CARIBBEAN COMPASS
On-line
FEBRUARY 2021 NO. 305
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

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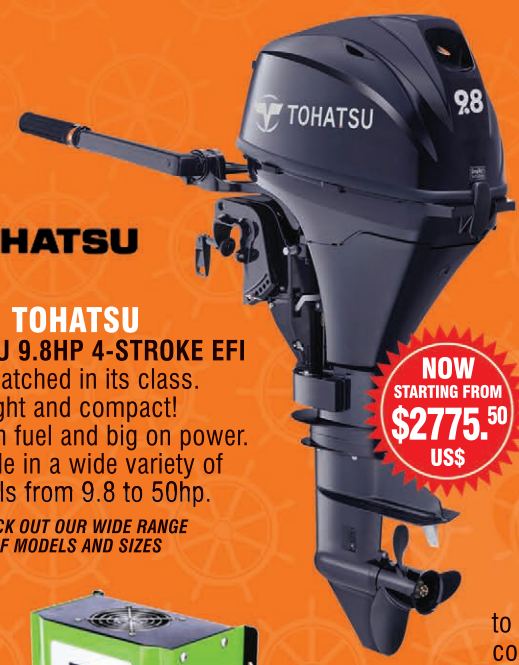


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CARIBBEAN
COMPASS
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

FEBRUARY 2021 • ISSUE 305


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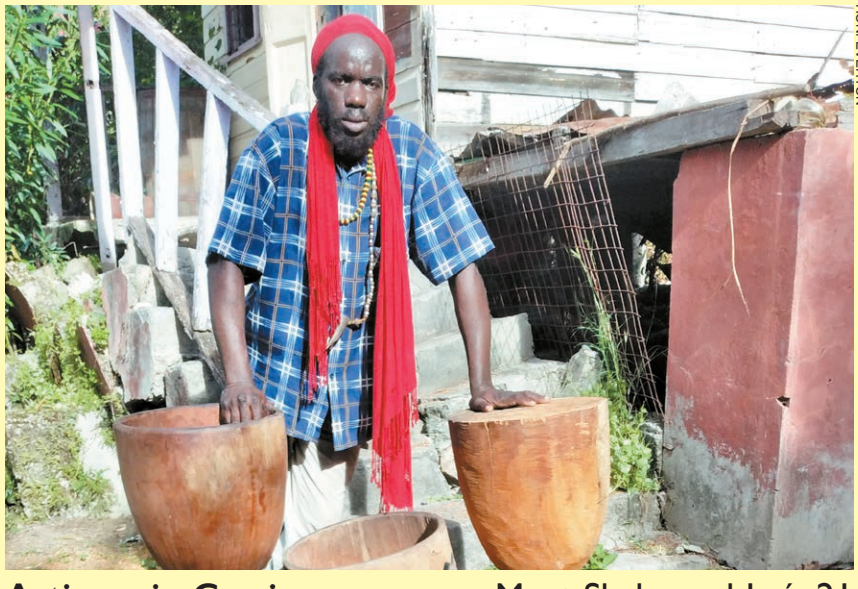
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It's an unusual winter for sure, but the Caribbean still has the places, races and faces you love! Turn the pages for more.
Photo by Richard Sherman

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



'*Caribbean Compass* is very informative and raises important issues for sailors who spend extensive time in the Caribbean.'
— Readers' Survey respondent

CARIBBEAN COMPASS

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Info & Updates

NOAA discontinues paper charts

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will discontinue production of its traditional paper nautical charts and related raster products. This gradual cancellation of charts will be completed in January 2025. This is part of a strategy to improve NOAA's premier navigational chart product, the electronic navigational chart (ENC), and provide options to obtain products derived from ENCs. NOAA is creating more detailed (larger scale) ENC coverage, which has not been available on the existing paper charts. ENC data also enables safer voyage planning and route monitoring while underway, in chart plotters and other chart display systems that can initiate alarms when a ship is heading toward shallow water or other dangers.

Updates to ENCs are posted weekly and may be downloaded for free from NOAA's Office of Coast Survey Chart Locator at https://charts.noaa.gov/InteractiveCatalog/nrnc.shtml. Other products and resources, including the US Coast Pilot, are available at the Coast Survey website at https://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov.

While traditional paper chart production will be ending, recreational users will be able to create their own paper/raster charts with a new online NOAA Custom Chart (NCC) application at https://devgis.charttools.noaa.gov/pod. These charts will be created directly from the latest ENC data and as the National Charting Plan predicted, will be a slightly different looking nautical chart product. It is anticipated that commercial vendors will be able to print large format NCC charts for mariners who want a paper chart.

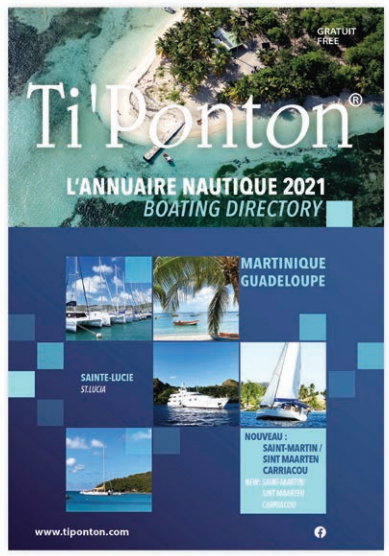
More information about how paper/raster charts and ENC differ is available at https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/charts/rnc-and-enc-comparison.html. Comments and questions about NCC or any other NOAA navigational products may be submitted at www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/customer-service/assist.

***Ti'Ponton* boating directory now available**

Ti'Ponton is the most comprehensive information resource of the boating business in Martinique, Guadeloupe and St. Lucia. It is packed with practical information, useful addresses, the right contacts and all the things that help you make the most of your Caribbean cruise.

New for 2021, this 16th edition of *Ti'Ponton* includes new destinations: St. Maarten/St. Martin and Carriacou.

Ti'Ponton is a free publication and can be picked up all year round in Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia and now also in St. Maarten/St. Martin.



MAYAG wins award for yacht arrival protocol

The Marine and Yachts Association of Grenada (MAYAG) won a special People's Tourism Choice Award from the Grenada Tourism Authority for its work on and management of the 2020 Integrated Yacht Arrival Protocol. This protocol enabled over 500 yachts with more than 1,200 crew aboard to arrive in Grenada during May through August last year as yachts sailed to Grenada to shelter for the hurricane season.

The Integrated Yacht Arrival Protocol is now being managed by the authorities in Grenada. If you are on a yacht and you want to come to Grenada then you must do the following:

- Register on SailClear at https://SailClear.com at least 24 hours before arrival.
- Take a PCR test a maximum of 72 hours before your departure to Grenada.
- You will be required to quarantine on your yacht for four days, after which you will be tested again. Once the results are negative you will get permission to clear in.
- If your sailing time (with no landfall) is more than four days and you have GPS track to prove this, then you may be able to take a test on arrival or at the earliest opportunity and be exempt from the four days quarantine. You will be advised on arrival.

See the relevant document on the MAYAG website https://grenadagrenadines.com or on the government covid19 website https://covid19.gov.gd

Antigua trains sailing instructors

Antigua & Barbuda's National Sailing Academy (NSA) announced that ten trainees have completed their Power Boat Level 2 training and their First Aid Certification and are well on their way to becoming RYA Certified Dinghy Sailing Instructors. As part of their training they will be taught how to adapt their equipment and their approach to ensure they can safely deliver training to people of all abilities, and how to assess and develop the differently abled sailors within their limitations. The courses were delivered by Ondeck Antigua and Antigua and Barbuda Search and Rescue.

The training programme is run by Sailing Manager Sylvester Thomas. Of the programme he says, "Yachting is a key pillar of the economy and at the National Sailing Academy we are building a foundation for future sailors in Antigua and Barbuda.

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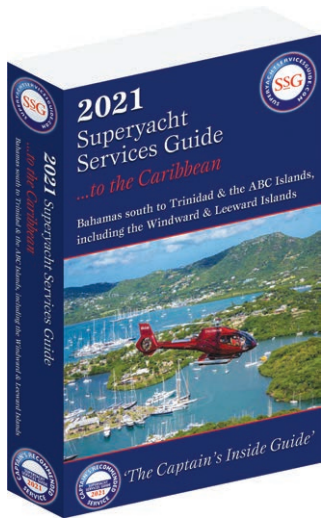
This latest group of trainees have learnt to sail at the Academy and by putting them through our instructor training we are preparing them for their yachting careers."

The students involved are Jody Thomas, Lily Barkoye, Ta Janica Thomas, Alliana Spencer, Craig Greenaway, Kayon Guiste, Tssadiq Tappin, Hassani Joseph, Justin Meyer and Jahmarly Edwards.

The NSA is an inclusive sailing school that delivers sailing lessons to youths and adults of all abilities. For youths the lessons are free as part of the National Curriculum and are funded through private donations.

The school is located on Dockyard Drive, English Harbour. Contributions from all of the English Harbour tenants, private donations, private sailing lessons, and kayak, SUP and boat rentals, all contribute to the funding of the school.

Visit www.nationalsailingacademy.org for more information.



2021 *Superyacht Services Guide to the Caribbean*

The *Superyacht Services Guide* is a comprehensive guide to recommended services and shoreside activities in each island destination from the Bahamas to the ABCs, including the Windward and Leeward Islands.

From links to the latest Covid regulations in each island, local organic farmer contacts, discreet taxi drivers, trusted engineers and carpenters, to a dedicated specialist list of full-service marinas and haul-out facilities for yachts over 30 metres, this guide has it all!

Available in print from www.bluewaterweb.com, digital at https://issuu.com/superyachtservicesguide/docs/car21-flipbook and online at www.superyachtservicesguide.com

Eight Bells

• LINDA KNOWLES

Linda Marie Knowles, one of the founders of the Salty Dawg Rally, died unexpectedly of a heart attack in her home in Vero Beach, Florida on November 14th, 2020. She was 71 years old.

Born in Buffalo, New York, she was a devoted wife of 36 years to her husband William (Bill) P. Knowles. They spent the last 15 years living on their sailboat *Sapphire,* cruising from the northeast US to the Caribbean each year. During this time, they founded the Salty Dawg Rally in 2011. The organization has grown to become the Salty Dawg Sailing Association, with over 800 members and hosting many events each year. Linda served as Vice President from 2013 until her death.



A Celebration of Life was held virtually on December 5th, with family and friends.

The family has requested in memory of Linda Marie Knowles and her passion for helping sailors and the communities they visit, that donations be made to the Salty Dawg Sailing Association, a 501(c)(3) organization, at www.saltydawgsailing.org/donations.

• VERNON WATSON

Vernon N. Watson, OBE and former leader of the Barbados Landship Association, died on January 9th at his home in St. Michael, Barbados. He was 89 years old.



BARBADOS GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE

The Landship is a uniquely Barbadian indigenous cultural and social organization, acting as both a grass-roots credit union and a performance troupe. Unfortunately, it is now mostly a thing of the past. Oral history refers to 1863 as the year when forming ships on land began. Individual groups are called ships, and have had names such as *Queen Mary* and *Iron Duke*. The headquarters of a ship is called the dock, and titles such as captain and admiral are used among the members. In 1931, a central authority, the Barbados Landship Association, was formed to oversee the administration of the various groups.

Traditional Landship performances combined elements of naval lore with African-Caribbean performance tradition. When on parade, some Landships created the image of a ship through the use of ropes: the crew on the outside of the formation held the ropes while the Sailing Master marched on ahead. A tuk band, known as the "engine," delivered the musical wind force for the ships to set sail. A uniformed group of men, women, boys and girls marched out in straight-line formation, and then performed "manoeuvres." When the Sailing Master called out "rough seas," they danced around the parade space, creating the image of sails tossed in the wind. At "man overboard," a member of the crew dramatically fell to the ground and a nurse revived him with "quinine" — actually white rum. (See Marcia Burrows's article in *Caribbean Beat* magazine at www.caribbean-beat.com/issue-123/landship-ahoy)

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In 1998, Watson was awarded an Order of the British Empire (OBE) by the Queen. He became a Justice of the Peace in 2016. In the Barbados Landship Association, he attained the title of Lord High Admiral.

Bequia Music Fest postponed

The Bequia Tourism Association and the Bequia Musicfest Committee have postponed the Bequia Music Festival 2021, originally scheduled for January, due to an SVG-wide ban on amplified music that was put in place following a surge in Covid cases. The tentative new date for 2021's "Homemade Edition" will be March 11th through 14th.

Visit www.bequiamusicfestival.com for more information.

Martinique Carnival 2021 cancelled

The decision was taken by Mayor Didier Laguerre of Fort de France, the leaders of the Southern Parade, the representatives of the groups on foot and the Prefect of Martinique Stanislas Cazelles that this year's Martinique Carnival festivities, originally planned for mid-February, will not take place, due to the Covid pandemic.

T&T yacht services await relief

The newly appointed president and board of the Yacht Service Association of Trinidad & Tobago (YSATT) report: YSATT pleads with the government authorities of Trinidad & Tobago to allow international yacht arrivals. Since the beginning of the pandemic the yacht services industry in Trinidad & Tobago has been largely shut down. The yacht services sector in Trinidad is world class and operates as a direct foreign exchange earning industry; this income is being lost. The customers of this industry directly and indirectly support several thousands of local workers and their families; their livelihoods are being lost.

Many yachts owned by international customers are in storage in Trinidad. Exemption requests to allow these boat owners to retrieve their property have been submitted via YSATT and await response from the authorities, as borders remain closed.

Caribbean nations such as Grenada and St. Lucia have successfully demonstrated the ability to welcome yachting customers through their ports with extremely low risk of Covid transmission. This has been achieved through testing, quarantine periods aboard vessels in designated areas, or designated hotels, and other strict controls.

In May 2020, a joint proposal made by YSATT and the Port Health Safety System (PHSS) for the safe re-opening of the yacht services industry was submitted to the Chief Medical Officer. Since then, YSATT has met regularly with relevant government officials and all requests for information were complied with. YSATT stands ready and willing to take any further action necessary. It is imperative that any approvals come ahead of the summer yacht-storage and hurricane season as many customers will require time to plan their journeys and make reservations for their arrivals. Should another summer season be missed or delayed, YSATT fears it could be the final nail in the coffin for many in the industry.

The YSATT-PHSS Proposal to the CMO has been since approved but the final decision is to be made by the Minister of National Security, which is now the main focus and drive of YSATT. The Ministry of Trade and Industry has been making strong representation on behalf of YSATT.

Visit www.ysatt.com and www.membersonlymaxitaxi.com for more information.

Carriacou heritage aims for UNESCO status

The Grenada Tourism Authority reports: Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique are working with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



JAN HEIN

(UNESCO) to record and highlight two of our heritage gems on the world stage: Traditional Wooden Boat Building and Carriacou Shakespeare Mas.

We are collaborating with stakeholders on preparations to have these heritage assets inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity.

We invite you to contribute to this momentous project by contacting our GTA Carriacou Office at (473) 443-7948.



Caribbean ECO-News

Caribbean coral reefs mapped

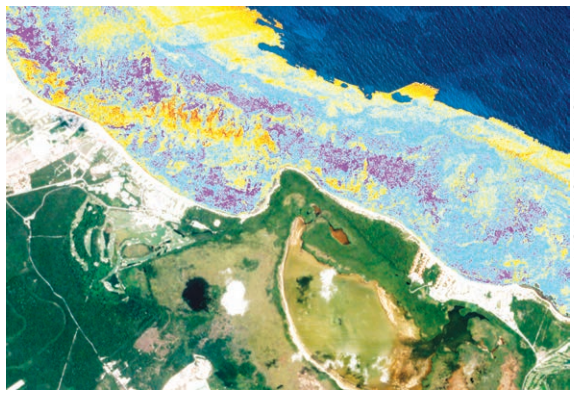
The Nature Conservancy has published the first-ever detailed maps of all Caribbean coral reefs. High-resolution maps of the underwater habitats of the entire Caribbean have the potential to transform marine conservation and significantly enhance our knowledge of the ocean. These revolutionary maps will help guide the sustainable use and protection of marine resources for island nations in which 60 percent of living coral has been lost in the past few decades alone.



STEVE SCHILL FOR TNC



STEVE SCHILL FOR TNC



TNC AND ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Top left: An aerial drone is launched to gather habitat imagery off the coast of St. Croix, USVI.

Above: An aerial drone is used to gather habitat imagery in Soufriere-Scott's Head Marine Reserve in Dominica.

Left: Airborne imagery map revealing habitat complexity at Bávaro, Dominican Republic, site.

These maps were created by stitching together tens of thousands of high-resolution satellite images, and in some places using aerial fly-over technology, drones, and divers to validate the data. By utilizing data captured from outer space to undersea, scientists were able to map and more accurately interpret the coastal ecosystems throughout the Caribbean. Having accurate and complete underwater habitat data for this region means that there is now cutting-edge guidance available to inform the sustainable use of marine resources on which 44 million Caribbean residents depend.

"You cannot protect what you don't know is there. Having access to these maps is a game-changing achievement for the Caribbean. Thirty countries and territories finally have access to better, more detailed information about their underwater habitats to help them better protect marine areas, support sustainable livelihoods and prioritize their adaptation to potential climate change impacts," said Dr. Robert Brumbaugh, Executive Director of The Nature Conservancy's Caribbean Division. "Understanding and protecting natural resources is critical to the economic success of these countries."

Roughly half of all livelihoods in Caribbean communities depend on healthy nearshore and coastal habitats. These maps are intended to inform a diverse array of conservation and policy decisions to protect and restore these essential coastal areas that people depend on. Decision-makers across the region can now use these new maps to identify areas optimal for coral restoration activities, guide climate change adaptation, and identify the best locations for establishing marine protected areas that successfully balance protection and diverse uses.

The finalized maps are now available at CaribbeanMarineMaps.tnc.org.

Dangerous levels of heavy metals in sharks

A new study found alarmingly large levels of 12 heavy metals, including mercury, in the muscle tissues of reef and tiger sharks sampled throughout the Bahamas. These findings carry important implications for human health in the Greater Caribbean Region, where people consume shark.

Sharks are apex predators. They naturally bioaccumulate toxins in their bodies from eating other species of fish. The impacts of heavy metals on shark health remain unknown. However, the concentrations of metals present in the study exceed levels considered toxic for human consumption. The study also finds that reef sharks, the more resident species, have higher mercury levels than tiger sharks.

The human health risks of ingesting heavy metals include muscular, physical and neurological degenerative processes that are similar to diseases such as Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and Alzheimer's disease. Symptoms of mercury poisoning in particular may include muscle weakness, poor coordination, numbness in the hands and feet, skin rashes, anxiety, memory problems, trouble speaking, trouble hearing, or trouble seeing. Since there is a risk to the fetus in particular, pregnant women are advised to avoid eating shark.

Dr. Oliver Shipley, the study's lead author, is a Research Associate at Beneath the Waves and postdoctoral researcher at The University of New Mexico.

Visit www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-79973-w to download an open-access PDF of the full research paper.

Seaweed-munching crabs may help save corals

While the health of coral reefs around the world has been on the decline for decades, new research suggests that they may have found an ally capable of turning the tide on coral reef decay: Caribbean King Crabs.

As a coral reef's health diminishes, rampant amounts of seaweed invade the space where the coral once thrived, making it even more difficult for corals to bounce back. Now, however, researchers report that they have come up with a potential solution that relies heavily on the seaweed-heavy diet of one special crustacean.

In a study published in the journal *Current Biology*, researchers reveal that after decades of studying coral reef habitats, one of their strongest natural tools in reversing coral reef decline rested with the Caribbean King Crab. These largely nocturnal creatures can consume massive amounts of seaweed on a regular basis, capable of eating at rates that can rival almost any other Caribbean marine species. They also tend to eat types of seaweed that other underwater dwellers avoid, making them ideal candidates to remove unwanted amounts of underwater vegetation.

Despite Caribbean King Crabs being so well suited to the task, however, researchers determined that there are simply not enough of them naturally occurring around coral reef areas to help keep seaweed growth under control. This led the researchers to wonder just how much a difference crabs could make on the health of the environment if they introduced a host of new Caribbean King Crabs to a coral reef ecosystem.

Mark Butler of Florida International University said that after researchers put this idea to the test using coral reefs off the Florida Keys, the results were nothing short of impressive.

"Experimentally increasing the abundance of large native, herbivorous crabs on coral reefs in the Florida Keys led to rapid declines in seaweed cover and, over the course of a year or so, resulted in the return of small corals and fishes to those reefs," Butler said with the release of the study. "This opens up a whole new avenue for coral reef restoration."

Researchers made the discovery by conducting experiments in 12 isolated sections of a coral reef, with each of the sections falling into one of three distinctive groups: coral reef sections that were stocked with fresh crab, sections that were stocked with fresh crab after divers scrubbed as much algae and seaweed from the coral reefs as they could, and sections that were left completely untouched.

After waiting roughly a year to see how the coral reefs accepted these changes, the results clearly showed just how much good the Caribbean King Crabs were doing. While the coral reef sections that scientists didn't touch saw no change in their seaweed coverage, the sections that were stocked with crab saw seaweed coverage drop to nearly 50 percent, while the sections divers scrubbed first dropped by nearly 80 percent.

These results were so definitive and startling that researchers insisted on replicating the experiment in a different location to ensure they were onto something — a second experiment that yielded virtually the exact same outcome.

The study reports that establishing new coral reef nurseries to raise Caribbean King Crabs is going to be a crucial step moving forward, one that researchers are currently pursuing. Researchers note, however, that while the study shows just how effective crabs can be at repairing coral reefs, sweeping conservation efforts are still needed.



Caribbean king crabs consume the seaweed that chokes coral reefs.

"Conquering the challenge of climate change coupled with local reef restoration, like development of stocking programs for herbivorous crabs, are immediately necessary to reverse this decline," Butler said. "Our findings mean little if they don't result in tangible new restoration efforts."

Read the full story at www.courthousenews.com/seaweed-munching-crabs-may-help-save-coral-reefs.

Carriacou's e-Concrete project update

Richard Laflamme, Founder of Carriacou's Zero Plastic Waste Project, and Ingrid Lewis, Project Manager, report: Our concrete blocks containing ten percent granulated waste plastic were tested by the Grenada Bureau of Standards and confirmed to have a compressive strength in excess of 150 percent over specification.

The next step is to up-scale this project to a sustainable business with the full support of the Grenada Solid Waste Management Authority and local hollow block builders.

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This is a project of the No-To-Single-Use Association, a Grenadian NGO.

To make Zero Plastic Waste, the main missing ingredient is a heavy-duty plastic granulator costing US$15,000. To raise the needed funds, we are asking for donations of EC$10 or more. If you want to help "Waste Plastic Disposal (e-Concrete) Solution" tell us how much you want to contribute at WhatsApp (473) 456-3474, on Facebook at climatesaveactionist, or bring your donation to any Ministry of Environment of any Caribbean island with this reference: NSU Carriacou, 1-473-456-3474.

Expansion in other Caribbean islands is expected for 2021. To implement e-Concrete on your island call the number above for information.

Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire

Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire reports: The 2020 sea turtle nesting season was successful, with 61 recorded nests on Klein Bonaire, 20 nests in the north and 29 nests in the south of Bonaire.



PAUL SUTCLIFFE

STCB has also been tracking Flappie, a female hawksbill that was fitted with a satellite transmitter in August 2020, on her journey from her nesting home in Bonaire to her foraging home in the Miskito Cays, Nicaragua. Flappie covered a distance of more than 860 nautical miles. Out of the 26 turtles of three different species tracked by STCB since 2003, Flappie is the ninth individual to go to this area, making it an important range state for Bonaire's nesting population. Follow Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire on Facebook to follow Flappie.

Last month, STCB staff and volunteers started their annual transect-count survey season, counting sea turtles along Bonaire's west coast and around Klein Bonaire. In addition to turtles, they also record several other keystone species, including barracudas, tarpons, rays and sharks.

Visit www.bonaireturtles.org for more information.

Blending birdsong and music to help birds

It's musical activism! Listen to the call of the endemic Jamaican Blackbird with a hypnotic beat. The Zapata Wren of Cuba sings sweetly, accompanied by delicate electronic notes. The Keel-Billed Motmot of Central America emerges from behind gentle rhythms. The cries of Mexico's Thick-Billed Parrot blend with a finger snapping background. The bird-loving guitarist of the well-known group Garifuna Collective in Belize composed a song featuring the Black Catbird.

The ten-track album *A Guide to the Birdsong of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean* is a unique fusion of music and birdsong where artists incorporate the songs and calls of endangered birds into their compositions. Single tracks, the full digital album, and limited numbers of the vinyl edition are available for sale. Proceeds benefit the NGO BirdsCaribbean.

"The album makes a great gift," said BirdsCaribbean's Executive Director Lisa Sorenson. "All these bird species are threatened by development and the destruction of their habitats. BirdsCaribbean works with local partners for the conservation of birds and their habitats."

Listen to the album and shop here: http://bit.ly/ShikaShikaBirdSong

Visit www.birdscaribbean.org for more information about BirdsCaribbean.

Offshore island clean-ups protect wildlife

As part of its commitment to reducing man-made threats to seabirds and other creatures, Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC) has sponsored coastal litter cleanups on several uninhabited seabird breeding islands of the transboundary Grenadines, namely Mabouya, White, Sandy, and Petit Rameau. To date, volunteers have removed hundreds of pounds of garbage, consisting primarily of plastic water bottles and other single use plastics, pieces of fishing nets, ropes, or foam. On one single island volunteers gathered 1,174 plastic bottles and 165 shoes.

Unfortunately, the efforts so far have only skimmed the surface of the problem. While main islands have been receiving enhanced attention to marine litter on their shores in recent years, it continues to pile up on offshore islands where it either washes up or is carelessly left behind by visitors. On the islands frequented by people for recreation, glass bottles, food cans, cling film, plastic utensils, styrofoam containers and plastic wrappers were common.

The cleanups, which began in September 2020 as part of the International Coastal Cleanup, are being carried out by EPIC and local partner Ocean Spirits, through funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, USAID, and the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife for the Wider Caribbean Region. Activities are being conducted in coordination with the Grenadines Seabird Guardians, a local group of citizen-scientists trained and mobilized by EPIC to monitor seabird colonies and reduce threats to wildlife at remote, uninhabited islands. Volunteer organizations present at cleanups included Kipaji Inc. (Carriacou), Dr. Carter Vet (Grenada), Carriacou Animal Hospital (Carriacou), Tobago Cays Marine Park (Union Island) and Sustainable Grenadines Inc (Union Island).



DEVON BAKER

A volunteer carries bags of collected litter to load onto a boat for proper disposal.

The main purpose of the cleanups is to protect the regionally and globally significant seabird nesting colonies that can be found throughout the transboundary Grenadine islands and endangered wildlife, such as the critically endangered hawksbill and vulnerable leatherback sea turtles. Many species of seabirds and all species of sea turtles are known to accidentally ingest and become entangled in marine litter, which can lead to injury and even death.

EPIC is an independent non-profit founded in 2000, recognizing the connections between ecological health, economic vitality, and the quality of life for Caribbean residents.

Visit www.epicislands.org for more information.



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REGATTA NEWS

Team Island Water World tops Course de L'Alliance

Eight monohulls and two multihulls raced in the 17th annual La Course de L'Alliance, sponsored by FKG Marine Rigging, on the weekend of December 5th, 2020. Two bullets in the first two races and a second place in the third race ensured Frits Bus's Melges 24, *Team Island Water World,* the overall win. The Melges 32 *Kick 'em Jenny* and the previous year's winner, the Esse 850 *Wanna B*, took second and third place. The battle of the multihulls was won by the custom-built Joubert/Nivelt 52 *Arawak*, followed by *Too Rum Punch*, a Scape 39.

La Course de L'Alliance is normally a three-day race from St. Maarten to St. Barth and Anguilla and back, but was reduced to a two-day race in St. Maarten waters, as Covid restrictions prevented the fleet from sailing to foreign ports. Day One saw one short race to Philipsburg and one out to Proselyte Reef and back to Simpson Bay.



The previous year's winner, Wanna B, *settled for third place.*

Day Two took the racers around Molly Beday and into Oyster Pond.

On the other Melges 24, *Island Water World 2*, a team of Sint Maarten Yacht Club youth sailors raced their first regatta. They beat *Team IGY Racing*, a J/70, on the second day.

The final prizegiving awarded winners with beautiful trophies made out of discarded rigging materials by title sponsor FKG Marine Rigging. Organizers called forward Race Officer Saskia Revelman; it was special to see such a young (30 years old) female running the races. In addition, longtime sailor Bernard Silem was recognized for the decades he contributed to sailing and the SMYC.

Visit www.smyc.com/coursedelalliance for full results.

Unique celebrations concluded ARC+ 2020

On December 14th, a unique prizegiving ceremony in Rodney Bay, St. Lucia, concluded a six-week adventure for 98 sailors who crossed the Atlantic Ocean with ARC+ 2020.

Adhering to the protocols of St. Lucia, this event was held on C Dock of IGY Rodney Bay Marina, with the 80-foot catamaran *Go Tango* providing a hosting platform. On board their own vessels, crews gathered in cockpits to enjoy a party pack of food and drinks provided by the Events Company. At dusk, the sound of steel pan music set the Caribbean party mood and the large screen on *Go Tango* broadcast photos from life at sea aboard various ARC+ boats and, of course, the results.

Hasta Luego 2 from Great Britain claimed line honors for leg two from Mindelo to Rodney Bay, *Rivercafé* out of Luxembourg topped the Multihull Division on corrected time, and *Bohemen* from Norway finished first in the Cruising Division. Special awards were given to the six yachts sailed by a double-handed crew and to the SSB net controllers who ran the daily radio net. Thirteen children added to the family atmosphere of ARC+ and received cheers from their fellow participants when their photos were displayed on the screen.

Each year, the ARC+ "Spirit of the Rally" award is presented to someone who significantly contributed to their fellow participants' experience. This year, actions in port were recognized. Prior to departure from Mindelo, delays with PCR results caused problems for the fleet's departure. Anders and Gunilla Ullman from the Swedish yacht *Ydalir II* shared their knowledge, commitment, and connections to assist with resolving the situation.

Delivering the rally this year would not have been possible without the enormous support in the host ports. Many thanks go to the Honorable Dominic Fedée, St. Lucia's Minister of Tourism, the Events Company and Tourist Authority of St. Lucia, and Sean Deveaux, General Manager of IGY Rodney Bay Marina.

Visit www.worldcruising.com for full results.

A very special direct ARC

On December 19th, on the docks of IGY Rodney Bay Marina in St. Lucia, ARC 2020 concluded with the prizegiving ceremony. For over 300 crewmembers aboard 56 yachts from around the world and for the team of staff and supporters who dedicated months planning a Covid-secure event, it was an evening to celebrate a successful 35th Atlantic Rally for Cruisers on the direct route from the Canaries to the Caribbean.

The ceremony was delivered from the big catamaran *Go Tango*, positioned at the end of D pontoon, while participants enjoyed the evening's entertainment from their own boats.

ARC 2020 saw Frenchman JP Dick on *Vitale The Kid* taking line honors and being crowned winner on corrected time for Division 2 - IRC Racing. The first arrival and winner of Division 4 – Multihull, was the Marsaudon TS42 *Banzaï* from Belgium. Line honors for Division 1 - Cruising with no motoring hours and the best family performance were awarded to the Pogo 12.5 *Rush* from Great Britain. The Swedish boat *Blue Magic* won the *Yachting World* Line Honours Trophy (including engine hours).

The St. Lucia Tourism Authority Trophy for Cruising Class B went to overall winner of the Cruising Division, *Peter von Seestermuhe* of Germany. The RM 13.7 *Khelios* from France was presented with the Prime Minister's Trophy for winning Cruising Class A.

The evening included many other awards, entertainment, and speeches from the Minister of Tourism, the Honorable Dominic Fedée, and the Prime Minister of St. Lucia, the Honorable Allen Chastanet. To conclude the evening, the award for "Spirit of the ARC" was presented. This award acknowledges the selfless commitment by a crew to fellow participants, for their unwavering desire to participate fully in each event and go that extra mile to include and help others. This year's award went to Bones and Anna Black on *Emily Morgan*.

With the conclusion of ARC 2020, the focus shifts to 2021, which is already sold out. Over 300 yachts will cross the Atlantic under the ARC banner. Participants will have the option of sailing via Cape Verde as part of ARC+, or on the traditional ARC direct route from Gran Canaria to St. Lucia.

Visit www.worldcruising.com for more information.

Delayed departure for Viking Explorers 2021

Due to the approach of the storm Filomena, the captains of the fleet of seven boats ranging from 35 to 52 feet in this year's fourth edition of the Viking Explorers Rally delayed their departure from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria from January 6th to the 9th. Some decided to stop in Mindelo, Cape Verdes; others took the direct route.

This is the first year that the Viking Explorers Rally had its finish line in Grenada, with the Grenada Tourism Authority, Camper & Nicholsons Port Louis Marina, and Westerhall Rums welcoming the sailors.

Organizers are looking already forward to the fifth edition with nine confirmed entries and many expressions of interest.

Visit www.vikingexplorersrally.com for more information.

RORC Transat 2021 destination Antigua

The 2021 RORC Transatlantic Race — in association with the International Maxi Association — started from Puerto Calero, Lanzarote, on January 9th. Ten teams sailed from European destinations to take part in the 2,735-mile race across the Atlantic Ocean.

The RORC Transat is a World Sailing Category 1 offshore event with RORC prescriptions. All competing boats underwent compliance checks and, in addition, all crews were required to produce a negative test result for COVID-19 prior to departure.

The monohull line honors favorite is Johannes Schwarz's Volvo 70, *Green Dragon*, while the multihull line honors will be contested by just one entry, Oren Nataf's Multi50, *Rayon Vert*, skippered by Alex Pella.

Three teams will contest the IMA Trophy for Maxi Yacht line honors: *Green Dragon*, Richard Tolkien's IMOCA 60, *Rosalba*, and the Open60 *Somewhere London*, skippered by Gunther de Ceulaerde. An exciting duel is expected between two of the latest Class40s from the design board of Sam Manuard: Antoine Carpentier's *Redman* and Olivier Magré's *Palanad 3*.

After lengthy consultation with Camper & Nicholsons Port Louis Marina, Grenada Tourism, and the competing teams, it was agreed that the best option under current Covid protocols was to move the 2021 RORC Transatlantic Race finish to Antigua. It remains the intention of the RORC to finish the 2022 edition in Grenada, as it has done since the first race in 2014.

Visit www.rorctransatlantic.rorc.org for more information.

World ARC 2021-2022 underway

World ARC 2021-2022 departed St. Lucia on January 9th and will return there in April 2022. This year's fleet includes crews from Argentina, Brazil, the US, the UK, France, the Netherlands, and Peru.

World ARC, an event organized by World Cruising Club, is a 15-month round-the-world sailing rally for boat owners and their crews.

This year's 11th edition looks very different, as the grip of the pandemic continues, but the format has been adapted to the new reality of ever-changing protocols.

The route began in St. Lucia with a first stopover in Shelter Bay Marina on the Caribbean side of Panama, and a plan to transit the Panama Canal at the end of January.

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

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ON THE HORIZON

Grenada Workboat Regatta 2021 postponed

The organizers of the Grenada Sailing Festival Westerhall White Jack Workboat Regatta have confirmed the postponement of the 2021 event, scheduled to take place on February 6th and 7th.

"This is a great disappointment, as we know what an important milestone the regatta is for the people of Grenada, Carriacou, and Petite Martinique," said Damon DuBois, on behalf of title sponsor, Westerhall Rums Grenada. "The Workboat Regatta is all about community and sharing our traditional sailing heritage. However, in the current ongoing situation of Covid-19, the health and safety of everyone must be our primary concern."

"We will continue to liaise with the appropriate authorities and, with their consultation, consider adjusting plans so that the regatta may be staged later this year," he added.

2021 RORC Caribbean 600 cancelled

After much discussion internally and after consultation with the Government of Antigua & Barbuda, it was decided that the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC) had no option but to cancel the RORC Caribbean 600 due to take place this month.

The escalation in the spread of the new strain of Covid-19 in Europe, the state of lockdown in the UK and concern that a large number of sailors travelling to Antigua could transmit the virus to the Island were all taken into consideration. The safety of the population of Antigua, competitors, local volunteers and RORC staff is paramount and the committee felt that this could be compromised if the race was run.

The Royal Ocean Racing Club thanks the Antigua & Barbuda Government for their co-operation and support and looks forward to organizing the 2022 RORC Caribbean 600, which is scheduled to start on February 21st, 2022.

Visit http://caribbean600.rorc.org for more information.

41st St. Maarten Heineken Regatta

Although future course of the Covid-19 pandemic is far from clear, the Sint Maarten Yacht Club Regatta Foundation and the government of St. Maarten are confident they'll host the 41st St. Maarten Heineken Regatta from March 4th through 7th. Relying on implementing proper protocols and transparent communication, the event is now accepting entries at www.heinekenregatta.com. Organizers suggest entering the event as soon as possible, so they can finalize plans and ensure safety for everyone.

The St. Maarten Heineken Regatta team is focusing on delivering a safe, competitive, professional, and "Serious Fun" event that offers world-class racing. Participants will have to comply with health and entry guidelines that are set by the government and the event organizers. These guidelines will be communicated on the regatta website and updated regularly on the official notice board (online and during the event).

All racing will take place in the waters surrounding the dual-nation island of St. Maarten/St. Martin, offering a variety of courses suitable for every class: Maxis, Ocean Racers, Multihulls, Bareboats and Cruisers.

Visit www.heinekenregatta.com for more information.

Registration open for STIR

Registration is now open for the 2021 St. Thomas International Regatta (STIR), which takes place from March 26th through 28th.

Sign up at https://yachtscoring.com/emenu.cfm?eID=14270.

Visit https://stthomasinternationalregatta.com for more information.

BVI Spring Regatta & Festival 2021

The 49th edition of the BVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival is scheduled for March 29th through April 4th, with something for everyone who attends. Race and cruise your way through the BVI. Whether you race, cruise, practice or just come to party, this regatta has it all! And with a huge choice of shoreside accommodations and activities, there's no need to leave your non-sailing loved ones at home.

Starting at Nanny Cay, the Sailing Festival features two days of warm-up racing. It starts on March 30th with the Round the Island race for the Nanny Cay Cup, followed by awards at the Regatta Village. March 31st is a race to Scrub Island for their Invitational Race — a short morning race and then an afternoon barbecue with games and relaxation.

April 1st is Lay Day — a chance to explore the islands, work on the boat, practice, or just relax on the beach. Registration for the Regatta series starts at noon on with live music and Welcome Party to kick off the 49th BVI Spring Regatta in style.

From April 2nd (Mount Gay Race Day) through 4th there will be three days of top racing round rocks and islands. With 18 classes, there's a boat and a course for everyone.



BVISPRINGREGATTA.ORG

You can race the full week, or either or both of the Sailing Festival races, or just the BVI Spring Regatta.

For more information visit https://bvispringregatta.org and see ad on page 10.

33rd Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta

Carlo Falcone, Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta Chairman, reports: The Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta is the premier classic sailing event of the Caribbean, attracting a large number of classics from around the world. In its 33rd edition in 2021, the event will enjoy a variety of competitors including traditional craft from the islands, vintage, classic, and historic ketches, sloops, schooners, and yawls making the bulk of the fleet, tall ships, and more newly built Spirit of Tradition yachts and a Dragon class.

After the postponement of last April's regatta, we are hopeful that the event will still be able to go ahead this year, albeit with limited social events and subject to the guidelines recommended by the Antigua & Barbuda government. Our sponsors Locman, the Italian watchmaker, Zaoli Sailmakers, and Paul & Shark yachting clothing are all still supporting us, as are most of our previous sponsors.

Mark the dates March 31st through April 6th in your calendar. See you all there!

Visit www.antiguaclassics.com for more information.

Les Voiles de St. Barth shines brightly

While the planet is facing a health crisis of unprecedented magnitude, there is a gleam of good news from St. Barth. Barring any changes, the island's major events will continue in 2021, including the unmissable Les Voiles de St. Barth Richard Mille, scheduled from April 11th through 17th.



CHRISTOPHE JOUANY

More than 20 teams have already confirmed their participation in this 11th edition, with a great mix of the regatta's faithful competitors, newbies, and "boomerangers," who are returning after several years. All are eager to take advantage of a chance to race again after 2020's forced absence. New for this edition is the formation of a Super Maxi Racing Class, which has already attracted some top boats.

Visit www.lesvoilesdestbarthrichardmille.com for more information.

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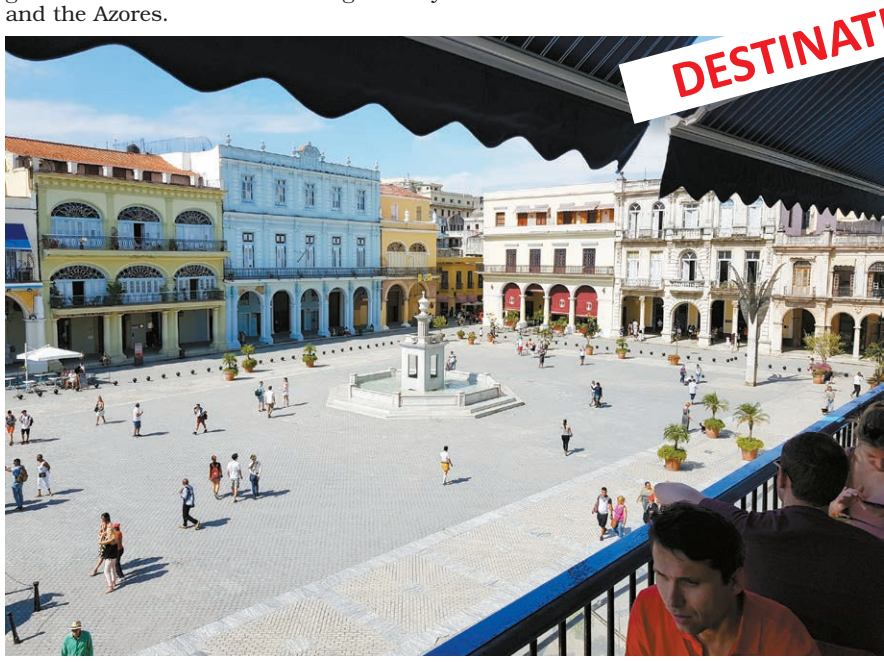
CRUISING CUBA: Discovering the South Coast

by Carla Fowler

DESTINATIONS

FROM remote islands and sun-kissed beaches to the lights, colours, and vibe of Havana, Cuba has so much to offer the yachtsman. Why not cruise the south coast and discover the culture, history and vistas from a time gone by?

In early 2020 we did just that. We had spent the Christmas season in Isla Mujeres off the coast of Cancún, Mexico. Having been in the Caribbean for over a year aboard our 40-foot cat, *Ocean Fox*, it was time to make our way back to Europe, 4,000 miles to the east. We had planned to cross the Yucatan Channel and take the north coast of Cuba to Hemingway Marina and Havana. From there we would go to the Bahamas before making our way to Bermuda and the Azores.



We took a road trip to Havana, which we found to be is as spectacular as the rumor has it.

But, as often happens when sailing, it didn't quite go to plan. The weather forecast had warned us that there would be a cold front coming down from the north, but the winds and seas were stronger than we were expecting. Struggling to stay on the wind we were pushed farther south, missing Las Tumbas point on the west tip of Cuba. As night fell and we were battered by the weather, we had no option but to head southeast. Now the whole 800 miles of the south coast of Cuba was waiting for us. And what a gem it turned out to be.

There are a few things peculiar to Cuba that the yachtsman should know. First, if possible, you should buy a visa before you travel. We bought ours from an official at Cancún airport. You can buy it in advance and it is valid for 30 days from when you check into Cuba. The cost of the visa is US$15 each, but if you arrive without one, you will be charged US$90 per person. Second, you are not allowed to anchor just anywhere: you have to stay in the government marinas or designated bays on the main island that have a Customs post. You may, however, stop on the archipelago of islands off the south coast as you feel fit. The Cuban coast guard says the restrictions are for your own safety, but in reality they want to keep tabs on you and prevent any stowaways coming onboard.

As the sun started to come up on the third day at sea we found ourselves off the Isla de la Piños (Isla de la Juventud), which is the largest off-lying island in Cuba, and the seventh largest island in the Caribbean. Here we dropped the anchor with two more boats that had made the crossing. We rested for the day off this deserted island. With its golden beaches, pine forests and blue water, it is as good as the Caribbean can offer.

The run along the coast to the marina on Cayo Largo (a port of entry) was a smooth ride through the deep blue waters of the Caribbean Sea. The fishing rods were out and we were catching fish as soon as the lure hit the water. We arrived off a stunning beach and sand bar as the sun started to dip and made our way up the well-buoyed channel to the small marina and a welcoming committee of officials waiting to board our boat.

The check-in procedure was somewhat long winded. We had around seven officials inspecting the boat, each filling out their own selection of forms. But they were all smartly dressed, spoke good English and were as helpful as they could be. Even though you are not allowed to take fresh food into Cuba, they turned a blind eye, saying, "We understand that you need to eat as well." Their eyes widened as they looked at the contents of our fridge with excitement boiling over as they inspected the fresh ginger.

The check-in was free (having bought the visas in advance) apart from paying for the agriculture inspection. For some reason they needed to collect 20 dollars, Euros or any other foreign currency, for each crewmember on the boat. We paid in Euros, as we wanted to keep our dollars for any unexpected problems along the way.

The next morning we were in town paying for the marina berth. It was like going back 50 years in time. There were next to no cars — motorcycles, tractors and bicycles were the order of the day. There was a small market selling leather goods and souvenirs for tourists, but there were no tourists around to buy them.

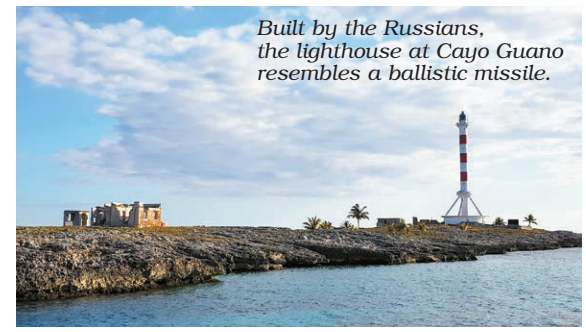
There is little to offer the yachtsman at Cayo Largo other than a small shop that may have some provisions and the state-run restaurant at the marina, but it does provide a safe harbour should the weather deteriorate. Close by there is a stunning beach called Playa Sirena that is sheltered from winds from all directions, offering a good anchorage, clear waters and soft sands. All along this archipelago you will find remote bays with clear waters and phenomenal beaches. But if you are looking for a livelier spot you have quite a way to go.

The buoyage and lighthouses are rather well maintained and accurate. We were using the Navionics electronic charts for our journey and I can't say we ever had a problem. A good example of the Cuban lighthouse is on the small rocky island of Cayo Guano. Built by the Russians, it resembles a ballistic missile more than a traditional lighthouse.

Our first stop on the main island of Cuba itself was at Cienfuegos in the center of the south coast. Cienfuegos is located a little inland on a large bay that is entered through a buoyed channel. Cienfuegos port is one of the largest in Cuba and serves the sugar trade as well as coffee and tobacco. The town is pretty, laid out on a grid system with a long sea wall overlooking the bay. It has many lavish buildings, streets lined with colonnades, wide boulevards and little to no traffic. This is a gem of a city that may get its beauty from its French sea trading routes, having been settled by immigrants from Bordeaux and Louisiana around 1820.

This was our first experience of shopping in Cuba, and all the stories you hear about food and medication are quite true. You find many shops full of one or two products and absolutely nothing else. You have to go from shop to shop buying whatever they have before you move on to the next. Make sure you have provisioned your boat well before you arrive.

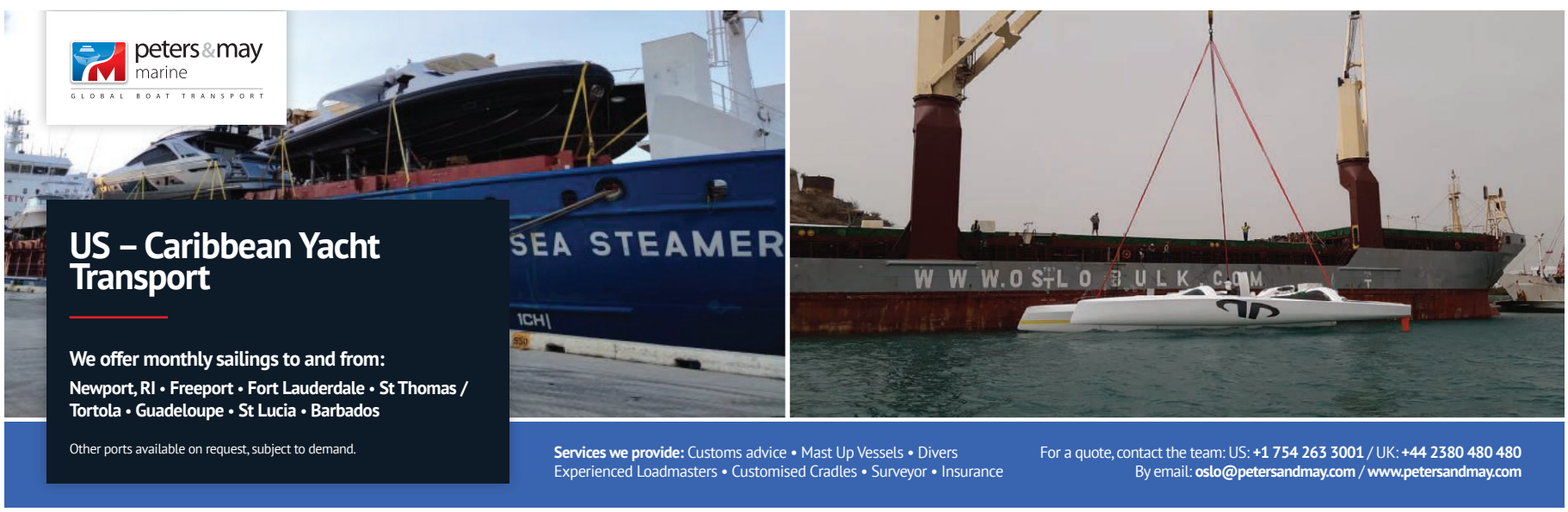
When we visited the coach station to buy a bus ticket to go to Havana, the manager offered us transport in a shared taxi for 20 Euro each. The four-hour journey takes you along the impressive A1, the main highway that passes down the spine of Cuba. With four lanes in each direction and little traffic, our ancient Lada swapped from lane to lane in a bid to choose the smoothest ride possible over the unmaintained asphalt.



Built by the Russians, the lighthouse at Cayo Guano resembles a ballistic missile.

Havana is as spectacular as the rumor has it. From the dusty chaotic streets of the old town to the wide boulevards of the Communist era, with the colours of the cars and the people walking by, it is a bustling city, a melting pot of Cuban culture. There is no doubt that there is a lack of investment in what once was a great city, originally fueled by trading merchants, shipbuilders and later the sugar rush. In the shadows of the parliament building that is now the university (after all you do not require a parliament building in a Communist state) lie narrow streets with the old merchant houses, with large double doors that lead to courtyards, all decaying into the gutters below. Once single-family homes, these buildings now house many families; a room or a wing of these buildings is all they have. Such neighborhoods seem to have been neglected for decades, but have a magnetism that makes you peer through the metal-grilled windows as you pass by.

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On leaving Cienfuegos we headed west to the islands of the Jardines de la Reina archipelago. This national park is made up of a string of islands that lie around 50 miles from the mainland and stretch for over 100 nautical miles. These rocky outcrops are completely deserted and boast glorious anchorages between the headlands and cays. Surrounded by clear blue waters, they are a sailor's dream. In a week we only met one other boat.

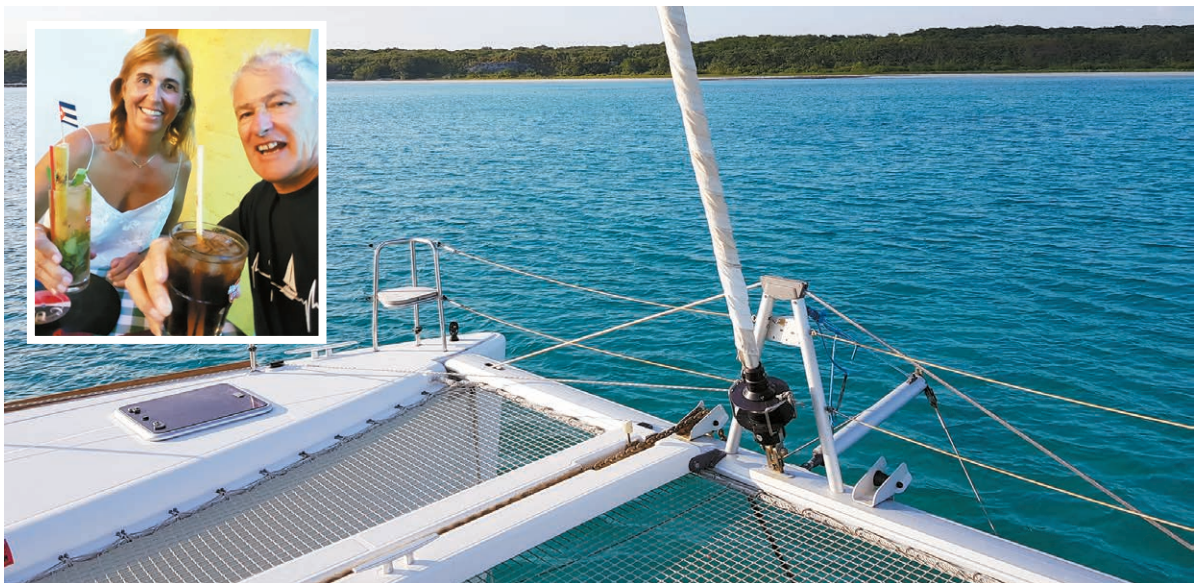
In this part of the island the poverty was staggering. Houses had no electricity or running water and people were carrying pails of water to their homes. The shops were empty of food and other essential items; there were few cars on the roads. But people were cheerfully meeting in squares and bus stops where they would find WiFi internet provided by the government at a charge of one CUC* per hour. It was time for them to escape and dream of the world beyond Cuba's shores.

Our last stop was the marina at Santiago de Cuba.



Top: Cienfuegos is a gem of a city with many lavish buildings, streets lined with colonnades, wide boulevards and little to no traffic.

Below: With its golden beaches, pine forests and blue water, Isla de Piños is as good as the Caribbean can offer. Inset: Author Carla Fowler with her husband, Simon.



As we headed for Santiago de Cuba, the last possible port to check into or out of Cuba on the southeast side of the island, we spent a week or so discovering the bays along the coast. Each night we would be visited by an official rowing out in an old boat to inspect our papers, fill out a new form and apply the many ink stamps that are required. These people were always as pleasant, respectful and efficient as they could be, given what they had to work with.

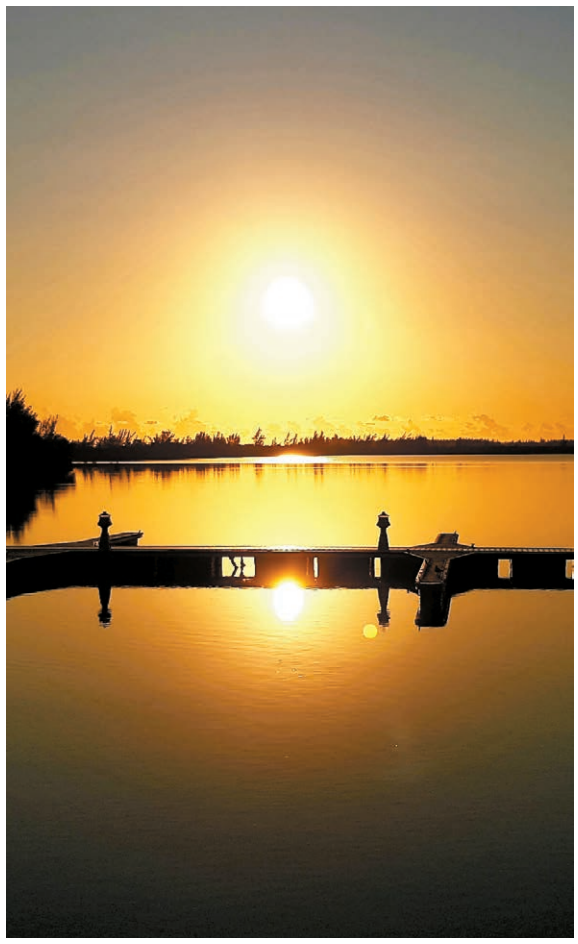
It had room for six visiting boats. The harbourmaster, a Captain Norman, was very strict about what we could and could not do. He liked to run a tight ship and instructed us to deal only with him; maybe this was his way of making a few extra dollars a month.

Our visa time was soon up. We had spent a month cruising Cuba's south coast. Next, we would turn east, pass Guantánamo Bay and head north to the relative sophistication of the Bahamas.

My final thoughts on cruising Cuba. Visiting on your own yacht is not really a problem. Yes, there is more paperwork than on the French, Dutch and the English-speaking islands put together. But the officials were as welcoming as they could be. The cruising grounds are stunning — from distant islands to great bays, they are a yachtsman's dream. Having sat in a time warp for 60-something years, the architecture is spectacular. But you have to see through the facades of the merchants' homes, the Art Deco and the Russian influence, and see the terrible state of the infrastructure and the poverty. As for the people of Cuba, my heart goes out to them. A good job pays US$14... a month. The only way to survive is to make little here and some more there.

**The Cuban government formally ended its dual currency system on January 1st, 2021, devaluing its peso for the first time since the 1959 Revolution. The government set the exchange rate at 24 Cuban pesos (CUP) to US$1. The "convertible" Cuban peso, known as the CUC, will be phased out completely by June, leaving the island with one currency — the peso.*

Carla and Simon have been living full time aboard their 40-foot catamaran, Ocean Fox, *and sailing the world's oceans for nearly three years. What started as a crazy idea of Carla's, just two days after their wedding, turned into an adventure sailing over 22,000 miles and visiting 47 countries. Simon and Carla love to share their wisdom about their sailing adventures. Visit them at www.sailingoceanfox.com*



We arrived at Cayo Largo as the sun started to dip.



KEEPING UP WITH COVID...
Or Trying To!

Caribbean countries' attempts to deal with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic see the yacht entry rules changing frequently. While it's impossible for a monthly publication like Caribbean Compass *to stay on top of all the changes, we present here a list of some key yacht entry protocols that were current as we went to press in late January.*

For updated information, please check "Breaking News" on our website at www.caribbeancompass.com and refer to these trusted online sources:

• www.noonsite.com/report/caribbean-bound-2020-21-yachting-protocols

• The Ocean Cruising Club's "OCC Caribbean Cruising" Facebook group, www.facebook.com/groups/359430798334637. This group is open to all OCC Members. Non-members who have a boat and are already cruising in the Caribbean or are planning to make passage to the Caribbean in the near future are eligible to join.

Cuba

Since January 10th, visitors to Cuba are technically required to have a certificate of a negative test for Covid-19 taken no more than 72 hours before travel, but reports are that officials will take into consideration the length of your time at sea before arrival. The certificate must be issued in both the language of the country of origin and in English. On arrival, you will have a second test. If this test is positive, you will be quarantined in a government–approved facility.

Updates are often available at facebook.com/groups/cubalandandsea

Puerto Rico

As of January 8th, arriving yachts will remain quarantined within the facilities of a marina unless you bring a negative test conducted 72 hours or less prior to your arrival or will be tested upon arrival.

Recreational sailing is allowed between 5:00AM and 10:00PM; curfew begins at 11:00PM. Anchorage is prohibited less than 50 feet from shore. Rafting vessels together is not allowed.

BVI

According to a press release issued January 5th by the BVI Ports Authority, the reopening of the seaports to international traffic has been postponed until March 1st.

Dominica

Dominica has reopened to yachts. Before arriving, submit an online health questionnaire, available at https://domcovid19.dominica.gov.dm, at least 24 hours before arrival. All vessels must submit arrival information at www.sailclear.com

Arrivals must be PCR tested, at their cost, on Day One and return to their vessel for mandatory quarantine of five days. Yachts must remain in a Quarantine Zone for a duration advised by the health authorities.

For Portsmouth, obtain current information from dominicapays@gmail.com

Cobra, in Portsmouth, can help with yacht arrivals: explore@cobradominica.com

For more information visit https://discoverdominica.com/travel-advisory-for-dominica

SVG

As of January 8th, travelers from high-risk countries must quarantine for 14 days in a government-approved facility. Travelers from medium-risk countries must quarantine for seven days in a government-approved facility, followed by a further seven days home quarantine.

Yachtspeople may complete the entire quarantine period aboard their boats.

Yachtspeople must contact svgarrivals@gmail.com five days before arrival, and must have a negative PCR test result taken within 72 hours of departure.

Contact svgarrivals@gmail.com or coronavirustaskforcesvg@gmail.com for more information.

Curaçao

As of January 1st, travelers from the following low-risk countries — Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Aruba, Bermuda, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saba, Saint Barths, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Eustatius, St. Maarten/St. Martin, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Turks & Caicos — have to take these two steps:

• Complete the digital Immigration card online before departure at dicardcuracao.com.

• Within 48 hours before departure, you need to digitally fill out the Passenger Locator Card (PLC) at dicardcuracao.com and carry a printed document of proof with you.

Travelers from other countries must follow these three steps:

• Complete the digital Immigration card online before departure at dicardcuracao.com.

• Within 48 hours before departure, digitally fill out the Passenger Locator Card at dicardcuracao.com and carry a printed document of proof with you.

• Show a negative result from a certified COVID-19 PCR-test.

Details are at www.curacao.com/en/questions/health-and-vaccinations/response-to-novel-coronavirus-covid-19



Emergency Offshore?
COMMUNICATIONS CAN HELP!

by Joan Conover

When sailing to or from the Caribbean, or within the region, keep in mind that while emergency communications devices can be lifesaving, the state of technology changes frequently with upgrades and updates. This article is written to provide a general overview of the overarching marine emergency communications systems that communicate messages from those devices; in-depth description is beyond a simple article.

This article is about the network of communications we use as private mariners, and the communication systems we depend on in emergencies. Since new devices come on the market daily, understanding the actual emergency communication process established for offshore vessels by international agreement is critical.

If you travel in international waters to Canada, Mexico, Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands or practically anywhere else, a Maritime Radio Vessel station license is required to use Marine VHF and SSB. Additionally, if you travel to a foreign port, you are also required to have a valid operator's certificate and Marine Mobile Service Identity Number issued by your home country.

Your Marine Mobile Service Identity number: MMSI

A nine-digit Marine Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) number is unique to your vessel, and should be the same for all your transponder devices and registrations. This number is in your Single Side Band (SSB) radio, Very High Frequency (VHF) radio and Automatic Information System (AIS) systems, and is a part of your Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPRIB) registration — a critical part. New-to-you boats/devices require either installation of your MMSI number or owner transfer of the MMSI number to the new owner.

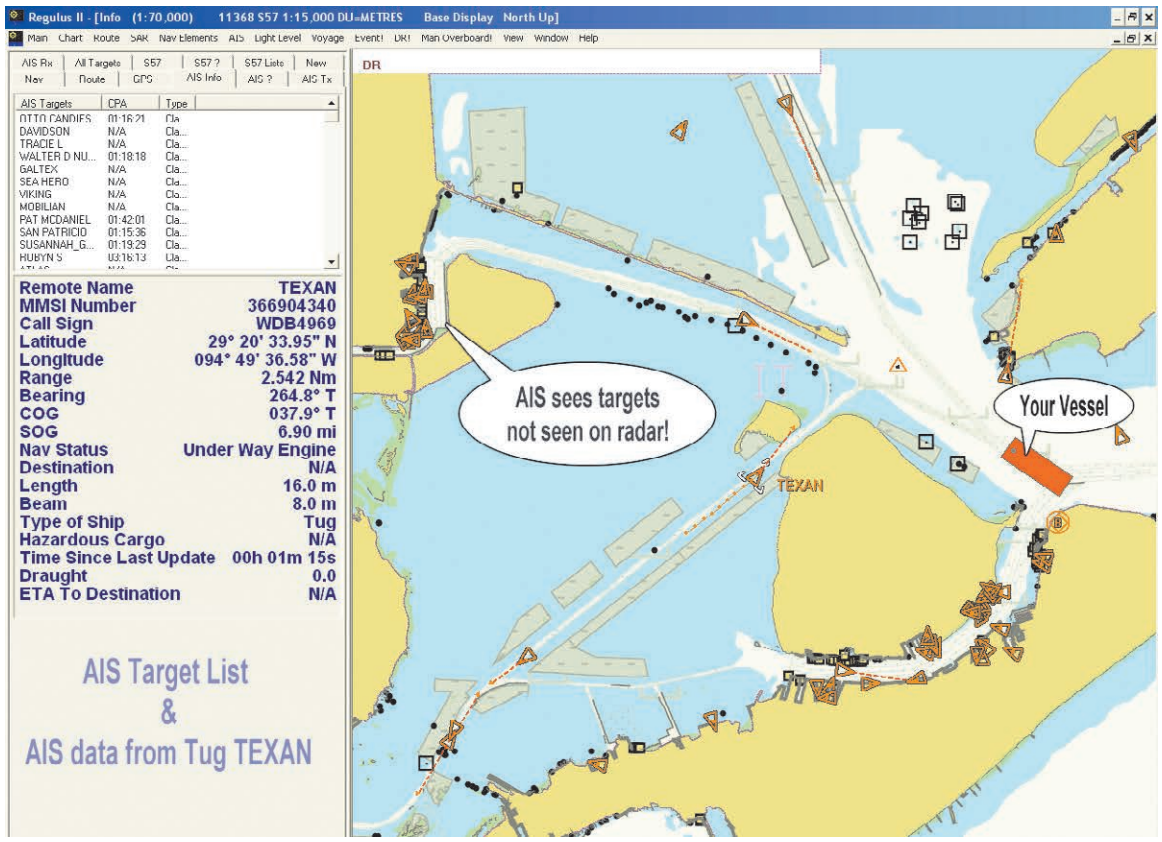
"Can I transfer this MMSI and SSB license over to me on a US flagged boat?" Sorry, no "transfer." The previous American owner must cancel his or her FCC license on the vessel you just bought. You will then need to obtain a new ten-year FCC Ship Station license, which will include a new MMSI number. You can review the process at wireless.fcc.gov. (Transfer processes may vary from country to country.)

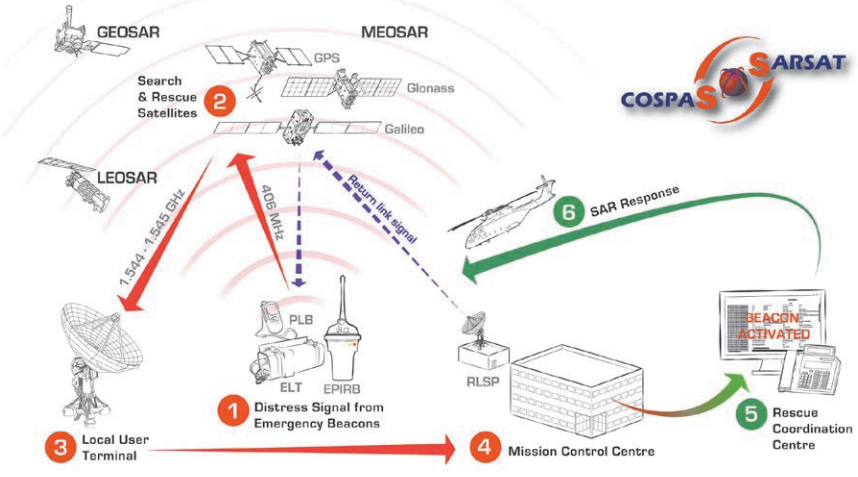
Your registration of your devices with the appropriate agency for EPIRB, personal locator beacon, AIS, and VHF devices with a single MMSI for all devices is critical if the following systems are to work correctly. And keeping devices re-registered prevents them from aging out of database systems, which impacts rescue. Your MMSI itself does not expire; it does not require re-registration.

All captains should keep devices updated and tested prior to each voyage. Make sure that your registration is current with your MMSI number, and have emergency communication and response plans and training for crew.

The satellite-based rescue system: COSPAS-SARSAT

The overarching satellite-based rescue system is called COSPAS-SARSAT. It is an integration of onboard commercial and military communication devices linked to satellite tracking systems, which then network to a series of international onshore stations. Our private vessels' devices utilize this network, sending signals via various emergency messages. The diagram in Image 1, from the United States





Coast Guard, illustrates the flow of data; note there are several steps, from alert, to satellite, to shore, to various countries for action. Any issue with registration or poor signal due to low batteries can cause delay or even notification failure.

The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System: GMDSS

The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) generally applies to all ships over 300 gross tons and over on international voyages. However, GMDSS-compliant systems may be carried on private pleasure craft too.

Commercial and military vessels (and private yachts within VHF range) all participate in GMDSS, which is a key part of marine rescue. This includes search and rescue satellite-aided tracking (SAR-SAT/COSPAS-SARSAT), which utilizes EPRIB and Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) alarms.

In addition, there are the satellite voice system INMARSAT and a newly announced GMDSS IRIDIUM satellite service utilizing special terminals. This new system also provides the ability for vessels in distress to talk directly to local regional control center (RCC), and can be used by non-commercial vessels separate from a full GMDSS system.

Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon: EPIRB

Another device used for marine emergency notification, the Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), transmits two signals constantly until either out of battery power or turned off. One signal is a GPS-supported 406 MHZ (digital to satellite) tracking signal. The other is a 121.5 MHZ analog homing signal that will alert all high flying commercial and military aircraft in your vicinity. Basic information such as your MMSI number and GPS location, date and time are part of the message package. The homing signal allows nearby GDMSS-equipped ships and aircraft to zero in on a vessel in distress.

Understanding that there are two transmission systems is critical. The transmitter should be with the people, not the vessel.

Very High Frequency Digital Selective Calling: VHF DSC

Very High Frequency Digital Selective Calling (VHF DSC) is a line-of-sight VHF system utilized world wide for emergencies. The Automatic Information System (AIS, see below) and VHF can share the same antenna system; the frequencies used are separate but still VHF.

Most often your primary source of seagoing help will be the ship or yacht that's closest to you. A VHF DSC distress call can bring help at sea very quickly from boats in your vicinity. When you initiate an automated VHF DSC distress call by pushing the red button on your VHF radio, every line-of-sight VHF-equipped vessel within 25 to 30 nautical miles will receive a loud alarm signaling your distress call complete with your MMSI, boat name and your precise latitude and longitude, and will be close enough for voice communication. Your VHF radio watches on Channel 70 for acknowledgement from a nearby boat. If acknowledgement is received, you use Channel 16 to describe your emergency. If no acknowledgement is received, the alarm continues to be sent every four minutes.

As most boats have VHF radio, the addition of DSC has offered an even broader messaging capability for vessels in distress. All consumer-grade marine VHF radios sold since 1998 are DSC equipped. The only drawback is that VHF is a line-of-sight transmission, dependent on antenna capabilities of both ships and shore station, and ship's power. It does increase the number of vessels who can receive an emergency broadcast, due to the greater numbers of shore- and satellite-linked vessels to transmit the alert to the larger systems.

The Automatic Information System: AIS

Another system also on both private yachts and commercial vessels, the Automatic Information System (AIS), provides vessels with local marine traffic information as a transponder sending MMSI number/boat name and GPS location. AIS is supported by local line-of-sight transmissions, creating a local data bubble linked by VHF transmission. Some devices can also support satellite transmission, called S-AIS, or satellite-linked AIS with VHF to line-of-sight vessels. Depending on the equipment/device, a system may be only VHF linked or both VHF and satellite linked.

Boats with AIS see each other in their shared VHF-created data bubble (see Image 2); vessels (usually commercial) with S-AIS see the local bubble and can share this information more globally back to shore-based information data systems. A commercial venture, MarineTraffic, utilizes a combination of shore-based AIS data sites, as well as satellite-based data, to collect and provide an AIS view of worldwide AIS enabled vessels as they voyage.

For emergencies, there are also EPRIB devices with AIS sending emergency signals to both systems. This is an addition that could shorten alert time with both technologies involved.

Some newer, lower-cost features

Some of the newer, lower-cost features for vessels are the Satellite Locators, the Garmin InReaches, SPOT and other devices entering the market for private citizen use on water and on land; and the onboard man overboard systems (MOA), which can be a combination of smart phone apps/local WiFi and/or PLB and MOA combinations. Last but not least are voice and data messaging systems such as SSB radio and satellite-based phones/data systems such as IRIDUM GO and Globalstar.

Most of these commercial locator systems also provide an emergency alert capability or SOS button. For most, as a service provided by the vendor or added-on for a fee, a global vendor, Garmin's GEOS, provides emergency rescue coordination and SOS/911 monitoring through their dedicated International Emergency Response Coordination Center. GEOS can be added to your device, so when the SOS button is pushed a mission control center is notified. This is separate from your EPRIB — it's a commercial service, paid for yearly in the case of GEOS. As a service covering 140 countries, it will use your registration data to coordinate your rescue response with government rescue coordination centers. This service can be expanded to cover international search and rescue costs, and in some cases medical evacuation: a reasonably priced service to be aware of if you are going offshore.

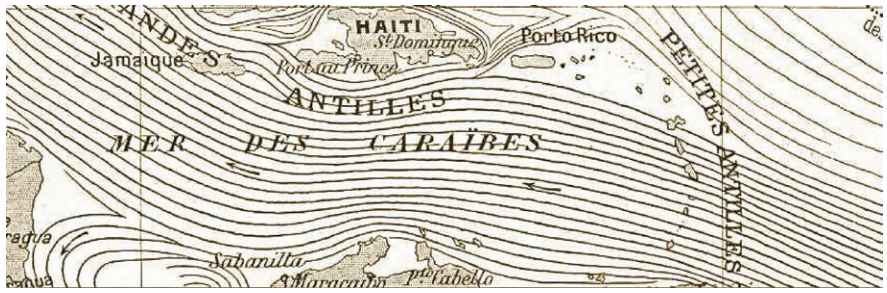
In the final review of systems for offshore and near shore devices used for emergencies, all require registration, maintaining, testing, and strong batteries — either ship's power or internal batteries. All require an understanding of how they work, and the way to deploy and test them.

Your safety at sea can be dependent on many factors in addition to seamanship, such as making sure you provide the basic emergency systems for your vessel, as well as keeping the registration needed for search and rescue up to date. And as new devices are developed to utilize rescue networks, captains will select what will work for their cruising plans.

Crossing Inter-Island Channels with Minimal Pain

Part Two: Sailing the Channel and Timing the Tide

by Don Street



ABALLERO1967

Lines showing ocean currents flowing east to west through the Caribbean

See last month's Compass *for tips on preparing your boat and your crew for optimal inter-island channel crossings.*

Sailing across a channel

For single headsail sloops the following advice is from Neil Harvey, Harken sales manager for the southeastern US and Caribbean. For 30 years he has pulled a crew together to race in various regattas in the bareboat division. For passagemaking to and from Caribbean regattas, Neil recommends two rolls on the headsail and a reefed main. If overpowered, take two more rolls on jib and move the sheet lead forward. If the lead is properly moved forward the jib will set passably with up to six rolls, but only if the sail is feeding off the windward side of the foil. Properly trimming the main, playing the mainsheet, positioning the traveler and adjusting the boom vang all have a lot to do with minimizing overpowering.

None of the bareboats are set up for double reefing. If with six rolls in the jib, conditions are such that a double reef is needed, the boat should turn back, find an anchorage and wait for another day.



REICHEL-PUGH.COM

A favorite memory about predicting the current involved a race on Titan.

Double-headsail cutters, yawls and ketches can roll up the jib, douse the mizzen, and sail under staysail and reefed main. This gives an easy to handle, all-inboard rig that will allow you to sail much closer to the wind than sailing without the main. If you do not have enough sail area it is easy to roll out the jib and set the mizzen.

If you find you can easily lay your course, alternate the rig: use a full jib, staysail and mizzen, and douse the main. Trim the headsails and mizzen carefully. When sails are properly trimmed, if the boat falls off course there is plenty of leverage to bring it back on course. A good sailor using this rig can often make the boat self steer.

A schooner's biggest sail is back aft, so reef or double reef the main, then add full jib, reefed jib, or no jib to the forestaysail as balance and wind conditions require.

If you have too much headsail and want to roll it up further or furl it completely, bear off and run with the wind close to dead aft. This will drastically reduce the apparent wind, making it easy to roll up the jib to the desired size and move the sheet lead to the correct position. Then come back up on course.

Time your passage with a weather-going tide

Hopefully the information below will allow you to estimate the direction and strength of the current in the channel you want to cross.

In general there is a one-knot westerly tradewind-blown current in the channels between the Eastern Caribbean islands. The current is increased by the flowing ebb tide, which flows to the west, and minimized, negated or overcome by the flood tide, which flows to the east. The tides will be strongest at full and new moon and the two to four days following.

The tide/current starts to flood east at moonrise, and continues until the moon's meridian passage. Then it turns west until the moon sets. Once moon has set the tide/current turns east until the moon is at its nadir, roughly 12 hours after its meridian passage, then it turns west until moonrise.

To estimate the strength of the current, remember the "rule of twelfths." This rule is easily comprehended if you assume that the tidal station has a tidal range of 12 feet. In the first hour of tidal range the tide rises one foot (one 12th), in the second hour two feet (two 12ths), in the third and fourth hours three feet (three 12ths) each hour, in the fifth hour two feet (two 12ths), in the sixth hour one foot (one 12th). You will begin to see the effect of the windward-flowing current an hour after moonrise. It will be effective until the hour before the meridian passage of the moon. Thus the first hour after moonrise the tide/current has little effect against the normal westerly current. Second hour more effect, third and fourth hours the greatest effect, then tapering off as the moon sets.

Whether the flood tide will overcome the normal westerly set of the current depends on how hard the tradewinds, which create the current that flows between the islands, have been blowing, and the stage of the moon — which influences the strength of the tide/current — and the hour in relation to the moon's meridian passage.

A two-knot easterly flowing spring tide will overcome the one-knot west-flowing equatorial current, giving you a one-knot easterly lift.

If your rhumb line course across the channel is 000° magnetic at seven knots, with a one-knot easterly flowing spring tide you will be lifted eight degrees, so your course will be 352° mag. If you cross on the lee-going current, two knots of spring tide plus a one knot equatorial windblown current makes a total of three knots setting west, so you must steer 024° magnetic. Thus, at springs, the difference in course when crossing a channel on a weather-going versus a lee-going tide is 32 degrees. This can change a nice reach to a very uncomfortable hard-on-the-wind passage.

Crossing the passage with a weather-going neap tide, the one-knot weather-going tide will negate but not overcome the westerly set of the wind-blown equatorial current, so your course will be 000° magnetic. Crossing with a lee-going one-knot neap tide plus a one-knot westerly current gives you a total of two knots. If sailing at seven knots, you will have to steer 016° magnetic. This will require sheeting in to a tighter reach.

Reflect on the above, and try to organize your crossing on a flood tide.

A table showing various speeds of crossing, current and offsets necessary to stay on course is found on every Imray Iolaire chart from Barbuda to Trinidad.

To optimize the chance of crossing with a weather-going tide, pick an anchorage as close as possible to the end of the island from which you are departing. Lay out your desired course before crossing.

While crossing the channel, keep track of your position by plotting your GPS positions on the paper chart or chart plotter. Try to stay to windward of the rhumb line, which should be laid out from your point of departure to your landfall on the next island. If you end up hard on the wind, strap the headsail and main down flat, put the traveler amidships, turn on the engine and put it in gear. Run the engine about 1,200 rpm but sail the boat as if the engine were not on. The engine being on means that if you hit a wave wrong the boat will not stop but will power through the wave. The engine will probably not increase your speed but will allow you to sail about ten degrees higher than under sail alone.

If you cannot lay the rhumb line, continue across the channel. Once under the lee of the next island, tack and beat to windward to your desired anchorage. Or drop sail and motor dead to windward to the anchorage. The choice will depend on the windward sailing qualities of the boat and the crew's personal preferences.

EDUCATING HOTSHOT NAVIGATORS

In the early years of this century I convinced *Sail* magazine to let me write an article on "Hitching in the Caribbean Racing Scene." I sailed on a different boat for each race. The boats varied drastically in size and type. At the bottom of the size range was a beautiful CCA Nielsen-designed yawl, at the top the J boat *Velsheda*. In between various boats, a favorite memory involved the race on *Titan*. She was a 75-foot Reichel-Pugh racing machine owned and skippered by Tom Hill, who after 40 very successful years in the construction business in Puerto Rico still sounded like he had left East Boston yesterday. He had built a series of boats of the same name, each bigger and faster than the last.

He had Ellis, Dennis Connor's navigator when they won the America's Cup in Australia, as navigator/tactician, and a very good crew. We had a good race, and everyone was satisfied with the result.

After the race we all moved to *Caribana*, the mother ship, for beer and sandwiches. Campbell Field, a hotshot navigator/tactician who I knew well, as we had done many races together on *Shamrock V*, came on board. He announced to Ellis, "Today was crazy. There was a one-knot easterly current. I have raced almost a dozen Antigua Sailing Weeks as navigator/tactician and I have never seen an easterly current!" Ellis, who had also sailed many Antigua Sailing Weeks, said the same thing.

I remarked, "At breakfast I could have told you there was a very good chance of a fairly strong easterly current." They were most surprised and asked me to explain.

The flood tide turns east at moonrise, but as explained in the rule of twelfths, the first hour is weak, second hour stronger, third and fourth hour strongest, then it tapers off. Tides are strongest at full and new moon and two to four days after full and new moon. The east-going flood tide has to overcome the usual one-knot westerly equatorial current, which slacks off in periods of light airs and increases in periods then the trades really start honking.

I explained, "The last few days the trades have been comparatively light. Two days ago was full moon. Today moonrise was at about 0800 hours, so by the time we were getting ready to start the race the flood easterly tide was getting some strength in it and was strong for our entire race."

Obviously the tide was going to overcome the equatorial current.

They looked at each other then said to me, "Our next beers will be hoisted to you and your long experience in the Caribbean!"

BLOWN AWAY BY *BLOWN AWAY*!

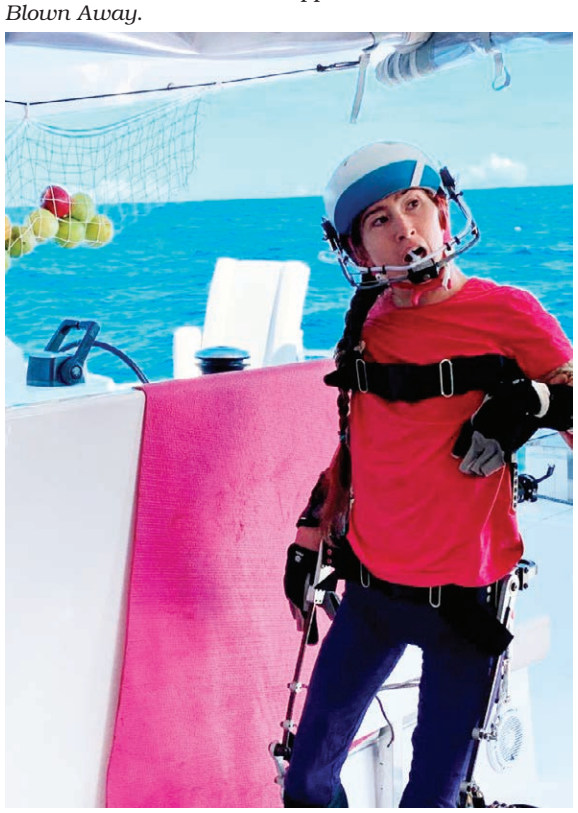
by Anne Purvis



Natasha's happy place is aboard Blown Away.

Below: The 'sip and puff' system invented by her father enables Natasha to steer the boat and trim the sails.

I first heard of Natasha Lambert a few years ago on a local radio programme in Southampton, UK, presented by Sir Robin Knox Johnson. What she was doing by way of sailing by the "sip and puff" method in spite of her cerebral palsy was truly remarkable. A year or so later, helping out with Chesil Sailability based at the Weymouth and Portland Sailing Academy, I heard that she and her family were there offering people with disabilities the opportunity to sail in Natasha's first boat, the one which is now used by her charity. Cue the St. Lucia Yacht Club this mid-December, when 80 or so boats were arriving with the ARC (to which, if I'm honest, I hadn't been paying a lot of attention). I struck up a conversation with a friendly looking lady wearing an ARC shirt who was buying drinks at the bar to take downstairs. I was amazed and excited to hear that she had come over as crew with Natasha as skipper, on the catamaran *Blown Away*.



So I went to visit them at Rodney Bay Marina, and I and my friend Marie were met with a warm welcome by Mum Mandy, Dad Gary, Natasha, Rachel and the crew. The two daughters, Natasha, 23, and Rachel, 14, are the keen sailors in the family. Gary and Mandy insist that they are not sailors and have been led along by Natasha's enthusiasm, although Gary has clearly learnt a thing or two. They came over the Atlantic with Mike, who is a Yachtmaster and instructor, and has done a lot of coaching with Natasha. Sue is a good family friend who came principally to look after Natasha, but unfortunately was seasick, so Mandy took on that responsibility instead of learning to crew. Sue's husband, Neil, wanted to cross the Atlantic and took advantage of the voyage to learn how to use a sextant, among other things. And Angela, whom I had met in the yacht club while she was getting drinks for her fellow crew, is Sue's sister. Natasha has wanted to sail across the Atlantic for some time and Mike had crossed with the ARC a few years ago, so it was agreed that this was the way to go.

The crossing went reasonably smoothly, with sight of a whale being a highlight, although they were disappointed not to see dolphins. The scariest bit was trying to dodge a storm when Natasha was thrown out of her bunk by a huge wave. Like all ARC participants, they were amazed not to see other boats once they'd left land, feeling all alone out there on the Atlantic.



Above: The family enjoys being here in the Caribbean and will probably remain until the spring.

Below: Rachel, 14, and Natasha, 23, are the keen sailors in the family.

I gave them a copy of the latest Chris Doyle *Sailors Guide to the Windward Islands* and mentioned that I was hoping some time to get down to the Grenadines to sail with Chris. Taking Mandy and Rachel shopping the next day, I was surprised and delighted to be invited to sail down to St. Vincent with them within the next couple of days, an especially kind offer as I would probably need to stay on board for up to a week due to Covid protocols. It took me three hours and two glasses of wine to accept with much gratitude and excitement! We all went for our Covid tests the following morning.

The family were somewhat nervous about sailing on their own once their Atlantic crew had departed, but were determined to be independent, so I appointed myself washer-up-in-chief and stayed out of the way. Sailing from Rodney Bay to Young Island Cut took longer than Gary had anticipated (we arrived in the dark, not fun) and he was the first to note the lessons to be learnt. But they had wanted to attend the ARC prize-giving the night before and sail down with the folks on other boats with whom they had become friends. Indeed, since they are a friendly and enterprising family, modest about their achievements, it's not surprising that other sailors and families have warmed to them and are more than willing to help out when useful. Natasha clearly enjoyed the journey although lack of time and support crew prevented her from being able to helm on this occasion. Rachel is excellent crew and learns quickly. And we were accompanied by some playful dolphins for a while, which helped everyone relax.

They are well pleased with *Blown Away*, a 46-foot Nautitech catamaran, which is wide enough to accommodate Natasha's wheelchair, and which has been modified in many ways to enable her to helm as well as live aboard. In addition to inventing the sip and puff method by which Natasha can steer the boat and trim the sails from the port side skipper's chair, Gary has also designed a structure which enables her to stand and helm from inside the boat. (You can see both inventions in use, sailing and climbing, on YouTube.) They bought this boat two years ago specifically for this project and did much of their learning while sailing from the Isle of Wight to the Canaries to join the ARC. Gary explained that it would in due course be sold in order to replenish Natasha's funds, which derive from compensation for her condition. It is in effect her boat. (NB: It is not funded from her charities.)

Natasha needs help with everything. Her love of the water, being in it and on it, gives her some control and a sense of freedom. She has on the boat what is known as the "shark cage" — another invention of Gary's — which enables her to enjoy the warm sea. With inflatable rims, mesh sides, and a mesh bottom lined with light steel plates, it can be secured in the water and is safe for Natasha to be in with Gary. She can — and does — throw herself around, diving underwater looking for fish, and maybe turtles if lucky. In spite of her disabilities she retains enormous patience and good humour, as do the rest of her family. She is involved in all aspects of family life as much as possible, from making mince pies to keeping up with Facebook and e-mails, administrated on her behalf by Mandy. She has the most infectious laugh, loves to share a joke and is quick to tease.

The family are enjoying being here in the Caribbean and will probably remain until the spring, when Rachel needs to be back at school. Natasha for her part has developed a taste for sailing in warm waters and now wants to sail across the South Pacific. Gary and Mandy are not enthusiastic!

Natasha uses her challenges to raise money for three charities, one of them her own designed to help others with disabilities sail like her — see www.missisle.org.uk — and the whole family is keen to demonstrate everywhere they go that serious disability does not prevent fun and fulfillment. The family are sensitive, though, to the fact that there are not the same resources here as there are back in the UK. They have connected with various disability groups on the islands and are very happy to meet up.

I spent a delightful few days with them on *Blown Away* and look forward enormously to meeting up again soon.



THE YOUNG AND THE RECKLESS

by Lee Kessell

MY husband and I left Trinidad after 15 years, a house, the birth of two boys and changes in career, and moved to St. Lucia, where we were comfortably housed in a quaint cottage on the opposite side of the inlet that housed the old Ganter's Marina. John was establishing a new line of work for himself, I was teaching at St. Joseph's Convent, and our two sons, Sean, aged 12, and Christopher, 9, were both in school.

As a boy in Australia, John had sailed his own home-built dinghies and crewed on racing yachts in Sydney Harbour, so in St. Lucia we enjoyed all the sailing we could manage on boats left to our care.

The first was *Happy Hollow*, nicknamed *Happy Wallow*, a 32-foot motor-sailer, broad in the beam and shallow in the keel. With a deep and extremely large open cockpit she was a boat "unsafe in any sea" and terrified all those who crossed channels in her. Being young and reckless we took off one school holiday to sail her to Dominica. The waters were calm and our crossing to Martinique survivable. After shopping in Fort de France we returned to the dock to see with stunned horror *Happy Hollow* drifting out to sea. But a chase in the dinghy saved the boat for another day. (We found that the anchor had landed inside an old car tire.) That night we rocked and rolled in the roadstead of St. Pierre and in the grey morning met the Atlantic swells on the way to Dominica. Waves and wind attacked in a most unfriendly manner and very soon it became a trip from and to hell. When the foresail blew out with a heart-stopping cannon shot, forcing me up on a widower-making foredeck to bring in the flailing remains of the sail, we turned around and went home.

Wimera was a 28-foot Westerly with twin bilge keels — it was an alarming sight to see one keel almost breaking the surface when well heeled. Our biggest alarm, however, came one time in the middle of the Martinique channel when we were knocked down by a sudden squall, filling the inflatable rubber dinghy that we were towing with water. With this huge drag the yacht could not be righted. I took to a bucket but as soon as I scooped out one bucketful it was replaced by more. Sense returned; we unplugged the dinghy's air compartment bungs and pulled the whole unwieldy mass into the cockpit.

We agreed to take a friend's motoryacht, *Vacationer*, for a haulout in Martinique. We had with us a young man, experienced in small yacht sailing, who wanted a free drop across the channel. As we left Rodney Bay we motored into a steep cross sea. *Vacationer* didn't like this one little bit, lifting her propellers clear of the water as she plunged headlong into the troughs. The young man and I sat flat upon the deck behind the high and solid sides of the cockpit. As conditions improved and *Vacationer* stopped airing her propellers, the young man, white faced, turned to me with a plaintive, "Oh, we must be in very rough seas!" I struggled up to see for myself. It was a pleasant, almost calm sea that any sailboat would have loved.

And so it went, the good sailing with the bad. Then it happened. A converted Norwegian fishing boat sailed into our waters and we were done for. The hippie husband and wife told us that the Norwegian government was replacing these old wooden boats with modern steel vessels. There were still a few of these sturdy wooden beauties that could be picked up for a song. Visions of fishing boats danced in our heads. We HAD to have one of our own. John was soon off to Stavanger Fiord with the US$8,000 we had managed to scrape together. When the long summer school holidays began, the boys and I followed. Reckless? It was becoming a habit.

When the boys and I arrived, John had already built a fine cabin for the boys beneath the pilothouse with an interior entrance for safety. John and I would have to brave the open deck to reach the forecastle and our bunks. The pilot house had a small room behind the steering position with a tiny propane hot plate, a small sink, hand pump water tap, a small table, a couple of drawers for crockery and the odd pot or two, and two small sofa benches, one just long enough to snooze on. When all was sort of ready we departed.

That first day we picked our way between the rocks out of Hardanger Fiord and into the North Sea. Of course we had missed the official channel and spent the night recovering in a quiet fishing village. The morning was wet and windy, cold too, but we were full of the spirit of adventure and happy to be on our way. By afternoon we were all on deck, eyes peeled for the entrance to Jossing Fiord. There was nowhere to anchor in the blue deeps of the fiord, so we stupidly tied up to a dock with enough warning signs to alert the most mentally challenged.

In the dead of night a most dreadful engine noise penetrated our hull and three piercing blasts from a siren threw us out of our bunks, grabbing at clothes and frantic with alarm. Already heavy boots were tramping across our foredeck; there were loud bangings on our forecastle door and angry shouts, obviously directed at us. Up on deck we had no time for contemplation of the starry skies as a huge red tanker was bearing down upon us with no intention of stopping. No time either for the seven minutes it took to preheat the engine — it was start or die. The engine did start, but in reverse. Okay, just remember to operate all the levers in reverse. We slid out from under the oncoming steel bow with nary an inch to spare, and chugged shakily across the fiord where we finally discovered an iron ring set into the steep, rocky wall. The gearshift jammed and we rammed the wall. It was 3AM.

As the pink blush of dawn picked out all the facets of the granite walls about us, we untied from the ring. Mid-morning found us leaving the lee of Norway and charging across the sea to Denmark. Oh reckless ones! We knew that to make it to a safe port we needed more daylight hours than we had. As the wind picked up, nearing gale force, the waves became cinematic, making me think of wartime documentaries with destroyers disappearing at each plunge into giant green waves. Everything that could possibly come adrift did so, and the wheelhouse was a confusion of kettle, coffee pot, spilled yoghurt, charts, instruments and books. The drawers came out and spewed crockery and pots into the mess. Cupboard doors flew open and sent their contents flying. Settee cushions slid to the floor. At one point I saw a strange, small brown cylinder go flying across the pilothouse. What the hell? It was a spurt of tea flung out of the spout of the teapot. I couldn't turn on the light because it ruined John's night vision. The hurricane lamp (what a misnomer!) wouldn't stay alight in the violent movement, I couldn't find the torch, and the matches burnt down all too quickly and scorched my fingers.

Sometime in the black of night a distant light winked from a far shore. I looked around for the pilot book. Where was the damn thing? At last I found it — with charts, books, cups and cutlery — down in the boys' cabin where they had all leapt when the hatch flew open. By striking endless matches, I tried to determine which navigational light I was looking at. How many flashes was that? What was the timing? We plunged high and low so dramatically that the light was constantly disappearing while I was in the middle of trying to count a sequence. At last I thought I had it — must be Thyboron.

During this endless night, solid water poured over our decks, sending white spray, heavy and threatening, against our wheelhouse windows. We thought the end had come when a terrible thump convinced us we had struck the shore. But no. In the morning we found instead that our little storeroom and toilet perched on the stern deck was gone.

The pewter light of morning also revealed, behind the slate green humps of waves, a flat sand dune shore. I reached for the pilot book again. What I read was enough to convince me never to sail these waters again. I was warned of shifting sands, an ever-changing coastline, flat as a rug, and worst of all, wrecks and uncleared WWII mines. What on earth did those ungainly black wooden towers mean? And at last when we found the entrance to a harbour, what was the meaning of those flags whipping in the gale? Whatever, there was no breaking water on the bar, so we sailed in. Bless you good guardian angel, all was well.

Before leaving the harbour, anxious to cross the bar without any trauma, we asked the harbour master for his advice. "You must cross the bar at exactly 0712 hours," he warned. We crossed the bar at precisely 0712, and THUD, we struck the bar. A swell lifted us and THUD. We struck the bar a second time. But there was no apparent damage, and as recrossing the bar in cresting seas was out of the question, we pressed on. As it turned out, we had sprung a butt end below the engine and water was getting into the engine room, forcing John to stop the engine. And so we spent the day labouring at the deck pump until the leather flange split in two, and then bailed with a bucket. At mid-afternoon help arrived in the awful shape of a huge, official, Atlantic-going tug. John despondently signed the salvage papers and we were towed into Esjberg.

Late that night the harbour master and tug manager met us at the dock. Everyone was very solicitous and offered help of every kind. Even though the tug manager charged us only for the fuel used by the tug, and the boatyard charged for only half our length, our small resources were wiped out. It seemed that our journey was at an end. But there was redemption for the young and reckless after all. A guardian angel helped us, and we sailed back to St. Lucia — but that's another story.

Postscript: Lee and John Kessell have passed away since this story was written, but their sons remain living and working in the marine trades in St. Lucia.

Reprinted from the May 2000 issue of Compass *in celebration of our Silver Jubilee 25th Anniversary year.*

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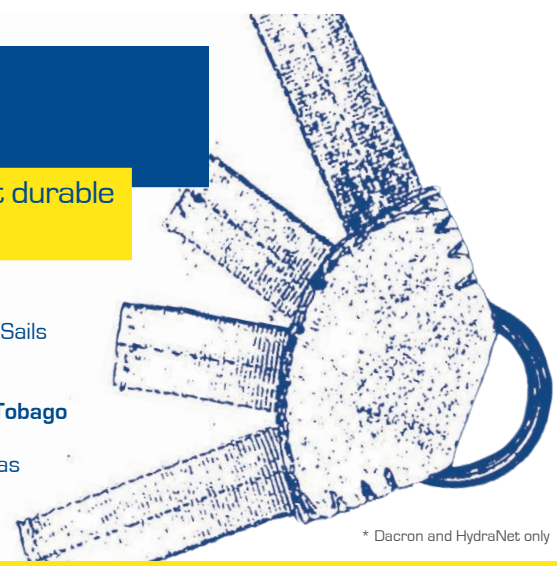
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Union Island offers some challenging climbs for us sea-level people; I described hiking to Big Hill and Mount Taboi in the February 2010 issue of *Compass*. But for a short, exciting and rewarding hike you cannot beat climbing the island's Pinnacle. It is the steepest mountain in the Grenadines, its dramatic outline making a conspicuous landmark as you sail in. It takes about three hours dock to dock. Most of it is an easy regular walk, but the final climb, when you get to the Pinnacle, is tough. It involves non-technical rock scrambling, avoiding



prickly plants and negotiating very steep, slippery terrain. For much of the time you are on, or close to, steep or precipitous slopes, so real care must be taken. You will spend time on your knees and your backside as you clamber your way up and down. At the very top you sit on a rock with a 360-degree, straight-down view.

I recommend wearing long trousers and a long-sleeved shirt against prickers, plus sturdy shoes with a good grip, and carrying a small cutlass (available in the local hardware store for about EC$20). You can, of course, tackle it without a cutlass, wearing a T-shirt, shorts and flip-flops. I did so in my youth, but that was nuts. If at any time you feel this climb is too much for you, turn back. Afternoon is the best light for photography.

The closest dock is the one by the West Indies Restaurant. Walk to the main road and turn left. At the top of the hill there are two roads that branch off to the right, one a little farther up than the other. You can take either (go by one, come back by the other). They join up again on the other side of the hill, where you will find yourself overlooking a small hill on which are perched a couple of big radio antennas. A road with some houses leads up to the antennas. Walk up this road and when you get to the antenna compound turn right onto the grass. At the moment a fairly well established path leads you close to the Pinnacle.

As you go, take a good look at the Pinnacle. At its northern end is a rock formation that looks a bit like a giant iguana climbing up onto the final slope. This rock comes much of the way down the Pinnacle, and the path, such as it is, closely follows the southern (left hand) edge of this rock.

As you approach the Pinnacle, you might see a small water hole, often dry. A path leads to the left of this, through the bush to the base of the Pinnacle. If you don't find it, find the best way you can to the foot of the mountain. You want to end up right under that iguana rock.

The next part is prickly and grassy; there is no proper path but there are probably several ways you could get through. We found our way going slightly to the north then coming back under the rock. The path becomes more apparent when you reach the foot of the rock and, from here, it harder to lose your way. The path is very small, tough in places, and a real scramble. Someone helpfully tied some heavy webbing to assist in one of the worst rock climbs. Test it before you rely on it; it is fine as of this writing but who knows how it will be later?

The cutlass is not for heavy work, but the route is seldom used and you may need to prune a few century plant spikes that have grown into the path. Watch out also for "brazil" (a bush or small tree with a small holly-like leaf), which is to be avoided; contact with the leaves or sap can cause severe itching and blisters.

You emerge on the bottom end of the ridge, under the southern end of the iguana rock. From here the path is straight up the ridge, often only a few feet wide, sometimes with big rocks to be navigated, and always a precipitous drop on both sides. I have had people with a fear of heights balk at this point; take it easy!

The cutlass will prove helpful again along the ridge for minor pruning of prickly things that have grown over the way: prickly pear cactus in particular, also a few devil nettles (like brazil, to be avoided) have taken root.

When you get near the top you scale the final summit by scrambling over some rocks. The summit itself is a big rock on which you can sit and gaze straight down in every direction. Union Island is laid out before you, and beyond Union all the Grenadines. On a clear day you can see St. Vincent and Grenada. You look back at the way you have come and wonder how you managed to make it up the steep slope, and whether you will ever see home again. Fear not, it actually seems a little easier going back down.

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Two Artisans in Carriacou:



RONI EVERTON (2)

SHAKA AND LUÍS

by John Everton

Aaron H. Barry's aliases include Shaka, Zulu and Bongo. Shaka was born in Grenada in 1980. He moved to Carriacou when 17 and has lived here ever since. Of all the West Indians here that I know he has the most African aspect, particularly in his dress, his bongo playing and the choice of materials in the necklaces he makes, which include animal bones and teeth that he finds when walking. Shaka's art is more for art's sake than profit; however, he will accept presents of value in exchange for necklaces and the drums he fabricates, as well as accepting commissions.

Shaka's bongo playing is certainly African based and I have seen him pick up the tempo and add zest to various bands he plays with. On board at night one can often hear his distinctive drumming drift across the water from the shore. The bases of his drums are made from mahogany logs, mostly carved with hand tools such as gouges after hollowing out the log with a chain saw. He usually uses pigskin for the membrane, called a drumhead or drumskin. Shaka began making bongo drums 25 years ago and has been making necklaces since his schooldays.

Shaka began scuba diving about 18 years ago and worked for dive shops, as well as selling the fish and lobsters he caught. About seven years ago he suffered a bends accident while diving southeast of Petite Martinique. He was down to 110 feet and when he ascended to 90 feet his regulator and mask blew out. Without being able to see he was able to activate an emergency regulator on his tank, which unfortunately proved faulty, so he came straight up to the surface from 90 feet. He was eventually transported to a decompression chamber in St. Lucia as at the time Grenada did not have one. Lucky to survive, he walks with a limp in one leg and with the aid of a crutch. He thought I should mention the accident in this article to warn other scuba divers of potential dangers.

Always colourfully dressed, and usually accompanied by his faithful dog JJ, Shaka can be seen regularly on the Tyrell Bay waterfront anywhere between Lambi Queen and The Old Rum Shop. When he is not out fishing or at home making bongo drums or creating jewelry he is listening to music or watching music videos and you can bet your bottom dollar it is African singing and dancing.

Aaron - Shaka - Zulu - Bongo H. Barry is a very spiritual man, an artist who works with nature, in true touch with his ancestral roots.

Another artisan now in Carriacou who has something in common with Shaka is José Luís Roman Saavedra, a native of La Coruña, Galicia, Spain, who arrived in the Caribbean in January 2020 after an Atlantic crossing on the 28-foot gaff cutter *Sauntress*. *Sauntress* is the smallest square-rigger sailing and one of the oldest wooden boats currently sailing in the Caribbean, having been launched in Cardiff, Wales, in 1913. Luís has been first mate of *Sauntress* for 15 years after joining the boat in La Coruña. When she crossed last winter, *Sauntress* called in at Tobago before arriving in Tyrell Bay, where she soon hauled out in Carriacou Marine. Back in the water *Sauntress* was my neighbour for several months until we moved into the mangroves for the threat from Tropical Storm Gonzalo. Luís has been living ashore for the past few months until his skipper decides to sail on. As the skipper has also fallen in love with Carriacou, that won't be anytime soon.

When Luís was 20 years of age he started working for his uncle on weekends. His uncle was a carver in wood and stone; Luis preferred working with wood, in which he became proficient. Boxwood is his favourite for carving because, as a very slow growing bush, it has virtually no grain and is almost inert. Old-fashioned chisel handles are crafted from boxwood. Other woods Luis finds agreeable for carving include black walnut, black cypress, olive and lime. Tools Luís uses for carving include gouges, a magnifying glass and an extremely sharp knife like a scapel. He usually works with the grain.

An example of motifs used on a knife handle include leaves, the lighthouse of Hercules (a Roman lighthouse in La Coruña) a mermaid, a snake, a ship under sail, fish scales, a crab with a beer in one claw and a joint in the other, a seahorse drinking brandy — all carved in intricate detail. He will spend many hours, days or weeks working on one carving. Luís works from pure imagination, although sometimes, with a particular image, he will on draw it on paper, glue it on the wood, and carve around it.



LUIS SAAVEDRA



RONI EVERTON

Above: Aaron H. Barry — better known as Shaka, Zulu or Bongo — makes drums from mahogany logs, mostly carved with hand tools.

Left: Shaka and Luís. When seeing each other's work they had an instant rapport and respect for one another.

Inset: Shaka and his friend Santa (at left), creating a beat. On board at night sailors can often hear drumming drift across the water from the shore.

Bottom left: Luís will spend many hours, days or weeks working on one carving.

Below: Luís sketches in his ideas onto the wood in pencil, and then carves the finished artwork.



LUIS SAAVEDRA

Like Shaka, for the most part Luis is a non-commercial artist — art for art's sake. In place of cash, he too will accept gifts that he can value. But most of his work he gives to friends or keeps for himself. Besides carving for friends and his own private collection he will accept commissions. He has many followers on Instagram, which puts him in touch with carvers all around the world.

Besides carving, Luís is an excellent fisherman, cook and invaluable crewmember of *Sauntress.* He has worked on her in every winter re-fit and races on her in all the local regattas.

I enjoyed introducing Shaka and Luís, who when seeing each other's work had an instant rapport and respect for one another.

Ideas Made Real



by David Lyman

"I want to build another boat," Havana, my son told me. He was nine, and had been building little boats since he was five. First Lego models, then creating his own designs using of Lego parts, then scavenging around my boat shop for scraps of wood he could fashion into something at looked like a boat.

We were on our way south to the islands several years ago on *Searcher*, our Bowman 57. Havana had fashioned a boat out of pieces of scrap pine, painted it and fixed a screw eye in the bow so it could be towed behind the dinghy. He and I had visited boat shops and yacht yards all up and down the East Coast, watching boats in various stages of construction and restoration.



Above: Whaleboat models in various stages of completion as Benson helps Havana.

Right: Hand tools in Sargeant's workshop.

"They build boats in Bequia," I told him. "We'll be there in a few days." [*Read David's story "Sailing Down to Bequia" in the August 2020 issue of* Caribbean Compass.]

Bequia has a boatbuilding tradition that goes back more than 200 years. From wooden, hand-hewn, 30-foot, open whaleboats to seagoing schooners, boatbuilding has been a way of life for these islanders. The tradition is alive today. The Bequia boatbuilders are still turning out whaleboats and schooners, and even custom mega-yachts — as models. Bequia is the center of model boat building in the Caribbean.

"Well find someone on Bequia to help you build a boat. They'll have more tools." Little did I know, some had fewer tools than I had aboard.

We arrived just before Christmas and anchored in Lower Bay, away from the mooring field, which was crowded with yachts from the ARC Rally. Out here the water was clearer, the breeze was fresher.

After we cleared in at the Revenue Office, my wife and daughter went in one direction, Havana and I in another. We were looking for boatyards.

We met Mauvin, a model boat builder with a shop on Front Street, just up from the open-air market. The shop had small and large scale model whale boats, some as long as two feet, others as small as 12 inches, all meticulously carved, varnished and painted in the bright colors like Bequia's traditional long whale boats. The detail was incredible. Oars, harpoons and lances, line buckets, sailing rig laid out along the thwarts. On display were half models and replicas of some large, sleek yachts, some completed on commission over the summer waiting to be picked up by the yacht owners when they arrived later in the season.

Farther on along Front Street, just past the fuel storage tanks, we came to a sign that read "Sargeant Brothers Model Boat Shop: The Original." The walls of the showroom were lined with shelves and display cases, crowded with finished models of all sizes, More than 50 finished models from small whaleboats to 36-inch replicas of mega-yachts. We found Benson Phillips, a tall strapping Bequian, out back in the workshop, sitting in a nest of wood chips, sawed planks, tools and half-finished models. He was not alone. Other men were carving, whittling and sanding their models amid non-stop teasing, gossip, football scores, and put-downs. All this in a West Indian dialect.

We stood in the doorway watching the men. No electrical tools were in sight, not even an electric light. There were handsaws, machetes (locally called cutlasses), chisels and hand planes. A large, stand-up vise held a block of wood being shaped into a hull under the sharp edge of a hand plane. Pots of International paints and Epifanes varnish sat in a corner. Sheets of cardboard stacked along one wall waited to be used for boxes to ship large models off island for yachtsmen and tourists. Windows and doors were open to the breeze off Admiralty Bay. Well-worn stools and workbenches provided working space for three or four men. Models in various states of completion were stacked on a table; others hung from the ceiling, paint and varnish drying.

Benson noticed us and asked if he could help.

"My son wants to make a small model sailboat, one that can actually sail," I said. "We are interested to see how you make your models."

"You want to make a model?" Benson asked Havana, ignoring me.

"Yes. Can I?"

"Depends. You got any wood?"

"Maybe," Havana looked up at me. "Do we?" He asked.

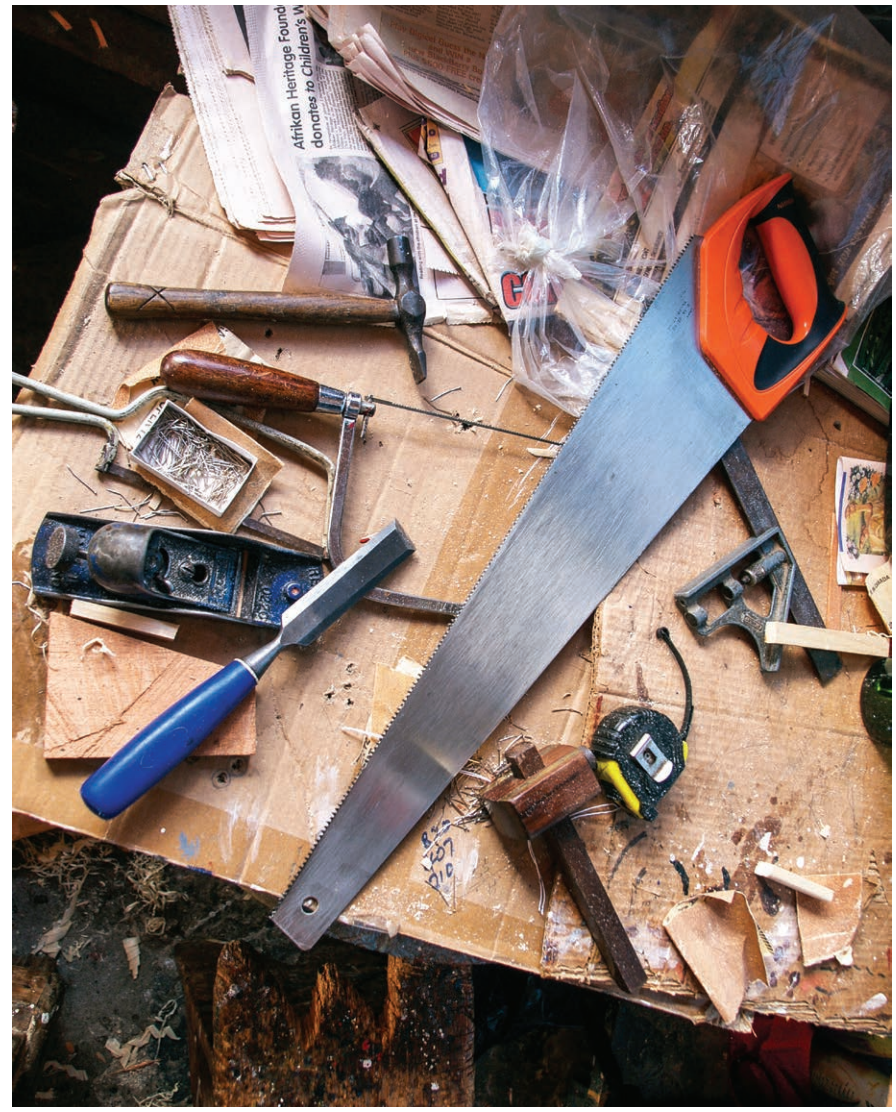
"I have a two-by-twelve plank of pine on board our boat," I told Benson. "I can cut it up and glue it together to make a blank." Behind one of the cabin seats I stow wood scraps, knowing I'll find a use for them down the road.

"You bring the wood," Benson said. "I'll get her shaped. Your boy can do the rest."

Benson was making display models, works of art that reside on wealthy boat owners' mantels, not bobbing about on the bay, but he knew a model builder that built boats that did sail, and sail well. The next morning, one of Benson's friends brought in a sailing model. It measured 24 inches long, with a beam of six inches and a hull draft of four and a half inches. The long, weighted keel was another ten inches and the mast was taller than the boat was long. This was the boat Havana wanted to build. Benson said he'd help Havana get started, but he had no gumwood available.

Back on *Searcher*, I cut the plank with my electric skill saw, creating four narrow planks. These would be stacked and glued to form the hull.

At the shop the following day, Havana and Benson discussed a basic hull shape for his model. The hull would be 20 inches long, five and a quarter inches wide and four and a half inches deep, to which the fin keel would be fitted. Benson looked over our pine, shaking his head.



"Too many knots — see? It's checked here, and here. You don't know how far into the wood this check goes. It could open up later as it dries."

But this was what we had, so Benson got to work. He laid out the dimensions on the deck plank, using pins to mark the various points along the sheer of the hull. An old saw blade was used as a batten to create a smooth curve along the pins marking out the hull's edge. Then he got to work with his cutlass, a machete that had lost half its width from repeated sharpening, which he did frequently while hacking away the excess wood with a skilled eye and hand. The boat's shape came to life. The three blanks now roughed in were married together and glued up with West epoxy. Next morning, Benson and Havana would begin to refine the shape using hand planes.

—Continued on next page

—*Continued from previous page*

On our way ashore the following morning, we met another boatbuilder. Sam Hermiston was a 12-year-old Scot living board his family's ketch, which was also anchored in the harbor. Sam was fishing off the dinghy dock when we pulled up.

"You building a model boat at Benson's," he declared in a decided Scots accent, spying the wood blank in Havana's hands. "I built one there too." He reeled in his fishing line, put down his pole, and off we all went. The boys got on famously, sharing an interest in models and in boats.

Later that afternoon, we took Sam out to his family's ketch, *Sea Warrior*, so he could show us his model. The small 14-inch model, made from gumwood, had been hollowed out and decked over, to make it lighter. It was sloop rigged, with a tall mast, self-tending jib, deep weighted keel and no rudder. Sam climbed into our dinghy, set his model gently in the water and gave her a shove. Off she went as straight as an arrow in the ten-knot breeze that ruffled the harbor. The tiny model laid over in the gusts, righting itself and bobbing along in the chop. As we followed it in our dinghy the boys were all smiles to see the small boat flying along, all by itself: no remote controls, no battery-powered motor, just the breeze and the magic of the boatbuilder's craft to harness the wind.



Back at the shop, Havana's hull was clamped in the vise and Benson showed Havana how to use a hand plane to complete the job of squaring off the outline of the laminated planks. Benson then drew a line on the hull where he figured the turn of the bilge would be, where the waterline might be. With his machete, he chopped away the excess wood creating the rough shape of the boat's underbody. More planing as the profile of the boat took shape. Next would be carving away the wood from stern to the stern to create the completed shape of the hull.

When it was completed, Havana could begin the long, tedious task of sanding the hull. We tested the hull's buoyancy in seawater. It sat too low. To lighten the boat, we'd have to remove wood from inside the hull, and then deck it over. That is, if Havana wanted his model to actually sail.

"Do you make any models that actually sail?" Havana asked Benson.

"No, but many of the kids do," he replied. "We have a model boat race here every year during the Bequia Easter Regatta. Here — I'll show you one of the winners." From off a shelf came a half a coconut, rigged with a mast and long bowsprit and cotton cloth for sails. "The lads put a few stones in the coconut for ballast."

But it would be some time before Havana's boat would feel the wind and taste the water, as he had a lot of sanding to do. This, to be followed by two coats of primer, sanding between each coat, then two to three coats of topside paint, then bottom paint, a boot stripe and deck paint. The mast and boom needed to be shaped, and then stays and shrouds and halyards rigged. Lifelines? Deck hardware might be added, and finally the name needed to be painted on the stern.

As we cruised farther through the Caribbean islands, Havana was busy sanding the hull and designing the rig and deck layout for his model boat, often taking an idea here and there from the yachts we passed or that anchored next to us. Whether his model ever made it into the water or not wasn't as important as the lessons he would learn along the way. The patience it takes, and the skill of hand and tool that Benson imparted, along with the feel of the wood — it's the process not the product that teaches.



Above: Models of whaleboats and large yachts share a counter in the showroom.

Left: Sam with his model that sails.

Later, while spending a month in English Harbour on Antigua, we visited the local shipyard and had a piece of sheet aluminum cut out for the keel. A nearby wood working shop cut out a piece of scrap mahogany plywood for the deck. But it wasn't until we returned to Maine that Havana fished his model.

She did sail once, but she was a bit too tender. She needed to be lightened more, and more weight added to the bottom of the keel for stability.

Havana's model sits here in our Maine house, a reminder that his ideas can be made real. All it takes is patience and acquiring skills, and those he is now learning. He's now 20, off to Solent University in the UK, studying marine engineering and yacht design.

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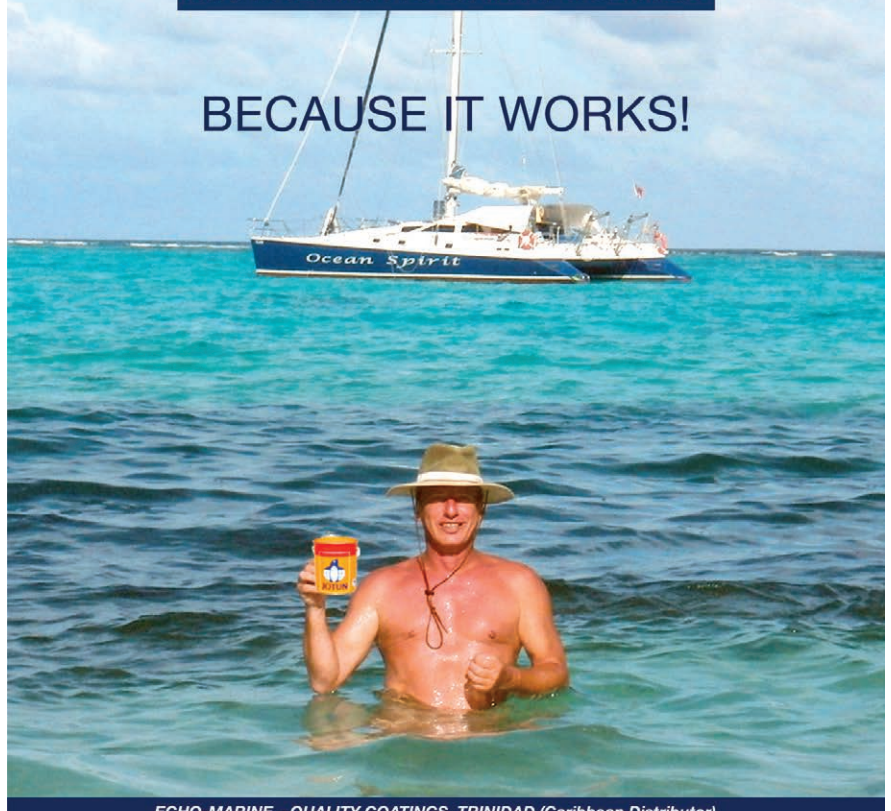
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Boats and History:

Bequia Heritage Museum Expands



The Bequia Heritage Foundation's Bequia Boat Museum, overlooking Friendship Bay at St. Hillary, houses a 36-foot Amerindian canoe, two 26-foot Bequia–built whaleboats and a 12-foot Bequia whaleboat tender. Backed up with signage, photographs, ships' models, artifacts and traditional woodworking tools, the display provides a window into Bequia's rich and unique seafaring heritage.

Expansion planned by the Bequia Heritage Foundation to cover the entire sweep of Bequia's history has now become a reality with the opening of the adjacent new Annexe building on December 7th, 2020. The two buildings together now form the Bequia Heritage Museum.



WILFRED DEDERER (ALL)

The Annexe houses a fine collection of Amerindian artifacts, almost all found on Bequia, plus a selection of material from the colonial period including a collection of bottles retrieved by divers from Admiralty Bay. The exhibits in the Annexe are enhanced by two PowerPoint presentations. One gives an in-depth and contextual overview of Bequia's more than 1,700 years of history. The other shows rare historical charts, maps and photos of the island. Allow a good hour to get the most out of this wonderful new addition to Bequia.

Until now, the Boat Museum was run by a small handful of Trustee volunteers and funded solely by donations. In the early days, the original unstaffed building, opened in 2013, was designed so that people could come and view the exhibits through the windows for free. Tours inside with a volunteer guide were available only by appointment. Now, through the Trustees' hard work and additional fundraising efforts, the new Annexe has been opened with a trained museum representative in each building during opening hours. Entry fees (EC$25, or $20 for groups of four or more; kids under 12 free) merchandise sales and donations will now provide funding for salaries, maintenance, etcetera.

A monthly "Open Saturday" with free admission for all is planned once Covid-related conditions and regulations permit. The Museum also actively encourages school groups to visit with their teachers by prior arrangement, once schools reopen.

Currently, due to the Covid pandemic, opening hours have been temporary reduced to Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9:00AM till 1:00PM. Personal guided tours outside these hours are welcomed, and available by prior arrangement.

For more information contact (784) 532 9554 or bequiaheritage@gmail.com

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

by Herman Belmar

The history of Bequia is largely oral, rooted in a mixture of cultures: Amerindian, Garifuna, African, and European. The lack of resources in the pre-1990s to send our students en masse to secondary schools and universities dampened the ability to put into writing the things that made us who we are. Our history and cultural traditions were passed on orally or lost forever. The purpose of the Bequia Heritage Museum is to change that: to bring to the front as much as possible of that which is quickly fading, and to preserve it for posterity.

The impetus for the founding of the Bequia Boat Museum was a backward glance at life on Bequia during the mid 1980s, including a glimpse of two whaleboats owned by an aging group of Ollivierre brothers: Athneal, Louis, Barton and Ocarol. Of the four, Athneal was the only one still capable of displaying brawn, as immortalised in song: "Athneal was the greatest whaler man, with nerves of steel and a powerful right arm."

Existing photographs of the crew of the two boats showed a team of brave men who had all passed their 60th birthday. Tom Johnson, a dear friend of Athneal, assessed the situation, even as Athneal declared himself "The Last Harpooner." With Tom as a driving force, the founders of the Museum Working Group took a decision to do something urgently to preserve the cultural traditions from which our island evolved. While all our history was important and worth preserving, we all felt the urgency to capture and preserve as much of the oral history of whaling and ship-building as possible, as well as the existing artifacts.

Tom and I were assigned to be the liaisons between the whalers and the committee, with Pat Mitchell doing much documentation through photographs. The Bequia Heritage Foundation was born, and the first offshoot was the Bequia Whaling and Sailing Museum.

A boat and equipment were acquired from Barton Ollivierre, and a second boat and equipment, depicting the Barrouallie whaling industry, was purchased, since it was built in Paget Farm. Land at St. Hillary was purchased from Government, and the evolution of the museum began its long laborious journey.

The emphasis today is not just on whaling. It covers our boatbuilding tradition from canoes to ships, with the whaleboat standing in the middle as the small craft that adapted the style of the Yankees while changing the face of life and history on Bequia. We have also expanded to cover the Amerindian and European periods of settlement.

Since the formation of the Museum Committee in 1984-85, a working relationship has been established with the Kendall Whaling Museum of Sharon, Massachusetts. We hosted a curator from that museum in the summer of '85, and contracted with a film company to produce a documentary on Bequia whaling. In 1986 I received training as a curator at the Kendall Whaling Museum, and land at St. Hillary was purchased with funding through the Canadian International Development Agency. That year we also opened relationships with the Barbados Museum, where I secured advanced curatorial training. In 1988 whaleboats were purchased, and a display at the Gingerbread Hotel was erected. The exhibits were moved to a shed in Port Elizabeth in 2000. The foundation of the Boat Museum at St. Hillary was laid in 2006.

Left: The new Annexe houses a fine collection of Amerindian artifacts, PowerPoint presentations and more.

Below: The original building houses a representative collection of indigenous open boats and related materials.



A canoe built by the Amerindians of Martinique, Dominica and Guyana was purchased in 2005. The Boat Museum was opened in 2013, and the Annexe in 2020. The existing buildings were built mainly thanks to the gifts of our many patrons and donors (see a list on the museum wall) and the sweat and toil of our Trustees. We now have two paid adjunct curators/office attendants.

In a master plan for the overall development of the property, our first drive is landscaping, to create easy access to the shore of Friendship Bay, to provide ease of access to yachties, and also to create a tranquil garden space in which one can relax, read or just enjoy the sounds of nature: The Morris Nicholson Memorial Garden. The plan includes the construction of an amphitheater-like building, where local traditional music, dance, and craft can be displayed: The Pat Mitchell Memorial Cultural Center. We are also planning spaces for a traditional Bequia chattel house, boatbuilding, and perhaps pottery and basket weaving, and work and display areas for traditional activities such as a whaling tryworks and a miniature sugar works.

While this is an ambitious plan, the work of the Trustees, who also serve as volunteers, is an ongoing labour of love. The task ahead is truly astronomical.

BOOK REVIEW
BY NICOLA CORNWELL

Honesty Less Ordinary: A CANDID CRUISING MEMOIR



Plunge: One Woman's Pursuit of a Life Less Ordinary, *by Liesbet Collaert. ©Roaming About Press. 320 pages, ISBN-10: 1735980609, ISBN-13: 978-1735980607*

I am reliably informed that in places known for selling boats, such as Fort Lauderdale in Florida, there is a veritable graveyard of broken relationships expressed in the large number of boats for sale by male owners who find themselves on their own after a couple's cruising dream didn't work out. Indeed, after living aboard full-time with my other half, it is my contention that relationships on boats should be counted in dog years (i.e. one year together equals seven in "normal" life), such are the stresses and strains of close-quarters watery environments. It takes a certain kind of special (or perhaps crazy) to make boaty togetherness a thing. And however it works, it is rarely blissful.

Before she met Mark, Liesbet knew only one thing about boats and that was they made her sick. Motion sickness is hardly the sailor's best friend. Nevertheless, the main thing about Liesbet is that she's not your average girl. Born in Belgium, she started traveling at 17 and it became a lifelong addiction. She became a global nomad, with no apologies about it.

"We only live once. It's up to us to pursue a life that suits us, tickles our senses, and shapes us into balanced, complete and satisfied humans. Each fork in the road leads to a new path. Life is about choices we make and the chances we take."

For her, buying a boat and going sailing was just another thing to do because it was there, a new path. And because Mark suggested it.

As much as this book is the story of life onboard the catamaran *Irie*, how that came about and where they went, it is the story of her relationship with Mark. A no holds barred, achingly intimate recollection of everything that this means to her, from the purely practical to the deeply emotional. It begins with how they met — "My eyes meet those of a tall skinny short-haired and attractive man in the doorway of apartment #1" — and ends with… well, I won't spoil that.

There is almost none of the "oneness" that often happens when cruising couples recall their exploits. There is very little "we" in this book. It is very much Liesbet's book and hers alone. Mark's point of view is reported but never explained. Naturally, he is integral to the story but the perspective is firmly Liesbet's. And she is brutally honest about how she feels:

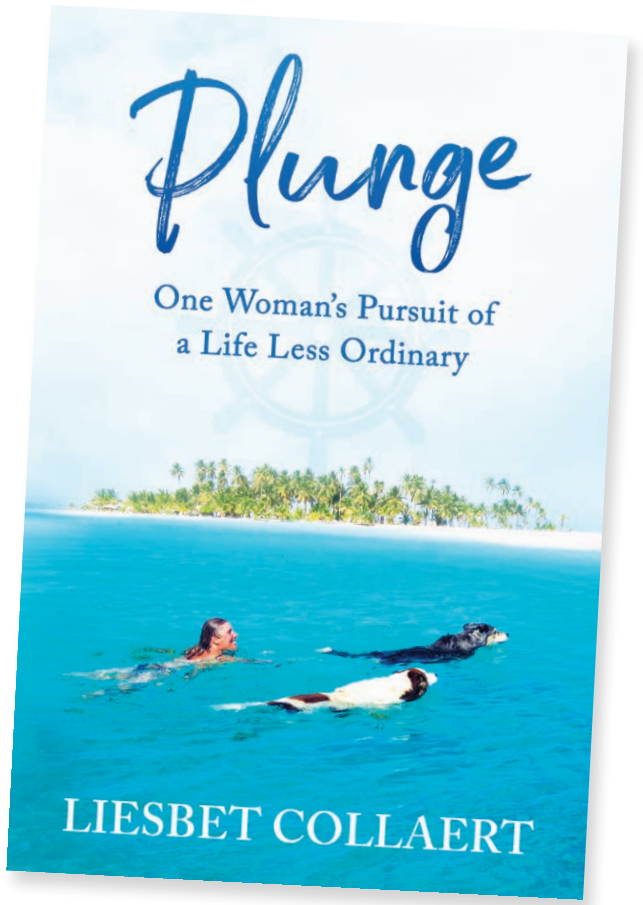
"I start exploring areas by myself. Not a bad thing since lately our relationship is strained again. The list of boat projects is never ending and each new issue is discovered and approached with cursing and yelling. When Mark is in these frustrated moods, Kali and Darwin [the dogs] cringe. I feel their anxiety… Are my ideas stupid? Is Mark sick of me? Should I just shut up and suck it up? These moments are unavoidable and dreadful. They make me feel minuscule."

It is this unflinching honesty that sets *Plunge* apart from other books written about the cruising lifestyle. That, and the fact that this candor comes from a woman. Mark and Liesbet not only have to figure each other out, but being in their 30s also have to find a way to make some money to continue their aquatic nomadic lifestyle even though they live as frugally as anyone aboard. And yes, no surprise here, that adds to the pressure of living together. The success of the business they create means conflicts of interest arise as they struggle to find the balance between work and travel.

"Mark's priorities and moods are shifting away from my passions. We need the money from the business, but is it worth giving up our freedom to cruise wherever we like? 'Do you think I want to work and sit behind my computer eight hours a day instead of exploring the islands?' Mark's question is paired with an accusing look.

"Often, we are told we're lucky to make money while traveling. Don't get me started on the word lucky. People have been calling me that as along as I remember, just because I chose a life less ordinary. What does luck have to do with making decisions or shaking responsibilities to pursue freedom?… People who get stuck in the rat race, have a family, or count on a big income to cover big expenses say they don't have options. They do. Period."

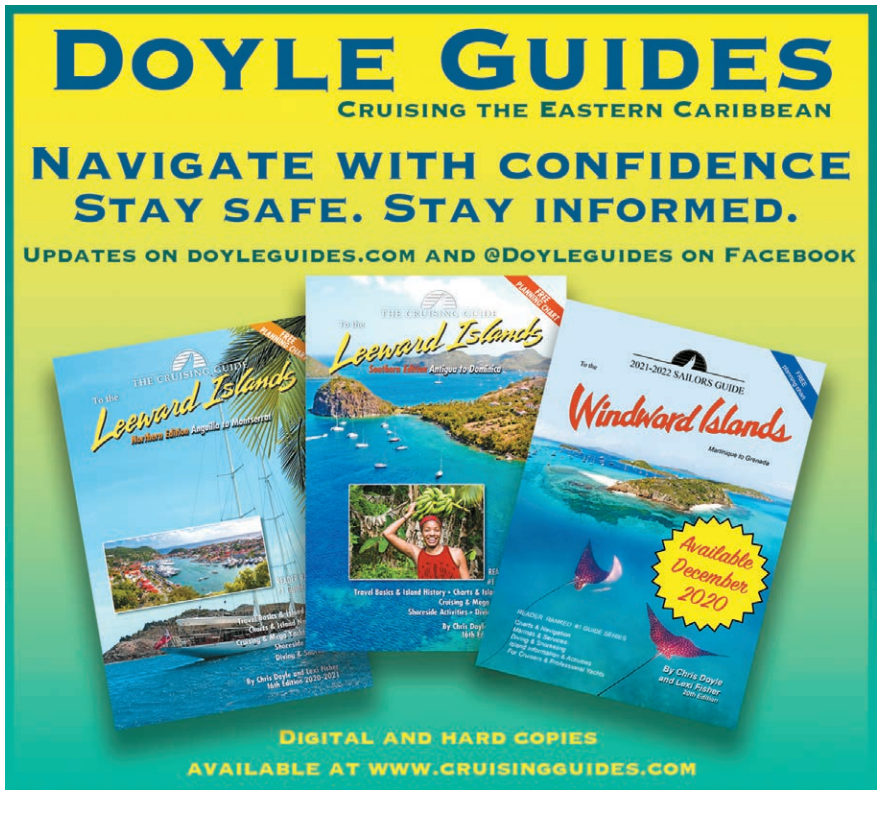
Along with setting up a business with Mark, one of the things Liesbet did to make money was to start writing articles regularly for both this publication and others. Although English isn't her first language you would never know it. She has an easy to read, confident and fluent writing style. Each chapter's subject matter reveals itself like a captivating short story. The ten years of life the book covers flies by easily and the author's frank openness means you get to share in a rich haul of sky-high highs and crushing lows laid bare.



In fact if I can make any criticism, it is that this "emotional social retard" sometimes found these raw and intimate declarations of feelings rather awkward to read, like overhearing a telephone conversation not meant for me. The stripped nakedness of it, on occasion, was something one wanted to cover up and not see. But maybe that's just my background and the stiffness of my British upper lip restricting any impulse I have to share that kind of stuff with total strangers. Liesbet clearly has no such issues and I commend her for that. It's what makes this book unique. And she reaches a conclusion that I can totally agree with:

"Happiness comes from within. It's presented in fleeting moments; it's found when you feel at peace with the decision you've made."

Author Liesbet Collaert is Caribbean Compass's *Editorial Assistant.*
Plunge *is available at online booksellers and from www.roamingabout.com*



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THE CARIBBEAN SKY: FREE SHOW NIGHTLY!

The Sky from Mid-February to Mid-March

by Jim Ulik

"In space there are countless constellations, suns and planets; we see only the suns because they give light; the planets remain invisible, for they are small and dark. There are also numberless earths circling around their suns..."

— Giordano Bruno, Despre Infinit Univers Si Lumi (About Infinite Universe and Worlds), *printed in Venice in 1584.*

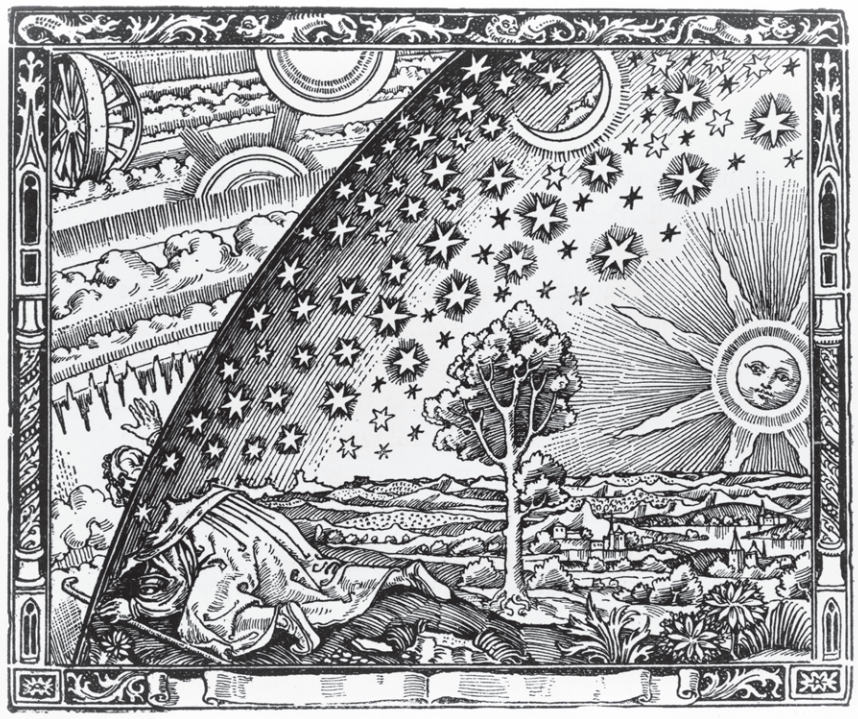


Illustration shows a man on earth peering through the universe to what was believed in the Middle Ages to lie beyond. Camille Flammarion woodcut, 1888.

Giordano Bruno, a Dominican friar, was held in prison for six years during the Roman Inquisition and interrogated for heresy. The detailed Holy Office transcripts of Giordano Bruno's trial were destroyed when Napoleon seized the Vatican Archives and brought them to Paris. All that remained was a trial summary written in 1598. He was interrogated not only about his opinions about church doctrine but also regarding his stances on cosmology. Bruno embraced Copernicus's heliocentric model of the solar system. He also argued that the universe was infinite and contained an infinite number of worlds inhabited by intelligent beings entirely foreign to us and to the church.* Giordano Bruno was convicted of heresy and burned at the stake on February 17th, 1600.

"They dispute not in order to find or even to seek Truth, but for victory, and to appear the more learned and strenuous upholders of a contrary opinion."

— Giordano Bruno

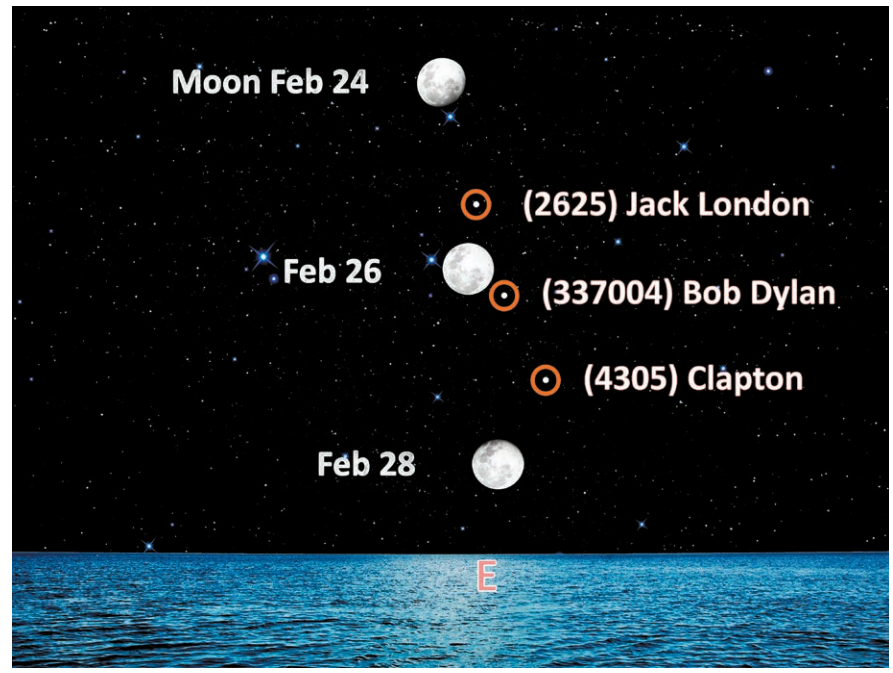
Three asteroids named after famous men will make a close approach as they sail past Earth this period. No worries, there is no chance that they will drift off course and run aground on Earth. The asteroids, with varying degrees of associations with the high seas, are:

• Jack London is making its close approach on February 20. He cruised the Pacific aboard the 55-foot *Snark*.

• Bob Dylan sailed the 63-foot Bequia schooner *Water Pearl*. This asteroid passes close to Earth on February 25th.

• Eric Clapton spent time aboard his 156-foot yacht *Va Bene*. His namesake makes a close approach on March 9th.

The discoverer of an asteroid is accorded the privilege of suggesting a name for his/her discovery. A committee of professional astronomers from around the world review and approve the proposed name. If one committee member strongly objects to a name, it is likely to be rejected. Contrary to some recent media reports it is not possible to buy a minor planet.



*Location of three asteroids sailing past Earth near the Moon over a few days at 2100 hours.***

Tuesday, February 16th

This morning Saturn, Mercury, Jupiter and Venus are lined up low in the east a few degrees above the horizon. They will only be visible for 15 minutes prior to sunrise. After tomorrow Venus will disappear as it becomes lost in the Sun's glare over the next three months. The only planet visible at night is Mars. This evening the red planet begins this period entering the constellation Taurus.

—Continued on next page

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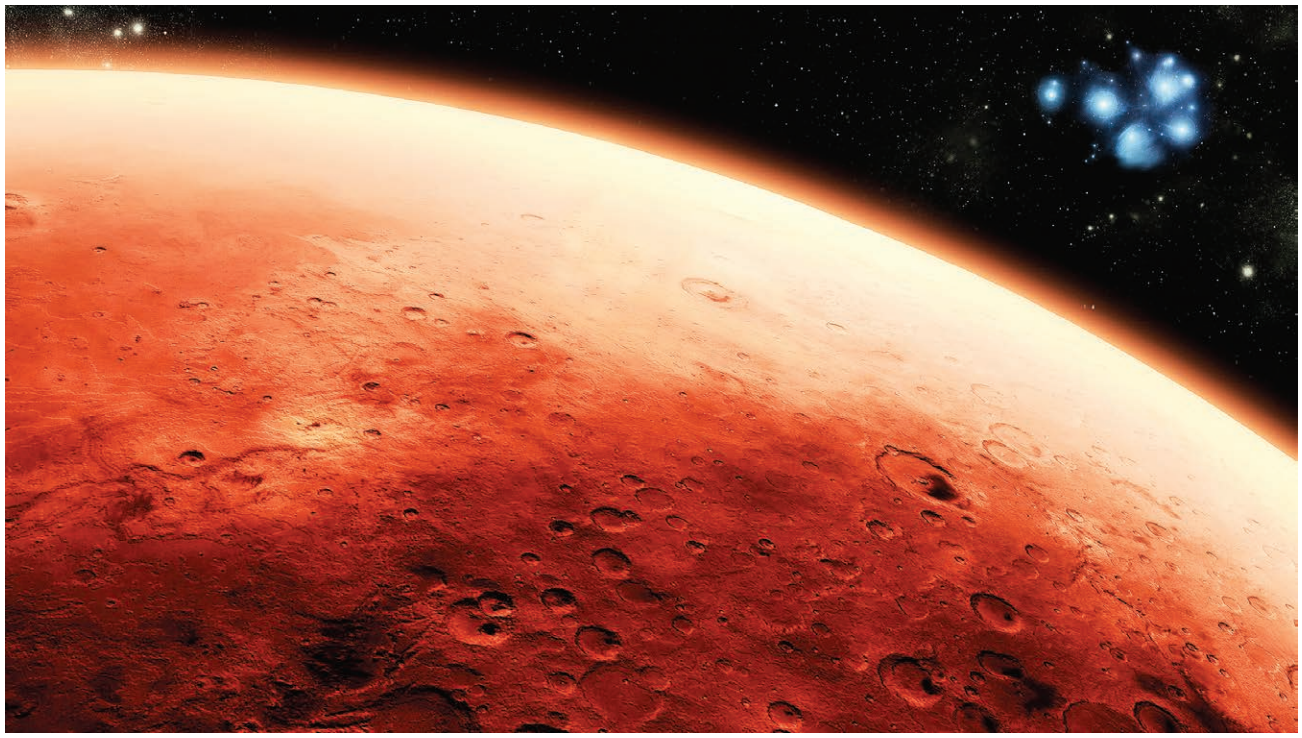


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Pleiades above Mars' horizon on March 3rd.

—Continued from previous page

Thursday, February 18th

The Moon takes up position approximately three degrees away from Mars tonight. Follow the Moon's terminator line — the dividing line marking the edge between day and night — towards the north to find Mars. Not only has the Moon been closing in on Mars over the last few days but so has the Mars 2020 spacecraft containing the rover *Perseverance.* The rover will land on Mars today. Attached to *Perseverance* is the helicopter *Ingenuity* that will test the first powered flight on Mars. One purpose of this mission is to advance NASA's quest to explore the past habitability of Mars. Another is to test oxygen production from the Martian atmosphere required for future missions.

Wednesday, February 24th

The Moon has shifted into Cancer alongside the Beehive Cluster. This group of over 1,000 stars is also listed in the Charles Messier catalog as M44. Look below Cancer around 1900 hours to find Leo rising. Even though the Moon is quite bright at this time you may catch a glimpse of a meteor or two from the Delta Leonids as the night progresses.

Tuesday, March 2nd

The Moon, at 18 days old, reaches the closest point along its orbit to the Earth. Over the next few days it will appear slightly larger than other nights.

Wednesday, March 3rd

Mars is visiting with the Seven Sisters tonight. As Mars passes eastward through Taurus it reaches its closest proximity to Pleiades, M45 or Seven Sisters tonight. Higher in the sky above Mars is Aldebaran, the eye of the bull.

Virgo will begin to rise in the east before 2000 hours. In a short time one of the nine Virginids meteor showers comprising the Virginid complex will reach its peak. This variable shower produces slow reddish meteors. The maximum number of meteors, 34 per hour, was recorded in 1841.

Thursday, March 4th and Friday, March 5th

This morning there is a close approach between Jupiter and Mercury. On March 4th there will be three quarters of a degree separating the pair. They will be less than one quarter of a degree apart on March 5th. It might be worth looking at this conjunction through a pair of binoculars. Look for a fuzzy spot east of Mercury. Comet 10P/Tempel takes 5.3 years to orbit the Sun traveling through space at over 111,000 km/h or 69,000 mph.

Wednesday, March 10th

Prior to sunrise there is a close approach between Saturn, Jupiter, Mercury and a sliver Moon. While all planets are in line the Moon is offset towards the south. There should be a good amount of sunlight reflected off Earth reaching the Moon to see detail in the dark side of the Moon.

Sunday, March 14th

Another year, another Pi Day. By 0200 hours Scorpius has risen in the east. In the south-southeast just to the right of Scorpius is the constellation Norma, Latin for carpenter's square. Nicolas Louis de Lacaille formed the constellation to fill in a dark patch of sky in 1756.

This morning the Gamma Normids meteor shower reaches its peak. The Normids is active from February 25th to March 22nd.

**Corpus of Canon Law, (1582 and 1591). Pope Gregory XIII included the heresy: "having the opinion of innumerable worlds."*

In the News

It takes MOXIE and planning to launch any mission to Mars. MOXIE (Mars OXygen In-situ resource utilization Experiment) is an oxygen generator that has accompanied the *Perseverance* rover. This instrument is a small version of a future freestanding plant that will create oxygen for propellant and breathing. MOXIE makes oxygen like a tree does. It inhales carbon dioxide and exhales oxygen. Hopefully the technology will not be a replacement for our forests.

*** 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 sails on S/V Merengue.

Perseverance, *helicopter* Ingenuity *and MOXIE settled on Mars, February 18th.*



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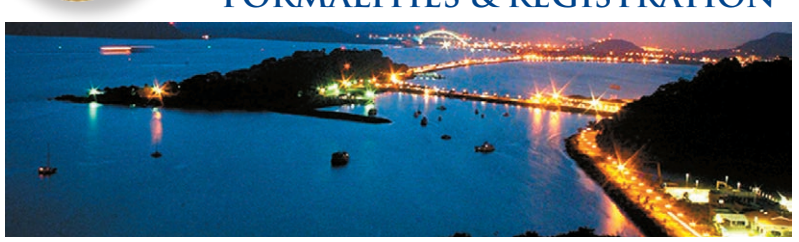
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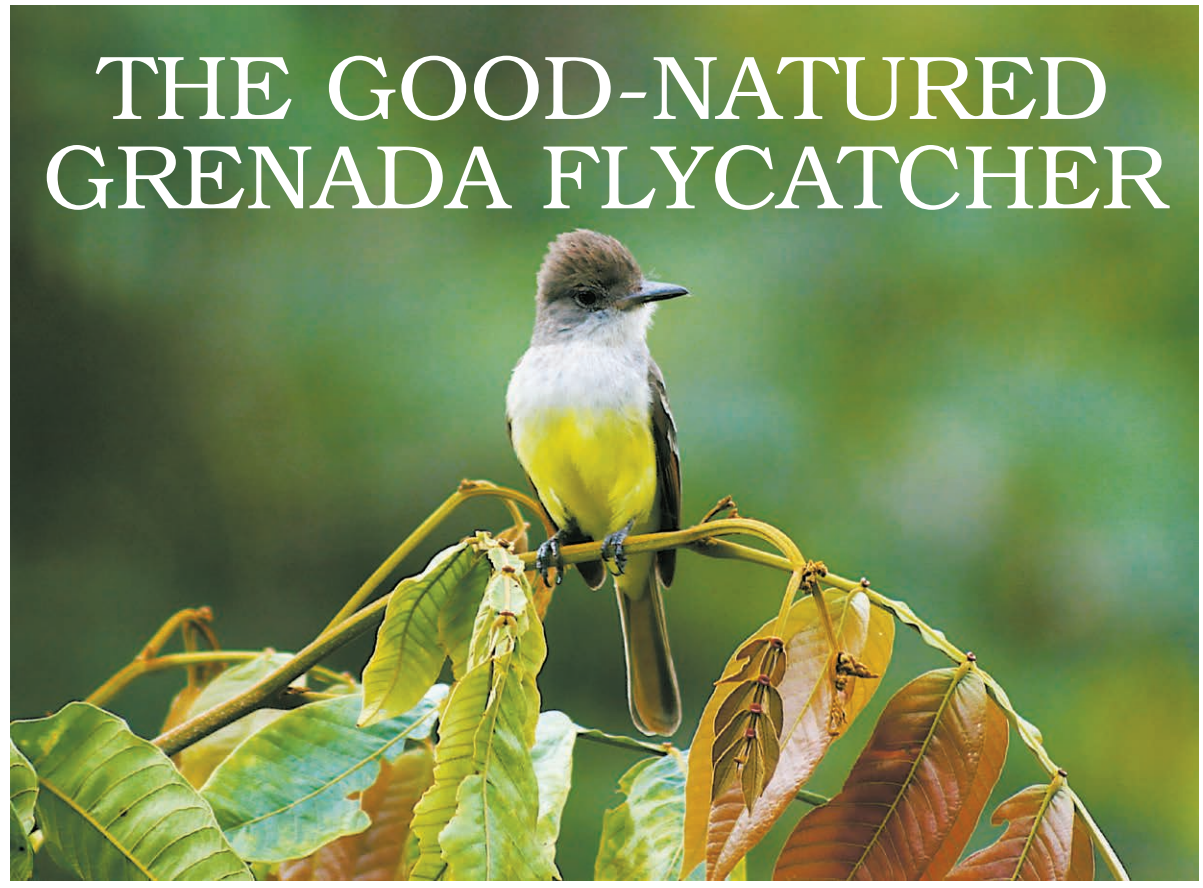
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THE GOOD-NATURED GRENADA FLYCATCHER



I have often approached individuals relatively closely while they stand docile, head slightly tilted to the side, watching me quietly.

Every year, a pair of Grenada Flycatchers takes up residence in a trunk cavity of our Ice Cream Bean tree. The first sign of their presence is a rather melancholic *"quip... quip... quip"* — like tears dropping onto a silent pond.

When I first noticed the pair, I greeted them at the bottom of the tree with camera in hand and big lens zooming. However, once aware of my presence, the birds either froze petrified or flew away. So I retreated, put the camera away and watched the pair from a distance. Unaware of my presence, the birds bloomed into busy nesters, carrying forth nesting material as they furbished the nest.

Grenada Flycatchers (*Myiarchus nugator*) are geographically restricted to the southern Lesser Antilles. As the name implies, they are endemic to Grenada and the neighboring islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, where the species replaces the very similar Lesser Antillean Flycatcher *(M. oberi*).

The Grenada Flycatcher is a large member of the group *Myiarchus*, a genus of similar-looking tyrant flycatchers, also commonly known as crested flycatchers. The species was once considered a race of the Brown-Crested Flycatcher *(M. tyrannulus*) of the southern US and South America, as the two are physically identical, differing in the bright orange mouth of the Grenada Flycatcher, but little else. However, the two species have showed consistent negative responses to tape playbacks of each other's vocalizations. Additionally, mitochondrial DNA analysis has confirmed that they are two different species. Although difficult to separate from other *Myiarchus* flycatchers, within their range Grenada Flycatchers are easy to identify not only by their distinctive voice, but also by the rust-coloured half crest and lemon-yellow belly, which have earned them the local names of Loggerhead and Sunset Bird.

Grenada Flycatchers can be found from sea level up to 900 meters elevation, favouring dry forests, secondary forests, agricultural land and human settlements. They are strong, direct flyers, often seen sitting patiently before sallying into the open to catch a passing insect. Although often seen near the ground, they are rarely seen on the ground, catching all their prey on the wing. They are good-natured birds, fairly tolerant of humans outside the breeding season. I have often approached individuals relatively closely while they stand docile, head slightly tilted to the side, watching me quietly. Looking into their dark, almond shaped eyes I wonder if they find me as fascinating as I find them — probably not. They are unhurried creatures, often remaining still for long periods of time while "*quipping*" lethargically. Then suddenly, as if waking up from a dream, they'll take to the wing and disappear from view behind a blanket of greenery.

Although Grenada Flycatchers are relatively conspicuous, there is very little literature on the species' breeding behaviour. Luckily, every year around March and April, I get to watch these dreamy creatures going through their breeding cycle. Grenada Flycatchers are monogamous and pairs may remain together for several seasons. The breeding season starts with the males advertising territory with a magical pre-dawn song: a series of "*quips*" that gradually increase in volume and culminate in a plaintive *"beeu-bee-wheéu!"* It may not seem like much, but it's truly a lovely thing to wake up at the break of dawn with the song of the Grenada Flycatcher. The sound is haunting, mournful and utterly sublime in intensity. After a series of repetitions, it ceases abruptly as the darkness dissipates and the new day rises from peaceful slumber.

Once paired, the male takes the female for a tour around his territory while both birds vocalise intensely, calling out "*free-free-free*" and "*frrr-reereeree- free.*" The male is more vociferous, while the female takes over the back vocals. After fluttering noisily about the garden for a few days, the pair will then settle in their perfect hole and the male begins delivering dry plant matter into the nest cavity. At the end of each delivery, he flutters back onto a branch overlooking the entrance to the hollow and "*quips*" satisfied, as his mate replaces the old with new soft furnishings. The center of the nest is lined with a variety of materials, including soft straw, garden string, dried leaves, animal fur and feathers. Occasionally, cloth, human hair and reptile skin may also be used. Grenada Flycatchers are cavity nesters and may use small natural holes in trees, or man-made structures such as pipes, masts and the booms of sailing boats.

Once the nest is completed, the female lays two to four eggs, which she alone incubates for about two weeks. The male guards the nest from potential threats — particularly the parasitic Shiny Cowbird, whom I have seen on several occasions attempting to parasite our Grenada Flycatchers' nest. As far as I can see, however, the ever-attentive male has barred them from doing so. Though I am never quite sure when the incubation starts, hatching is usually marked by a sudden change in routine, with both adults spending most of their time carrying food to the nest, occasionally communicating with their offspring with a gentle "*quip.*" The chicks respond with a series of excited *"sis-sis-sis;"* however, most of the time the adults tend to remain silent, thus reducing the risk of discovery from predators.

Fed on a rich diet of insects, the nestlings in our Ice Cream Bean tree grow rapidly, with fledglings popping out of the nest cavity at about 15 days old, spreading out onto the tree limbs like winged confetti. The young family departs the tree soon after, usually in a loud and disorderly manner with the adults calling urgently for the excited youngsters to gather their wings and fly. Although they are now able to fly, the newly fledged chicks will continue to be fed by their parents for another month, or until they are ready to hunt by themselves.

I watch their departure into the distant greenery with a touch of longing. To witness, albeit from afar, the nesting cycle of the Grenada Flycatcher is a fascinating experience that I look forward to every year: to see the chicks' first flights and perceive their eager anticipation of a life on the wing is nothing short of wondrous. As I watch the young Grenada Flycatchers depart their birthplace, I wonder like a doting godparent, if these young Sunset Birds will make it to adulthood and raise their own families. I would like to think so, because as the sun rises over the horizon bringing new opportunities, so are all beginnings filled with hope.

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EEL APPEAL

by Darelle Snyman

Eel sightings remain a thrill and encounters with these secretive fish make a dive memorable. On a few occasions these ill-tempered-looking creatures have nearly given me a heart attack as they suddenly popped out of a hole, mouth agape bearing some ferocious-looking teeth that made me back up a tad. These intimidating fish are mostly observed peeking from their labyrinthine lairs, but what a treat to see them moving through the water in a ribbon-like fashion, their elongated bodies allowing them to weave through narrow openings and holes in the reef with ease.

That's a moray

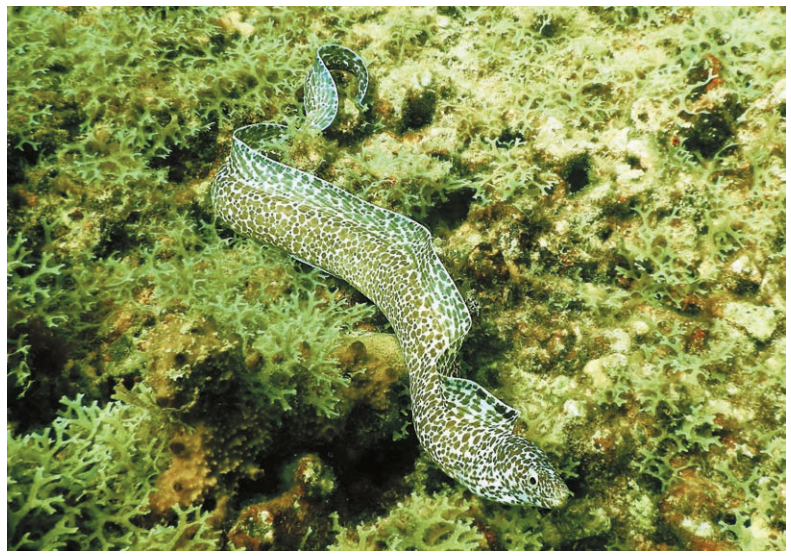
Of all the eels none is more fascinating than the moray, a family of eels that includes nearly 200 species.

These interesting members of the Muraenidae family are common coral reef inhabitants and differ from other eels in lacking pectoral fins and having small, rounded gill openings. Their ferocious look is courtesy of double jaws, holding very sharp backward-pointing teeth, that ceaselessly open and close. This teeth-baring habit, however, is not a defensive or aggressive move: morays breathe through their gills and when not moving forward they maintain water flow over their gills by opening and closing their mouths.

Attacks on humans are rare but you can end up with a nasty bite if you should disturb these territorial creatures or try to feed them. They have poor vision and rely on an acute sense of smell when hunting; distinguishing where the food morsel ends and the fingers begin could be a little problematic for them and you. These voracious predators hunt mostly at night, latching onto their prey with both sets of jaws. The inner jaw can retract, pulling the food farther into the mouth, while the outer jaw maintains its grip on the prey. Morays are, however, not the only predator out hunting and they still have to keep a vigilant eye out for a hungry shark or grouper looking for a tasty eel snack.

Morays, like all eels, start out life as flat, transparent larvae called leptocephali that drift among the plankton in the surface layers of the open ocean. This floating lifestyle can last as long as two and half years before they develop into juvenile eels called elvers and swim down to begin their life on the reef.

Most of my eel encounters have been with the spotted moray (*Gymnothorax moringa*), a shy eel typically seen peeking out from a hiding place in the reef, eyeing me with its unblinking stare. I have observed it slithering across the reef in the open during the day and it was not happy becoming my photographic subject. The spotted morays, as their common name suggests, are covered from head to tail in spots and the spotted pattern continues into their mouths. They have the long skinny body characteristic of other eels and can reach lengths of over six feet (two metres). Spotted morays prefer hunting on the move at night and during the twilight hours but will not ignore the occasional sick or wounded fish that pass by their burrows.





From the top:
I observed a spotted moray slithering across the reef in the open.

The green morays are probably the Caribbean's most impressive eel residents.

The golden-tail eel has a short, blunt snout and its brown body is covered with small yellow spots.

It's fun watching a gold-spotted snake eel probing the sandy bottom with its pointed snout, looking for prey.





The green moray

The green morays (*Gymnothorax funebris)* are probably the Caribbean's most impressive eel residents. With their distinctive yellow-green color, strong muscular body and prominent dorsal fin that runs the entire length of their body, they are unlikely to be confused with any other eel species. They are among the largest morays and, contrary to their common name, their true body color is actually brown. Their distinctive yellow-green color is the result of the toxic, yellow-tinted mucus that covers their bodies. Although they are fish, the green morays, like other moray eels, lack scales, so to protect themselves from pesky parasites and diseases they cover themselves with a mucus layer that is often toxic.

Green morays primarily feed at night as ambush predators but will engage in active hunting near reefs and rock formations. They have the habit of wrapping themselves in a knot around prey that is too large to swallow whole, making it easier to rip it into bite-size chunks.

The golden-tail eel

The golden-tail eel (*Gymnothorax miliaris*) is another beautiful moray eel with a wide distribution in the greater Caribbean area. It is not an uncommon species, but one that I have only encountered a few times. This stout eel has a short, blunt snout and its brown body is covered with small yellow spots — but just to confuse things it can also have a yellow ground color with brown spots. The tip of the tail is always yellow in color, but since the body is often not visible, the distinctive yellow ring around each pupil is a dead give away that you are dealing with a golden-tail eel.

Snake eels and garden eels

Other types of eel species that frequent the Caribbean are the snake eels and garden eels.

The first time I saw the gold-spotted snake eel (*Myrichthys ocellatus*) foraging among the seagrass beds in the St. Pierre anchorage in Martinique I really did think it was a sea snake because of the way it moved. Its tan body, as its common name indicates, is covered in dark spots, each having an intense yellow spot at its centre.

Their firm, pointed tail distinguishes snake eels from moray eels, whose tails are flattened. They use their tails during feeding to uncover hidden prey but also to burrow backward into the sea bottom, creating a protective burrow.

These unique-looking eels are more approachable than their moray relatives and it is fun watching them probing the sandy bottom with their pointed snouts, looking for prey.

A smaller eel resident, more social in nature, is the brown garden eel (*Heteroconger longissimus*). From afar a colony of this species looks like seagrass swaying in the current as individuals protrude from their sandy burrows to feed on zooplankton that floats by. Mucus secretions from their skin help to cement the burrow walls, preventing them from caving in. The slightest movement causes these eels to retreat into the safety of their burrows, making them horrible photographic subjects, which explains my lack of decent photos of these large-eyed little creatures. If you are lucky enough to view them up close you will see that their bodies, as their common name indicates, are dark brown in color, dusted with numerous pale spots, and that they have a pale belly. Each garden eel lives in its own burrow and once established it seldom leaves it. Mating can be a dangerous game for male garden eels: once a male has chosen his female mate he will defend her viciously and a fellow suitor could find himself minus an eye or even a head after such an encounter.

Eels are fascinating to watch, so next time you are out exploring a Caribbean reef, take some time to look for one of these unique creatures.

Finding My Depth



CONNY HAGEN / ARAWAK DIVERS

The colors are most vivid in shallow water.

by Jim Hutchinson

The second half of my life began when I sold it all and bought a small yacht. It was about freedom, travel, adventure, whatever, but mostly it was about sailing. Then, in the Florida Keys and the Bahamas, I discovered snorkeling. Snorkeling, to my delight, proved half the fun of being out here.

I got pretty good at it. Learning to clear my ears got me below the two-and-a-half-metre barrier. Learning efficient moves, moving slow, and relaxing as my confidence grew gave me a working depth of eight metres (I could move or hand-set my anchor or tie a line to it at that depth). My personal record is 40 feet, 13 metres. I grabbed a handful of sand to prove it to myself, flipped over, and pushed off the bottom hard towards the sky, ascending with minimal flutter of fins. I was happy to reach the surface, but knew I could learn to go deeper.

I don't need to go deeper. On a good reef, I am fully entertained in one to four fathoms, where the light and the colors are at their best. That also covers my work and investigations in the anchorage (how I learned most of what I know about anchoring).

In the Bahamas, where fishing with compressed air is prohibited, some snorkeling fishermen work as deep as 60 or 80 feet (25 metres). Bahamian fishermen build homes and raise families on their snorkeling skills.

The December 2020 *Compass* has a lovely article by Lexi Fisher, "On a Single Breath of Air." After my first read had settled in, I reckoned it worth a second read. Fisher dives deep as a sport — an extreme sport, she mentions the dangers. The photos in the article clearly show depth, a muting of colors and fading light. She speaks of how such diving is done, but some of the technique applies at any depth, notably, a relaxed mind and slow, deliberate movements.

The Bahamians knew some of the tricks, but mostly learned on their own or from each other, gaining confidence (thus, relaxation), and knowing that it could be done.

My halfway-to-their-depth snorkeling was pure recreation. The Bahamas, in particular, spoiled me. I typically anchored in two fathoms with good snorkeling within a few hundred metres. There was no end to what I could see in six metres of depth.

I had been snorkeling for many years when nephew Doug, who is big on scuba, came to visit. I got scuba certified so we could dive together. Scuba is a good and popular way to explore underwater. I liked it a lot and even bought a second-hand scuba kit so I could dive from my own yacht. But I soon got rid of it. Paying a dive shop to rinse, dry and stow all of the gear was one thing, doing it aboard my little yacht with its frugal water supply was another. And tanks had to be taken to a dive shop for re-fills. Far more importantly, I agree with Fisher that not having a tank greatly improves the freedom. By this, I mean both freedom of movement and a delicious freedom of mind.

If you're on a small tropical island and don't snorkel, to whatever depth, you're missing half the fun… careful not to hit your head on the dinghy when you surface.

#

Bahamian fishermen knew how to do it, Fisher's article tells us how it's done. A couple of her points might be news to Bahamians, much was news to me — how it works more than what it does. It is interesting and often useful to know what lies beyond one's horizon.

Safety and security have become humanity's big issues… after power, money and sex. Should you contact a "freediving center" and learn to go deep? Should you learn to snorkel moderate depths, such as I do? Should you simply lie on the surface with mask and snorkel, amazed at what can be seen even from there? Are you a swimmer, do you belong in the water? For that matter, do you belong on a yacht? Fisher's article cautions us about the freediving that she advocates. My questions are also of caution — walking out the door is dangerous… as is staying at home. Let each of us make our own luck. But along those lines, Kurt Vonnegut advises, "Read the directions, even if you don't follow them." (Speech to MIT class of '97.)

Jim Hutchinson is the author of One Man's Sampler, *a collection of minor Caribbean adventures. Hutch has been cruising aboard his 24- foot sloop,* Ambia, *since '84, mostly in the Caribbean.*

LOOK OUT FOR…

A 'PLUM' OF MANY NAMES

by Lynn Kaak

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

Spondias purpurea goes by many monikers. Hog Plum seems pretty common, but in Grenada and parts of the Grenadines it is better known as Sugar Plum. In Bequia and St. Vincent it is Bequia Plum. Jocote is a fairly frequently used name in Spanish-speaking areas, but so is Mombin. Or Ciruela. In Trinidad it's known as Jamaica Plum. Thankfully we can point when at a market, or just pick them off of the trees when they are in season (usually early summer, but varying by location), so the exact name isn't always a necessity.

The red *Spondias purpurea* is not to be confused with the yellow or orange Hot Plum, Chilli Plum, Yellow Mombin or Chinese Plum.

Red Plum (an easy name to type) is native to Central America, calling the area from Southern Mexico down to Peru its birthplace. Once the Europeans discovered it, it was spread around the rest of the Tropics quickly and readily.

While mangos are native to India and that part of the world, and these plums are from a whole other hemisphere, they are related. And they are both related to the cashew; yes, it sounds a little nuts, but that's the scientific opinion. And like the mango, there are numerous varieties of Mombin to be found.

The trees grow to about ten metres (35 feet) on average, but can be found as shrubs, or can tower to twice the average height, depending on elevation, age, soil and pruning. Typically, we will see them get to about seven metres (25 feet) in the Eastern Caribbean and closer to the coasts. The trunks are stout, while the branches are fairly thick, but not overly strong, with a tendency to being brittle so they can snap off fairly easily. The crowns of the trees open up, making them pleasant enough shade trees.

As a deciduous tree, it will lose its leaves yearly. The leaves are 12 to 25 centimetres (four to ten inches) long, with a somewhat spear-like tip or arrowhead shape. There are slight "teeth" at the pointy end of the leaf, but it won't bite. The young leaves are red or purplish, becoming dark green as they mature. The young leaves are eaten raw or cooked in some areas of Central America

The small five-petalled flowers can be red or purple. They appear before the leaves reappear for the year. There are male, female, and bisexual flowers.

The fruit are green as they develop and red or purplish when ripe. They are two to five centimetres long (one to two inches) with a glossy edible skin. The plums are roundish or oval, but there may be a small knob at one end, and they may have a little pitting on the skin. The ripe flesh is yellow and juicy, and surrounds a single pit or stone. They are best eaten when they have surpassed bright red and get little darker, as they will be at their sweetest then. Slightly under-ripe fruit are still edible, but may be a little more acidic, and certainly less sweet. Once ripe, the fruits come off the branches easily, so while a tree may seem laden one day, the next day it may all be lost to the ants if there has been a strong wind.

In some areas of Central America, the ripe fruit is eaten with salt. The unripe fruit may be used to make preserves or to cook with. Mashing the ripe fruit and mixing the juice with water and sugar is also popular in some areas. Pickled plums with hot pepper may also be found in some places. Some people may have an allergic reaction if they are sensitive to poison ivy, poison oak, or mangos (yes, they are all related). Ripe plums are also popular "stewed" whole with water and sugar, and then bottled as a long-lasting preserve.



Red plums are definitely tropical, and don't enjoy cold. They do better in areas with less rainfall, but don't suffer too badly if planted in a wetter area as long as they get decent drainage. Full sun isn't a concern for them, and the soil can be sandy, rich or pretty much any combination. A little bit of salt doesn't seem to affect them, so being close to the coast isn't a problem.



The trees grow well from cuttings, which is far faster than trying to grow them from seeds. They are planted to act as natural fences in some areas, and with their unusual gnarled form are also popular for landscaping purposes.

From a medicinal perspective, the juice of the leaves has been shown to have an antibacterial effect, and has been used for wound care by many peoples. Parts of the tree have also been used for intestinal problems, fever and infections.

These trees can be found just about everywhere throughout the Caribbean. They are so common in some areas that you don't always find the fruits for sale, as people can readily pick them for themselves and their friends.

ONCE THERE WAS A BAR

by John Everton

Left: Built in 1829 as a private home and dubbed Hotel 1829 in 1904, in the '70s this was a popular watering hole.

Right: Trader Dan's was the place where hippies, beatniks and an odd assortment of regulars congregated.

Below: Opened in 1924 as the only grocery and liquor store on the North Side, Sib's was refurbished in 2018 after suffering hurricane damage the previous year.

IN 1969 the Viet Nam War was still raging and a young American man's fortune often depended upon whether or not he was drafted. By then I had been radicalized and had joined the anti-war movement, so I was in need of a draft deferment unless I wanted to risk serving in the armed conflict. Having an anarchistic bent I would not have adjusted at all well to military life, especially in the midst of war, so instead of taking a job at Captain Haggerty's Dog Training School in Woodstock, New York, at just about the same time as the Woodstock Music Festival — which would not have provided a draft deferment — I opted to sell my MGA convertible and buy a plane ticket to St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands (which I had to look up in the atlas!) where I



TRIP ADVISOR

could apply for a teaching job that brought with it a draft deferment.

I got the job, teaching English, US history and Caribbean history at Charlotte Amalie High School. But I started drinking in a local rum shop before I started teaching. Heinekens were 40 cents and I remember a fellow next to me telling me that soon I would be drinking in bars frequented by the "continentals" — other people from the mainland US — where beers were a dollar or more. Sadly he proved to be right. I was disillusioned after having hopes that St. Thomas would be more integrated socially.

Within a few months I had bought my first cruising boat to live aboard, so I have Viet Nam to thank for my cruising life since. When I first hauled out in the Frydenhoj Lagoon there was a beer machine that dispersed 25-cent cans of Budweiser and Schaefer. When the boatyard became known as Independent Boatyard the Poor Man's Bar, formerly *HMS Pinafore* (a failed haul-out repair) was opened. It was a pour-your-own bar where customers sat around the deck of the derelict boat and the barman served drinks from inside the hull. Rum was cheaper than Coke, so no problem pouring double shots.

In those days we teachers would mostly stay at home on work nights and go out drinking all night at the weekends. There was no shortage of varied and comfortable watering holes available on the island. Some of the best that come to mind include the following: the iconic Trader Dan's located in Charlotte Amalie next to Palm Passage and a great bookstore which also sold nautical charts at a very reasonable price. Trader Dan's was the place where hippies, beatniks and an odd assortment of regulars congregated. It's where my friend Crazy Art Albrecht



VORGIN ISLANDS DAILY NEWS

met Janis Joplin and arranged to take her and her entourage sailing on his Danish cutter, *Kuling*.

Fearless Fred's, located on the dock at Yacht Haven before the marina morphed into Yacht Haven Grande, served breakfast, lunch, dinner, cold beers and cocktails all day (Heineken or Bud with, or for, breakfast). While I was there Bret Slocum, a descendant of Joshua Slocum, was building a Tancook Whaler called *Jusfine* in the parking lot of Yacht Haven. She was decked over fore and aft but open amidships. After launching and shakedown sail trials Bret and his girlfriend sailed north to Martha's Vineyard for the summer, cleaning up on the local racing circuit. Leaving in late October to return to the VI they learned the hardest lesson about the


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vulnerability of open boats in heavy weather in the North Atlantic when seas spawned by a late season hurricane overwhelmed them and *Jusfine* foundered, never to be heard from again.

Another bar in St. Thomas of that era which comes to mind, and which is no longer, was the Green Parrot in Frenchtown. Augie Hollen, who became my sailing guru when I was there, was building his Block Island cowhorn schooner, strip-planked, edge-glued and fastened, at Avery's Boathouse in Frenchtown. Avery's included a railway for haul-outs and dock space at a couple of docks, one of which had Dick Avery's houseboat berthed where Dick lived with his wife, Marianne, and two children, Morgan and Kristen. I used to go hang out to watch Augie building *Taurus* single-handedly, punctuated by several beer breaks at The Green Parrot, down a shady lane from the boatshop.

There were a lot of other bars we frequented, a few of which are in existence today, including the oldest hotel on St. Thomas, built in 1829 as a private home, which became Hotel 1829 in 1904. Sibilly's on the Mountain was opened in 1924 as the only grocery and liquor store on the North Side, and was refurbished in 2018 after suffering hurricane damage the previous year.

From the days of yore to the present, when they're not sailing, fixing their boats or shopping for marine supplies, sailors tend to gravitate toward bars and rum shops. Today's popular watering holes will be tomorrow's stories!

THE MINISTRY OF RUM BY EDWARD HAMILTON

RUM: It's Not Just For Breakfast

If you've never started your day at the local rum shop with an eighth, well, you just haven't lived in the islands. Opening the bottle before you've opened your eyes isn't something that I recommend as part of a balanced diet, but it will certainly change the way you look at the rest of the day. There are lots of other ways to enjoy your daily portion of Caribbean spirit (such as an afternoon cooler), but are you using enough rum in your daily cooking? A little rum can add flavor and a bit of the Caribbean to almost anything you cook.

Have you ever wondered how some restaurants get that extra excitement out of seemingly common ingredients? Add a little light rum to your vinegar, oil and herb salad dressing and you'll be surprised how crisp and fresh your salad will taste. A little dark rum in chocolate desserts and sweet toppings will bring rave reviews.

How about putting a tablespoon of dark rum in your honey jar, or mixing a little rum with in your pancake syrup? Or, one of my favorites, a couple of tablespoons of dark rum in the pancake batter? Add a quarter cup of rum to your barbecue marinade — when you cook the meat all of the alcohol will evaporate, leaving just a hint of rich essence. I use dark rum for added flavor but light rum will work too, and the alcohol helps tenderize the meat. But in marinades and dishes with robust flavors the lighter rums don't come through once the meal is cooked.

Want a quick and easy dessert or snack? Substitute rum for half of the water in a brownie mix. You might want to make two batches since these brownies won't last long. For something that looks a little fancier, try these almost-too-easy rum balls. Start with a chocolate cake; a day-old one on sale at the bakery will do just fine. Use your hands to break up the cake and the frosting into a large mixing bowl. Add about half a cup of dark rum and a couple of tablespoons of brown sugar. When everything is well mixed, form small balls from the mixture. Finish by rolling the balls in some freshly grated chocolate mixed with a little brown sugar. A word of caution: if anyone is watching you make these rum balls, you'll have to be quick or all the goodies might get eaten before you have a chance to wash your hands and help yourself.

As I've said, when I use rum in my cooking, I usually use a dark-colored rum — not necessarily rums that have spent years sleeping in oak barrels in a quiet warehouse caressed by the tradewinds, but rums darkened by the hand of their blender. These rums tend to have a lot of flavor and aren't as expensive as aged rums, but as most recipes use rum sparingly, feel free to go ahead and use some of your better rum next time you cook.

Your guests will always be impressed with bananas fried in a little butter, sugar and Caribbean spirit. For this dessert, I like to use fairly good rum since I don't like to cook all the rum off the bananas.

I usually cook simple things, but occasionally I do bake a fruit pie. Cut up the fruit — pineapple, berries, apples, peaches, mangoes or whatever you have — into a bowl, squeeze some lime juice over the fruit, pour a couple of cups of rum over it and then marinate overnight if time permits. After the fruit is removed from the marinade and used to make the pie, the remaining fruity rum can be used to make a flavorful cocktail while the pie bakes.

By now, you should be able to think of a few more ways to use rum in your cooking. But just in case you need some more help, try this. Stir a mixture of lime juice, rum and brown sugar over low heat to thicken it just a little. Brush this mixture on chicken when it's almost cooked. The sugar, lime and rum will brown the chicken skin as the sugar caramelizes.

Are you using enough rum in your daily cooking?

And here's another idea. Sprinkle spoonfuls of dark rum over a cake after it's baked and before you frost it. Since the rum won't evaporate try to spread it evenly over the whole cake to keep everyone happy. And of course you've added a couple of spoonfuls of the Caribbean to the frosting, haven't you?

Have some ideas of your own? I'd love to hear them! The research continues.

Edward Hamilton is the author of Rums of the Eastern Caribbean.

Editor's note: This article first appeared on our October 2001 issue. It concludes our series of reprints celebrating Compass's *Silver Jubilee 25th Anniversary year. To read more articles from past issues, visit our Back Issues Archive at www.caribbeancompass.com/backissues.html*



The Food Fair

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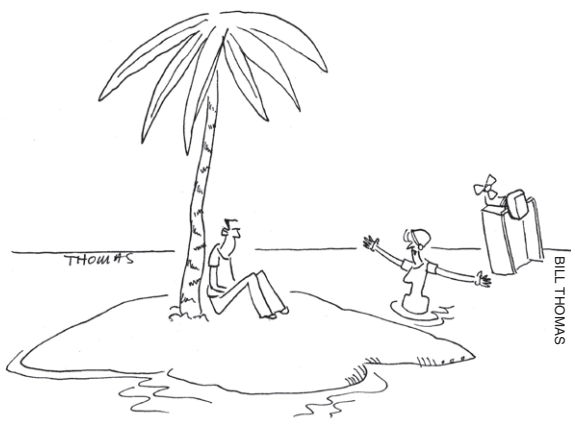
One Man's Sampler
by Jim Hutchinson

Favorite little adventures from several decades of live-aboard sailing. Here are sailing dinghies, crazy craft, a dolphin, hurricanes, a concert, assorted characters and some fiction.

Lots of fun photos and drawings.

My e-book on Amazon/kindle. Please try the free sample and read the introduction — Thanks,
"One Man" Hutch

COMPASS CARTOON



"On the bright side, we don't have to worry about social distance."



A HEART-WARMING ISSUE

Dear *Compass*,

What a wonderful and heart-warming issue in December [www.caribbeancompass.com/online/december20compass_online.pdf]! It brought back so many memories of our adventures 20 years ago. As we struggle with Covid, cold and snow, some of the pieces brought tears of happiness to my eyes.

You are doing such a great job with the publication and we look forward to it every month.

Loren and Nancy
Formerly on *S/V Feng Shui* (1999-2006)
Now Jackson, Wyoming, and a summer land yacht
www.NaturalPhotographyJackson.com

HOW TO USE A ROWING DINGHY

Dear *Compass*,

Re: Jim Hutchinson's "Paddling Ashore" in the December issue.

Using a pram dinghy and double (kayak) paddles is the hard way to get ashore.

Find a well-shaped stemhead dinghy; they are available in wood or fiberglass. Buy or have made a proper set of oars that matches the size and shape of the dinghy. Rule of thumb on oars: twice the beam of the dinghy, plus or minus six inches, depending on the freeboard of the boat.

A good rower, feathering the oars, can row against a 20-knot tradewind and harbor chop. Rowing in mild conditions is a nice way to relax, tour the anchorage admiring boats, visit friends quietly, and produce no noise, engine exhaust pollution, or wake.

Make sure the dinghy has a sculling chock in the stern or install an oarlock.

Learning to scull is very useful. It is the only way to propel a dinghy under oar power and drink beer at the same time.

With a stemhead dinghy, do NOT board or step off via the narrow bow. This is a good way to capsize and dump yourself in the water.

When landing, back the dinghy in. Tie it to the dock stern first. Learn to row the dinghy not only forwards, but also backwards and practice pivoting the dinghy clockwise and counterclockwise while remaining in one spot.

Don Street
Glandore, Ireland

SOMETHING IS HAPPENING

Dear Compass *Readers*,

Something's happening! Over the past three months, we have received eight to ten times more requests per month than usual to be on our monthly email list notifying readers when each new issue of Compass *is available online.*

And we love the comments that are added:

"I live in Toronto, Ontario, and am dreaming of sunny skies and warm weather!"

"It's a gift for my husband, who's recovering from shoulder surgery."

"My circumnavigation was completed last year, but because of Covid-19, my Caribbean cruising was partly compromised and I ended up rushing from Grenada to France via St. Martin and the Azores. It was sad to see all the Caribbean islands pass to starboard without being able to stop."

"We love to read your magazine. Can we sign up?"

If you would like to receive a notice by email when each new issue of Compass is available online, just send a note to sally@caribbeancompass.com — it's that easy!

CC

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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Be sure to include your name, and your boat name or shoreside location.

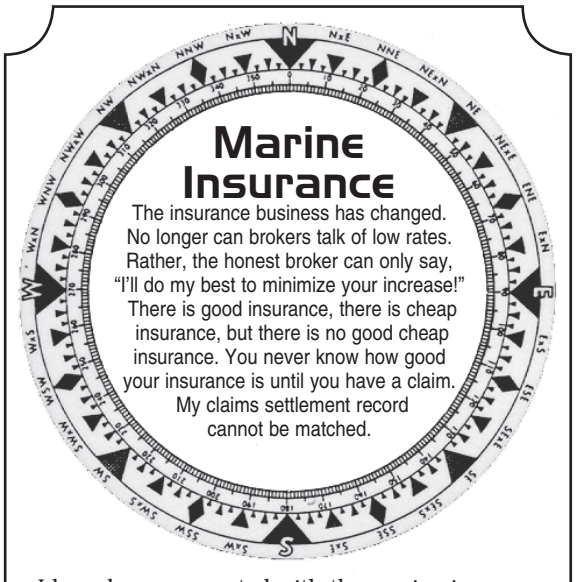
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Sailboat Guests From Hell

...and What to do About Them

by Damian R. LaPlaca

Recently I granted the request of my boat mechanic, Fernando, to take a woman sailing. He apparently was eager to impress her, he is a fine sailor, and he is currently without a boat. He had been doing a lot of work for me and I thought I'd like to reward him. What I learned the hard way is you should reward your boat mechanic with only a paid invoice, not a day on the sea with a person you have never met before.

It's difficult to spot a Sailboat Guest From Hell, the dreaded SGFH. Predicting an SGFH is equal in difficulty to predicting a Bridezilla, when and where lightning will strike, or the results of a presidential election. But there were some clues. The first was when she arrived at my slip at 11:30AM for a 10:00AM departure without apology. The second was when she brought her own guest without permission. That made her guest a guest of a guest of a guest. That is the equivalent of triple hearsay, which no judge in the land would admit into his or her courtroom, even in a case against former President Trump. But I had no choice but to admit the third-tier guest onto my boat.

Fernando's guest, Doily, which sounds like her actual name, and her guest, Bad Rosé, which sounds like one of her names, literally brought a boatload of food, none of which either ever offered to me, the presumed captain. But they were happy to pass the supermarket bags down the companionway to me so I could store them until Doily and Bad Rosé were good and ready to eat. They were also happy to pass down their heavy bags of who knows what for a shortened half-day sail, given the unanticipated late departure.

Doily spoke loudly and continuously and without periods to her sentences. The only way you knew she was finished was when the noise stopped, the boat stopped vibrating, and the flying fish felt safe to fly again.

Both had zero interest in knowing anything about me. All of their conversations were directed to Fernando, who was effectively the host. The limited occasions they spoke to me were out of need. For instance, I heard, "Damian, music!" Apparently, asking me an actual question was out of the question.

In fact, in the entire day each had precisely one question for me. "Damian," Bad Rosé began, "can you pass me up my bag?" When I demonstrated that I indeed was capable of passing up her bag, one would have thought that learning such highly personal information might spark a follow-up question, such as, "Have you ever passed up the bags for other guests?" Or, "When I am ready, can I pass my bag back down to you?" Instead, inexplicably, Bad Rosé abandoned the opportunity to learn more about my bag passing capabilities.

> *There is nothing wrong with setting rules on your boat.*

Shortly afterwards, possibly out of bag envy, Doily asked me a roughly similar question. "Damian, can you pass my bag up to me?" There was only one bag left, a blue one, so I thought to engage her in deep, luggage-related conversation. "You mean the blue bag?" I should have anticipated her one-word answer: "Yes." I again proved my bona fides in bag passing, which sadly went unnoticed a second time.

When it was time for lunch, Doily took the initiative to fetch a rotisserie chicken that I had brought. She and Bad Rosé brought two rotisserie chickens, but Doily chose mine for lunch. Then, in an act of pure savagery, Doily removed the plastic cover and began tearing the chicken apart with her hands, beginning with the legs. No knives, forks, plates or napkins were employed. Fernando happened to be in the galley and I asked him to send up a knife and a serving fork, along with some paper towels. I cut up the rest. Doily's rustic approach to chicken carving certainly made clean-up easy, which, of course, I did.

After lunch we anchored by a small island and swam. When it was time to return to the boat, I, the presumed captain, assumed the obligation to be last up the transom ladder. Bad Rosé had swum with a mini boogie board, which she left in my hands as she climbed the ladder. When she ascended Bad Rosé issued the same command, twice. "Damian, pass me my *tablita*. Damian, pass me my *tablita*." I instructed, "Por favor." Bad Rosé had to admit to the slight. "Yes, por favor." That was a small but significant victory.

When we returned to my slip everyone predictably fled the boat with their belongings, leaving me to do the clean-up. For her part, Bad Rosé returned and charitably asked if she could help, when I was almost finished. She also asked if she could take the garbage bag, which I happily passed to her, thus adding to my growing catalog of passing skills.

Don't let this happen to you. Resist any request to take a stranger sailing. When you receive a request to bring a stranger, employ clear diplomatic language that fairly but unequivocally explains your response, such as, "No." Definitely capitalize the No. But what if you suffer insufficient liquidity to pay your mechanic's invoice, you lose a bet, or your requestor has photos of you that might diminish your standing at the marina, such as sailing with your fenders out or leaving your slip beerless? There are steps you can take in such unfortunate circumstances to preserve control should you make the heinous mistake of granting such a request.

Remember, you are the captain of your ship. You are not a charter captain, maligned, disregarded, overly demanded and under-tipped, and addressed only out of need. When a guest screeches, "Damian, music!" you shout, "Fernando, music!" In fact, you instruct your Fernando to receive their demands, that they should ask nothing of you, and that he is to respond to their whims, as long as their desires do no harm to your vessel and they take nothing of your private stock of rum.

As captain, every odd profundity you desire to manufacture, just for the hell of it ("a sailor on passage has the clearest conscience") and every lie you care to create, just to mess with them ("if you want the good rum, I store it in the head") must be met with unchallenged acceptance and appreciation. Every statement addressed to you must be prefaced with "Por favor." When the question is whether you are to have a day of stress on your own boat against whether an unannounced guest has to retrieve his or her own beer, or a beer for you, the balance is easy.

There is nothing wrong with setting rules on your boat. In fact, rules preserve both the safety of your passengers and your own sanity. When it is clear that an SGFH has no sailing skills, you have every right to ask, "Well, what contribution can you make to today's adventure?" Don't wait for the answer, lay down the law. "Doily, you are in charge of serving the beer. Bad Rosé, you will chair the committee on lunch. You both will co-chair the ad-hoc committee on clean-up." A day on your sailboat is a privilege, not a right, and that day comes with responsibilities. You are responsible for a fun sail and a safe return, so it is not too much to ask for an in-kind contribution.

But if all your measures fail, and an SGFH asks you, "Can you pass up my bag?" answer the literal question with a literal answer, "Yes I can," and enjoy the bewildered look when you don't pass up the bag.



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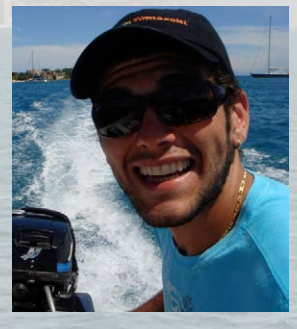
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Featured Caribbean Listings



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2015 Royal Cape 530
$652,000



2015 FP Sanya 57
$999,000



2015 ALIBI 54
$899,000



2015 Lagoon 560 S2
$1,250,000



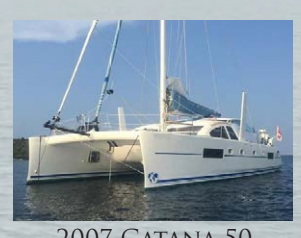
2008 Catana 50
$620,000



2011 Lagoon 450
$479,000



2008 Leopard 46
$420,000



2007 Catana 50
$659,000



2015 Bali 4.3
$499,000



2007 Lagoon 440
$410,000



2003 Privilege 465
$395,000

SOME RECENTLY SOLD BOATS



2016 FP Helia 44



2015 Catana 47



2009 Catana 50



2014 FP Helia 44



2011 Privilege 615



2014 LAGOON 450



2010 Outremer 49



2006 Sunreef 62

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CALENDAR

February

2 World Wetlands Day. www.ramsar.org/activity/world-wetlands-day
6 St Kitts/Nevis National Kiteboarding Race. skyachtclub@gmail.com
6 Manhattan Yacht Club Challenge, Tortola. www.royalbviyc.org
6 – 7 Caribbean Multihull Challenge. www.smyc.com/caribbean-multihull-challenge
7 Public holiday in Grenada (Independence Day)
12 – 14 Jolly Harbour Valentine's Regatta, Antigua. www.jhycantigua.com
12 - 16 Semaine Nautique Internationale de Schoelcher, Martinique. www.cnschoelcher.net
12 – 16 Carnaval de Ponce, Puerto Rico
12 – 17 Trinidad Carnival
13 – 16 Carnival in Barranquilla, Colombia
15 Public holiday in Puerto Rico & USVI (Presidents' Day)
15 - 16 Carnivals in Aruba, Carriacou, Curaçao, Dominica, Haiti and St. Barth
17 Public holiday in many places (Ash Wednesday)
18 Public holiday in Aruba (Flag Day)
19 – 21 (TBC) Tobago Carnival Regatta
22 Public holiday in St. Lucia (Independence Day)
23 Public holiday in Guyana (Mashramani)
25 Public holiday in Suriname (Liberation Day)
26 Bahamas Opti Nationals, Exumas. http://exumasailing.club/opti_nationals.html
27 FULL MOON
27 Governor's Cup Race, BVI. www.royalbviyc.org
27 Public holiday in Dominican Republic (Independence Day)
TBA Sailors' & Landlubbers' Auction, Bequia, www.bequiasunshineschool.org

March

4 - 7 St. Maarten Heineken Regatta. info@heinekenregatta.com
8 International Women's Day
8 Public holiday in BVI (HL Stoutt's Birthday observed) and in Belize (National Heroes' Day)
10 - 14 Superyacht Challenge Antigua. www.superyachtchallengeantigua.com
11 – 14 (TBC) Bequia Music Festival 'Homemade Edition.' www.bequiamusicfestival.com
13 Digilife Cup race, Martinique. www.facebook.com/clubnautiqueneptune
14 Public holiday in some places (Commonwealth Day) and in St. Vincent & the Grenadines (National Heroes' Day)
14 – 21 Martinique Cata Raid. https://martiniquecataraid.com
17 Public holiday in Montserrat (St. Patrick's Day). St. Patrick's Day Festival, Grenada
18 Public holiday in Aruba (Flag Day)
18 – 21 St. Barths Bucket Regatta, St. Barths. www.BucketRegatta.com
20 Vernal Equinox
22 Public holiday in Puerto Rico (Emancipation Day)
25 Round St. John Race, St. Thomas, USVI. stthomasyachtclub.org
26 – 28 St. Thomas International Regatta. stthomasyachtclub.org
27 St. Maarten National Sailing Championship. www.smyc.com
27 Entre Mer et Lune race, Martinique. www.facebook.com/clubnautiqueneptune
28 FULL MOON
29 – 4 April BVI Spring Regatta & Sailing Fest, Tortola. bvispringregatta.org. SEE AD ON PAGE 10
30 Nanny Cay Round Tortola Race. www.royalbviyc.org
30 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Spiritual Baptist 'Shouter' Liberation Day)
31 – 6 April Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta. www.antiguaclassics.com
TBA Yachtie Appreciation Week, Portsmouth, Dominica. dominicapays@gmail.com
TBA Curaçao Youth Sailing Championships. https://ysco.org/curacao-youth-championships
TBA Foxy's Music Fest, Jost Van Dyke, BVI. https://foxysbvi.com
TBA Antigua Optimist Open & Antigua Laser Open. www.antiguayachtclub.com
TBA Pam Pepin International Optimist Regatta, Puerto Rico. https://clubnauticodesanjuan.com

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

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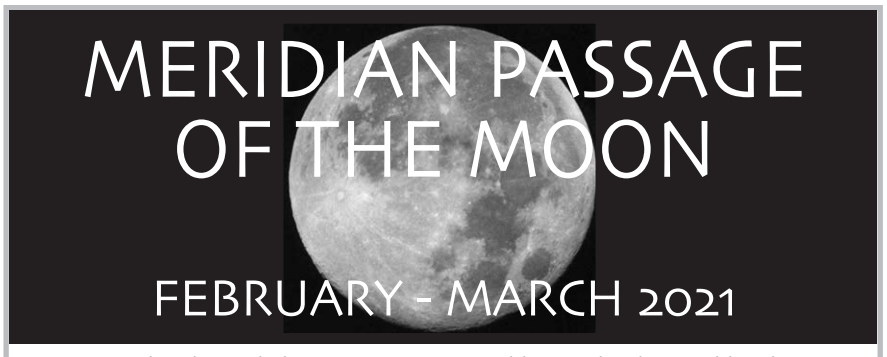
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Crossing the channels between Eastern Caribbean islands, an ebb tide carries you off to leeward and a strong flood tide creates lumpy seas, so crossing with a favorable tide is faster and more comfortable. The table below, courtesy Don Street (www.street-iolaire.com), showing the local time of the meridian passage (or zenith) of the moon for this and next month, will help you calculate the tides.

Water generally tries to run toward the moon. The flood tide starts running eastward soon after moonrise, continues to run east until about an hour after the moon reaches its zenith (see TIME below) and then ebbs 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.

The first hour after moonrise, the westerly current is barely negated. The second hour the flood tide is stronger, the third and fourth hour it's strongest, then it eases off in the fifth and sixth hours. The maximum tide is three or four days after the new and full moons.

February					
DATE	TIME	20	1844	11	1050
1	0304	21	1934	12	1137
2	0353	22	2026	13	1221
3	0442	23	2120	14	1303
4	0532	24	2215	15	1344
5	0625	25	2310	16	1425
6	0720	26	0000 FULL MOON	17	1507
7	0818	27	0003	18	1551
8	0917	28	0146	19	1637
9	1016			20	1725
10	1113	**March**		21	1815
11	1206	1	0146	22	1908
12	1256	2	0236	23	2002
13	1342	3	0328	24	2056
14	1426	4	0420	25	2148
15	1508	5	0516	26	2241
16	1549	6	0613	27	2332
17	1630	7	0713	28	0000 FULL MOON
18	1712	8	0810	29	0024
19	1757	9	0906	30	0116
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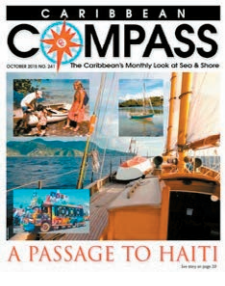
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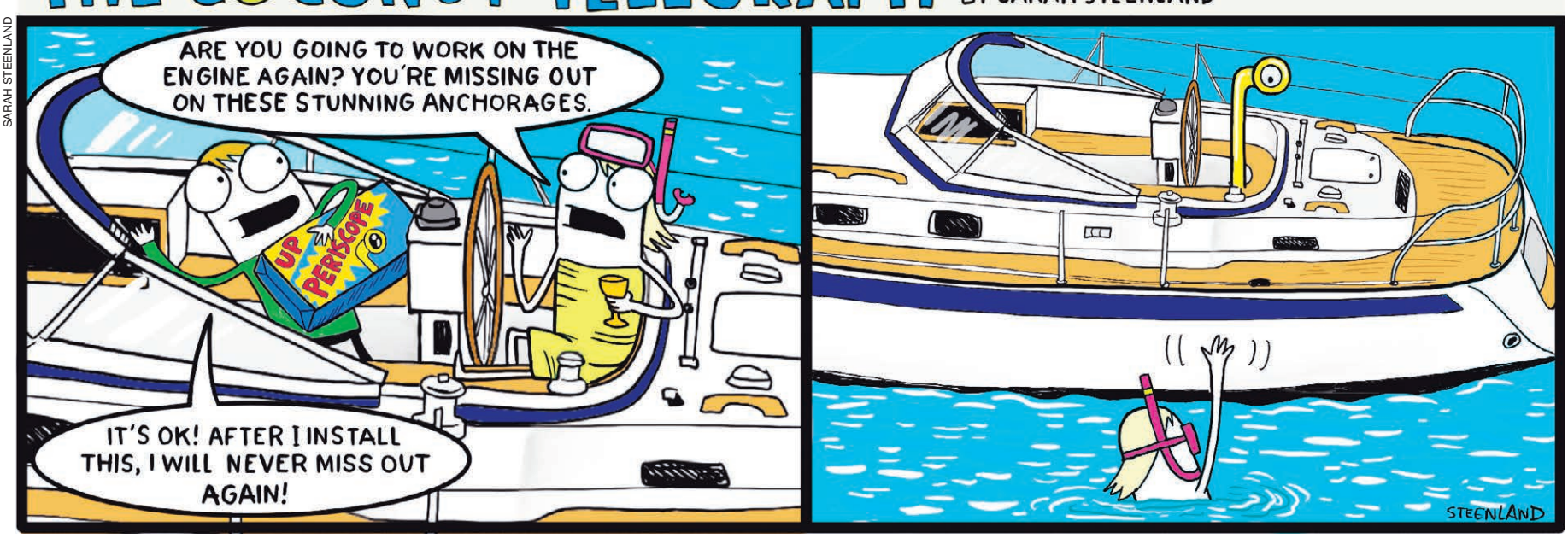
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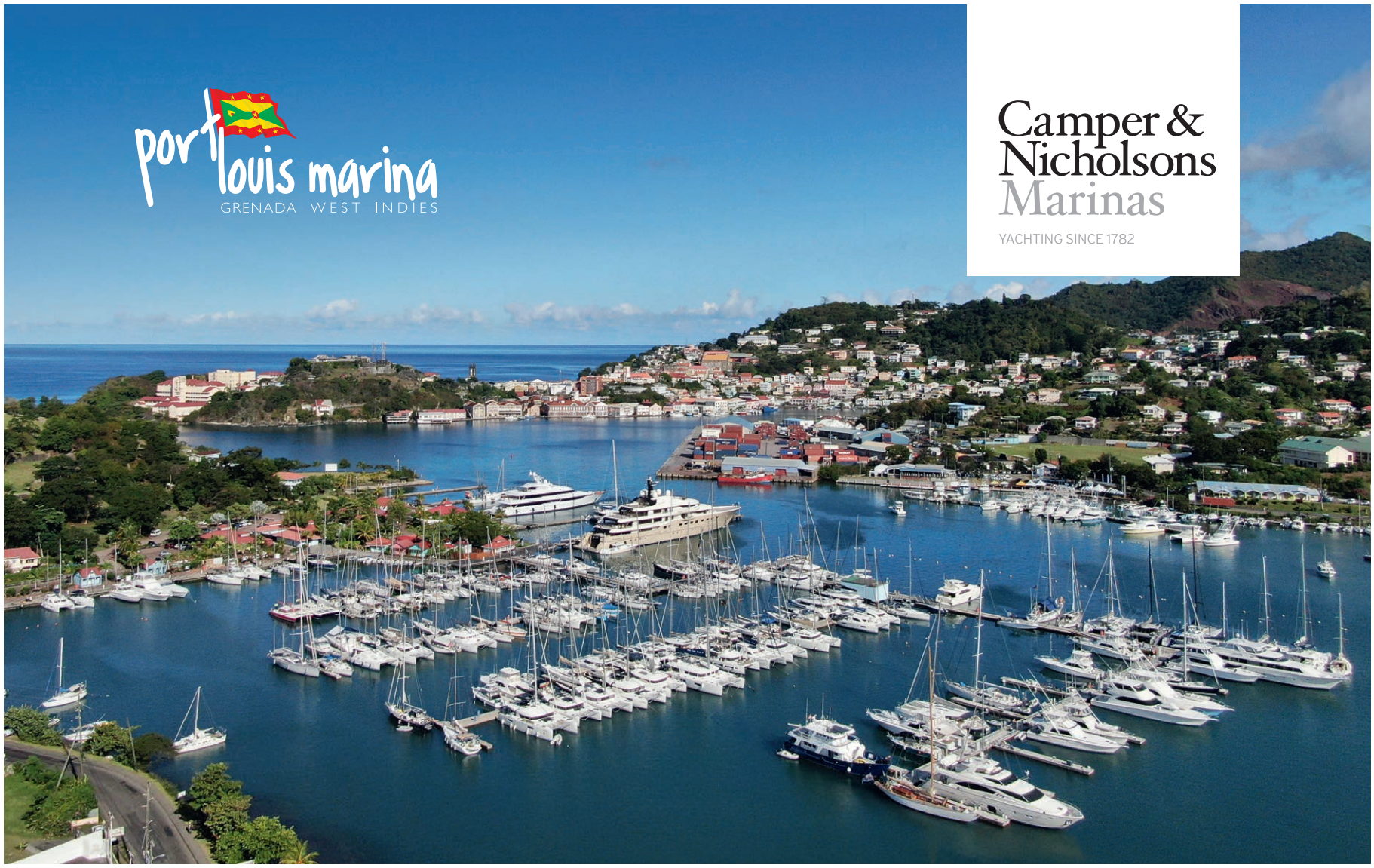
BY SARAH STEENLAND



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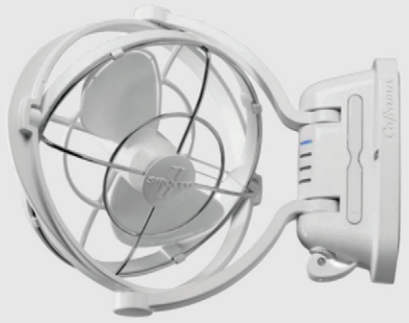
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