series of articles celebrating sailing's role in youth development for Caribbean children.

José Gilberto "Yoyo" Berrios' adult life has been committed to expanding the sport of youth sailing. So robust is his story that we'll take a look at it in two parts. Let's call it "Then" (Part I) and "Now" (Part II, coming out next month).

To introduce his story, let me tell you how I met Berrios. In 2010, he was giving a skippers' meeting to a group of six- to 16-year-olds standing beneath a large awning at Club Náutico de San Juan (CNSJ): "I expect you to know all the signal flags. We will use flags from the race committee boats to notify you…"



Top: José Berrios's 'Y Sailing' facility in Puerto Rico, before 2017 hurricane damage

Other photos: As Yoyo grew up, he sailed on a variety of types of dinghies and keelboats, eventually becoming a coach to mentor other young sailors

"Wow," I thought. "This guy has some serious expectations of these kids."

CNSJ friend Tom Cordero introduced me to their youth sailing program by arranging for us to observe their annual February dinghy regatta. This meant seeing Berrios in action. "I am going to introduce you to Yoyo. He is amazing with the kids."

My instant thoughts were, "Did he get that nickname because he just keeps coming back? Back up, up, up! Or maybe that yoyo trick where the yoyo keeps spinning. Spinning wildly?"

"From Bayoyo," Yoyo explains. "Since I was born my aunts started to call me Bayoyo (party boy). My real name is José Gilberto. My Dad is José Antonio; my big brother is José Antonio and my youngest brother Alejandro José. I think they had to come with a nickname. My aunts still call me Bayoyo."

That he expected the children to know all the signal flags and follow regatta etiquette and rules to the T gave me an instant appreciation for Berrios. Precision,



organization and discipline are the kind of special gifts, or as I like to say, "tools", for Caribbean children to place into their Toolkit for Life.

Learning to sail is not just about how to keep a floating contraption going in the direction you want it to go. Sailing can convey many key skills and life lessons that will be revisited in the mind of the child over and over for a lifetime. Even if the child becomes an adult never having raced or never even setting foot in a boat again, they will have, in their Toolkit for Life, valuable knowledge and lessons and ability to relate to others.

José Berrios gets that.

The Early Days

In the years just before Yoyo's birth, his father had an O'Day 19. A family friend who owned a J/29 began inviting his family to join in on weekend cruises to the BVI. And the J/29 was the first boat Yoyo sailed on, at the age of three. For several years running at that time, the Puerto Rican Es de Velasco department store sponsored a popular annual keelboat regatta. The owners were friends of Yoyo's family. As their children outgrew their Topper (an 11-foot single-handed sailing dinghy), they passed it along to Yoyo's family. Now the boys had a craft they could skipper themselves. Yoyo's love of sailing swelled.



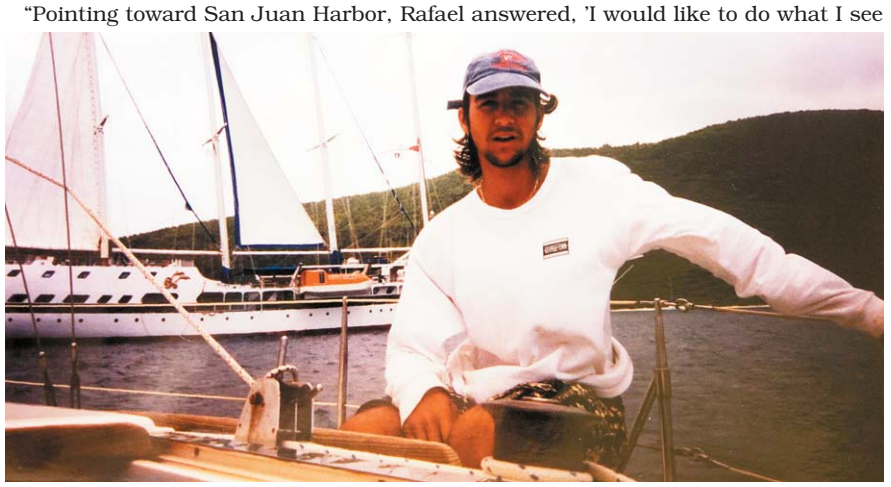
"I was eight at the time, and not heavy enough to sail the Topper well," Yoyo explains. "My parents enrolled me in the first summer sailing classes at CNSJ, so I could learn to sail correctly and from a professional. We were taught in Holders, a small sailing dinghy that looks like an Optimist. They held a small regatta at the end of the first session. I took first. It gave me the excitement to keep going."

On weekends, Yoyo's family traveled east to Fajardo where the Puerto Rico Sailing Federation held an instructional program in Lasers. Yoyo battled the heavy winds and big seas outside the breakwater at Marina Puerto del Rey, following the adults, and capsizing often. It wasn't until 1993 that avid sailor José Fuentes introduced the Optimist to Puerto Rico for his son to sail. Berrios was 15 at the time, and the Optimist was too small for him. His younger brother Alejandro was just the right age and size for the Opti. But it wasn't long before Yoyo was tapped by a group of parents to coach the fledging Optimist sailors.

"My first thought was, how would I have time to sail in regattas and also coach?" he explains. "At the same time, I enjoyed using my knowledge and receiving training as a coach from guest coaches (visiting Puerto Rico)."

José Maria Albiñana of BRISA SUR (Boqueron Sailing Association/South) has known Yoyo's family since before Yoyo was born. "My son took sailing classes with Yoyo in 1996-97. I have watched Yoyo work hard to be a good example to others. Promoting sailing in Puerto Rico and being an example to Puerto Rican youth is important to him. He has made many improvements for youth sailing, despite difficulties. For example, the cost of sailing lessons is high. A ten-year-old boy from a nearby orphanage was asked by the priest, 'Rafael, what would you like to do this summer?'

"Pointing toward San Juan Harbor, Rafael answered, 'I would like to do what I see



those boys doing.' The priest approached Yoyo. They worked it out to provide sailing lessons that summer for Rafael in Optimists, keeping the funding source anonymous so none of the other children knew that 'Rafa', as he was known, came from a disadvantaged situation. Rafa thrived. He went on to race Optimists and now Lasers. Other children from the orphanage, including Rafa's younger brother, have followed his lead."

"Charismatic. Respected. Humble." These are the words Albiñana uses to describe Yoyo. "He is easy for youth to talk to and get help from. By donating his sailing equipment from Y Sailing to one of the programs in southeastern Puerto Rico that suffered extensive damage from Hurricane Maria, he has demonstrated his generosity and dedication to sailing development in Puerto Rico."

Yoyo is one of those people who have a nose for opportunity. When he was 16, the sailing club needed a coach for their aspiring Optimist sailors to participate in the Optimist South American Championships in Ecuador. Yoyo stepped forward. Adaptable and eager, he debuted his coaching skills. Such a young coach, the international press at the championship easily mistook him for a competitor.

In Part II next month, we'll follow Yoyo's progress as an adult and visualize the thousands of Puerto Rican children whose lives have been forever touched by José "Yoyo" Berrios.

Ellen Birrell attributes her opportunity to cruise the Caribbean aboard S/V Boldly Go *to life skills built in childhood. Believing swimming and sailing are essentials for island youth, she supports grass roots and competitive junior sailing, and serves as chair of sailing development for Caribbean Sailing Association.*

PANAMA — A Caribbean Cruiser's Overview

DESTINATIONS

by Ray Jason



Main photo: The San Blas islands epitomize many cruisers' dreams
Inset: Getting remote on the Rio Chagres
Right: Cruisers at a swap meet

When sailors hear the word "Panama" they usually think of the magnificent Canal. But there are many other alluring destinations along the Panamanian coast that beckon to the sea-gypsy soul. Indeed, it can be argued that there is nothing quite like it in the Caribbean because of the diversity of its attractions. In this article, I will give you a general overview of the pleasures that await you in this almost undiscovered corner of the southwestern Caribbean.

The first treat that deserves a mention is the fact that — aside from Hurricane Martha in late November of 1969, which briefly visited Panamanian waters before making landfall in Veraguas Province as a tropical storm — there has never been a hurricane in Panama. It is also below the latitude that freaks out the insurance adjustors, so you can actually get coverage. And there are several safe places to leave your boat if you want to head north for the summer. These include full-service boatyards and marinas as well as budget friendly in-the-water parking lots.

Getting here from the Eastern Caribbean is a downwind jaunt that can be done non-stop. However, there are interesting places to visit along the route if you want to break the voyage into shorter segments. If one begins from the Windwards or from Trinidad, the latitude is far enough south that the trip can be undertaken at any time of the year. Consult the pilot charts for estimates of the likely conditions during the different months.

The San Blas Islands

Let's begin our tour with the Panamanian island group that is closest to the West Indies — the San Blas Archipelago. When you hear sailors who have been there describing these beautiful isles as a northern version of the South Pacific, you are hearing the truth. Blinding white beaches, islands canopied by palm trees, cool turquoise water and fish disguised as a swimming rainbow await the voyager.

Woven into this beautiful panorama is a flourishing indigenous culture. And to make it even more intriguing, it is a matrilineal society — and these are not just any women. They are the tiny Guna Indians who are known worldwide for their magnificent reverse appliqué embroidery. These artists will paddle up to your yacht in a dugout canoe and vigorously negotiate a price. Their salesmanship would warm the heart of even the most ferocious Amway sales rep.

These gorgeous *islas* also appeal to cruisers because sailors practically have them to themselves. There is no significant tourist infrastructure — no restaurants, hotels or cookie-cutter malls that cater to cruise ships. But there are still enough conveniences, such as WiFi and cell-phone coverage and local fish and produce boats that circulate among the islands.

Although some of the anchorages are popular, they are not nearly as crowded as those in the Eastern Caribbean. And since there are over 350 islands to



choose from, one can always find isolated empty spots. In a world where the word "unique" is overused, I believe that the San Blas Islands actually live up to that description.

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The Panama Canal Area

Passing through the Panama Canal is on the Bucket List of many a sailor. Indeed, the allure is so powerful that some cruisers join boats as line handlers so that they can experience The Ditch — even though they are not planning to transit with their own yacht. But there are also other wonderful attractions close to the Canal.

A half a day east of the Canal entrance is historic Portobelo. This picturesque bay is where the treasure galleon fleets gathered in the 16th through 18th centuries as they waited for the Inca riches to arrive by mule train across Panama from the Pacific Ocean. Forty-five such fleets headed back to Spain during those 120 or so years.

Naturally, they attracted pirates, and so two forts were built on the shores for protection. Those ruins make for enjoyable exploration for the visiting cruiser.

There are also several interesting buildings from that period that have been restored in the little town. One nice benefit of the anchorage at Portobelo is that you can easily connect by bus from there to either Colón or Panama City for shopping or parts runs. The local vibe here is full-on mellow.

Just inside the gigantic breakwaters of the Canal is the Shelter Bay complex. It features an excellent marina and restaurant and a boatyard with a travel-lift that can even accommodate wide catamarans. It is in a beautiful setting surrounded by the jungle and the Canal.

Six miles west of the entrance to the Canal is a true Water Wonderland. It is the Rio Chagres and there is nothing else like it in the Caribbean or perhaps anywhere. During the California Gold Rush this was a short-cut that saved fortune-seekers and settlers the ordeal of rounding Cape Horn. They would get ferried up the river and then transfer to a mule train, by which they would then travel to the Pacific side of the isthmus and join ships headed to California.

But now it is a spectacular jungle river climax ecosystem. You will go days without seeing another human, but there are monkeys and crocodiles to keep you company. This is the ultimate off-the-grid destination. During my three excursions up this enchanted river, there was never any VHF or SSB radio and no cell phone connections. Wanna get away? Cruisers intending to visit it for a couple of days often end up spending a couple weeks hiking, exploring and decompressing.

The Bocas Del Toro Archipelago

Although the spots that I have already mentioned are very alluring, it is the sultry siren of Bocas del Toro that has seduced this sailor. In a world filled with overcrowded anchorages, there are always dozens here without a single boat in them. And the view from almost all of them is sublime — on one side are the crashing waves from the Caribbean, while on the other





are the high mountains that stretch from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. You can choose between low mangrove islands or mid-height mountains where cougars still roam in the deep jungle.

This gorgeous terrain supports some very exotic creatures such as miniature candy-colored frogs and shockingly bright macaws. Often I am awoken in the morning by the barks of howler monkeys or the chirps of the wild parrots commuting overhead.

The main town of Bocas del Toro has an unkempt charm that will never be mistaken for a prissied-up cruise ship port. On the gentrification scale it is a 2 slowly nudging towards 3. But it has all the essentials, such as groceries and hardware stores, and some luxuries like terrific restaurants and bars. The locals are a mix of Spanish and Indio and Afro-Caribbean. The expats are surfers, backpackers and sailors. People visiting Bocas are probably not regulars at Disneyworld.

The archipelago has three full-service marinas and a new boatyard. Bocas Marina is the main hub of cruiser activity with its bar and restaurant. They host regular swap meets, do propane fill-ups and even provide a local veterinarian to look after the pets in the fleet.

Left: The docks at Bocas Marina

Below: School bus, Panama style

And for those choosing to throw out the hook, even the anchorages closest to town are not crowded.

Conclusion

This is just a thumbnail view of the many charms that await the cruiser who chooses to visit Panama's Caribbean shores. Hopefully, you will now understand why many of us over here think of it as The Undiscovered Caribbean.



It's 'PAYS Back' Time in Dominica!

by Alan Ryall



Above: Many of Dominica's famous rainforest hiking trails are again open
Right: Our guide, Dylan, walking us across a flooded road

Over a decade ago, a group of "boat boys" in the town of Portsmouth, Dominica did something truly amazing, something many corporate businesses could learn from. They realized that hundreds of cruising boats sailing between Guadeloupe and Martinique were sailing straight past without stopping. The few who did stop explained that Dominica had a "bad rep" — a reputation for aggressive behaviour, poor value and above all else, the fear of crime and violence.

So, without the help of consultancies, or even much support from government in the early days, they formed PAYS (the Portsmouth Association of Yacht Services) and created a model that if only we could replicate and scale would transform the Caribbean. PAYS members give a huge welcome to every boat entering the anchorage at Prince Rupert Bay: they smile a lot, say and mean "Welcome to Dominica" and provide both security and great value. They undertake training for their members and invest in the local tourist infrastructure — and where else in the Caribbean do you get invited to an annual "Yachtie Appreciation Week"?

PAYS has changed the perception of Dominica as a whole, and moved Portsmouth from a place we once sailed past into a "must stop" destination.

It is in our interest as Caribbean cruisers to help build this example into a widespread movement, but right now Dominica is severely wounded by last September's Hurricane Maria and the guys at PAYS need our support — it's "PAYS back" time, folks!

In February 2017 my wife, Terry, and I picked up a PAYS mooring for our Island Packet 465, *Seminole Wind*, and cleared into Dominica, planning to stay for just a few days. The Dominica Government has recognized the potential of yachting, is fully supportive, and has made its clearing in and out process among the simplest in the Caribbean. You can clear in and out for a two-week stay at the same time, and the cost is minimal. The Government has even made PAYS an official NGO in recognition of what they have achieved.

In the event, we stayed much longer than planned and toured this stunning island in the care of knowledgeable and passionate guides arranged by PAYS. We learned so much about the rainforest, the agriculture, the history and the sheer beauty that Dominica has to offer. Along with a bay full of cruisers and charterers we joined the weekly PAYS barbecue and made new friends. At all times Terry and I were made to feel valued, welcome, safe and in truth fell in love with the island and its people. So when Hurricane Maria laid waste to much of the island we felt the need to go back — and I'm so glad we did.



Let's not pretend the experience was the same. It was mid-December 2017 by the time we got there, three months after Maria, and the evidence of destruction was still everywhere. As we got nearer we realized that those bright blue "roofs" were actually tarpaulins and that many more buildings were beyond salvage. We had been told to expect that the lush green slopes would be brown, but in fact nature was healing fast and trees stripped of leaves, branches and even bark were already starting to regrow, although the rainforest will take years to get back to where it was before the storm.

Three months after the Category Five-Plus hurricane hit there were still many homes without power. Hundreds of houses have been lost completely and many more will need a ground-up rebuild.

But some things don't change and when PAYS member Alexis came out to meet us in his boat we got the same big smile and the same "Welcome to Dominica" — but with the additional poignant phrase we were to hear so often in the following days: "Thank you for coming".

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The moorings in Prince Rupert Bay were all swept away by the hurricane, but thanks to the generosity and support of some of the cruisers who love this place, and in particular a group of Ocean Cruising Club members, the seabed has been cleared



Main photo above: The hillsides above Portsmouth were denuded by the storm, but nature is healing fast
Inset: The author and his wife
Right: Dylan took us inland to gain further understanding of the effects of Hurricane Maria and the progress of the island's recovery

of debris and a new consignment of moorings has been donated. They are expected to have arrived by the time you read this, and laid in time for this year's Yachtie Appreciation Week. The rebuilding of the PAYS pavilion — the cruisers' meeting place and home to so many great social gatherings — was well advanced, and the bars and restaurants were starting to reopen, lacking only customers to get back to some level of normality. The shops have plenty of food and various aid agencies have brought in water purification plants. Power and internet are still a challenge, but the cell phone networks are up and running in much of the island.

Importantly, at no time did Terry or I feel insecure or unwelcome — quite the opposite. Everywhere we went, people wanted to tell their story and thank us for coming; it was both humbling and uplifting to see such resilience in the face of adversity. A trip into the mountains and rainforest gave us an understanding of the sheer brute force of this storm. The fertile valleys particularly have been scoured by the floodwaters but the National Park Rangers have done an amazing job: the hiking trails are mostly clear and open. Our guide was Dylan, a ranger himself and, like all the Dominican guides we have known, knowledgeable, articulate and clearly in love with his island and the natural world.

Dylan's wife is a teacher at the school in Portsmouth; they rode out the storm in the school building and in the early hours of the morning had to move their young family to another classroom when the roof came off part of the building. He tells the story calmly and simply but you are left with a vivid picture of sustained winds over 190 mph with gusts up to 250 mph, the air full of flying debris, whole trees, corrugated metal roofing, vehicles and power cables. But above all he talks about the noise — "the sound of a dozen locomotives passing over the roof at full speed and all



at the same time — for hours". They emerged the next morning to find their house severely damaged and uninhabitable, a town full of dazed people and a disbelief that they had survived.

We visited Dylan's childhood school, which was largely destroyed in the storm but is nearing completion, freshly painted and almost ready to open again. The site foreman met us with a huge grin and showed us round — he was so proud of what they had achieved, and so he should be. I was reminded of an old adage: "Having achieved so much with so little we can now do almost anything with almost nothing". But of course they can't: they need materials, they need skills and they need money. Thousands have left the island and if they are to be tempted back there has to be something to come home to.

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Amazingly, the forest is recovering and new growth is everywhere, the waterfalls are just as dramatic as ever and, thanks to Cobra and his team, in December the Indian River hosted its first trips since the hurricane. Perhaps most important of all for some of us, the Chocolate Factory, home to some of the best chocolate in the world, is open for business and visitors.



Dominica has an agriculture-based economy with the emerging tourist industry still in its infancy. The hotels and resorts have been largely destroyed and most will not open for the 2018 season. The essential banana crop has been wiped out and we couldn't find a single banana on a tree or for sale. The bulk of the overseas-based personnel who were supporting projects last year left before the storm hit and have not returned, although some agencies and NGOs are in place and doing a terrific job. Unlike other hard hit islands, Dominica has no "rich uncle" like France, the United Kingdom or the United States, so recovery will be a hard uphill battle — but they are getting there.

This was a great trip, very different from the one we made earlier in 2017 and we fell even more deeply in love. The sad thing was the empty anchorage — only four or five boats were in the bay and a procession of cruisers and charterers sailed by without stopping. I don't blame them; anyone seeing the media coverage might think it best to stay away. Please don't! The media coverage was accurate at one time, but the networks have now lost interest and so Dominica's situation is old news. Hurricane Maria caused a monumental natural disaster, but for every reason to sail by Dominica I can give you ten why you should come. You can bear witness to the power of nature to destroy and rebuild and be inspired as we were by people who just get up and do it again.

The 2018 Yachtie Appreciation Week will commence on February 18th and our ambition as a cruising community should be to make it the biggest and best ever. Please, please come — not just for Dominica, not just for PAYS, but for a great experience, one you will remember long after the rum punch wears off. This is still a beautiful island, these are still amazing people and it really is "PAYS back" time.

For more information on Yachtie Appreciation Week 2018 see ad on page 7.

Many structures along Portsmouth's Purple Turtle Beach were damaged but, like the storm-battered tree below, they promise to once again burst with life







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Sailing Relief Supplies to Dominica:
HELP STILL NEEDED

by Joan Conover

Sailing to Dominica last month, my husband, Greg, and I carried a load of hurricane-relief supplies aboard our Morgan 511, *Growltiger*. Working with the International Rescue Group, we collected the items from Antigua & Barbuda Search and Rescue's warehouse, docking at the Antigua Yacht Club to load two small pickup trucks' worth into our main salon. We left Antigua on January 3rd, arriving in Dominica after a day's sail.

Coming around the bluff before dawn, the town of Portsmouth showed bright lights all along the shore. Several sailboats were moored in the northern side of the harbor with white hulls and anchor lights visible. No lights were on the mountains, and a curious jagged edge to the ridges soon revealed itself to be wind-damaged treetops as dawn lit the sky. Hurricane Maria had stripped all the foliage from every tree and bush in September 2017, but daylight showed that a green blanket of plants has sprouted up to cover the hills.

We moored and Greg went into Customs with our inventory of hurricane-relief supplies, best described to Customs as "gifts", and a list of who was to receive the items. (Checking into Dominica with donations was a learning experience as previous "gifts" from one sailboat had involved illegal drugs!) We then took *Growltiger* to the Customs dock, tied up for inspection, and offloaded the donated items onto pallets. This was the easiest way to unload our cargo, which included extension ladders, thousands of nails, tool boxes and tools, first aid supplies, bedding, 14 saws, and large work lights. After Customs clearance, we returned to a mooring with help from Portsmouth Association of Yacht Services (PAYS) members Monte and Daniel on fellow member Edison's boat.

A tour around the north of the island was provided by Faustin Alexis ([767] 615-8821). Alexis, a PAYS member with a boat, also has a 16-seat taxi van. We were accompanied by another knowledgeable local, Valina Peters. Born in Dominica and raised in Great Britain, she is involved in social services and is one of the energetic "go-to people". Her stories included her mother's survival during the hurricane. The various stories of people's experiences, their homes and lives gave the tour special meaning, each account different and each showing the resiliency of the people. We visited Alexis's parents' home, with a meat smoker used for preservation in the absence of electrical refrigeration and a raised growing bed showing huge lettuce heads. Alexis' mother invited us into her home, parts of which such as a roof and side wall still need repairs. His little niece was there, a lovely child in fifth grade who has lost her father; her mother helps in the Upper Pennville community living area — a concrete block building, about 50 by 50 feet, housing villagers who lost homes during the storm.



The roads featured canted power poles and wires that made traffic one way in some areas. A refrigerator lay crumpled halfway up one mountain side, roofs from one house were plopped on top of neighboring homes, some homes lost walls and roofs but not washing machines or refrigerators, some lost washing machines and internal cupboards, but not walls and roofs. Our guides mentioned at least 68 deaths.

Valina and Alexis also described what happened to the parrots whose habitat was destroyed. Just after the storm, birds flew everywhere confused and looking for food and their nests. After a short time, the parrots migrated, some to Guadeloupe. They hope that, in time, they will return. At one of our stops, Val pointed to a breadfruit on the tree, we heard the sound of a bananaquit, a single song. Val told us that since the hurricane, mosquitoes have been a greater nuisance than before, but out on the mooring there were very few.





After delivering their cargo of relief supplies, Growltiger's *crew looks around. Clockwise from left: shops are open and there are leaves on the trees; cruisers visit the Roosevelt Douglas Primary School; the new* Providence *water taxi is on the job*

Back on the boat, looking around Prince Rupert Bay, we could see that Fort Shirley, up on the hill, survived with minimal damage, but the cruise ship dock below was destroyed with the walkway boards at all angles — straight up, straight down and sideways. One tall ship arrived during the first week of January, anchoring and allowing passengers the opportunity to tour Portsmouth.

The Purple Turtle Restaurant suffered roof and structural damage, but the decorative outside hexagonal buildings fared better; the owner is working hard on the downstairs area, where bright paint announces the name. Monty's roadside bar next to it was completely destroyed — he is concentrating on rebuilding his house first. And for a miracle, the nearby old wooden powerboat that has been sitting in grand decaying majesty for years shows no damage at all!

PAYS is busy fixing their pavilion's roof and furniture, checking moorings, and clearing debris from the anchorage. PAYS has some new moorings, thanks to Offshore Passagemaking Opportunities' Hank Schmidt, who recently completed a visit with donations of materials and gensets for repairs.

Near to PAYS, Martin "Providence" Carriere built a new boat to replace the one lost during the storm; we were part of the "splashing" and on his maiden voyage Martin happily ran from one side of the bay to the other under a bright rainbow between squalls. Of other PAYS members' hurricane damage, Spaghetti, Albert and Ken all lost their homes entirely, and others' homes suffered major damage. Albert lost a leg, so his son Alvin is now the primary captain on Albert's vessel.

Farther down the beach to the south, Madiba's restaurant is open, with food and music. In the Indian River tour areas, which were damaged by flooding, the "cabin" set survived, as did the bar at the top of the river.

Life is returning to normal in Portsmouth. Many businesses are open, including the hardware store where Ken, one of the PAYS guides, is now working for his brother. Food is in stock, and the Saturday market day is alive with vendors; cruisers can tie up at the fishing dock. The fuel pump at the end of the fishing dock was working for a short time this year; as of January 8th it is currently sometimes operational. WiFi is available at the hotel near Ross University and in downtown Portsmouth; the Digicel cell phone office and services are operational, and the ATMs are working. My cell service is usable from our boat on a mooring at the northern side of the bay!

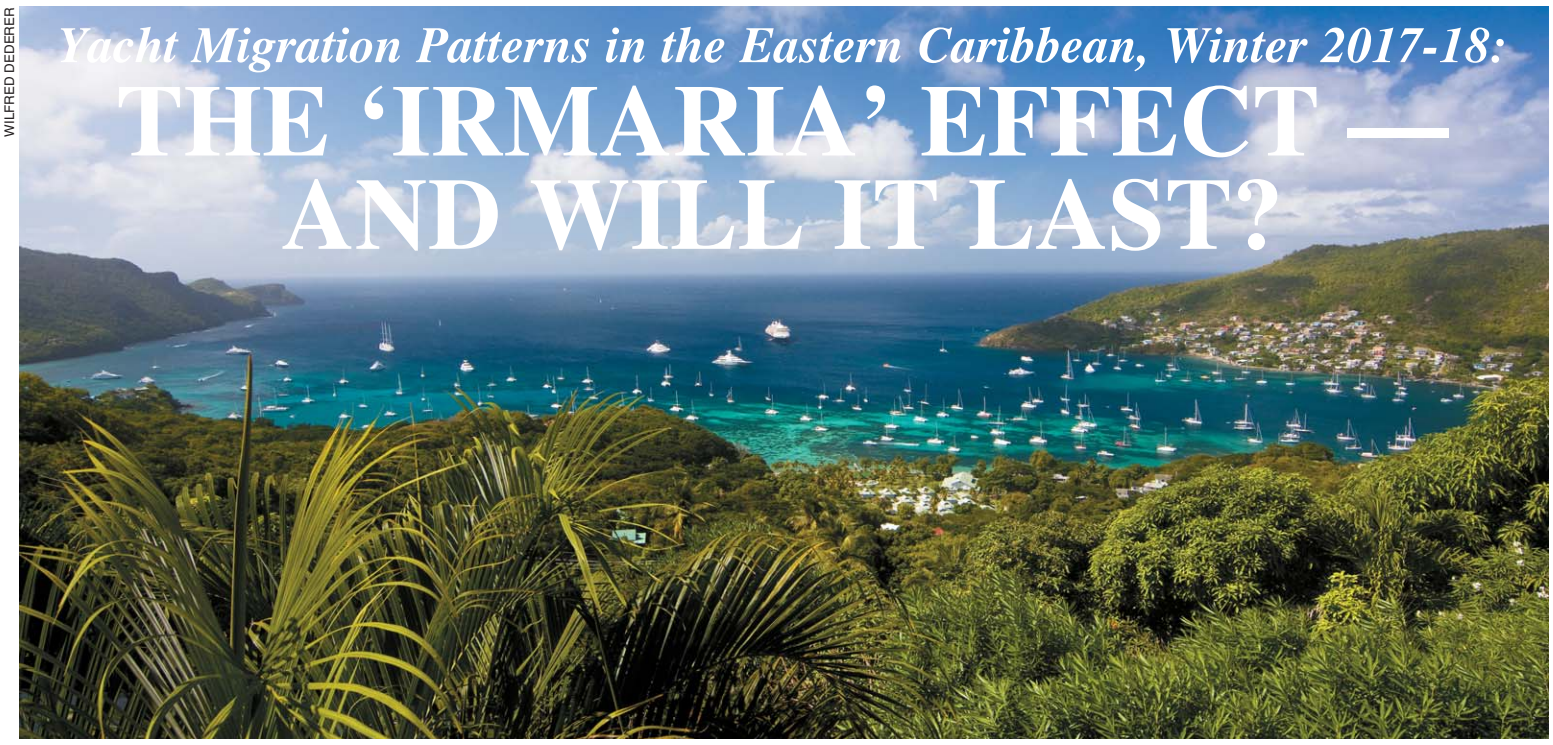
In the north side of the harbor, the PAYS mooring area was full of yachts, staying either for the two weeks allowed, or utilized as a welcome overnight layover. The PAYS moorings are marked with yellow buoys, and cost EC$25 a night. The shore area has been cleared of debris out to the maximum depth volunteer divers can reach. Farther out in the bay, debris such as roofs and such could still be littering the seabed, so anchoring at depths may offer challenges. PAYS members will guide you to the better area close in if you so request on VHF Ch-16. Enter the harbor in daylight, using moorings or anchoring recommended by the PAYS members who patrol the harbor. Farther towards the main town of Portsmouth to the south, other buoys are available and are handled separately by private individuals.

In addition to infrastructure repairs, all the community home repairs in Dominica are creating a desperate need for building supplies, and volunteer efforts are ongoing. Yachts planning to visit Dominica via Antigua are encouraged to stop by ABSAR (in Falmouth, across from the Antigua Yacht Club Marina) and help with delivery of needed items. Contact ABSAR via VHF 16 or by calling (268) 562-1234 (it's an emergency number, so reference aid to Dominica).

Yacht Migration Patterns in the Eastern Caribbean, Winter 2017-18:

THE 'IRMARIA' EFFECT — AND WILL IT LAST?

WILFRED DEDERER



This winter's post-Irmaria high season saw chock-a-block anchorages in the Grenadines (above) and wide-open spaces in the Virgin Islands (next page)

Despite dramatic recovery efforts in Eastern Caribbean yachting destinations affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017, and the desire of many charter skippers and cruisers to return quickly to those popular areas, many boaters opted to spend their Christmas and New Year holiday season farther south, in the Windwards, some visiting these islands for the first time.

Concerns last fall that the entire Lesser Antilles' yachting season might be hurt by the damage done to Barbuda, St. Maarten, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands by "Irmaria" (and by misleading headlines claiming "Caribbean devastated by hurricanes!") proved unfounded. Preliminary analysis of AIS data (AIS is an automatic tracking system used on voyaging vessels) by Applied Technology & Management, an engineering and environmental consulting company with a specialized marina practice, suggests that there are as many yachts in the Eastern Caribbean this season as in past years, but they have shifted south.

A Bumper Season in the South

Over the holiday period, "Admiralty Bay, Bequia was like a boat show", with apparently more yachts than ever before anchored and moored in the harbor, including an unusually large number of megayachts and big classics such as *Elena* among the super-sized fleet of cruisers and charter boats. One local official said that, in contrast to the usual spike in yacht arrivals in Bequia over the Christmas and New Year period, the 2017-18 winter levels so far were more consistently high.

A little beach bar on the tiny Grenadine island of Mayreau, whose population is approximately 300, hosted a New Year's Eve party for yachties — and 150 people came to eat fresh-caught lobster, drink rum and dance the night away in the sand. "It was like Foxy's in the old days."

Esteban Biondi, Associate Principal of Applied Technology & Management (ATM), tells *Compass*, "After the damage in the Caribbean due to the harsh 2017 hurricane season, lots of questions were lingering regarding the cruising 2017-18 season. Will sailboats and mega-yachts be migrating to the region as every year? Where will they be berthing?"

He answers the question: "The region overall seems to have received a similar influx of recreational vessels, based on year-over-year comparison of a snapshot analysis of vessels in marinas and anchorages between the USVI and Trinidad. However, a lot of the vessel activity shifted south. Martinique and the Grenadines seem to have received significantly more vessels, while the USVI, BVI and St. Maarten are suffering, presumably due to reduced berthing capacity and overall infrastructure problems. This data also suggests that while numbers of smaller recreational vessels (under 30 metres) are strong, there may be marginally fewer megayachts.

"We did a snapshot analysis of recreational vessels throughout the Eastern Caribbean for a market study in 2016 with marine traffic data. We had this baseline data, so we re-ran the same analysis to assess the differences," explains Biondi, who is testing innovative approaches to analyzing AIS data. "ATM has a long tradition of leadership and innovation in the marina world — this is just one of the issues we are working on nowadays.

"The analysis… was based on data from both years at one point in the week before Christmas. This is one of the innovative semi-quantitative methods under development by ATM, based on this new source of data. We are using new approaches to obtain additional qualitative information on recreational navigation behavior, and this analysis seems to show a believable pattern," says Biondi. He notes that because AIS transponders are mostly voluntary for recreational vessels, the data set is not complete, so its results are not statistically accurate. However, official statistics on yacht arrivals in various islands may not be available for many more months.

Charter companies were able to provide more information.

Aurelien Fayolle, B2B sales manager of Dream Yacht Charter, reports: "We looked at our bookings confirmed for the Caribbean from October to December 2017 versus October to December 2016 per country of destination. This is interesting, as it shows booking patterns by customers in the three months straight after Hurricane Irma, compared to the same period one year before."

	2016	2017	DIFFERENCE
St. Martin	140	40	-71%
BVI	271	163	-40%
Puerto Rico	5	3	-40%
Guadeloupe	95	78	-18%
Cuba	49	45	-8%
Antigua	58	83	+43%
Grenada	67	97	+45%
St. Vincent	29	54	+86%
Martinique	135	268	+99%
Bahamas	68	160	+135%
TOTAL	917	991	+8%

Fayolle says, "[Esteban Biondi] was indeed right: there has been a shift from the BVI and St. Martin to Martinique and the Grenadines. DYC covers this zone perfectly with three bases — in Martinique, St. Vincent and Grenada — especially since we purchased Regis Guillemot in Martinique, which allowed us to accompany this shift coming from US and European clients.

"Antigua has also seen an important growth, with many UK and US clients choosing this destination. The Bahamas has proven a destination of choice for US clients hesitating to return to the BVI," Fayolle adds.

Jacqui Pascall, a Director at Horizon Yacht Charters, confirms the charterboat trend: "Hurricanes Irma and Maria have impacted the charter industry throughout the Caribbean. Thanks to our base locations in the BVI, Antigua, St. Vincent and Grenada, Horizon Yacht Charters are well placed to see the changes that have occurred. In the immediate aftermath of the hurricanes, our bases in Antigua, St. Vincent and Grenada saw a dramatic increase in the number of charter enquiries."

Robbie Ferron, General Manager of Budget Marine Sint Maarten, says, "Clearly it is true that most yachts have been in the south for the early part of the season. However, in St. Maarten we do get the feeling that following the early [post-hurricane] adventurous visiting yachts is a less daring group who have been advised that everything is pretty okay…. For the visitor there are fewer bars and restaurants, however the enthusiasm to welcome customers has significantly gone up — marine establishments are particularly enthusiastic. In the meantime, it is clear that the Southern Caribbean (and Antigua) is having a bumper season."

Sean Devaux, General Manager of IGY Rodney Bay Marina in St. Lucia, tells *Compass*, "In terms of migration patterns, I do believe that the effects of Maria and Irma, while very sad for our sister islands, have allowed boaters to seek alternatives and/or explore new territories. Without a doubt, many vessels have arrived in the Southern Caribbean for the first time not knowing that these facilities, natural beauty and activities existed.

He adds, however, "While we enjoy the opportunity to show off IGY Rodney Bay Marina, the hospitality of our marina, our island and the Southern Caribbean, it is still important that we return to our sister islands to continue our old habits of diving, eating and supporting the local economy. Without this, the rebuild would be even longer."

Rapid Recovery in the North

Robbie Ferron says of St. Maarten, "It took a while for momentum to start, but recovery is happening faster and faster. Except for a few cases where the 200mph winds destroyed major infrastructure completely, it will get back to the original fairly quickly.

Oriel Blake, Executive Director of the VI Professional Charter Association, says of the US Virgin Islands, "Thanks to charities founded since the hurricanes hit last summer, such as The Marine Rebuild Fund, there is relief revenue flowing into the Virgin Islands marine industry. Combined with fruitful payouts by insurance companies, the yachting infrastructure is rebuilding stronger and better than before. The Marine Rebuild Fund was established with Community Foundation Virgin Islands to help rebuild, clean up and — by encouraging marine tourism to return to the USVI — provide cash infusion into the USVI economy during a time of great need. Its projects include laying, maintaining and managing new transient moorings, providing VI youth marine training and providing sustainable clean-up efforts at watersheds, in bays and mangroves. (See more at http://vimarinerebuild.org)."

Judy Petz, Director of the BVI Spring Regatta, gives us an overview of the recovery process in the British Virgin Islands: "Photos of destroyed homes and yachts circulated the internet as we saw what no imagination could ever dream of unfold. How does a 56-ton catamaran come out of the water, flip upside down and land on top of a two-storey building? How can an entire fleet of charter boats slam into each other so hard they literally rip the cleats out of the bows? Winds of over 200mph is how.

"First priority in the recovery phase was for lives, shelter and supplies. The BVI was lucky to have tremendous support immediately from the UK Government and many US islands sending in what help they could.

"Next was salvage, how to right hundreds of boats, dredge the marinas to find those that sank, and remove the debris from the roads, yards and water.

"Fast forward four months later. Reclamation of what we knew and cherished is proceeding. Boats are righted, homes are being repaired, our famous landmarks such as Foxy's and Pirate's Bight are open for business. Foxy celebrated Old Year's Night with over 100 boats attending. People are sailing again in the beautiful waters of the BVI; it's being called sailing in the 'virgin Virgin Islands'.

"With each day we regain a bit more of normal life. The marine industry has been the first to get back on its feet. Charter companies are welcoming guests to come and enjoy what they have always loved about sailing here. It's easier to find a mooring and you don't need reservations. But as we regain our balance, we look forward by encouraging more people to come."

"The territory is recovering. We are excited, hopeful and looking forward to rebuilding the country to be more sustainable, more resilient and always the most beautiful place in the world to sail."

Blake adds, "Many Northern Caribbean businesses have been affected by the horrendous hurricanes of 2017, however the chartering business in the Virgin Islands is fortunate to have been able to thrive due to the fact that, with many hotels closed for refurbishment, holidaymakers, even wedding parties, have been accommodated on charter vessels instead. We are lucky that the Virgin Islands' charter industry depends on the natural beauty of its cruising grounds, which have bounced back with a remarkably green and sparkly clean, 'hurricane-washed' beauty.

—Continued on next page

—*Continued from previous page*

"At the VI Professional Charter Association, we are happy to see the hope brought by charter guests spending their vacation in the Virgin Islands this year. Guests not only still want to seek the beauty of our quiet and pristine beaches, but also, they hope to help everyone rebuild. By viewing their charter as a form of hurricane relief, charter guests can enjoy our beaches, bars and restaurants while contributing to the economy getting back on its feet — chartering for a cause."



STEVE MCCAULEY / CHARTER CARIBE

"Right now, our charter boat has more bookings than at the same time last year," says Missy Kom, Chef onboard *S/V Pisces* in St. Thomas.

Will Yacht Migration Patterns Change?

Will this season's Irmaria-induced shift of many yachts from the northern to the more southern islands of the Lesser Antilles result in a change in future migration patterns? Will those Virgin Islands and St. Maarten regulars who have discovered (or rediscovered) the "down island" chain from Martinique southward stay? As one wide-eyed megayacht crew said to a local restaurant owner in the Grenadines, "We never knew it was like this down here — it's the real Caribbean!" Or will they revert to their old stomping grounds next winter?

Charter companies, while nimble in relocating bookings right after the storms, have been equally active in getting their bases in the hurricane-hit areas back to full speed. Aurelien Fayolle of Dream Yacht Charter says, "Regarding the BVI, despite a reduced fleet, we are seeing good booking numbers, and we believe it will return to nearly the same booking patterns for DYC, thanks to the massive effort we made to renew our fleet, ordering no fewer than 20 new boats straight after Irma for the New Year.

"Overall, despite our loss of around 70 boats in BVI and St. Martin, we made more bookings to the Caribbean in the past three months compared to one year before. This is due to our large range of bases with fleets well shared between them. Dream Yacht Charter is committed to the Caribbean, and as you can see our organization allows us to react well to major natural events like Hurricane Irma."

Jacqui Pascall of Horizon Yacht Charters adds, however, "As it became clear that the British Virgin Islands were working hard to recover, their enquiries have begun to return. Nonetheless, our other bases continue to receive a significant number of enquiries from people who had previously sailed regularly in the BVI. All the Horizon Yacht Charter bases have clients who return year after year, and have their favorite cruising grounds. But the impact of Irma and Maria has meant that charterers have gone farther afield and discovered what the other islands have to offer."

She adds, "In Grenada and in the Grenadines we have also experienced a large increase in the number of superyachts (both motor and sail) and private, crewed charter yachts. This has been excellent news for these islands and we hope that these yachts will continue to visit on an ongoing basis.

"Since the large charter companies have had to downsize in the BVI," Pascall says, "we expect to see other sailing destinations in the Caribbean continuing to rise in popularity."

The Grenada Tourism Authority's Research & Planning Department reports that Grenada's experience this season for yachting has been good, having closed off 2017 with a more than eight percent increase in the number of yacht calls compared to the previous year. The GTA noted, however, "We cannot establish at this time that the migration patterns over the last quarter were primarily based on the natural disasters (Hurricanes Maria and Irma)." The increase in activity throughout 2017 was attributed instead not only to the sheltering of yachts during the active hurricane season, but as a result of various events geared towards appealing to the yachting visitor, specifically Grenada Sailing Week as well as regattas in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. "We are optimistic that arrivals will increase for 2018."

While January's Grenada Sailing Week 2018 had attracted a record number of entries over a month before the event, regatta organizers in St. Maarten and the Virgins were putting heroic efforts into the March staging of major yacht-magnets such as the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, the St. Croix International Regatta, the St. Thomas International Regatta and the BVI Spring Regatta.

Regatta Director Judy Petz says, "The 2018 BVI Spring Regatta will be held from March 26th through April 1st. It's the largest event of the territory and the timing could not be better. Those who have raced before are excited to come and help. They will inject the economy with much needed money by chartering boats, renting hotel rooms, villas and cars, by purchasing provisions and dining out — each dollar goes back to those who need the funds to rebuild their homes and their lives. Over 30 boats are registered, and more signing up every day."

And what about the crucial issue of where boatowners will choose to cruise or store their vessels during the coming hurricane season?

Sean Devaux of Rodney Bay Marina says, "I believe there are two types of migration — voluntarily and involuntarily. The voluntary migration is what I would classify as those who wish to explore the Southern Caribbean on their own, seeking new boating grounds because of the unfortunate circumstances this year in the Northern Caribbean. This migration will probably happen between the peak months of December through April. The involuntary migration would be for those vessels who will be directed farther south by their insurance companies than normally allowed. This type of migration will obviously happen during the summer months for those vessels looking to rest up."

Oriel Blake adds, "Owing to yacht-insurance reasons, charter yachts may need to leave the hurricane belt during hurricane season, however this is the only migration we expect to see. During the in-season months (November to July) we don't see any reason for charter vessels to migrate away from the Northern Caribbean. Why would vessels relocate from such an incredible cruising ground, with constant tradewinds, sheltered water and short hops between over 60 idyllic islands?"

Robbie Ferron concludes, "Who can answer the tough question as to whether [the yacht migration pattern] will come back to the original status? My view is that there may be some change, but service availability will be the basic drive — although that too might well adjust itself to the changed conditions."

Meanwhile, the hurricanes of 2017 have brought a renewed focus throughout the Lesser Antilles on the allure of the essentials. Right now, a quote by Ann McHorney of Select Yachts in the September 26th, 2017 issue of *The Triton* (www.the-triton.com) — "We're calling it 'going back to the old Caribbean': enjoying the water more, having beach bonfires, hanging out…." — could describe sailing in the northern and southern islands alike.



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A sign on the tiny Grenadine island of Mayreau — 'Please come again'

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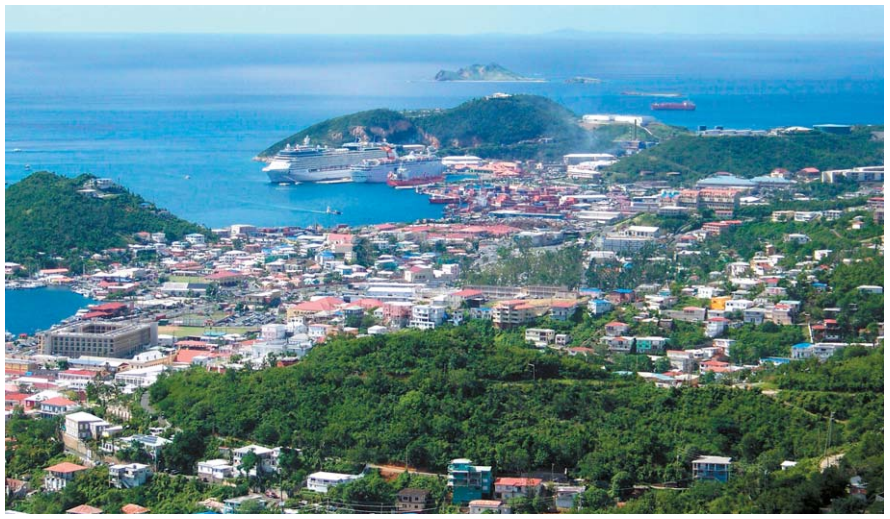
In early December 2017 we sailed our Morgan 511, *Growltiger*, into Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, USVI to anchor at night — which is not recommended. Luckily my husband, Greg, and I were able to avoid the many white buoys (moorings? Wreck warnings? Who knew?) in place around the marked anchorage locations.

At dawn we proceeded to Crown Bay Marina, where we found excellent cruising support with a slip, clean fuel and water, Tickle's restaurant, a well-supplied Island Marine store, hot showers, and laundry facilities. The marina had suffered damage from vessels breaking loose and hitting some of their docks during last September's Hurricane Irma, but most were now open for use and, while electricity was still not available at the slips, new electric stands were being installed. Free WiFi is available at the slips (with an extender) from VIYA. This company has provided complimentary services to all the US Virgin Islands as their contribution to hurricane recovery. It's greatly appreciated by all!

ST. THOMAS IS OPEN FOR VISITING!

by Joan Conover

The new management includes Manager Larry Imhoff, the friendly face of Eustacia, and a personal friend, Dock Master Jamie Steinbergen, of the sailing vessel *Kittiwake*, a long time Seven Seas Cruising Station member. She was making sure vessels arrived in their slips safely, even helping us with our less than graceful exit in bad side winds. The Crown Bay dinghy dock is open (tenders over 20 feet should be registered with the office).



During our week in the marina, we watched yachts come in daily for fuel and some to stay for a night or so. For boats just dropping off or picking up crew, talk to the office for availability. The fuel area is one of the better designed on the island; call the marina office, hail on VHF 16, then chat on 11, to obtain permission to come into the inner harbor. This is critical as the larger ferries and megayachts can take up the entire entry coming in and out; scheduling of use of the fuel area is also needed with up to three vessels possible within the turning basin.

The large Pueblo supermarket, a couple of short blocks away, was very well stocked, with fresh fruit, meats, frozen vegetables, breads and almost every item found in USA supermarkets. We saw no major difference from last year's stock.

The Pet Paradise, a full service pet store, is open, with a full assortment of pet foods and other pet items, and full grooming services — and our dog's favorite treats. The AT&T office has standing room outside for the large number of customers and extra security guards; evidently cellular service is in high demand. The beauty parlor is open and while they have walk-in services, the business is brisk and there could be a day's wait for salon services. The Mail Stop is open, as is the ice cream shop with its lifesaving morning cup of coffee. Yogi is back, with his black van taxi service. He gave us a warm welcome, and his spot (with the posted roadside Yogi Taxi sign) is back in its usual place near the dockside ferry landing in Crown Bay. Nice to see all our friends survived the storm!





Clockwise from above:
A glimpse of a busy Coki Beach from the dive shop
Growltiger *alongside the dock at Crown Bay Marina*
The view from the overlook toward Crown Bay: not many white sails out on the water, but lots of cruiseships and freight coming in

Across from the marina entrance, Elephant Bay had a large number of anchored vessels including cruisers; this area seemed to be the preferred anchorage at that time. We saw three damaged hulls aground the west side of Hassel Island, and others on the east side. Water Island also had several vessels aground. While harbor channels, such as the cut between Crown Bay and Charlotte Amalie Harbor, have been cleared by the USCG, there are likely sunken objects scattered underwater in the deeper areas, some marked by buoys.

Touring the island in one of the little open truck taxis (US$25 per person for three hours) from Crown Bay to Hill Top, Red Hook, Bolongo Bay and back to Charlotte Amalie, it was clear some areas were hit harder than others.

Brewers Bay looked untouched and there were at least two anchored cruising boats taking advantage of the calm waters and white sands. At the tourist attraction of Hill Top, looking over the sea toward St. John and the BVI was beautiful, but sad. There were no white sails, no boats on passage — just the sea and the islands. It was back to the 1950s.

Continuing toward the east side of the island, a view of the Charlotte Amalie harbor was a reminder of recovery. Yacht Haven Grande Marina was open and the docks looked undamaged. However boat traffic was light, and we saw few filled slips. The fuel dock was operational, and the agent mentioned they had electricity and water. Again, there were very few anchored or moored yachts seen, and the harbor had a lot of new wreck-marking buoys. It was as empty as we had ever seen for cruising boats, but several large cruise ships were tied up at Havensight.

Overall, at waterfront level Charlotte Amalie showed either little external storm damage or a tremendous amount accomplished to get things back to pre-hurricane shape.

Continuing on the taxi circumnavigation of the island, on the northern coast we found Coki Beach and the Coki Dive Center open and active, local roadside stands are open, the beaches are clean and white, the fish have come back to the coral, and it's life as usual under the sea there. Peter Jackson of Coki Dive Center said things were pretty much normal except for a slight downturn in customers. Coral World did not seem to have much damage, although they were not open.

The town of Red Hook seemed almost back to normal, Barefoot Davis was even playing Friday nights at Tap and Still! The local docks at Red Hook took a major hit, but the American Yacht Harbor marina had some slips available and an operational fuel dock. We saw some yachts anchored at the end of the docks; evidently the other areas of Red Hook were limited for anchoring.

Farther to the west we came to Benner Bay, looking worse than Red Hook, with greater damage to the docks, sunken vessels and missing buildings in the mangrove areas and channels. However, the Independent Boat Yard, a working yard, was actively helping with recovery. We stopped to observe them aggressively righting boats with cranes, and helping to get the cruising vessels that had been knocked off cradles back in place. Unlike some other boat-salvage efforts, the staff of IDBY carefully lifts boats without mast removal or invasive cutting. There was a strong focus on helping cruisers quickly get their boats back together and into the water. The carpenter shop was severely damaged, but the little restaurant, CaRiGa's, had just reopened that day, serving meals and drinks. With cruisers working on their vessels, the yard was busy. The local Budget Marine store was open, with little damage visible.

The channel to the marinas was in the process of being cleared: a crane appeared to be lifting out debris and boats. With the number of wrecks around, this area should be entered only with great caution until officially cleared.

Sadly, the mangrove swamps are gone. Mud and debris fill the waterway where green plants existed last summer. Just twigs of mangrove twisted trunks are sticking out around boat carnage; a large cat hull floated midway between two arms of mangrove isles and various vessels showed emergency patches to hulls. From the path of wind and wave damage, from the southeast to the northwest up the bay, this must have been Ground Zero for Irma's eye wall. It was difficult to see the carnage, remembering our visit just last spring and seeing large numbers of beautiful vessels. But given the amount of damage, lack of electric power, the denuding of the mangrove areas, the atmosphere was still upbeat and busy.

At Christmas Cove just to the east of the Benner Bay marinas, a single vessel was seen at the anchorage where ten or more boats would usually be moored or anchored. The single mast in a formerly crowded mooring area was telling. In fact, few sailboats were seen underway anywhere, except for larger charter boats taking groups out for day sails and events.

Based on our trip around the island, we found businesses open, with some limitations (mainly lack of electricity), especially in the major tourism areas, which were very busy with cruise ship passengers. Several enclaves existed for cruisers, such as Crown Bay Marina, and Yacht Haven Grande, and American Yacht Harbor. Elephant Bay and Water Island beaches were open for anchoring and at Water Island, Coki Beach and Red Hook the small beach bars are back in service.

The locals have faith that the cruisers will return to help their economy recover. We met friendly people everywhere who all had the same message: "St. Thomas is open for visiting!"

BOAT LAUNCH, 3.0

by Andrea Milam

Winds thundered across the landscape, whipping up the sea and tossing boats, cars, and large sections of people's homes through the air with the ease of a toddler throwing his toys mid-tantrum. *Kekoa*, a 50-foot wooden catamaran, was tied down in St. John's Hurricane Hole alongside more than 100 other Virgin Islands vessels in preparation for a direct hit by powerful Hurricane Irma. Slowly, one by one, *Kekoa* broke free of the 15 three-quarter-inch lines with 75 feet of three-eighths-inch chain per line anchoring her to the ocean floor, and then edged herself toward the shoreline. The sleek gray vessel had been here before, alone at sea in a terrible storm. She knew how to take care of herself. *Kekoa* crawled up on the shoreline, narrowly missing several large boulders and a pileup of wrecked boats that would have torn her body apart, and came to rest where she awaited discovery by her builders, brothers Ryan and Jamison Witbeck.

NIKO DELLIOS







TOMMY GIBNEY

Hurricane Irma blew the catamaran Kekoa *and other yachts ashore in St. John, USVI's ordinarily well-named Hurricane Hole*

Jamison (left) and Ryan inspecting damage to Kekoa *at Hansen Bay*

Like many other St. John residents, the Witbecks spent the days leading up to Hurricane Irma's arrival fretting and tirelessly doing all they could to protect themselves and their property. They had built *Kekoa* by hand a decade ago, and then nearly lost her at sea during her delivery from South Carolina to the Virgin Islands, when the delivery crew abandoned her off the US East Coast during a storm. *Kekoa* spent six days alone at sea, sailing herself 168 miles back toward the coast, before she was finally found and restored by the Witbeck brothers. With the worst behind her, *Kekoa* enjoyed days at sea with 6,000 guests annually, who were tantalized by her sleek beauty and trademark black sails, her harrowing tale, and the love her builders had for her. And then September 2017 arrived, and a wave came off Africa that had many Caribbean residents watching, waiting, and worrying.

Ryan, who lives in the mainland US with his family, was planning to join his brother Jamison on St. John on September 12th, 2017 for *Kekoa's* annual haul-out, but the August 27th departure from Africa of the weather system that would become Hurricane Irma caught the boatbuilder's attention.

"We both concluded it didn't look good and I should probably just be there," Ryan recalls. "We hoped it would just be a fire drill, but all indicators were showing it could become something massive. It was a super-scary scenario."

Ryan hit the ground running, teaming up with Jamison to protect their beloved catamaran in every way possible. They brought her to Hurricane Hole, the most protected stretch of shoreline on St. John, where more than 100 other vessels tucked into the area's sheltered bays in anticipation of the rapidly intensifying Irma. The brothers tied up their most precious creation with every bit of line and chain they owned, and helped secure some of their neighbors' boats as well before turning their thoughts to preparing for their own safety.

"In a state of total exhaustion we just looked at each other and said, 'We've done everything we can do,'" says Jamison.

They woke up on September 6th to breezes that became gusts that became howling winds that peaked in an indescribable force. Ryan and Jamison barricaded themselves in their home's concrete bathroom, the door screwed shut with extra wood enforcements, power tools at the ready to cut themselves out after the storm if need be.

"It felt like an earthquake, a hurricane, and a tornado combined," Ryan says. "The whole cement structure was wobbling. We were shoulder to shoulder on the floor of the bathroom, and sure enough the roof went tearing off. We both got really quiet."

Even as they focused on their own survival, their beloved *Kekoa* was never far from their minds. The brothers knew that what they were experiencing inside was nothing compared to what their boat was being subjected to outside. Two days after the storm, when many St. John residents were still shell-shocked and putting all their energy into securing food, water, and shelter, Ryan and Jamison took to the water. Just ten minutes after the boat-launch ramp in the island's main town of Cruz Bay was cleared, the brothers set out by dinghy to learn the fate of the wooden catamaran that they'd built by hand and then rescued and restored after she was abandoned at sea. It was a long, quiet ride along the island's north shore, where the brothers took in what they described as a "nuclear blast site." As they finally approached Hurricane Hole, they realized anxiously that they didn't see *Kekoa's* mast sticking up over the hill where it should have been.

"In the first bay, you could see catamarans thrown up into the woods and piled up in the back of the bay," Ryan recalls of those heart-pounding moments. "Both of us just took a deep breath and said, 'Okay, it's really bad. No one made it.'"

As they rounded the corner to the bay where they had left *Kekoa* tightly strapped down, it took several moments to register what they were even seeing.

"It looked like she'd driven so far up on land between the trees," Ryan says. "She was at such a severe angle we couldn't even tell what we were looking at."

The brothers pulled the dinghy up onto the shoreline and crawled over trees and boat parts so mangled it was hard to tell one from the other. They circled their treasured *Kekoa*, taking stock of the damage and shouting out to one another every gash, break, and tear they came upon. A mast snapped in three pieces. Twisted, broken railings. Small fractures here and there.

"Then we came up on her port side and saw a 12-foot gaping hole from the head to the engine room, and we just started saying, 'Oh no, she's broken,'" Ryan says.

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"For a moment it looked like a total loss, like she'd broken her back."

Less than an hour after they'd arrived to survey the scene, the brothers had to leave. It was all too much to take in. Ryan and Jamison admit to hoping that *Kekoa* would beat the odds and survive the strongest Atlantic storm on record. After all, she had survived being abandoned at sea; why couldn't her perseverance carry through to this disaster, offering some form of hope to an island that was so traumatized, so battered?



COURTESY OF KEKOA

Above: Silver Cloud *towing the patched-up catamaran toward Hansen Bay*

Below: Ryan and Jamison working to liberate Kekoa *from the mangled mangroves*



"There was a real moment where we felt like we let everybody down," Ryan says.

Through her initial construction, her rescue and restoration, and her subsequent sublime days at sea, *Kekoa* had become a member of the Witbeck family. The brothers speak of her as though she's their daughter, and their description of how they felt leaving her broken and battered on the shoreline is heartbreaking.

"The night after we pulled out of the bay was harder than seeing her for the first time," Ryan recalls. "Jamison has done an amazing job running everything so well and taking such good care of her, and driving away from her that day, looking over our shoulders at the wreckage, it was like seeing her in her graveyard. It was like leaving our injured child in the woods with wolves circling. 'Oh my god, she's just out there.'"

The brothers acted fast, eager to bring *Kekoa* back to life. There was never a question of whether she would be deemed a total loss. Ryan and Jamison had brought her back before, and they knew they would do whatever it takes to get her ready to launch for a third time. The process began with clearing away the 16-foot by 30-foot area between *Kekoa's* two hulls, which was jam packed with tiny sticks and segments of branches.

"We were digging like dogs, and it took many days to get that area under the boat clear," says Jamison. "The morale was low."

Finally, the area between the hulls was clear. The brothers patched up *Kekoa's* holes, coated the plywood patches with epoxy, and then jacked her up in preparation to float her for the first time. *Silver Cloud*, an iconic St. John sailing vessel, came to the rescue. The boat's owner, Elliott Hooper, towed *Kekoa* back into the sea and headed east toward Hansen Bay, a pretty, picturesque stretch of sand on the island's east end.

"When *Silver Cloud* pulled us off the beach, *Kekoa* floated, and there was this sense of relief and pride," says Ryan. "It was like, 'Okay, she's a boat again.'"

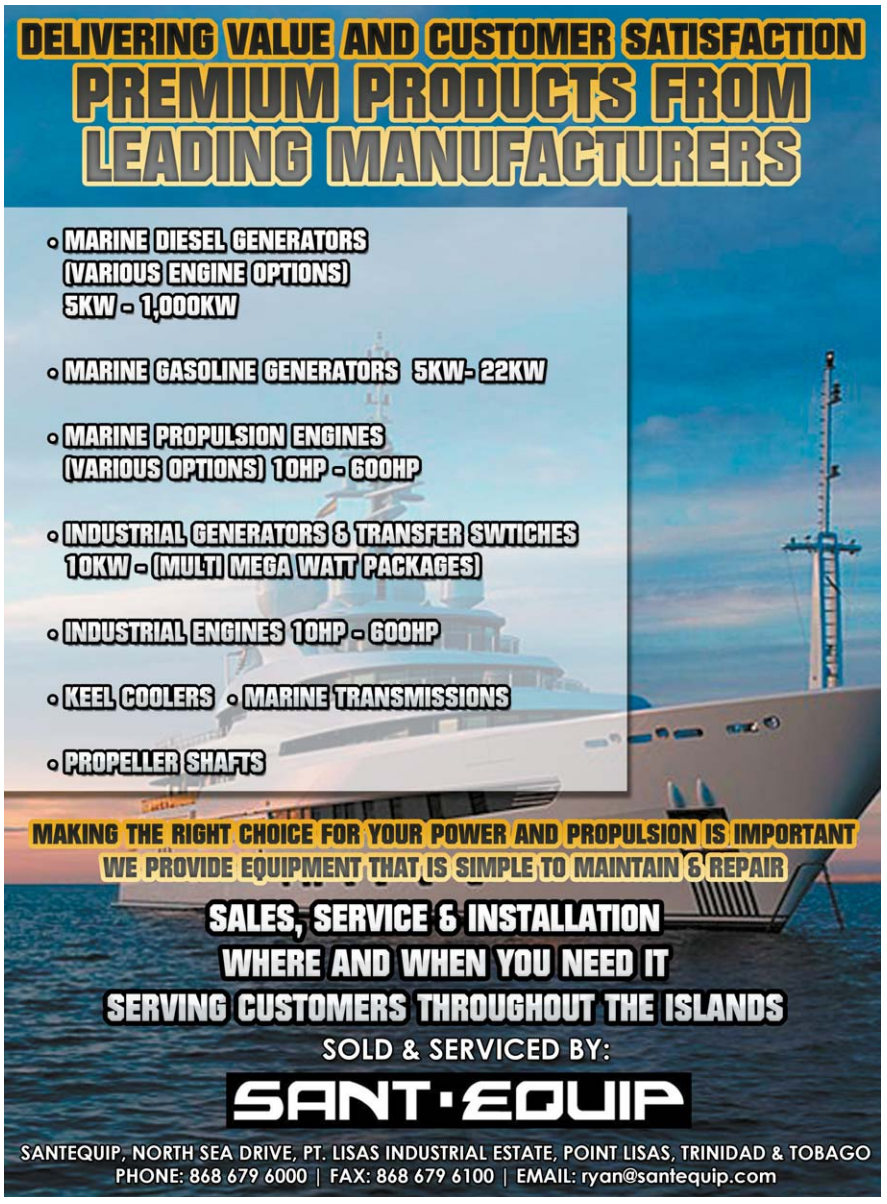
Water seeped into sections of the hull the brothers hadn't realized were compromised, and Ryan and Jamison spent the hour-long trip surveying, bailing water, and looking over their precious girl as she was towed to safety.

Hansen Bay is accessed from land via private property, and the owners of that property were initially not happy about watching *Kekoa* limp up onto the shoreline. The brothers knew that the magnitude of devastation in the area could mean many months before they might get into a boatyard, and who could better repair *Kekoa* than the men who built her? With much of the island protected by the National Park, however, finding a place to work on *Kekoa* was not easy.

"We need your help," the brothers pleaded to the Hansen Bay property owners. "*Kekoa* is not just a boat. It's our heart and soul."

Ryan and Jamison breathed a huge sigh of relief as they were granted permission to work on their boat on the beach, and they immediately set to work, spending long, grueling days in the Caribbean sun bringing their girl back to life. Before reconstruction came the demo phase, when the brothers cut away fractured areas. They emptied bilges, inspected every inch of the boat for standing water, and constructed a makeshift shed to protect themselves from the record-setting rains that continued to fall for weeks following Irma. Ryan and Jamison plan to complete the woodworking on St. John before getting into a boatyard for painting, welding of new railings, and possibly replacing *Kekoa's* engine with an electric motor. With the help of those who continue to contribute to *Kekoa's* YouCaring fundraising initiative, the brothers are ready, yet again, to pour their blood, sweat, and tears into their prized wooden boat, as they prepare to launch her for a third time to the delight of all who have fallen in love with her story.





THE *TRES HOMBRES* TRANSFORMATION



by Chelsea Pyne

Last year I wrote an article about women in the sailing community and another about the resurgence of sail cargo via Costa Rica's newest tall ship. In a funny series of events, the two literally came together right before 2017 closed out. *Tres Hombres*, a 1943 32-metre brigantine, had a delivery change and wound up on my home island of St. Martin. Not only was the ship anchoring down the water from me, it had a last-minute trainee spot open up.

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When there was no tugboat available, dinghies pushed the engineless Tres Hombres *into port*

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So with a few days' notice, I gathered a bag, called home, and told my family they may or may not hear from me for a while.

My boyfriend was not so thrilled. Having me celebrate Christmas without him on a boat full of lonely, sea-ridden Dutchmen didn't make his list of ideal holidays. Nevertheless, how often does a tall ship show up in your homeport looking for an extra hand?

Tres Hombres appeared on December 17th after a four-week journey from Palma. I was eagerly awaiting the ship's arrival by using an online tracker and through a pair of binoculars. At last, they came around the north point of the island and into Marigot Bay.



During the author's time aboard there was a total of nine women on Tres Hombres — nueve mujeres*! Two are not pictured here*

As I looked out from the hills of St. Martin, I could only imagine what sort of morning the crew had. The Anguillian channel was blanketed in white caps; Anguilla itself — a whole six miles away — was barely visible through the rain clouds. It was as if they had brought the weather from Holland with them. Chilly rain cooled off the island for the first time in months.

I was hoping we could give the crew a more splendid "land ho" welcome. Still, their spirit was contagious, and with an Atlantic crossing under their belts, the stench of victory was thick. The new turquoise territory was not only refreshing, as rain showers drenched them clean, the bay felt like bath water — a much needed spa day.

When I went out to greet the crew, I was pleasantly surprised to see three female faces appear over the safety lines. I know this ship is about the resurgence of sail cargo, but it may also be inspiring the *insurgence* of young sailing women. First Mate Anne Flore gave me a tour around the boat, sputtering terms I've never heard and introducing me to my new sleeping arrangements: the foxhole. The boat had 15 on board; I'd be sleeping next to seven. "Just think of it as a week-long slumber party," I tried to convince myself.

It would certainly be an interesting journey in such close quarters with the other sailors. The plan was to go to Barbados for a rum delivery with a few stops in between. We'd leave St. Martin after delivering supplies to the animal-welfare organizations around the island. The weather was clearing up and returning to classic Caribbean easiness. I was pumped and ready. The last words my boyfriend mumbled as I boarded *Tres Hombres* may have actually been just a growl. "Don't let anyone…" was his parting advice. After Hurricane Irma snapped our own boat's mast in two, I can't blame him for being grumpy as I boarded a fully intact ship and headed into the sunset… with strange men. (Fifty percent of the crew was female — that had to count for something, right?)

Nevertheless, we pulled up the anchor on the 21st, headed south. Within half an hour my clothes were ragtag. I expected to get dirty, but being covered in rusty-tar-gooeyness was a surprise. That was the beginning of the *Tres Hombres* transformation — and it was time to embrace the change. Over the next week, I would become my best dirtbag self.

The trip gave me a wide spectrum of feelings. From that of despair as I learned all 15 of us would share the same toilet, to the joy of breaking fresh bread together every day. My mixed emotions perhaps say more about me than about the boat itself. But my overall impression from the experience was rooted in respect. This life ain't easy. The men and women who can pull this off both bewilder and amaze me. Do you know how much energy and willpower it takes to sail a 128-ton engineless ship? And there's not a whole lot of room for error.

The sail cargo experience really redefines who you are. I was aboard for a short leg, disembarking in Martinique after a week. The crew stays on for eight months and the trainees' stints range from a few weeks or months to the whole shebang. I had a 17-year-old German girl teach me how to lash rum barrels together in the cargo hold. Seventeen! She crossed the Atlantic, wore the same outfit from the first day I met her, and never once complained or whined about missing home. I need to be more like her, I decided.

It's not fun going weeks without a shower, internet and family, and sleep in your own, non-rolly bed. *Tres Hombres* forces you to wake up. To embrace what's around you and make the most of it. Real adventure happens when you leave your comfort zone. Instead of listening to music on my iPod (we used as little power as possible, so charging devices was kept to a minimum), I had to listen to the crew play the mandolin and fiddle.

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What a pity! I went a week without a single e-mail update. No news catastrophes to start my day. A week without scrutinizing my face for the tiniest flaw. No worrying whether a wrinkle was in formation or if it was just my imagination. (The perks of not having a mirror — you stop thinking about these things, and they stop mattering.) A week without caring what I would wear or if I needed to do laundry. My tar-battered, salt-covered pants would work just fine. A week without pretending to be someone I'm not. *Tres Hombres* strips you down to your bare minimum. If anything, I was my real self, in full power with a splash of Amazonian Queen. There was no covering up or putting on a nice filter. This was raw cruising. But regardless of all the rough and tough aspects of the ship, it was incredible sailing. Which is the point, right?

We glided out of St. Martin hitting seven knots down to St. Kitts and Nevis. From there we tacked our way to Martinique from the leeward side, sneaking in between Antigua and Guadeloupe to eventually drop anchor in Sainte Anne. It took us longer than planned, but it's hard to complain when you have top-notch stargazing every single night. We also had good coffee, which makes a big difference.

During the days I was aboard, my duties were kept less complicated than for those who crossed the Atlantic. I would man the bunt and clew lines on the course sail. This translates to something like, "pull this rope as tight as you can, tie it off, and then move to the next set." These lines were the easiest to haul, as my tendonitis and lack of biceps didn't offer much on the heavier lines. As the weakest person on board, I learned to stay out of the way, jump on the end of the hauling line, and help out in the kitchen. The fear of screwing up a tack was always on my mind. We were out in the middle of the sea on an engineless boat — I was not going to be the reason the trip was compromised. Nevertheless, I did screw up quite often. However, the crew remained unfazed, unbelievably patient with me, and carried on steadfast.

I am not one of the people who will be signing up as crew for the next expedition. I'm just not cut out for it — or so I think. A week's sail may not have been long enough for me to get the hang of things or for me to realize that, hey, I can do this too. But I have to admit, it was a transformative experience. One I think everyone should participate in (or be forced to participate in). It creates awareness of yourself, your output and your environment. What do we really need? What do we really want? What are the most important "things" in our lives and what do we take for granted? Why should I feel embarrassed when I haven't shaved or put on make-up? The *Tres Hombres* experience is the complete opposite of superficial.

It was truly inspiring to see so many women (almost all my junior) take command of the vessel — a huge vessel. On a power spectrum, I lean towards feather strength. Although, in fact, much of any strength comes from technique, knowledge, and practice. *Tres Hombres* was a refreshing and awakening experience, one that helped me realize where I can take my own sailing abilities. The camaraderie of the whole



Right: 'I was my real self, in full power with a splash of Amazonian Queen'

Below: The crew breaking bread together down below — 'the camaraderie encourages confidence'



trip encourages confidence, which I will gladly put to use back in St. Martin. (Granted, when our own boat's mast is upright.)

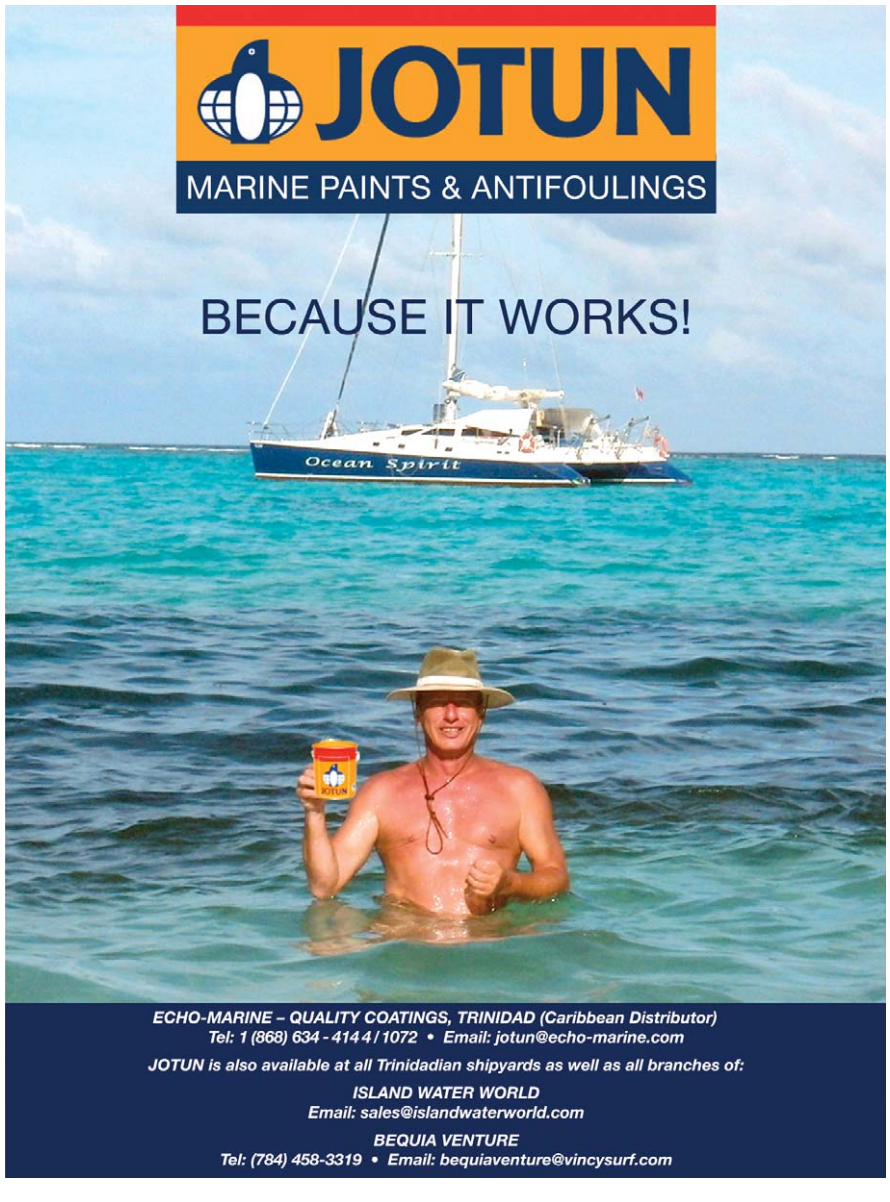
Tres Hombres is currently sailing around the Caribbean for the rest of the winter and spring before heading up to the US and back to Holland. The timeline is always evolving, as it depends on wind, waves, and cargo deliveries. If you want to join the crew or learn the ropes as a trainee, be flexible. It's likely the ship will change course and make a rum delivery where needed. Which is also a pretty cool notion — letting go of control and leaving it to the nature of the sail. Time is not of the essence; might as well enjoy it.

To the crew that had me aboard, thank you for your friendship, understanding and patience. Best winds to you.

Follow the ship's movements via the online tracker at Fairtransport.eu/ships/tres-hombres.

If they are sailing to your island and you want to be praised for a day, help transport the cook to the grocery store. A well-fed crew will repay you with a night of good fun, music and food. (I can attest to that: Tres Hombres *does not cut back when it comes to mealtime.)*

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A RACE AGAINST TIME — KEEPING BONAIRE'S *BOTO PISKADO* AFLOAT

by Pamela Teitel

The *boto piskado,* beautiful small sailboats once used daily for fishing in Bonaire, were the boats that began the Bonaire Regatta — traditionally, the fishermen would take a week off from fishing every year to race. But as motorboats replaced sailboats in the island's fishing fleet, this cultural icon began to fade, with only the annual regatta to sail in. Facing the high cost of repairs and upkeep for the wooden craft, most owners gave up, leaving the boats rotting away, never to sail again.

Boto piskado is simply "fishing boat" in Papiamento, the community language of Bonaire. There have been many discussions on the island about the fate of these vessels, and even attempts to bring them back, but there was no obvious way to get them back to operating condition and make that sustainable. That is, until a group of passionate, dedicated and committed volunteers and collaborators decided, "We just have to do it now, before it is too late!"



Everyone wanted to see the *boto piskado* race in the 50th Annual Bonaire Regatta, held in October 2017. Several companies with strong ties to the local culture and to the sea were approached to sponsor the repairs necessary to get the boats back in racing trim. Rather than distributing cash, Budget Marine Bonaire, the Obersi Group, Teal, and Ports of Passion teamed up with boatowners to collect and restore as many *boto piskado* as possible, supplying materials, support and organization rather than funds. With only two months before the regatta, there was no time to create a solid plan — we had to go with the attitude of "Just do it!"

In short order we found and collected seven boats and brought them to the Regatta House at the waterfront. If you want to "Just do it" you need to involve the entire community. Don Andres, a shipping company, showed up with a forklift to move two boats that were small and close by. For boats that were larger and farther from the Regatta House, a friend with a crane was called, and Boogie Trucking brought the rest of the boats to their new home.

Luckily Budget Marine was close by, as they sponsored most of the materials needed to rebuild the boats. Budget Marine also contacted a supplier, Sea Hawk Paints, which donated a huge quantity of their products to the project.

Next a call went out for workers. Carlos Aguirre Garcia, a former resident who was visiting from Spain, came in to demonstrate some new techniques that could be used to do the restorations quickly and effectively. He and his family worked diligently during his entire vacation. When it was time to go, his nephew and a friend, Rafa and Kate, from Spain and England respectively, remained behind and continued working every day right up to the regatta. Local craftsmen who had originally built the boats with great care joined us to show off their skills as well. Jopi Soliano worked daily to totally renovate his own boat as well as work on and supervise the repairs on all of the others. He took great care with his boat, including the artwork on the sides.

We focused on getting four of the seven *boto piskado* completed by the 50th Annual Bonaire Regatta, leaving the other three for future races. In an amazing flurry of work, the boats were gutted, cleaned out, fiberglassed, and fitted with new ribs and structures to result in fully restored boats. Ants, termites, trees and cacti were evicted. On some boats, all of the wood had rotted away, leaving only an outer layer of fiberglass as a mold to basically build an entirely new boat in. Passersby were roped in to sand and paint. It was amazing to watch an 80-year-old craftsman guide a 12-year-old on how to do the work needed. Ivan Flores came by to weld one item for Jopi and was so caught up in the momentum that he restored an old, beaten-up trailer so that we could get the boats to the water when ready.

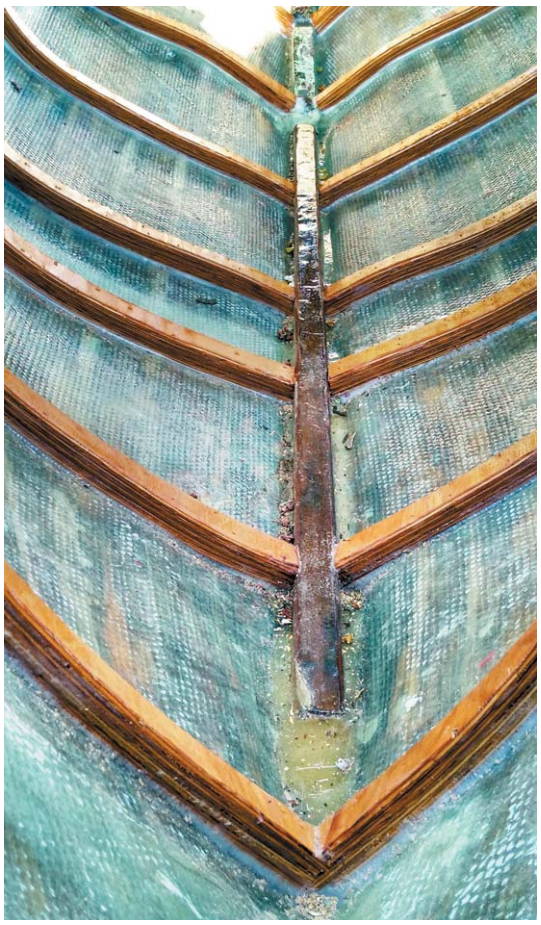
To complete a project like this, it takes a community. People dropped by with bags of fruit, ice, drinks and even a giant pot of soup from Chacho's restaurant to keep the workers fueled. People on visiting yachts dropped off lines, shackles, sails and other items that could be re-purposed for these boats. Lara Chirino worked like a conductor, organizing volunteers and sponsors and making sure things happened on time.

When tallying up our supporters, we surpassed 20 different companies and countless individuals who made some contribution.

With only seven weeks from arrival of the first boat at Regatta House to the start of the Regatta, people were always asking, "Why did you wait to the last minute?" to do this or that. Well, it was *all* at the last minute! Doyle Sails in Barbados shifted their production schedule to quickly fabricate sails for us, and the sails arrived the day before the races! During registration for the regatta we were still busy painting with the paint generously donated by Krioyo Paint. Tarzan Welding was cutting and melting lead donated by Stone Crushers to make ballast. With no proper slipway at the launching site, the boats were carried by hand from our newly restored trailer into the water to prepare for their much-anticipated races.

Jopi's brother Geovanni flew in from the United States to be captain of the *Arantsa*, but his flight from Curaçao to Bonaire was canceled, so another brother, Papichi, captain of a competing boat, hopped on his modern fishing boat and took the long ride to Curaçao to pick him up.

In time for the first race, we had only three of the four restored *boto piskado* in the water. During the race, one broke its rudder. But the crew rushed the broken rudder ashore and before the next race a new one was fabricated. In the next race, a metal tiller broke and the welders hauled their equipment onto the boat at the shore and welded it right there in the water. Each race saw some new excitement, and it took till the last race for all four boats to both start and finish!



Fast forward to last December. Budget Marine sponsored a large fundraiser for the project, featuring a sailing regatta, triathlon, 5K run and Santa Hat Walk, and a sport festival. All four of the newly restored *boto piskado* managed both of the two races this time! To involve the wider Bonaire community, we had space at the event for sport clubs and fitness groups to set up booths to sell things, have activities and give demonstrations to show off what they do. Of course there was a great barbecue and bar to complete the weekend. This was the first step toward restoring the remaining boats.

This year, our goal will be to have quarterly races for the *boto piskado* and other types of boats, to continue the initiative. The *boto piskado* are not for the young and inexperienced, so we need to continue to promote all levels of sailing to guarantee that future generations of sailors will be able to handle these small but unique sailing craft. (In 2019 Bonaire will host the Sunfish World Championships, so there is a big push to stimulate the local sailors for that as well.) The development of necessary infrastructure, maintenance programs and educational programs will be paramount to the sustainability of the *boto piskado*. Beyond our initial goals, we would like to engage and stimulate our regional neighbors to join and embrace their traditions and race with us.

For this effort not to be wasted, we need to sit back now and build a plan of sustainability. A project with such historical magnitude has many aspects that require the financial, material and service support of passionately driven people and organizations. We look forward to your support as well!

For more information contact sponsor@historicalsailingboatBonaire.com

The goals of Bonaire's Historical Sailing Boat Project are:

- to maintain this important aspect of Bonaire culture;
- to safeguard this extreme sport and the specialized skills required to sail the boats;
- to locate, negotiate, mobilize, restore or fabricate hull, mast, rigging, weights and sails from existing boats and prepare to build new ones;
- to promote sailing and educate the local community of all ages in areas related to boat design, restoration, construction, maintenance, navigation and racing;
- to improve the infrastructure for storing and launching the *boto piskado*.

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LOOK OUT FOR...

Sapodilla, the 'Nice' Fruit

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

Sapodilla has an elusive flavour, hard to describe. Upon our first introduction to this fruit, when we asked what it tasted like, we were told, "It tastes nice!" We had no doubt that it tasted *good*, but nobody could give us a straight answer as to what it tasted *like*.

We picked the "ripe" but not "ready" fruit, and wrapped it in paper for a couple of days, as we were told to do, so it could become "ready" — slightly soft to the touch. What did it taste like? Well, it tasted nice! It has a flavour that could be described as a honey-cinnamon blend, combined with a bit of pear. We then understood the descriptor of "nice" for the fruit. We have enjoyed it in other places, too, with remarkable differences in the taste, like the sweetness being more like brown sugar rather than honey, but all are "nice". The flesh has a granular texture much like that of pears.



Sapodillas on the tree and on the plate — wait till they're ready and they sure taste great!

The sapodilla originally came from Central America, but made its way through tropical South America and into the Caribbean islands. Since the seeds can remain viable for up to four years, the tree grows fairly easily from seed, and no special care is required, it is not surprising that it spread quickly. Its propensity to grow in almost any soil, its ability to withstand dry spells, and its tolerance of salty soil make it a natural for the Caribbean. The Portuguese and Spanish took it to other parts of the tropics, where it has thrived and has become right at home.

Left to their own devices, the trees can grow to a height of about 30 metres (100 feet), however, they can be controlled and pruned when being grown commercially or decoratively, with solid trunks and enough spread to create suitable shade for humans to enjoy or undergrowth to flourish. The leaves are quite abundant, and are from eight to 12 centimetres long, and about three centimetres wide. The flowers are unremarkable.

The tree produces an extremely sticky latex, which can be discovered if picking the fruit a little early. The gummy substance is known in Central America as *chicle*. Yes — the *chicle* in Chiclets. It was, and still is, used as a chewing gum source. The latex adheres to skin, and requires soap and diligent scrubbing to remove.

The fruit looks a great deal like a kiwi, but without the fuzz. While growing, there is a small spike that grows from the bottom, and the fruit is deemed ripe when that point falls off. However, that does not make the fruit "ready." The fruit must be allowed to sit for a couple of days until it becomes a little yielding to the touch; this process can be accelerated by wrapping the fruit in newspaper or a paper bag. Eating it too soon will cause a case of dry mouth, and the flavour will not be fully developed. "Ready" fruit can be kept refrigerated for a week or two, and can be kept frozen for a month. Each fruit has from one to six seeds, which are big enough to find and discard as you eat it. The skin is edible.

Sapodilla can be eaten out of hand, or makes a (dare we say?) nice addition to smoothies, desserts and fruit salads.

The Caribbean BROWN PELICAN

Grenada's northeast coast — with its Atlantic-facing beaches prettily decorated with conch shells and grey-washed driftwood, and fringed by windswept seagrape, sea almond and coconut trees — is an essential stopover and breeding ground for various species of seabirds. Hence, it was on River Antoine's long, white beach, and looking through the barrel of my 300mm camera lens, that I contemplated an image reminiscent of an epoch long past: a white head, nestled between an almost six-foot wingspan and supported by a contracted neck, is dominated by a mammoth-sized pouched bill. Its stocky owner — a three-foot-long, brownish bird with a short, square tail, webbed feet drawn against its dark belly, soared against the pale blue horizon. Presumably, a flicker of silvery light broke the surface and danced into the creature's pale yellow eye, for it plunged headfirst from 30 feet above the surface into the wind-ruffled blue water, only to break the surface seconds later. In its featherless gular pouch was a stunned fish and gallons of ocean cascaded from the far corners of its yellowish bill. Finally, as the bird's head tilted back, the fish vanished down its throat.

This feathered creature is an adult specimen of the subspecies *Pelecanus occidentalis*, better known as the Caribbean Brown Pelican. There are five subspecies of Brown Pelican, all very similar in appearance, with only geographical range distinguishing them from one another. Distributed along both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of North and South America, the Caribbean and the Galapagos islands, the Brown Pelican is a fascinating creature of prehistoric appearance, which has changed very little in the last 30 to 40 million years.

As I scanned the seemingly deserted beach, I was glad to see two more pelicans standing in the distant sand. I could just make out that they were preening, running along their feathers with their long bills, a task which not only gives beautiful luster to the plumage but most importantly creates the waterproof barrier much needed when submerged. As one took to the sky, it offered a view of its white belly, a sign of its youth. Juveniles take three years to reach maturity and the lighter colour is an advantage to the inexperienced birds when seen from below; by blending the underparts against the sky, the coloration allows them to get closer to their prey and successfully feed, while at the same time perfecting their hunting skills.





Mature Brown Pelican above, and juvenile at right

Having spent 20 minutes watching from a distance so as not to disturb them, I was fascinated by how the bird's form and functionality appear to be so little in accordance: an 11-inch pouched bill gives the owner a very bizarre-looking appearance, yet not once did I see the large pouch extended for more than a few seconds. Contrary to popular belief, the pouch is not used to store or carry food but is rather a fishing bucket-like mechanism attached to the lower mandible/throat region. Remarkably, at each feeding time it collects as much as three gallons of water or three times the total capacity of the bird's stomach!

Is this is an acute case of Dixon Lanier Merritt's famous limerick?

A wonderful bird is the pelican,
His bill will hold more than his belican...

Has a species that endured through the last 40 million years come all this way with a less than perfect feeding apparatus?

Surely, if all birds evolved so that the bill works according to its needs, then I'd like to think that the surplus of water taken during a dive is not just a hindrance to the bird, but rather performs an important function that has eluded us so far. The pouch has other functions besides acting as a plunging bucket: a feeder for its young to eat from, and when expanded on a hot day, it works as a cooling device.

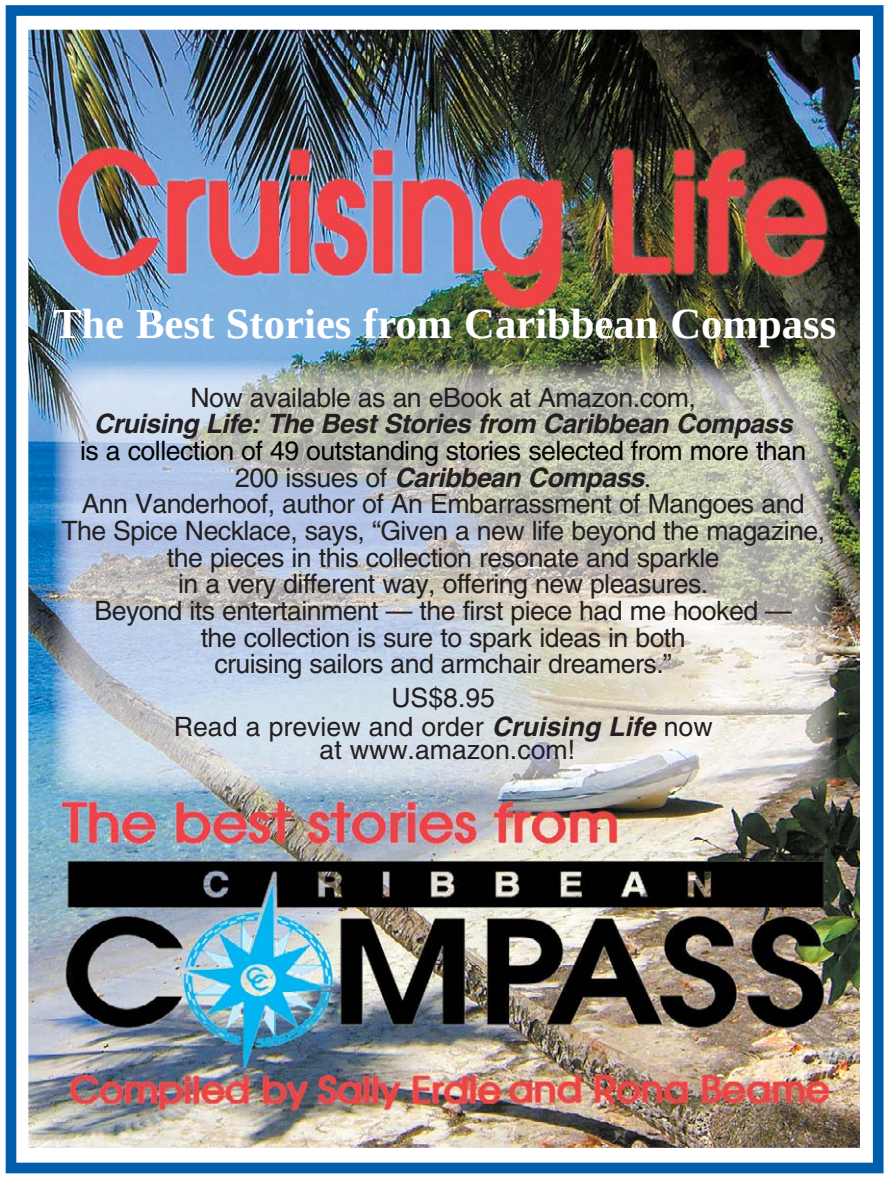
Looking at the adult bird gliding a foot above the surface, in perfect harmony with the rise and fall of the waves, I am mesmerized by its elegance and grace; airbags throughout its body and under the skin not only cushion the impact when diving from heights of as much as 60 feet but offer extra buoyancy and greatly improve its flight aerodynamics.

Inevitably, my conclusion is that the Brown Pelican, whether we understand it or not, is an example of stunningly successful adaptation that for millions of years has been in perfect harmony with its environment's changing conditions and that those conditions, like the bird itself, have barely changed in millions of years — until now. During the last century, the Californian Brown Pelican struggled with reproductive failure as a result of DDT exposure, yet as harsh chemicals are banned in the developed world, other poisons replace them and today, seabirds are still as much at risk as 60 years ago. Seabirds in developing nations are not only exposed to pesticides long banned in richer countries but are facing many other perils such as habitat degradation due to coastal development, overfishing, and badly disposed of fishing lines which are deadly to diving pelicans resulting in a slow, agonizing death. And of course human-induced climate change is very real, and it will cause a rise in sea level that will submerge the seabirds' last refuges; those small, low-lying islets that they depend upon to nest. Whether or not we want to see it, our lifestyles are having serious and broad repercussions on this beautiful, blue-water planet.

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The Sky from Mid-February to Mid-March

by Jim Ulik

And now for something completely different. The Galaxy Song from Monty Python's "The Meaning of Life":

Whenever life gets you down, Mrs. Brown,
And things seem hard or tough,
And people are stupid, obnoxious or daft,
And you feel that you've had quite eno-o-o-o-o-ough,
Just, remember that you're standing on a planet that's evolving
And revolving at nine hundred miles an hour
That's orbiting at nineteen miles a second, so it's reckoned,
A sun that is the source of all our power.

I recommend doing an internet search and listening to the rest of the song. Even the video version sung by Stephen Hawking is worth a watch. The original song and lyrics were written by Eric Idle and John Du Prez. Eric Idle and Brian Cox rewrote the lyrics, now titled the Galaxy DNA Song, for the BBC series Wonders of Life that was hosted by Professor Brian Cox.

A few months ago I wrote about guitarist and songwriter Brian May with rock group Queen. In 2007, May was awarded a PhD in astrophysics from Imperial College London. He has now become a prominent figure in astrophysics. So, who is Brian Cox? Professor Cox is another rock star that turned high-profile physicist. Brian Cox was the keyboard player from the bands Dare, who toured with Jimmy Page, and D:Ream. He completed his Ph.D. in high-energy particle physics from the University of Manchester, spending some time doing research at CERN's Large Hadron Collider. They both have the credentials to educate the public.

"We live on a world of wonders. A place of astonishing beauty and complexity. We have vast oceans and incredible weather. Giant mountains and breath-taking landscapes.

"If you think that this is all there is, that our planet exists in magnificent isolation, then you're wrong. We're part of a much wider ecosystem that extends way beyond the top of our atmosphere." — Professor Brian Cox

Friday, February 16th

There is but a sliver of Moon illuminated in the western sky at twilight. Just after the Sun sets look for earthshine to provide a subtle glow on the rest of the Moon's surface. Right below the Moon is Venus shining brightly just above the horizon.

Sunday, February 18th

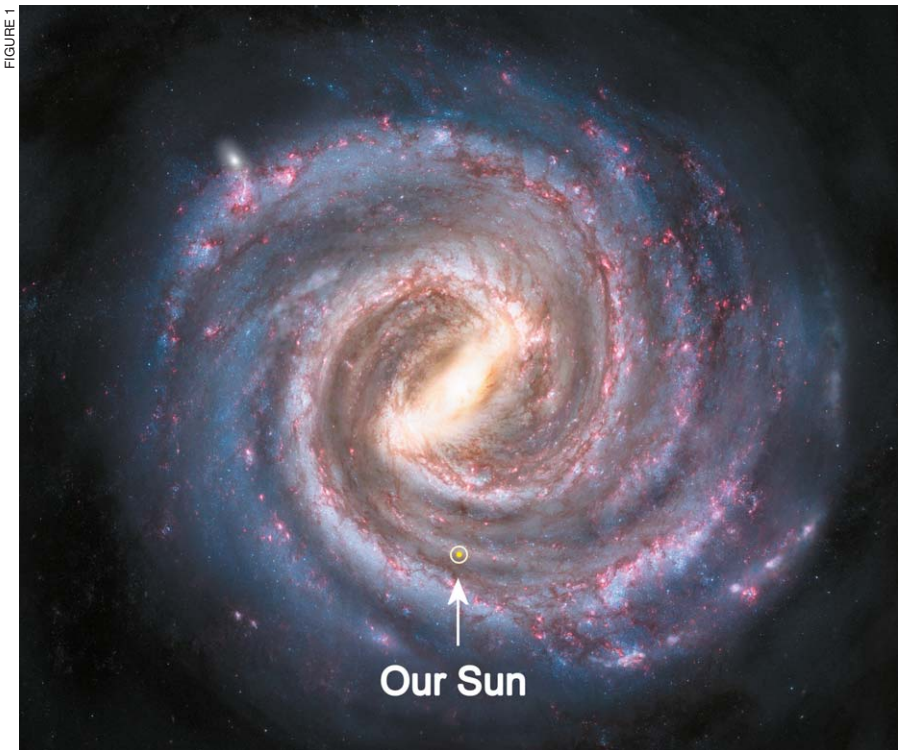
The most visible planets can only be seen in the early morning sky before sunrise. Jupiter, Mars and Saturn are lined up in a row above the eastern horizon. Mars, named Ares in Greek culture, is the middle planet near the red giant double star Antares (meaning anti-Ares). Mars and Antares can be easily confused because they appear similar in color. This morning they are of equal brightness. Mars is the object northward or left of Antares.

In the late 1800s it was determined that the planets Neptune and Uranus had irregular orbits. Astronomer Percival Lowell thought that an undiscovered Planet X was the reason for the predicted orbit discrepancies. Eighty-eight years ago today Pluto was discovered by Clyde Tombaugh at the observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona named after Lowell. Tomorrow evening Uranus is positioned near the Moon. Neptune reaches its closest point near Venus on February 21st.

Monday, February 19th

Happy 545th birthday Nicolaus Copernicus! Born in 1473, Copernicus was a mathematician and astronomer who formulated a model of the universe that placed the Sun rather than the Earth at the center of the universe. As mentioned in past articles, a recent survey (2014) shows that 25 percent of the world's population doesn't believe the Earth orbits the Sun (insert loud sigh here).

FIGURE 1



Our place in the Milky Way Galaxy

Friday, February 23rd

The first pairing up of celestial bodies this period occurs this evening. The Moon is located near Antares, the eye of the bull in the constellation Taurus. Also, early this morning the Moon reached first quarter phase.

Saturday, February 24th

First observed in 1911, the delta Leonids meteor shower will peak tonight. This shower is active from February 15th to March 10th. While this may not be a major shower the combined number of shooting stars from other showers will increase viewing possibilities. The Leonids radiate from the constellation Leo.

The asteroid Apophis is making another close approach to Earth this afternoon. Apophis is now located in the direction of the Sun. As asteroids pass near any celestial object their orbital path can be altered even by the slightest amount. As these passes occur astronomers can re-determine the future path these bodies are taking. This will help predict Apophis' altered course as it makes an extreme close approach towards Earth on Friday April 13th, 2029.

Tuesday, February 27th

Two days before the Moon turns full it can be found in the constellation Cancer. Even though the Moon is quite bright you may see the Beehive Cluster slightly north and west. The Beehive Cluster is one of the closest star clusters to our solar system and contains more than 1,000 stars.

—Continued on next page

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—*Continued from previous page*

Wednesday, February 28th

There is a conjunction between the Moon and "the heart of the lion" this evening. The star Regulus is actually a multiple star system that appears as the brightest star in the constellation Leo.

Thursday, March 1st

The Moon rises at 1809 this evening. Wait another three hours and the Moon illuminating the night sky finally reaches the full phase.

Saturday, March 3rd

The Full Moon will interfere with tonight's peak of the Virginids meteor shower. However meteors can be seen anytime this shower is active. The shower runs from February 13th to April 8th.

The US National Academies of Sciences was created 155 years ago today. The NAS was established by an Act of Congress, signed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, and is charged with providing independent, objective advice to the nation on matters related to science and technology. Three Academies work together as the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to provide objective science-based advice on critical issues affecting the United States. The National Academies also encourage education and research, recognize outstanding contributions to knowledge, and increase public understanding in matters of science, engineering, and medicine.

Brian Cox, professor and physicist mentioned previously, turns 50. By age 12, Cox was inspired to become a physicist after reading the book *Cosmos* by Carl Sagan.

Sunday, March 4th

Low in the western sky right after sunset there will be two objects shining brightly. They will be so close that they may appear as one object. Look for Venus and Mercury to be just above the horizon. Over the next few days Mercury will be dimmer and higher in the sky as it moves away from the Sun. The distance from Venus will also become greater.

The Moon will rise just before 2100, located in the constellation Virgo. There is a conjunction between the Moon and Spica this evening. Spica is a two star system; the two stars take only four days to orbit each other. You can find Spica positioned close to the right or south of the Moon.

Tuesday, March 6th

There is a conjunction between the Moon and Jupiter this evening, lasting into the morning of March 7th. Look for the Moon to rise first, with Jupiter following a few minutes later. Both bodies are located in the constellation Libra.

Saturday, March 10th

The predawn sky has the Moon splitting the distance between Mars and Saturn. The trio can be found in the southeastern sky. Mars is situated above the Moon and Saturn lies below. By this time tomorrow The Moon will be slightly below and left of Saturn.

Wednesday, March 14th

The month and date today is 3/14. That makes it Pi Day. This day is an annual celebration of the mathematical constant *pi*. Physicist Larry Shaw organized the first Pi Day celebration in San Francisco. It was another day added to the calendar for celebrations and maybe an excuse to eat pie. At least this holiday is an annual event unlike Square Root Day. That day is celebrated on days when both the day of the month and the month are the square root of the last two digits of the year. So, the next square root day won't be until 5/5/25.

This is also the birth date of Albert Einstein. Born in 1879 Germany, he would be 139 years old.

In the News

Who is piloting that ship? Well in the next few years it won't be humans. Communications, weather and GPS satellites put in place by the ESA (European Space Agency) in conjunction with the hardware and software developed by Rolls-Royce Ship Intelligence division will enable the operation of commercial autonomous shipping. Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be the Captain and crew. Piloting and navigation will be done by robots. Hopefully they will not solely rely on current digital charts.

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

Jim Ulik of S/V Merengue *is a photographer and cruiser.*



FIGURE 2

JIM ULIK

Above: A photograph taken from Prickly Bay, Grenada of the crescent Moon and Venus in the western sky

Below: Unmanned ships at sea with the capacity to self-navigate and auto-dock

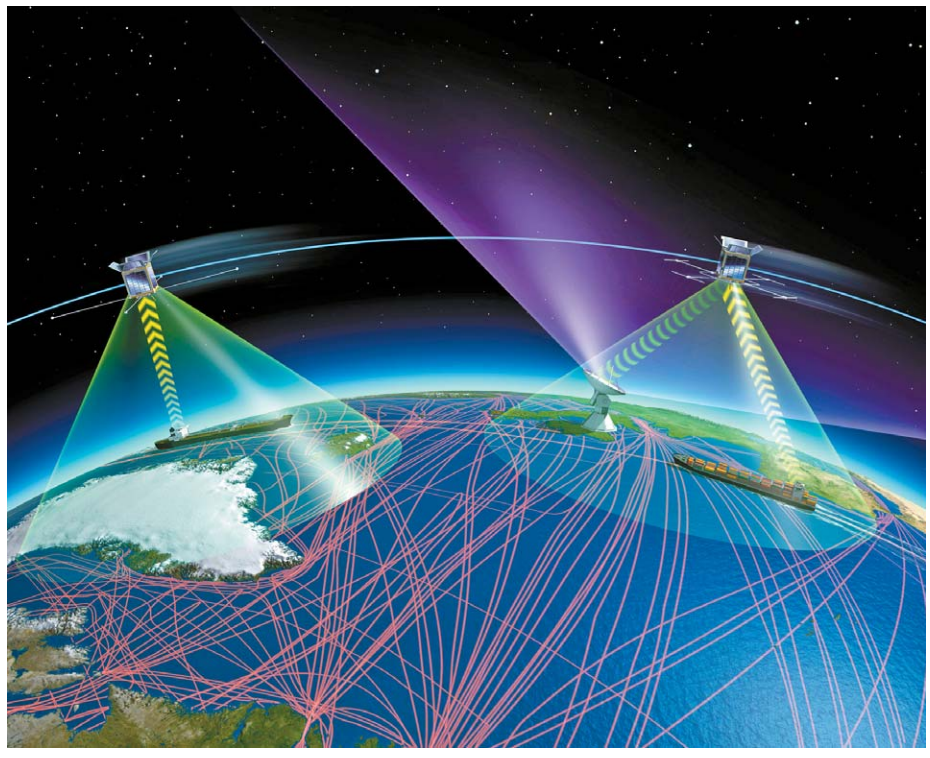


FIGURE 3

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A Cruiser's Guide to Provisioning in the Eastern Caribbean

by Lynn Kaak

Introduction

This is not a definitive listing of places to shop; there are cruising guides that do that. What I will do is make it easier to figure out where to get larger quantities of provisions, and maybe some other things, with the greatest ease and best selection, with a few other hints thrown in. Not all islands will be mentioned, as not all have particularly decent provisioning options.

If you're from North America or Europe, as you shop in the Eastern Caribbean islands, you will see local brands that you might not recognize. Don't be afraid to try them. They are often a fraction of the cost, and usually quite good. An added bonus: high-fructose corn syrup is not a common ingredient in Caribbean-made foods, with cane sugar being the preferred sweetener. And who wouldn't prefer "Morning O's" for breakfast instead of just "Cheerios"?



A roadside shop in Luperón, Dominican Republic. 'Small grocery stores offer the basics, and some provide wonderful surprises'

There is also a cruiser belief that one *must* go to the French islands for inexpensive wine. I am going to dispute that. A decent bottle of French wine will cost about five Euros, assuming you know that it is a decent wine (French does not automatically equal excellent). This is equivalent to about EC$15. For about EC$15 one can buy some very decent South American wines in some of the larger English-speaking islands.

However, the cheeses to go with that wine are far, far more affordable in the French islands, as are most dairy products.

Speaking of dairy products, if North Americans can become used to UHT milk, it makes shopping far easier. Many of the milks found in the dairy cooler are either close to expiry because they have spent the last week on a cargo ship, or are reconstituted. Not all UHT milk has a strong aftertaste, so a little experimentation is worthwhile. After a while, you'll become used to it, and you don't have an option to buy non-UHT in many places.

The Virgin Islands

Starting with the northern end of the Lesser Antilles, the Virgin Islands are a cruising hotbed. Despite the best efforts of Irma and Maria to rearrange the landscape last September, things are now happening here. Many bareboats and crewed charters provision in the Virgins, so getting what you want, and reasonably accessible, is not a concern. St. Thomas has a "real" Home Depot, which speaks for itself. Did I mention duty free, too?

The Leeward Islands

• St. Maarten-St. Martin is a duty-free mecca. Within Simpson Bay Lagoon are dinghy docks within a reasonable distance of well-stocked supermarkets, and enough duty-free liquor suppliers to scare anybody's liver. The ACE Hardware on the main road close to the "border" has a wide selection of things, including 20-pound propane tanks at a reasonable price.

Prime is the place you really want to go for deals. They sell larger quantities of food and everything else, plus they are distributors for alcohol, including the higher-end stuff. Cost-U-Less in Phillipsburg requires a bus ride or taxi, but is also a favourite for cruisers. If you can't get it in St. Maarten, you aren't likely to find it anywhere else down island, either.

• Basseterre on St Kitts has a couple of smaller supermarkets a stone's throw from the marina. Their selection is decent, owing to the medical schools in the area, and the prices won't shock you. Borrow a cart to bring your haul back to the boat or dinghy. The marina is right at the cruise ship dock, with all of its duty-free stores. While often not the place to find deals, if you are there out of season, you may discover some excellent bargains.

• Antigua is easy. Jolly Harbour has a pretty well stocked supermarket right there, and for a small tip, your purchases will be carted out to the docks. Take a bus to the large Epicurean Supermarket just outside St. John's, and you will find almost everything you need, including the largest selection of specialty snack foods you will probably find anywhere in the Caribbean. This is where you can find peanut butter made of nothing but peanuts.

Falmouth Harbour has two smallish markets close to the bay. Bailey's isn't bad, and the market at the Antigua Yacht Club might surprise you with some of the things you can find. And of course, the market in St John's is a great place to find your fresh fruits and vegetables.

• After checking in to Guadeloupe at Deshaies, a few miles down the coast you will find Malendure, with a Leader Price close by the water within a reasonable walk to a dock. It's a Leader Price — what more needs to be said?

Pointe-à-Pitre is Guadeloupe's biggest town. Right at the Marina Bas du Fort is a Carrefour Market that makes stocking up easy, and within two kilometres is a Casino Geant. If you are familiar with the HyperU and the massive Carrefours, you understand that this store has almost everything; it even has Soda Stream accessories.

While in Pointe-à-Pitre, you are also close to the fifth-biggest Zone Industrielle in all of France and her Departments — 33 hectares of supplies, including 1001 Piles, a store specialising in batteries for mobile devices, including laptops, phones and tablets.

—Continued on next page



—Continued from previous page

There is also an immense chandlery on the edge of the Zone, which some of the more intrepid cruisers access by dinghy. This area is accessible by public transit, with communal taxis (TaxiCo's) and municipal buses providing transport.

The large Carrefour in the Destreland mall is also easily accessible by public transport. This mall also has a Decathlon (a fantastic sporting goods store) and a Mr. Bricolage (like a small Home Depot). This is a one-stop consumerism fix.

Of course, there is an excellent market, including a busy fish market, right downtown for your fresh-food needs. This is easily accessible by dinghy, or about a two-kilometre walk.



KAAK

Above: At Le Marin, Martinique, provisioning is extremely convenient. You can almost drive your grocery cart right into your dinghy

Right: There are even some warehouse-type stores in the islands where you can stock up on caseloads

• In Dominica, Portsmouth has a very good Saturday market, while the little stores along the main street will eventually take care of what you need, even if you have to go store by store. The fish market is phenomenal.

The Windward Islands

• Martinique is probably the single best place to get almost anything. Right in Fort de France, you have a Leader Price on the waterfront, and a Carrefour maybe a kilometre in to the center of town. There are a couple of great farmers' markets in the town, with a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, including some you might not see elsewhere. There is another massive Carrefour, like Walmart with better-dressed customers, an easy bus ride away (conveniently close to the Dillon Rhum Distillery), and the Galleria mall with the HyperU can be reached via the Ducos TaxiCo, which can be caught right by the ferry docks. The Decathlon and Mr. Bricolage are diagonally across the insane roundabout from the Galleria. This mall is also an instant consumerism fix.

Le Marin is, in my opinion, the easiest place to provision. The Leader Price has a newly refurbished dinghy dock that you are encouraged to bring your shopping cart back to. There is a Carrefour Market just up the hill, and both stores will deliver to the marina. Closer to the Capitanerie is a Simply Supermarket, about 400 metres from the dinghy dock. The covered market provides an acceptable selection.

• Rodney Bay, St. Lucia, just 23 miles south of Le Marin, is the second-easiest place to provision. There is a dinghy dock provided at the far end of the lagoon for access to two supermarkets. Both Massy and Massy Gourmet are an easy buggy push from the dinghy dock, and between the two, you can find your chia seeds and Greek yogurt, as well as locally grown food.

For a bigger provision, catch the bus to the Massy Mega and stock up on caseloads. This warehouse-type store is also home to ACE Hardware and Courts, so you can get more oil for the diesel, new pillows, and a massive pack of frozen sausages in one go. You can get them to call a taxi to get your goods back to the dinghy dock or the marina, or try to cram yourself back into a bus.

The Rodney Bay Marina hosts a small farmers' market on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

• In St. Vincent & the Grenadines, many cruisers who need to do more than pick up a few odds and ends like to anchor in Bequia and take the ferry to Kingstown to visit two adequate supermarkets not far from the ferry wharf: Greaves and Massy. At Greaves, if you shop more than an hour before the ferry heads back to Bequia, ask them at checkout to box your goods and deliver them by truck to the ferry for you (ask for a marker to label your boxes). Otherwise, there are "cart guys" by the door who will take your parcels in an old-fashioned wooden pushcart, an adventure in itself.

At the farmers' market in Kingstown on Saturdays you can get an array of fresh produce on the street just past the actual market building.

In Bequia, check out Doris Fresh Food for high-end specialty items.

• Carriacou is the home of a new, large supermarket at Tyrell Bay — Alexis has taken shopping on the island to a new level.

• Grenada is another place with easy shopping, with cruiser shopping buses operating from popular anchorages a couple of times a week. With a large medical and veterinary sciences university catering to North American students, there is no problem getting what you want, as long as it is in stock. Imported food arrives by container on Thursdays, making Fridays the best grocery-shopping day. CK's, the cash-and-carry store, will deliver for free. Closer to Port Louis Marina, there is a Food Land and two wholesale distributors that welcome cruisers.

Trinidad

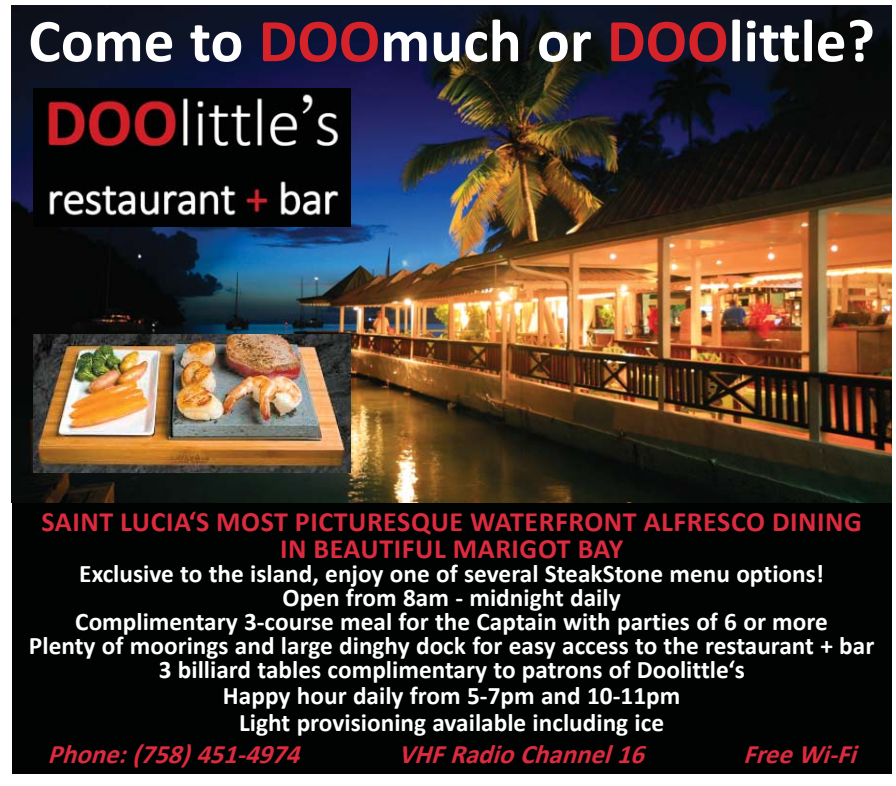
• Trinidad has what you need, and quite affordably. Bus trips for shopping at the malls or going to the store near to the boatyards should take care of your needs, and still leave plenty in your wallet for some doubles.



A Final Word

These are the major places to buy large quantities of groceries. However, the little rum shops and small grocery stores offer the basics, and some provide wonderful surprises, but they won't be where you want to fill up before heading off on a long passage, or restocking major supplies. Regardless of the size of the town, people there need to eat, so you will always find something available, but with a smaller selection and in lesser quantities.









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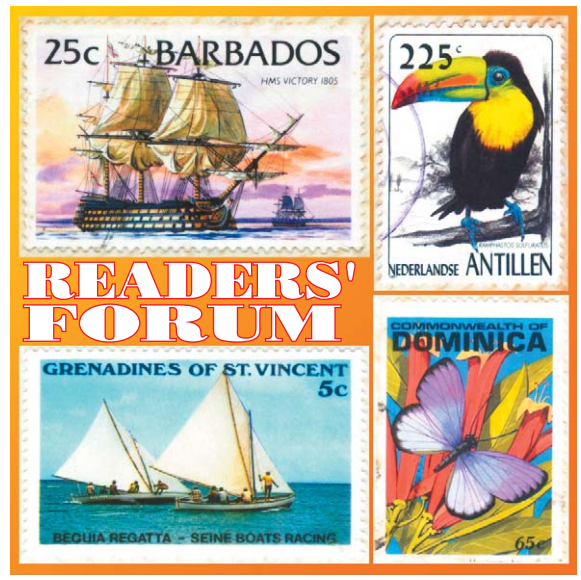
Read in Next Month's *Compass*:

Records Shattered in 'Wild' Round Barbados Race

Minimizing Hurricane Risk for Stored Yachts

Glimpses of Cienfuegos, Cuba

... and much, much more!



HOW SAILING HAS AFFECTED MY LIFE

Dear *Caribbean Compass*,

I am very thankful for your interest in how sailing affected my life and future career. I believe that what you do is amazing. This article ["Following Blanca y Antonio" in Y2A by Ellen Birrell, in the January 2018 issue of *Caribbean Compass*] may help many to realize the importance of a child's future, it will influence society to stand up for one another to make a difference, and will help those who are struggling with the same situation to overcome it.

I am currently completely focused on my studies as it is my last year of high school; as you know this is really important. I still try to sail as often as I can and also compete on team sports at my school.

Given the amazing opportunity to compete in sailing for my country at an international level taught me very valuable life lessons that I incorporate daily. As 2017 is coming to a close, my whole focus is on obtaining a full scholarship to an international university where I can pursue both my academic and sailing careers. I dream of being a doctor and then becoming a plastic surgeon.

With regard to my sailing career, I want to race in international championships; I love racing and know that I would always put my 110 percent into every race. I want to be coached to become the best and I feel very confident that I will be a valuable asset on any team. My home life the past couple of years has been complicated and difficult but thanks to my sailing club, beautiful Belizeans and great friends' support, many issues have been resolved and now I am in a better place to focus on my studies and betterment.

A big thank-you once more for your support and I send my love from Belize.

Truly yours,
Blanca Velasquez
Belize

ANCHOR BUOYS: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY TRUTH

Dear *Caribbean Compass*,

In my experience there are only one or two instances that I have observed when deploying an anchor buoy is a reasonable option. This would include use by single-handed sailors or use in very gnarly and rocky bottoms where an anchor could easily get stuck.

In crowded anchorages, a buoy can be a hindrance rather than an advantage to other cruisers who are trying to find a safe spot to drop the hook. In these tight anchorages we can't all enjoy full swinging room, so it is inevitable that someone else's boat will be over your anchor some of the time. Relax. It will not be a problem unless you leave before them, and then it may only take waiting for the right conditions, or communicating your intentions beforehand if you are planning to leave during the night.

It seems somewhat arrogant to expect others to respect your anchor by deploying a buoy when not enough room is available for everyone to do the same. In the increasingly popular Eastern Caribbean anchorages, this is typically the norm — there are more boats than most of us are comfortable with, but we manage by being respectful and patient and communicating our intentions.

The really ugly side of anchor buoys is something most users are either not aware of, or they feel the odds are small enough to ignore the risk. Firstly, your props or rudders could snag your own buoy on a calm night as your boat drifts lazily over your anchor, and if the wind picks up, could quite easily drag your anchor along directly underneath you on a one-to-one scope. The outcome of this happening could be catastrophic, and it has happened on numerous occasions.

Secondly, and even more dangerous, is the snagging by another boat's props as it powers over your unseen anchor buoy at night. This recently happened to us on a busy, noisy night in Fort de France, Martinique. We were the innocent boat anchored a "safe" distance off the port bow of a large ketch when it suddenly started to move quickly toward our starboard side at an angle of 45 degrees, heading directly towards our midships, the large bowsprit an ominous battering ram. Neither we nor the owners of the ketch had any idea what was causing the two boats to come together. The offending catalyst of the event was discovered a few seconds later when a local power boat appeared alongside our port side with the crew shouting at us and pushing against our hull with their feet to ward us off. They mistakenly thought that our chain was fouled in their prop. But after closer examination it turned out that the ketch had deployed an anchor buoy and the connecting line had been snagged by the power boat as it crossed in front of us, dragging the ketch's 40-kilo anchor out, and continued on its way, arcing around us before hitting our hull and bringing all three boats together, also fouling all our bottom tackle with the ketch's to the point that it could only be untangled the next morning by putting a diver down. Needless to say, damage was done, mostly to the stomach and ribs of a friend who was sitting on the coach roof of our boat as he bravely positioned himself as a human fender to ward of the invading bowsprit.

The other good news is that it appears that after spending six years in the Caribbean, the use of anchor buoys seems to be on the decrease, although this may just be positive thinking.

Steve White
S/V BlueZulu

TAKE CARE WHEN SWIMMING OFF YOUR BOAT

Dear *Caribbean Compass*,

When you're anchored in Simpson Bay, St. Maarten; Jolly Harbour, Antigua; Gosier, Guadeloupe; Les Saintes; Portsmouth, Dominica; Ste. Anne, Martinique; Rodney Bay, St. Lucia or anywhere else boats congregate, take great care whenever swimming off your boat or diving on your anchor.

Jet-ski operators, whether untrained tourists or experienced PWC owners, will zoom too close to your boat at maximum speeds.

This isn't a rant about those "devil jet-skis" because fishing pirogues and water taxis do it, too.

Even cruisers' dinghies will often pass by your boarding ladder just a few metres away. We've all seen fast RIB dinghies filled with people — but where's the driver? Those passengers have blocked forward visibility for the driver in the stern while engaged in conversation, so they are often not looking forward.

Many of these folks seem to have little or no concept of the danger they present to swimmers.

But you do!

When we dive on our anchor in busy bays we try to either escort the snorkeler with the dinghy and a driver, or keep a sharp watch while standing at the bow with a loud air horn, ready to sound a warning.

Ken and Lynn
Silverheels III

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

***Dear* Compass *Readers*,**

We want to hear from YOU!

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

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

Send your letters to sally@caribbeancompass.com.



‘FOD Weather Net’ Ends as Meteorologist Swallows Anchor

by Laurie Corbett

In his book *The Tipping Point,* Malcolm Gladwell advises you to determine who the “connectors” are in your life by listing your friends and remembering how you met them. Chances are good that one person, sometimes two, are involved in the majority of your acquaintances and friendships — whether they have introduced you to numerous people, or set the stage so that you met them, it might not have happened without the “connector”. For many of us sailors in the Caribbean right now, Denis and Arleen Webster of *S/V Tiger Lily II* have turned out to be our greatest connectors.





Main photo: Friends of Denis convene for beer and pizza aboard the ‘dinghy donut’ in Prickly Bay, Grenada

Inset: Denis and his wife, Arleen, are connectors

Over the past 11 years, a growing number of Caribbean cruisers have started their winter-season days with their single side band radio turned to 4420 for Denis’ Weather. The program would start with a synopsis of the active weather systems in the Caribbean and a review of how each system would affect the weather over the following few days. It would be followed by an open program where anyone who was planning a passage could call in for Denis’ opinion on when they should go and when they shouldn’t. The program was well peppered with local weather reports from cruisers, social happenings, and calls for technical assistance or aid coordination.

After Denis retired as a senior meteorologist for the Canadian government, and Arleen finished her career as a teacher, they left Canada in 1991 in a Tayana 37, *Tiger Lily*. They spent the majority of their early cruising life enjoying the southern and western edges of the Caribbean Sea. However, when they bought *Tiger Lily II*, a Hylas 47, in 2000, their insurance agency refused to insure it for those areas, and they agreed to stick to Trinidad, Tobago, and the Windwards and Leewards.

Denis explained why he kept his previous occupation a secret: “I didn’t want everyone in the bay second-guessing the motivation for my every move, or following me from bay to bay, thinking I knew something about the weather that they didn’t.” However, he was always active on the Ham and SSB early-morning weather nets, acquiring and discussing the weather information that might be available. He also met a close group of friends on 4420 every morning, discussing their comings and goings, the local weather, and promoting group input into technical problems they or others might have. I was lucky enough as a relatively new cruiser to join their morning meetings in 2005, and began to enjoy better passage weather, better sourcing of needed parts and repair expertise, and a way to keep track of the growing numbers of friends.

If you shared a bay with *Tiger Lily II* or other members of this band of friends, you would be invited to join them in one of their cockpits for sundowners. Denis jokingly referred to these get-togethers as SEED meetings – the Society of Early Evening Drinkers.

The group on 4420 grew as more and more people knew a good thing, and as more asked Denis for advice for passages. By 2006, the net had evolved into a platform for Denis to assist cruisers, and he became the net controller. Besides providing information that improved the safety of passages, Denis also promoted social activities. Hikes, lunches, visits to attractions, and reviews of the previous day’s activities were organized and discussed. As people called in from a location or headed to a location, Denis would advise them of other listeners who were in that bay, and suggest a “SEED meeting”; insisting only three persons were required for a “quorum” to carry out the necessary “business”. The “minutes” of the meetings always seemed to get lost!

Denis’ dedication to this new net and his followers was quite significant. Although he had to start each day before or near sunrise to get the necessary data and organize it, he seldom missed a morning. We were also quite aware throughout the phenomenon that this net was significantly altering our Caribbean experience. In 2009, a hard-core group of us were enjoying a “meeting” in Grenada at the start of the cruising season, when one bright fellow (John of *S/V Free Spirit*) suggested we meet up with Jules, the flag-maker at the Grenada Yacht Club, and design a burgee for the group. We quickly promoted our station to represent all Friends of Denis, and ordered up the first batch of red FOD Burgees, and passed them out, to the surprise of Denis and Arleen. Of course he was surprised at our enthusiasm; but also a little concerned that FOD also stood for Forecast On Demand, a very negative term in the field of meteorology (what did we know?). Still, he chose to ignore the second potential meaning and to embrace the bestowed honour. Many other burgees were ordered in batches from Miss Mary, the Flag Lady of Rodney Bay, and distributed.

As the group grew, and each morning dozens of people called for advice or to announce they had arrived at their destination, another skill became obvious: Denis and Arleen had an uncanny memory of the names of people and their boats. People who had called in years earlier, then gone missing, would be greeted with total recall; people they had met in the early 1990s and not since would be recognized by boat name with total recall. If Denis faltered, Arleen would chime in as his “external hard drive”.

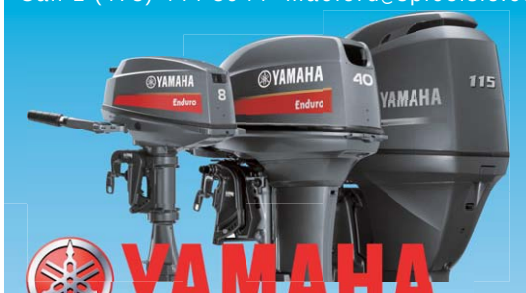
Although always with the meteorologist’s “boiler-plate” disclaimer that the decision is made by the captain, Denis and Arleen were influencing when people changed islands and bays, and who met whom in each bay, from the Virgins to the ABCs, and even farther afield. As for whatever bay they were in, that could sometimes be frenetic. Their own popularity had them picking and choosing between the invitations to any sundowner meeting, hike, walk, beach day, game of *boules*, or luncheon being held in their own location. A tradition on Christmas morning for *Tiger Lily II* was to deliver cinnamon bun or two to every friend in the anchorage, while Arleen wore a delightfully outrageous fur-trimmed red Christmas bikini.

Denis and Arleen’s influence upon the lives of their followers has been strong. A British couple whose company we all enjoyed once explained that getting up for the “FOD Show” was interfering with their sex life — yet I do not recall them missing a morning of broadcast.

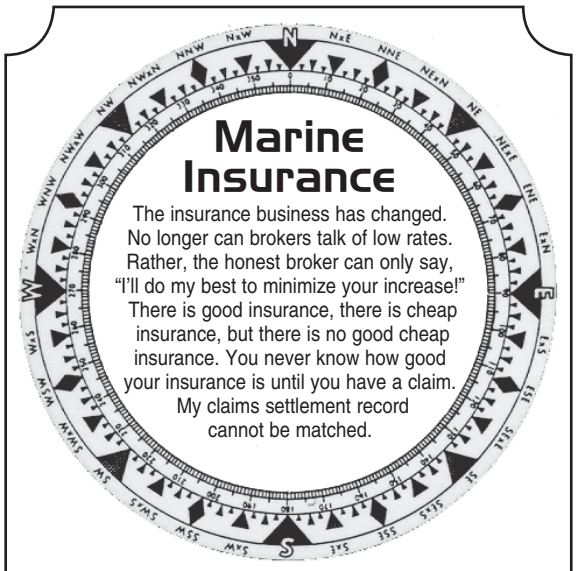
Is it the end of an era for the FODers? Well, we have a better understanding of Caribbean weather; we have many fond memories of our times with Denis and Arleen, and an amazing list of Caribbean friends. A group has started an echo of a net with the same schedule: 4420 every morning at 7:45, with Denis and Arleen’s blessing. The objective is to maintain the contacts, keep track of comings and goings, get repair advice, suggest hikes, organize SEED Meetings, and even attempt to acquire weather information. Please call in — it isn’t too late to join. Indeed, Miss Mary, the Flag Lady of Rodney Bay, is still selling FOD burgees, and we’re still flying them. As well, Terry of *Silk Pajamas* may have one or two FOD calendars available.

As for Denis and Arleen, well, they have not exactly swallowed the anchor. They have acquired a lovely Jeanneau 40 in Canada, *S/V Vitesse II*, in which they are already enjoying the summers, cruising Georgian Bay and the Great Lakes. Winters will likely see them doing some traveling — at something faster than five knots.

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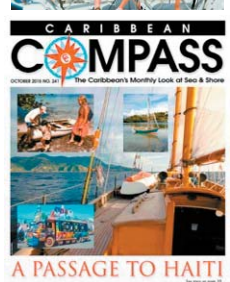
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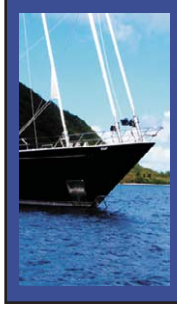
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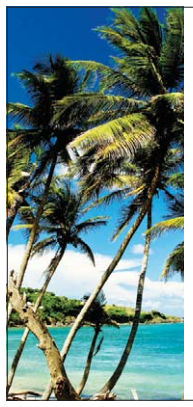
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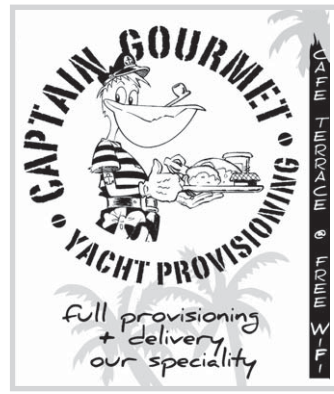


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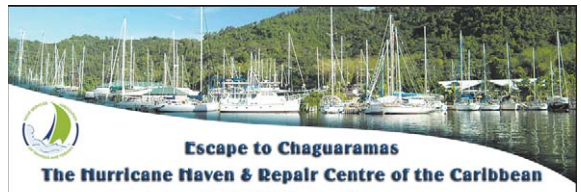
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Carl Olivier
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CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

2	World Wetlands Day. www.ramsar.org/activity/world-wetlands-day
3 - 4	Grenada Sailing Festival Workboat Races. www.facebook.com/WorkboatRegatta
3 - 4	Crucian Open Regatta, St. Croix. www.stcroixyc.com/Cruzan-Open
6 – 10	Round Martinique Regatta. www.theroundmartinique.com
7	Public holiday in Grenada (Independence Day)
9 - 12	Jolly Harbour Valentine's Regatta, Antigua. www.jhycantigua.com
9 - 13	Semaine Nautique Internationale de Schoelcher, Martinique. www.cnschoelcher.net/regates
10	St. Kitts KiteBoarding National Championship
10 – 11	Puerto del Rey Sailing Challenge, Puerto Rico. www.facebook.com/Puerto-Del-Rey-Sailing-Challenge
11	Sailors' & Landlubbers' Auction, Bequia, www.bequiasunshineschool.org
11	Karnaval Parades, Bonaire & Curaçao. www.infobonaire.com/www.curacao.com
12 – 13	Carnival Monday and Tuesday in most Dutch and French islands, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Dominica, Carriacou, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela and other places
13	Round Redonda Race. www.jhycantigua.com
16	Antigua 360 Race. www.antiguayachtclub.com
16 – 18	Pan Pepin International Dinghy Regatta, Puerto Rico. www.nauticodesanjuan.com
18 – 25	Yachtie Appreciation Week, Dominica. SEE AD ON PAGE 7
19	Start of RORC Caribbean 600 race, Antigua, http://caribbean600.rorc.org
19	Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI (Presidents' Day)
22	Public holiday in St. Lucia (Independence Day)
23	Public holiday in Guyana (Republic Day)
24	Governor's Cup race, BVI. www.royalbviyc.org
24 – 3 Mar	St. Petersburg – Havana Regatta. epennin09@earthlink.net
25	Public holiday in Suriname (Liberation Day)
27	Public holiday in Dominican Republic (Independence Day)

MARCH

1	Gill Commodore's Cup, St. Maarten, www.heinekenregatta.com
2	Public holiday in Guyana and Suriname (Holi observed)
2	FULL MOON
2 – 4	St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, www.heinekenregatta.com
5	Public holiday in BVI (HL Stoutt's birthday observed)
8	International Women's Day; public holiday in St. Barts (Mi-Careme)
9 - 11	St. Croix International Regatta. SCYC, www.stcroixyc.com/event
9 - 12	Caribbean Superyacht Regatta, Virgin Gorda. www.boatinternational.com/luxury-yacht-events
12	Public holiday in Belize (National Heroes' Day) and in BVI (Commonwealth Day)
14	Public holiday in St. Vincent & the Grenadines (National Heroes' Day)
15 – 18	St Barths Bucket Regatta. www.BucketRegatta.com
17	Public holiday in Montserrat (St. Patrick's Day); St. Patrick's Day Festival, Grenada
18	Public holiday in Aruba (Flag Day)
20	Vernal Equinox
22	Public holiday in Puerto Rico (Emancipation Day)
22	STIR Round St. John Race, USVI. https://stthomasinternationalregatta.com
23 – 25	St. Thomas International Regatta, USVI. https://stthomasinternationalregatta.com
24 – 25	Antigua Laser Open. AYC, www.antiguayachtclub.com
26 – 1 April	BVI Spring Regatta & Sailing Festival. www.bvispringregatta.org
29 – 2 April	Bequia Easter Regatta. BSC, www.bequiaregatta.com. See ad on page 10
30	Public holiday in many places (Good Friday); and in Trinidad & Tobago (Spiritual Baptist "Shouter" Liberation Day)
30	Vuelta al Cayo Youth Regatta, Samaná, DR. www.puertobahiasamana.com
31	FULL MOON
TBA	Puerto Rico Heineken Jazz Fest. www.prheinekenjazz.com
TBA	Annual Dark & Stormy Regatta, Anegada. WEYC, www.facebook.com/groups/weycbvi

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

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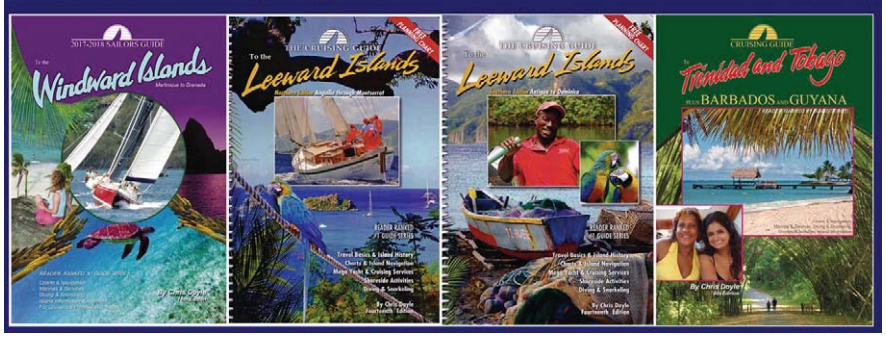
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Budget Marine St. Kitts	St. Kitts	MP
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MP = Market Place pages 42 - 44
C/W = Caribbean-wide

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