CARIBBEAN On-line
COMPASS
JANUARY 2014 NO. 220
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore



AN ARC OF CONTRASTS

Story on page 12



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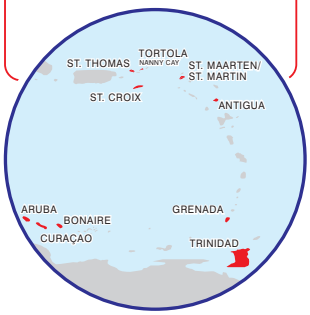
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JANUARY 2014 • NUMBER 220


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The St. Lucia finish line of the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers 2013 saw big smiles from both novice cruisers on Khaleesi *and experienced racers on* Scarlet Oyster. *Photographer Tim Wright was there to capture the joy*



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 an invaluable source of information, especially for newcomers in the Caribbean.'**
— Petra and Jan Willem Versol
Witte Raaf

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Info & Updates

Cuba Relaxes Yacht Rules

Cuba now allows foreign vessels to stay at local marinas for up to five years.

On November 21st, Decree number 314 - 2013 was published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Cuba. Article number 47 of the decree, which regulates



Marina Hemingway in Havana. New Cuban rules allow long-term stays

all tourist marinas, establishes that foreign recreational vessels may remain in Cuban territory up to five years, and even longer with a marina's approval. Formerly, an import duty of five percent of the value of the boat had to be paid if the vessel was to remain over a year in Cuba.

Also in the same gazette, the Cuban Ministry of Finance & Prices posted Resolution number 442 – 2013, which regulates clearance and cruising permit fees and which set a new entry fee of 55 CUC (US$55 at current exchange rate).

These measures are part of a broader initiative to diversify tourism in Cuba, which is currently the nation's second-greatest economic activity. The government said it also plans to create a National Nautical Commission, which will coordinate policies relating to nautical tourism.

Commodore José Miguel Díaz Escrich says, "The Hemingway International Yacht Club of Cuba welcomes these new regulations, which will continue to enlarge Cuba's friendly relationships and collaboration with the international yachting community and offer safe and happy sailing among the more than 3,000 islands and keys that form the Cuban archipelago."

For more information visit www.hemingwayyachtclub.org.

Moorings Upgraded in Saba

After hosting an "open day" for the Saba public, the Royal Netherlands Navy support vessel *Zr. Ms. Pelikaan* and its crew helped the Saba Conservation Foundation



place new mooring blocks around Saba. To protect the beautiful and unique reefs in the Saba Marine Park it is crucial that visiting yachts and other vessels do not drop their anchors onto the coral.

—Continued on next page

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St. Vincent
Barefoot Yacht Charters
Blue Lagoon

Trinidad & Tobago NEW
AMD
Chaguramas

USVI St Croix
Wilsons' Cruzan Canvas
Christiansted



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The Saba Marine Park first dropped mooring blocks in 1987. Those original blocks, which have served very well for decades, were due for an upgrade. The 11 new blocks weigh four tons each. Heavier blocks with new chains and shackles will be able to support various vessels in heavy weather.

For more information visit www.sabapark.org/marine_park/yachting.

SVG to Allow Remote Testimony

In a major advance in prosecuting crimes against visitors, on December 2nd the Parliament of St. Vincent & the Grenadines passed a bill that allows for testimony to be given remotely. In the past, many suspects accused of crimes against visitors escaped prosecution because the victims had left the country and were unable or unwilling to return to appear in court. Under the new law, the Witness (Special Measures) Bill, victims and witnesses will be able to give evidence via a video link or other electronic form, and this evidence will have the same weight as testimony given in person inside the courtroom.

Prime Minister the Hon. Dr. Ralph Gonsalves noted that the law would be useful in cases where crimes are committed against yachting visitors.

The Act will come into force on a date to be determined by the Governor General.

Eight Bells

Walton Budd, better known as Walter, died on November 18th of cancer at age 67.



The late Walton 'Walter' Budd delivering fresh baguettes to the yacht Pipe Dream *in the Tobago Cays Marine Park*

WWW.GESTOLLARD.CO.UK

He was one of the oldest waterfront service providers working in the Tobago Cays. Harm Brink of *S/V Horta* says, "Walter was a close friend to us and many others, especially charter boat crews who visit the Cays often. He was always willing to help, extremely friendly to our guests and a great guy to have as friend. Without him the Cays will never be the same."

Chris Walter of the charter yacht *Sudiki* adds, "Walter was born in Carriacou, left when he was 15 and lived in Trinidad for the next 15 years where he worked on the shrimp boats. He was known locally as Machine or Engine and was a fixture in the Cays as he came out *every* day (except Sundays) and many folks relied on him. He was well known for his gravelly voice and gold front teeth, which he frequently flashed in a smile. He was an executive member of the Southern Grenadines Water Taxi Association and was instrumental in organizing it. He was also known for the paint job on his boat, *Free Spirit 2*, which always had a pink bottom and intricate design on top.

"Walter was buried in the village of Campbell on Union Island and seen off by a crowd of 200 to 300 people. He leaves a daughter, Mia (11 years old), and his wife, Lorna, who, along with her mother, runs the bar at Union Island airport. He will be sorely missed."

Yachtsman Donates to Carriacou School

On December 2nd, educational books and magazines donated by Dimitri Stephanos of the yacht *Iafrica* were presented to Mrs. Stevenson, Director of



L'Esterre Primary School in Carriacou, and volunteer Leanne Pomeroy by Diane Martino and Richard Laflamme of Lumbadive dive shop. The school also received two Sony game controllers with nearly 50 game discs. Thanks, Dimitri!

CCEF Awards Scholarships

A fund supported mainly by the visiting yachting community, the Carriacou Children's Education Fund (CCEF), has again awarded college scholarships.

—Continued on next page



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The three CCEF awardees for 2013-2014, and the recipient of a fourth scholarship donated by the Sue Kingsman Memorial Fund, are Martin Jones (Business Studies) and Antonia Joseph (Social Work) from Bishops College, and Bettina Joseph (Social Science) and Vanesta Mitchell (Social Science) from Hillsborough Secondary School. All four students are attending the TA Marryshow Community College in Grenada. The scholarships cover full tuition and fees for two years, plus a stipend of EC$1,000 towards the purchase of textbooks.



Kindra Materine of Nigel D. Stewart & Associates presents the non-profit certificate to CCEF Committee members Lizzy Conijn and Harm Brink

Each student has to do well in his or her Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate exams to be eligible for scholarship consideration. They also write an essay on the topic "How I will use my education to build a better Grenada". Thus far, 28 students have received scholarships awarded by the CCEF and the Sue Kingsman Memorial Fund.

The CCEF is an informal, voluntary group of individuals from visiting yachts from around the world, and a number of concerned local businessmen and women. With the assistance of Nigel D. Stewart & Associates located in Hillsborough, Carriacou, the CCEF has obtained Non-Profit Organization status from the Grenada government. Since 2000, CCEF has conducted fundraising activities during the first week of August, coinciding with the Carriacou Regatta Festival. During this time, CCEF has raised over EC$200,000 to provide TAMCC scholarships for secondary students, and uniforms, back packs, lunches, computer labs (a 50/50 partnership between the schools and CCEF), and school supplies for primary students in Carriacou.

Please don't donate to anyone in a dinghy purporting to collect funds for CCEF; instead, see the website below or attend a fundraiser.

This year's Carriacou Regatta dates are August 1st through 3rd. Come to the 2014 CCEF fundraisers: the welcoming CCEF barbecue on Wednesday, July 30th and the CCEF auction on Friday August 1st.

For more information visit www.carriacouchildrenseducationfund.org.

Oh, No, Not Paria Again…

In yet another assault aboard a yacht sailing off Venezuela's notorious Peninsula of Paria, the 44-foot Norseman *Explorer,* with two septuagenarian circumnavigators aboard, was boarded by armed robbers on November 13th. The boat had left Trinidad bound for Puerto La Cruz with a "buddy boat" that was soon far ahead. *Explorer's* skipper reported, "We hadn't even reached the first waypoint when we were attacked. We were about ten miles west of the tip of the Paria peninsula and five miles offshore at 10:30AM when we were approached by a pirogue with a 75-horsepower motor with five men on board. They were on us in seconds with drawn revolvers, with one man remaining with their boat."

The skipper and his mate were bound and pistol-whipped. The boat was ransacked and virtually everything of value taken. The skipper said that they both expected to be killed, but the appearance of a coastal freighter nearby frightened the pirates and they left. *Explorer* returned to Trinidad, where the couple were treated for their wounds and a report was made to the Coast Guard.

The skipper says, "I would never do that trip again and would advise anyone else not to do this either. We are thankful to be alive."

For more information see www.noonsite.com, Piracy Reports 2013.

Department of Corrections

As a result of an editorial error, the order of the answers to the Sea Cucumber Quiz in Salty's Beat in last month's Compass was mixed up. Here is the quiz with the answers in the correct order:

Sea Cucumber Quiz

1) A species that can be used to monitor the health of the environment.
2) Refers to the accumulation of substances, such as pesticides, or other organic chemicals in an organism.
3) To remove the entrails of; disembowel.
4) An animal that naturally preys on others.
5) Animals that feed on dead or decaying matter.
6) To re-grow or replace lost tissue.
7) Soft internal organs of the body.
8) Sea cucumbers are marine invertebrates, also cousins to sea urchins and starfish, known as _____.

Answers

1) bioindicator
2) bioaccumulate
3) eviscerate
4) predator
5) scavengers
6) regenerate
7) viscera
8) echinoderms

Our Star Guys

The best things in life are free, and enjoying the spectacle of the night sky in a quiet Caribbean anchorage, away from industrial pollution and city lights, is a real treat. What's going on tonight? Our regular night-sky column tells you.

In this issue of *Caribbean Compass* we bid a fond farewell to Scott Welty, our long-time night-sky columnist, and say hello to his successor, Jim Ulik, who will continue to let *Compass* readers know every month what's in the stars….

Welcome Aboard!

In this issue of *Caribbean Compass* we welcome new advertiser Blue Lagoon Hotel and Marina of St. Vincent, on page 17. Good to have you with us!





Add a little spice to your sailing: Visit Grenada this season

With a rare combination of world-class facilities and an authentic and unspoilt Caribbean atmosphere, the 'Spice Island' of Grenada is fast becoming 'the' Caribbean destination for yacht owners.

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up to 40	$1.10	$0.99	$0.94
up to 50	$1.20	$1.08	$1.02
up to 60	$1.30	$1.17	$1.11
up to 65	$1.45	$1.31	$1.23
up to 75	$1.50	$1.35	$1.28
up to 80	$1.65	$1.49	$1.40
up to 100	$1.70	$1.53	$1.45

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

A Happy Rodney Bay Boatyard Customer

George Bevan, Ship Technician at IGY Rodney Bay Marina Boatyard, reports: Murray Fischer and his wife, Cindy, have owned *Lorien* since 2001, when she was discovered in Ontario, Canada. Built by C&C yachts in 1976, the 30-footer was a moldy hull with very rudimentary sailing equipment and no cruising set-up to speak of. She had been owned by two doctors who used her as a beer-drinking platform. Murray paid CAD$30,000 for her and has invested much more since then. He says, "I don't keep track — it keeps me sane that way."

While still in Canada, *Lorien* got enough new equipment that Murray and Cindy could sail to the many harbors on Lake Ontario. They then decided to have the boat shipped to the Caribbean.



Having weathered the seas aboard a freight ship all the way from Lake Ontario to St. Lucia, *Lorien* arrived with water damage caused in transit. Her cabin sole was immersed in six inches of water and saltwater's damage had been done. On arrival in St. Lucia, *Lorien* was efficiently cleared through Customs and launched from the wharf with the assistance of Kenneth Mathurin, an IGY-employed Customs broker — despite a public service strike at the time. *Lorien's* Atomic Four gas engine fired right up and powered the vessel to the IGY Rodney Bay Boatyard for repairs. When we cleaned the boat properly, we were amazed to see the condition of the gelcoat on the hull and deck. Murray worked hard to preserve that over the years.

Under the project management of IGY, a month on dry land and the hard work of all boatyard staff, *Lorien* was returned to the water, freshly varnished by John Alexander.

She was then sailed from St. Lucia to Port St. Charles, Barbados with a crew of three (myself, Murray and Cindy). It was a pleasure to have completed this delivery with Murray and Cindy, who showed immense hospitality upon arrival in Barbados.

Following a few months of sailing in Barbados, Murray and Cindy returned *Lorien* to the Rodney Bay Marina for hurricane season, a re-power project and upgrades to the electronic navigation equipment. Murray decided on a brand new 3YM30 and all new Raymarine instruments. Matched to the new engine was a standard shaft drive with folding Max Prop supplied by Ian Cowan of Island Water World, whose expert advice was instrumental in this project's successful completion. The Raymarine chart plotter, GPS, radar, fish finder and wind speed and direction indicator were fitted by the local Raymarine dealer, Regis Electronics. In addition, *Lorien's* keel was re-bedded and custom load plates installed, the rudder was rebuilt, a new stainless steel fuel tank was fabricated by Arc Dynamic, and a new outboard crane and bracket were installed. Murray was very pleased with all the work completed and, in his words, "will continue to be a loyal IGY customer".

Lorien was delivered back to Barbados; the new engine and improvements performed wonderfully. After Murray and Cindy completed a test sail out of Port St. Charles, Murray said, "Feathering props and clean bottoms are a beautiful couple!"

It was a great pleasure to have worked on this project and even more of a pleasure to have sailed with Murray and Cindy. We look forward to caring for *Lorien* in the future and for the many other beloved yachts in the Caribbean.

For more information on Rodney Bay Marina Boatyard visit www.igy-rodneybay.com/boatyard.

Mercury Marine Engine Tests

Did you know that Mercury has a vast library of engine tests available to you on its website? The engine test section of the mercurymarine.com website contains hundreds of boathouse bulletins, head-to-head and third-party engine tests. Go to mercurymarine.com/engines/engine-tests and click on the specific outboard, sterndrive or diesel engine you're interested in.

Bequia's Oasis Gallery Relocates

Bequia's Oasis Art Gallery is now open at its new sunny location, upstairs behind the Porthole Restaurant and Local Color boutique, a short walk from the Frangipani Hotel. Drop by to view a selection of unique arts and crafts, all made in St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

For more information contact oasisbequia@vincysurf.com or (784) 497-7670.



REGATTA NEWS

Last Day Surge Grabs Triskell Cup

The 13th edition of the Triskell Cup was held in Guadeloupe from November 1st through 3rd, 2013, attracting 82 entries including boats from Martinique, Barbados and Trinidad, as well as Guadeloupe.

After mixed results on the first two days, Polish-born skipper Andrzej Kochanski and his crew on *Crédit Mutuel* won three races on the last day to take the overall title and CSA Class 2. Last year's winner, Eddy Chalono on *J Boss*, settled for first place in CSA 1. In changing conditions off the islet of Gosier, and facing a strong CSA fleet of 21 boats, Andrzej said, "Today we had to race as fast as possible, sail the shortest distance and make perfect maneuvers. Conditions were better for us, but we had very little chance of winning."

Triskell Cup 2013 class winners were:
CSA OVERALL
Crédit Mutuel, SF 3200, Andrzej Kochanski, Martinique
CSA 1
J Boss, J/111, Eddy Chalono, Martinique
CSA 2
Crédit Mutuel, SF 3200, Andrzej Kochanski, Martinique
CLASS 8/SURPRISE
Bati + Bagghi, Class 8, Luc Duponteil, Guadeloupe
COASTAL
School Luc Coquelin, J/24, Cynthia Janne, Guadeloupe



The popularity of match racing is growing in the Caribbean, and Trinidad is now back in the mix



MELGES 24
GFA Caraibes, Nicolas Gillet, Martinique
MULTIHULL
Sanem, KL 28, Cédric Santoni, Guadeloupe
CLASS 40
City Sainte-Anne/Uhaima, Philippe Fiston, Guadeloupe
For full results visit: http://triskellcup.com.

Match Racing in Trinidad is Back!

November 10th, 2013 saw the first match racing event in Trinidad & Tobago in more than ten years. Ten teams competed in this charity event to reach the finals, where they sailed against the TTSA instructor team in a "winner takes all" match.

The event raised funds for the community-outreach sailing programme that delivers free sail training to local school children twice a week as well as providing transport to and from the training.

The wind came through after the first hour to give a nice 15- to 20-knot breeze for most of the day. After the five finals, the instructor team came out with a three-two win over the competing crews.

The new SR Max programme is now underway in T&T and will include fleet racing, match racing and a national league for the class.

For more information visit www.ttsailing.org.

11-Year-Old Tortolan is SOL Opti Champ

The 10th annual SOL Sint Maarten Optimist Championships took place at Simpson Bay, St. Maarten on November 9th and 10th, 2013, organized by the Sint Maarten Yacht Club, with 29 youthful competitors representing five different islands: Tortola, Curaçao, Anguilla, St. Barthelemy and St. Maarten. For the first time, this annual event was held over two days (not one), and was preceded by a three-day clinic with internationally renowned coach Nicolas Fracchia. Sailors were divided into a 20-boat White Fleet (more advanced), and a nine-boat Green Fleet (beginners).

On the Saturday the winds were consistent and average, but winds picked up on the Sunday, promising more challenge. Race Officer Paul Miller and his crew made sure that everything went smoothly.

The top ten in the White Fleet sailed closely together, with most of them taking at least a first, second or third place. Rayne Duff from Tortola, age 11, scored a bullet every race except for one — becoming SOL Optimist Champion this year. In second place was Leonardo Knol from St. Maarten, and third was Luc Mahieu from Curaçao. First girl was Mariangela Fray from Curaçao who ended fifth overall in the White Fleet.

The St. Barths sailors led the Green Fleet: in first place was Adrien Elie, second place Mathias Quessada, and third place Didier Pignet. First girl in the Green Fleet was Summer Morton from St. Maarten.

Tiebreaker Takes the Rum at St. Croix

Following the warm-up Commodore's Race on November 15th, 26 boats competed in five classes at the St. Croix International Regatta on November 16th and 17th, 2013. The CSA Racing saw a very closely fought competition, with a tiebreaker in the Spinnaker Class and skipper Morgan Dale's weight in rum going to the Melges 24 *Boogaloo*.

St. Croix International Regatta 2013 class winners were:
CSA SPINNAKER
Boogaloo, Melges 24, Morgan Dale, St. Croix
CSA NON-SPINNAKER
El Shaddai, J/24, Dave Tomlinson, USA
JIB & MAIN
Cheeky Monkey, Craig Hassey, USA
MULTIHULL
Piglet, Teegull 2300, Joe San Martin, St. Croix
RHODES 19
Chrys, Chris and Debbie Schreiber, St. Croix
For full results visit www.stcroixyc.com.

BVI Team Tops Caribbean Dinghy Championships

The Caribbean Sailing Association-sanctioned Caribbean Dinghy Championships were held in Antigua on November 17th and 18th, 2013, hosted jointly by Antigua Yacht Club and Antigua's National Sailing Academy. Five Caribbean nations participated: Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, Trinidad & Tobago, St. Maarten and Antigua & Barbuda.

—Continued on next page



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Conditions were challenging with light and variable winds but between eight and ten races were held for each class over the course of the weekend.

The Zoom 8 Class was won by Antigua & Barbuda I's Rocco Falcone with seven points. Second place went to Thad Lettsome of the BVI with 16 points, and third place went to Antigua & Barbuda II's Louis Bavay.

In the Optimist Class, Rayne Duff of the BVI took the title with all first place finishes for a total of seven points. Daniel Smit of Antigua & Barbuda II finished in second place with 20 points, and Maria Eldridge of Antigua & Barbuda I finished in third with 22 points on a tiebreaker with Carson Gifford of St. Maarten.

The Laser Pico Class was also won with a total of seven points, this time by Rhone Kirby and River Andrews of Antigua & Barbuda I. In second place were Sam Morrell and James Dawson of the BVI with 15 points, and in third place were Joshua Ho and Meiling Chan Chow of Trinidad & Tobago with 21 points.

Kelly Ann Arrindell of T&T took the win in the Laser Radial class with 15 points. Antigua & Barbuda II's Jules Mitchell took second place with 24 points, and Amy Cox of Barbados finished third with 26 points.

The Laser Class was closely contested, with the winner being decided by half a point. Gregory Athill, sailing for the BVI, won with 23.5 points; Jason Tindale of Barbados finished second with 24 points; and Frits Bus of St. Maarten took third place with 25 points.

The team trophy was awarded to the team with the fewest points. This year's Caribbean Dinghy Championship team was British Virgin Islands with a total of 92.5 points. Congratulations to Thad Lettsome, Rayne Duff, Sam Morrell, James Dawson, Matthew Oliver and Gregory Athill.

For full results visit http://caribbean-sailing.com/caribbean-dinghy-championships-final-results.

Second Annual Mango Bowl 'Resounding Success'

Dee Lundy-Charles reports: St. Lucia's premier competitive sailing event enjoyed its second year, and organizers at the St. Lucia Yacht Club are delighted with the response from participants, sponsors, spectators and media who helped make the Mango Bowl 2013 a resounding success. A total of 32 boats sailed off Rodney Bay, an increase on last year's fleet.

J/24s and the Surprise Class from Martinique raced together on a short course, while Racing and Cruising Classes headed north of Pigeon Island on their longer race route. Racing Officer James Benoit (Grenada) and on-the-water Judge Tom Rinda (USA) kept everything running smoothly.

Out of nine races in the J/24 Class, Fredric Sweeney (aged 24) and his young *Sugar Beach Attitude* crew, Dylan Charles (17), Konstantin Tonkopi (14), Ryan Alexander (25) and Ricardo Charmon (28) took four first places and three seconds to top the class.

Winner of the 15-boat Cruising Class after five races was the Carriacou sloop *Savvy* from Grenada, skippered by Danny Donelan. United Insurance provided a special gift of golf umbrellas to the *Savvy* team, which were presented by the marine insurance provider's Marketing Officer Josette Edgar and General Manager Faye Miller.



The three Racing Class yachts fought a tough regatta, with Barbados' *Whistler* just taking the top spot from Martinique's *Fiser* by one point.

Six crews from Martinique battled in the Surprise Class. *Clippers Ship* blew away the competition by winning seven out of nine races, with second place *Digilife* matching their last year position and the all-female crew of *Denebola* taking third.

But it was *Sugar Beach Attitude's* weekend. After winning the Southern Caribbean J/24 Championship in Bequia at Easter, Fredric and his team have competed in Barbados and spent many hours training in the waters off Rodney Bay, which was evident in the teamwork and tactics that took them to overall first place. The team also took the IGY Rodney Bay Marina J24/Surprise Class Combined Series prize of a haulout valued at EC$2,500, which was presented by IGY General Manager Simon Bryan. The same boat was also winner of the inaugural Mango Bowl in 2012, then skippered by Stephanie Devaux-Lovell and her all-girl crew and nicknamed *Blonde Attitude*.

Winners in all four categories received a hand-painted ceramic Mango Bowl trophy, designed and created by local artist Michelle Ribot, as well as other prizes. Once the prizes were awarded, a surprise free bar was announced and the Mango Bowl Regatta wound down with drinks from Mount Gay Rum, Heineken, Blue Waters and Monster.

The St. Lucia Yacht Club thanks everyone who supported and assisted with Mango Bowl Regatta 2013 including the race officials, committee, volunteers, club staff, media members, and sponsors IGY Rodney Bay Marina, Blue Waters, Saint Lucia Tourist Board, United Insurance, Mount Gay Rum, Heineken, Yamaha, Boardwalk Bar, Island Water World, Regis Electronics, Endless Summer & Cats Inc, Johnson's Hardware, Rodney Bay Sails and Exodus Boat Charters.

Mango Bowl 2013 class winners were:

J/24
Sugar Beach Attitude, Fredric Sweeney, St. Lucia
SURPRISE
Clippers Ship, Nicholas Poix, Martinique
CRUISING
Savvy, Carriacou Sloop, Donny Donelan, Grenada
RACING
Whistler, J/105, Peter Lewis, Barbados

ON THE HORIZON…

Grenada Sailing Week Starts This Month

It's spicy and special! Island Water World Grenada Sailing Week 2014 will take place from January 30th through February 4th.

What better place to kick off your sailing season than Grenada? The island provides a perfect-size setting, with friendly people, natural beauty and an active social life. From smooth water and steady breezes off Grand Anse to more challenging conditions off the south coast, there is something for everyone.

—Continued on next page

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by the Beach in Friendship

Saturday, 25 January - De Reef 8.30pm
COVER DRIVE - SOKA KARTEL
NJ3O+ - TOBY ARMSTRONG - INFINITY

Sunday, 26 January - De Reef 12.30pm
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—Continued from previous page

Variety is the spice of life and Grenada Sailing Week invites you to "spice it up" at three different host venues — Port Louis Marina, Le Phare Bleu Marina and



Last year's Grenada Sailing Week skippers' briefing at Port Louis Marina

Prickly Bay Marina — each with its own ambience and after-race entertainment. You, too, can be part of the passion that is building this regatta into a Caribbean event sought after by international racers, and proudly supported by local sailors and marine industry players.

Register online today and make sure you have booked your space on the dock.

For more information see ad on page 9.

Cats for South Grenada Regatta's Match Races

The South Grenada Regatta Committee has announced an exciting revision to the schedule of events for the sixth annual South Grenada Regatta (SGR): instead of mid-sized monohulls, this year's Lay Day Match Races will be on fast and exhilarating ten-metre (33-foot) Rush 10 catamarans.

The South Grenada Regatta takes place from March 5th through 9th, with Rush 10 Match Racing on Saturday, March 8th.

SGR introduced match racing as their Lay Day activity a number of years ago; a novelty among Caribbean regattas which host mostly fleet races. By providing the unique opportunity for two teams to compete head-to-head on identical one-design boats, SGR's Match Races have become a sought-after activity and are considered a separate event for registration purposes. Not only that, since SGR provides the match race boats, those who don't own a yacht, or don't want to race it in the fleet category, can still participate in the SGR by registering a team in the Match Races.

SGR's match races are popular with spectators as well. With a race course set in the middle of Clarkes Court Bay, spectators can cheer everyone on from the comfort of SGR's start-line floating bar, which is made easily accessible by a complimentary water shuttle service.

Jana Caniga, Chairman of the SGR Organizing



Committee, says, "We believe that giving sailors the opportunity to do some match racing on exciting Rush 10 Catamarans will be a huge draw for participants this year."

For more information see ad on this age.

Antigua Classic NOR Available

The Notice of Race for the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta 2014 is now available at http://antiguaclassics.com. This event will take place April 17th through 22nd.

Before the race days, stroll the Concours d'Elegance and ogle the acres of polished brass and gleaming varnish. As sailor Steve Manley once wrote, "This regatta isn't just about racing, it is all about aesthetics." The Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta hosts between 50 and 60 elegant yachts every year and enjoys a wonderful variety of competitors including traditional craft from the islands, classic ketches, sloops, schooners, and yawls.

For more information see ad on this page.

Sponsors Announced for Antigua Sailing Week

Antigua Sailing Week has announced two official sponsors for the 47th edition of Antigua Sailing Week, which will take place from April 26th to May 2nd.

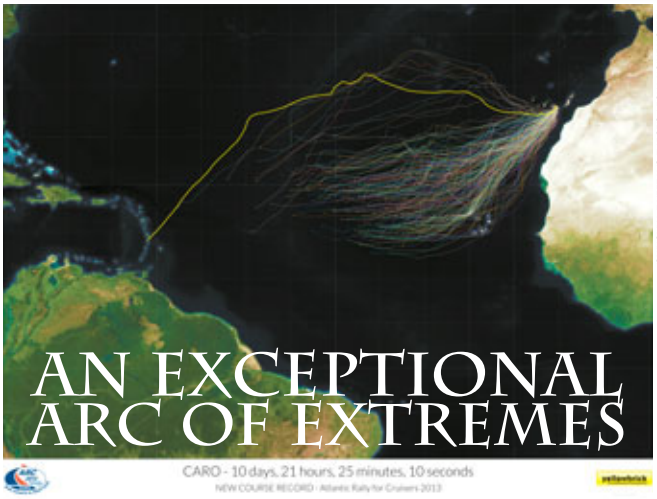
The Antigua & Barbuda Ship and Yacht Registry will once again be an Event Industry Partner. The Antigua & Barbuda Department of Marine Services and Merchant Shipping is the Maritime Administration of Antigua & Barbuda, operating a maritime registry offering the option to boat owners of registering their boat in Antigua & Barbuda and flying the flag worldwide. "We are very proud of the name that Antigua Sailing Week has internationally, the regatta flies the flag for Antigua & Barbuda and we want to continue to be a part of the event, which showcases Antigua & Barbuda's yachting industry and our beautiful islands as a wonderful destination for yachts and visitors to our shores," commented Katarina McGhie, Head of International Maritime Policy and Business Development.

For the first time, The American University of Antigua College of Medicine will be an Official Industry Sponsor of Antigua Sailing Week.

For more information and on-line entry visit www.sailingweek.com.







by Sally Erdle

"We were becalmed in the middle of the crossing and were cooling off with a swim when a pilot whale surfaced right behind the boat." Chris Jackson, Lancelot II

"We arrived in St. Lucia under mainsail alone in winds gusting up to 50 knots." Pekka Karlsson, Corona Aq

Crossing the Atlantic Ocean under sail is on a surprising number of people's "bucket lists", making the annual Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) from the Canary Islands to St. Lucia the world's most popular yacht rally. Participants include expert sailors and complete novices, sailing on boats old and new, large and small, fast and not so fast. Conditions vary during such a long ocean passage as well as being different each year and, with some 1,400 individuals sailing aboard more than 250 boats, there will be many ways to "do it right". This year's ARC underscored that diversity.

New Route Added

For the first time in the rally's history, there were two routes available. Forty-three boats with nearly 200 crewmembers aboard sailed in the pioneering "ARC+", which stopped in the Cape Verde islands before continuing on to St. Lucia. ARC+ set off on November 10th, 2013, two weeks ahead of the main ARC group. Leg 1 sailed from Las Palmas to Mindelo, a distance of approximately 850 nautical miles, and Leg 2 sailed from Mindelo to the IGY Rodney Bay Marina in St. Lucia, about 2,150 nautical miles. In the 28th edition of the traditional ARC, which set sail on November 24th, 224 boats and some 1,200 people took the direct route — 2,700 miles on the rhumb line — from Las Palmas to Rodney Bay. Two starts meant that the most boats ever — a total of 267 — sailed across the Atlantic with the World Cruising Club-organized event this year.

Although the ARC has always been known for its camaraderie, the ARC+ participants cohered as a much smaller group who shared the additional experience of an en route stop and a sense of being explorers. The "average" ARC+ boat was slightly older and smaller than those in the main ARC fleet. The majority of ARC+ boats were family cruisers, whereas ARC 2013 had the largest Racing Division ever.

The first winners of the "Spirit of ARC+" award are confirmed liveaboard sailors Pekka and Barbro Karlsson of the Laurin 32 *Corona Aq.*

—Continued on next page



Top left: Map showing Coro's *extreme northerly route and some ARC boats' southerly tracks, creating a record spread. (Prints and digital downloads available at www.yellowbrick-tracking.com/customprints)*
Above: While ARC 2013 contained the most racers ever, Barbro and Pekka exemplified 'old school' cruising with a small 50-year-old boat in ARC+

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—Continued from previous page

The Swedish couple sailed in the inaugural ARC in 1986 and returned to do the 1995 and 2001 editions, but had no plans to enter again until they heard about the Cape Verdes route option. With a friend and their 12-year-old cat, Josephine, also aboard the 50-year-old fibreglass double-ended sloop, they completed the new route without fuss. "It's wonderful to be back in St. Lucia," Barbro says, noting many improvements at Rodney Bay Marina since their last visit 12 years ago. The couple will sail in the Lesser Antilles this winter and then return to Europe via Bermuda and the Azores. The Karlssons have advice for others thinking of doing an ARC: "They should. Although we are very experienced sailors, we always learned a lot from the ARC seminars. And it's so nice meeting people from all over the world."

Course Record Broken in a 'Slow' Year

While not all boats are in as of this writing (December 19th), 2013 was the fastest and will likely also be the slowest ARC to date. Although unusual weather patterns gave most of the fleet longer crossing times than expected, the Knierim 65 *Caro*, a lightweight carbon-fibre racer-cruiser, shattered the previous ARC course record by more than eight hours, setting a new record of ten days, 21 hours, 25 minutes and 10 seconds. *Caro* arrived in St. Lucia on December 5th and two weeks later 18 boats were still at sea. Record ARC course distances were covered by some yachts sailing almost a thousand nautical miles more than the "crow flies", and, as *Yachting World* magazine's Features Editor Elaine Bunting wrote in her blog, "There has also been the biggest ever stretch from north to south... The spread between the furthest north and the furthest south was — incredibly — almost 1,300 miles!"

Oddly, with such a spread-out fleet, the night of December 13th saw six ARC boats cross the finish line within a 20-minute span after over 18 days at sea. Chris Jackson, skipper of the British Beneteau First 40 *Lancelot II*, says, "We didn't have full tracking of the other boats coming across, and we only started realizing what was happening when we started hearing all the chat on VHF — it was almost hard to get a word in!" The convergence sparked a landfall celebration to remember: "We arrived around three in the morning to a fantastic welcome with rum punch and immediately started phoning our families to say we'd arrived. Soon it was sunrise and more or less the crews of all six boats went together to breakfast and [what with a live band at the marina and the famous Gros Ilet street party] didn't get to bed until four o'clock — the next morning!" This is Chris's eighth ARC in a row. "The ARC provides very informative seminars that my crews learn from, excellent organization, and a great social atmosphere — that's a lot of people to go and have a drink with in the evening. And you get to meet people you'll see again in the different islands all through the season."

From Calms to Gales

After being bedeviled by light, fickle breezes in the first part of the crossing, ARC boats approaching St. Lucia in mid-December contended with "Christmas Winds" of 20 to 25 knots, gusting to 40 and higher in squalls.

British life-long sailor and experienced racer Ross Appleby, owner/skipper of the 26-year-old Oyster Lightwave 48 *Scarlet Oyster*, scored an elapsed time of 16 days, 10 hours, 21 minutes and 10 seconds. He says that factors contributing to an efficient passage in the challenging conditions included having a very well-prepared boat optimized with smaller "white" sails and a bigger spinnaker that paid off in moderate to light downwind conditions. "The boat is good down wind, a manageable size, and can sail to its maximum most of the time." *Scarlet Oyster* had good weather-routing help and "we were careful not to fall in any holes", basically taking the rhumb-line route with one jog south near the end to avoid a calm. Ross advises, "Keep pressing, but keep it balanced between going faster with risk of breakage and going slower."

Veterans and Newbies

The ages of ARC 2013 sailors ranged from toddlers to septuagenarians. The oldest skipper, of the 1962 Swan 62RS *Albatros*, was German Manfred Kerstan, age 77. "Sailing is my life," says Manfred, who has sailed since childhood. After a six-and-a-half-year circumnavigation in a 48-footer also called *Albatros* he sailed the inaugural ARC in 1986. This was his 19th consecutive ARC — a record.

Manfred takes crew for the ARC, and he does the cooking. He spends six months ashore in Germany and six months aboard, sailing to, from and in the Caribbean: "I like my life." Why cross with the ARC? "You get good crew for the ARC — people want to do it. I can pick and choose my crew. [ARC organizer] Andrew Bishop does a really good job. I hope the ARC continues to go for a long time."

And why do so many ARCs? "It's so much fun! I really had fun in the marina last night."

—Continued on next page





Above: Racing Class B and Spirit of ARC 2013 winner, Ross, regularly campaigns Scarlet Oyster *on the Caribbean racing circuit after the ARC. (Want to race? His crews include charterers!)*

Left: Manfred enjoys both the ocean passages and the shoreside fun of the ARC, and says of St. Lucia, 'Isn't it beautiful here?'



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—*Continued from previous page*

Manfred says that the ARC enables him to enjoy a much broader social life than is typical for most men his age: "There are old friends and always new people. I never get bored. Also, it's much nicer and cheaper to be in the islands rather than on the hard in Germany — isn't it beautiful here?"



While an impressive number of ARC participants are repeaters, the event also attracts enthusiastic newcomers such as the young crew of Khaleesi. *With virtually no sailing experience before their transatlantic passage, they now plan to cruise the Lesser Antilles*

Equally pleased with themselves and their arrival in the tropics are the Norwegian crew of the 44-foot X-452 *Khaleesi* — all of whom are under 25 years old and none of whom, except for the skipper ("a little bit"), had any sailing experience before embarking on the ARC. The five young friends are taking a year off and only got the boat two months before the start. Why do the ARC? "For the adventure and the experience." They enjoyed a "very good" crossing of 21 days, having caught 13 fish including a huge dorado and thrilling to the sight of a humpback whale broaching repeatedly as one day dawned at sea. Their plan is to cruise the island chain for five months, and, as skipper Markus Gjelseth says, "Have fun, have friends come over, do whatever comes to mind" and then return to Norway via Bermuda and the Azores.

What's New in St. Lucia

In addition to all the other "firsts" in ARC 2013 — the introduction of a second route, a record total number of participants, a record number of yachts in Racing Division, a new course record, record passage lengths in both time and distance, and the widest spread between northern and southern tracks — the finish destination of IGY Rodney Bay Marina has a brand-new general manager, Simon Bryan. Simon says, "The ARC atmosphere is fantastic; I'm thoroughly enjoying it and learning every day. We are always looking for input regarding improvements: we've enhanced security and customer services, with Digicel we have enhanced the WiFi in the marina for the ARC, and the marina now also provides guardianage packages. We're making sure that there are more things going on ashore in the evenings to make it fun for the ARC+ and ARC arrivals, showcasing local food, crafts and music."

The St. Lucia Tourism Board is also firmly on board. Director of Tourism Louis Lewis says, "We have just signed on to host the ARC for the next five years — it's a definite benefit to us, and the ARC and ARC+ are the direction we want to go." This year, the Ministry of Tourism tailored three different island tours especially for ARC participants, and has recently appointed a Tourism Safety & Security Officer within the Ministry. "We're taking yachting seriously and working to have everything in place to make St. Lucia a memorable experience."

Caribbean Plans

With the Atlantic crossing under their belts, the ARC+ and ARC participants now head out into the Caribbean, to cruise, race or do both.

Like many others in the Racing Division, Ross of *Scarlet Oyster* plans to do some leisurely cruising — "It's a fantastic cruising boat, and what could be better than 20 knots, blue skies and warm water?" — as well as the Caribbean race circuit, including the RORC Caribbean 600 in February, where the Lightwave 48 has won its class twice.

Meanwhile Manfred of *Albatros* plans to fly home for Christmas ("The flights on Condor between St. Lucia and Germany are perfect"), come back in January, sail to Puerto La Cruz in Venezuela, then head straight to St. Maarten before sailing home — to prepare for his 20th ARC!

For full results of ARC 2013, and information about next year's ARC and other World Cruising Club events visit www.worldcruising.com.

Many thanks to World Cruising Club, the Saint Lucia Tourist Board and Bay Gardens Hotel for making first-hand coverage of the ARC 2013 arrival possible, and my stay in St. Lucia so enjoyable.



THREE CRUISES, ALL IN THE GRENADINES

by Don Street

Ready for a cruise with no hairy channel crossings or time spent clearing Customs? You can easily cruise for a week or two entirely in the waters of St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and even enjoy some uncrowded anchorages to boot.



WILFRED DEDERER

Bequia's Admiralty Bay offers a protected anchorage with a variety of services and things to do

To enjoy the Grenadines have on board Imray Iolaire charts A30 and A31 and the detailed chart of the middle Grenadines, B311. Do not rely on electronic navigation and chart plotters, use charts and eyeball navigation in good light. Also have a copy of Chris Doyle's *Sailors Guide to the Windward Islands* as well as my Martinique to Trinidad guide — they are quite different but complementary. Where Doyle and I do not agree, investigate and proceed with caution. Doyle does not describe several anchorages mentioned below that I feel should be visited.

If starting and ending a one-week cruise at St. Vincent, one barely scratches the surface as a full day is needed to reach the southern Grenadines, and a day and a half to return. This leaves only four and a half days in the Grenadines. A ten-day cruise gives almost a week to explore the Grenadines, while a two-week cruise gives plenty of time to stop at Baliceaux, Mustique and Isle de Quatre in the northern Grenadines and still gives a week in the southern Grenadines.

One-Week Cruises

If you only have seven days and do not want to spend a day getting to the southern Grenadines and another day getting back, given settled weather and no northerly swell you can happily spend the time in and around Bequia. From St. Vincent sail to Anse Chemin on Bequia, and then on to Baliceaux, Mustique, Isle de Quatre, Friendship Bay, and then Admiralty Bay. On the final day, sail back to St. Vincent. All these anchorages are described below. With the exception of the last day's sail, all of the inter-island runs will be two hours or less.

On any cruise to the southern Grenadines, you probably will not be ready to leave St. Vincent until early or mid-afternoon so do a quick short run to Admiralty Bay, Bequia, course 22° magnetic, just over eight miles. The wind should be aft of abeam so it should be a fast beam or broad reach. Once in Admiralty Bay, work your way east and anchor on the north side of the harbour as far east as conditions permit.

On Day Two, depart early. (You can explore Bequia ashore on your way back to St. Vincent.) Head for Glossy Hill on Canouan, course about 205° magnetic, just over 17



SALLY ERDLE

Who says the Tobago Cays are overcrowded? This boat found a solitary spot in high season between Petit Rameau and Horseshoe Reef. Use eyeball navigation, please!

miles. Round Glossy Hill and work your way eastwards, eyeball navigating to avoid the rocks and shoals until you reach Friendship Point, then turn north and work your way up behind the reef as your draft permits. Moor bow-and-stern facing east, as the sea coming in over the reef and exiting the south end of Windward Bay creates a fairly strong south-flowing current that will swing you beam to the sea inducing a roll.

If the windward side of Canouan doesn't suit you, carry on to the Tobago Cays Marine Park (entry fee EC$10 per person per day) and drop the hook in the seldom-used anchorage between Petit Rameau and Horseshoe Reef. You can easily spend Day Three here.

On Day Four, head to Union Island to visit one of its four anchorages.

In Clifton Harbour, sail in, round up and ease on forward until you feel the keel gently touch, drop the anchor, allow the boat to drift back, give it plenty of scope and set it.

Or head for the lee of uninhabited Frigate Island, and watch the Magnificent Frigatebirds drift lazily along until they spot a bird with a fish. Then the Frigatebird dives on the other bird, which drops the fish that the Frigatebird catches before it hits the water! [Note: Although it is unlikely to happen again, on October 3rd, 2013, the crew of the yacht *Rainbow* were assaulted while at anchor at Frigate Island. You might feel uncomfortable being the only yacht at anchor here.]

Or you can continue on to Chatham Bay, where the beach is lined with restaurants. When entering, avoid Winter Rock, which has nabbed more than a few boats.

Only if the wind is south of east, and there is no sign of a northwest ground swell, go to Bloody Bay and anchor in the northeast corner. Here you will find a deserted, fantastically beautiful beach with soft sand and an unoccupied house — built without permission and the government has never allowed the builder to live in it. Anchor bow and stern in case a ground swell comes in.

Allow a full day and a half to get back to St. Vincent when leaving from Union Island or Mayreau. Once across North Mayreau Channel immediately tack to the east so that when you depart from the northwest corner of Canouan you are close to the point.

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page
The course to West Cay, Bequia is 025° magnetic, 16 miles. If the current is running to the west, given leeway you will have to steer about 040° magnetic to lay the course. Check the tidal information on the back of all the Imray Iolaire charts. If you can time your departure from the northwest corner of Canouan to pick up the first of the east-going tide, this run will be an easy close reach rather than hard on it.

If you are not laying West Cay, tack to the east as soon as you are far enough north to lay Isle de Quatre on port tack. There will be smoother water and less current in this area than north of West Cay. Once you feel you can lay West Cay, tack to the north. Round West Cay close aboard then work your way eastwards into Admiralty Bay and anchor in the north side of the bay.



BOB STEWART

Relax and explore ashore but be ready to head back to St. Vincent in the morning before the wind really begins to blow. Again check the tide. If possible leave on a weather-going tide. The course from Admiralty Bay to Blue Lagoon is 045° magnetic, a course that you cannot possibly lay unless the wind is south of east and you have a weather-going, lifting tide. If all this falls in place you can make it to Blue Lagoon or Young Island in one shot — but during the first three miles (until you get off the shelf), with the wind against the tide the waves will be short and steep, almost square. Once off the shelf the seas will lengthen out.

If the tide is running west, the fastest and least painful way to reach Blue Lagoon is to short tack up the coast of Bequia all the way to Anse Chemin or until you can easily lay Blue Lagoon. If you do not lay Blue Lagoon and the tide is running to the west, off the south coast of St. Vincent it will be running two or possibly three knots. On starboard tack the foul tide will be sucking you off to leeward like a giant vacuum cleaner; on port tack it will be stopping you dead.

A Ten-Day Cruise

On a ten-day cruise, head south as above described, but include a stop at Petit Tabac, southeast of the Tobago Cays and within the Marine Park. Horseshoe Reef will be easily visible but the reef just to windward of the dinghy pass (look at chart B311 carefully) will be hard to spot as it will only break in heavy weather, but the shoal water will be easy to spot. Head for World's End Reef. As it is approached, bear off, pass to leeward of Egg Reef, and head for the west end of the reef of Petit Tabac. Pass to leeward of the reef, then round up and work your way east as far as your draft will permit into sheltered waters. This is an ideal anchorage for shoal-draft monohulls and catamarans. If you have a good dinghy or RIB you are within easy dinghy distance of World's End Reef. If your crew is really interested in snorkeling or diving, World's End Reef will keep them occupied for days.

If your boat is too deep for Petit Tabac, follow directions as above but sail past Petit Tabac and on a course of about 225° magnetic toward Pinese, near Petit St. Vincent (PSV). As you approach Pinese, pick up the range on chart B311 and my guide (page 125). Run on in on this range on a course of 163° magnetic, passing between Pinese and Mopion using eyeball navigating — no chart plotter! Once through this passage, work your way eastward inside the reef to the north of PSV and anchor. From this anchorage you have superb snorkeling and diving.

After a day or so in this idyllic anchorage (conditions permitting), head west to Pinese and Mopion, pick up range 13 and head for Union Island, avoiding Gran De Coi shoal. Note the ranges/transit on B311 to avoid this danger.

Visit the anchorages on Union previously described, or visit Mayreau. Saltwhistle Bay is often crowded; Saline Bay less so unless a cruise ship is in. If you want to be alone, carefully enter Windward Bay using range 19 on chart B311; see my guide page 116. Take a dinghy ride ashore, a short walk across the low land to the Saline Bay beach, and follow the road up the hill to the church and you have a fantastic view of all the Grenadines. Walking up and down the hill will make you thirsty and hungry. There are numerous small bars and restaurants along the way that will happily sell you refreshments.

Head on back to St. Vincent, allowing a day and a half for the trip. Or allow two and a half days for the trip back and stop at one of the two anchorages in Isle de Quatre. The southern anchorage is only to be used by good eyeball navigators sailing boats drawing six feet or less, and only in ideal light. Be prepared to leave if the wind goes into the south.

Alternatively, anchor on the north side of the island on the narrow shelf, making sure the anchor is well set if the crew goes ashore to explore. It is best to leave one person on board. Those that feel like mountain goats can climb 300 feet to inspect

Left: Chatham Bay at Union Island is uninhabited — except for the beach bars

Below: Petit Tabac, at upper right in the photo, provides a getaway for those with good eyesight and shoal draft



the ruins of a stone-walled 18th century house on the ridge. It is rather amazing as it has been unoccupied for more than half a century but has weathered half a dozen hurricanes and the ravages of the termites, yet is still standing. It's a lot easier to get to the house from the lagoon on the south side; there is a path from the beach and it's not so steep.

If neither anchorage at Isle de Quatre suits you, try Petit Nevis or Friendship Bay.

A Two-Week Cruise

If you have a full two weeks, if conditions permit on the first day head to Anse Chemin, five miles from Blue Lagoon on a course of approximately 200° magnetic. If there are fishermen there, please stay out of their way. On the second day (or on Day One if a surge or north wind makes Anse Chemin untenable), head off to Baliceaux. The land is privately owned, but of course you can walk along the shore on the "Queen's chain" (a chain is a standard measurement that has been used in England and the colonies since shortly after William the Conqueror arrived).

The next day sail to Mustique, where the ultra rich have changed a rough West Indian island where a few farmers grew cotton into an island that looks like a well-tended garden.

Then enjoy the rest of the Grenadines as described above.

Since you have 14 days at your disposal, when heading back to St. Vincent allow a full day or two days in Admiralty Bay to explore Bequia. Whenever I arrived in Bequia with either *Iolaire* or *Li'l Iolaire* and was planning to stay a few days, our solution to the crowded anchorage problem was to sail right up to the head of the harbour, douse sail, and ease on in until we ran aground. We would then drop the anchor. If the boat drifted back, we eased out the anchor line and set the anchor. If she stuck, a crewmember would jump into the shoal water, run a line ashore and tie it to a palm tree. Then a stern anchor was set. We were close to shore, with no problems with boats swinging into us or dragging down on us.

As you can see from this article, there is plenty to keep a sailor occupied, on the move and off the beaten track in the Grenadines!

Don Street is the author of Street's Cruising Guide to the Eastern Caribbean, Seawise, *the* Transatlantic Crossing Guide, *and* The Ocean Sailing Yacht. *Visit his website at www.street-iolaire.com.*



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Revisiting Grenada… and Seeing It for the Very First Time

DESTINATIONS

by Frank Virgintino

Anchorages are like relationships: once you take them for granted, you lose sight of what they have to offer. The Lesser Antilles is often referred to as the "beaten track" because many have cruised it for so long. Some anchorages are so familiar that the instant we see a picture of them, we recognize them.

One of the most beautiful destinations in the Lesser Antilles — a chain of islands over 400 miles long as the crow flies — is Grenada. It is exquisite in so many ways. Most often, it is far enough south that you are safe from hurricanes. There are ample anchorages. Clearance procedures are pleasant and convenient. St. George's Harbour is beautiful at any time of the day, rain or shine.



Above: Grenada through an artist's eyes. Susan Mains' painting captures the vibrant essence of St. George's

Below: The best part of the market is the people. Slow down, interact and explore…



As humans, we are creatures of habit. We have our favorite anchorage at a given destination and we go to it directly. As the years go by, we find that there is less and less excitement in making our landfall. Whereas in years past our hearts started to beat fast when we saw the entrance to St. George's, or Hog Island or Prickly Bay, we now routinely round up, drop sail and set our hook. We then do our shopping, follow up on our "to do" list, and look up our friends to catch up on all the news. How much do we get to "see" of Grenada?

Recently, I had the opportunity to spend a few weeks in Grenada and I asked those that I met what their exploration plan for Grenada was.

—Continued on next page

—Continued from previous page

I found none who planned to sail around Grenada to the different harbors and anchorages. One even told me, that if they upped anchor, "they would lose their space". I asked another fellow who "had been coming to Grenada for years" what he thought of Gouyave. He told me that it was not his favorite fruit!

While there is a time for rest, there should also be a time to discover what is in the next bay and the next anchorage. Too often I hear "Seen it, done that"! Cruising is not a check-off list; it is an art that includes learning about new areas and new cultures.

I wanted to rediscover Grenada, to go to areas I had not been to or had been to and forgotten. Normally when I want to go shopping, I head for the supermarket. Instead, I went to the Farmer's Market in St. George's. I had been there before but had not remembered how vibrant it was — full of color and sound and smell. I thought I would just pick up a few fruits and vegetables, but ended up spending the better part of an entire day. The fruits and vegetables were well worth the money, as were the lime juice and spices. However, the best part of the day was the people. Most of the booths in the spice market are staffed by women, interspersed with a man here and there. If you stand back and listen to the banter, it is enough to make you laugh so hard as to bring you to tears. Grenadians have a keen sense of humor and if you are willing to "play the game", it does not take long to catch on. While I was there, it started to rain and one of the men told me it was "weather for two". I thought he meant that business was going to be slow and that they were going to have a two-for-one sale. I asked him which two were on sale! After that I could have said anything and everyone would have laughed!



At Belmont Estate, the tour guide took us through the history of how cocoa is processed and brought everything to life

The following day, I took a taxi and headed for Gouyave. I had been there in years past but wanted to know why it is called "the town that never sleeps". I figured I would buy some fish and also ask around about why the town never slept. I spent about an hour in the general store, the owner of which is a Grenadian whose roots are in Portugal. He explained to me, perhaps with tongue in cheek, why Gouyave fishermen are renowned and why the town never sleeps. Gouyave townspeople take fishing seriously and those that do not go out in boats to fish lend a hand in "pulling the nets". As most fishing activity takes place very early in the morning, before daybreak most of the task is complete. As a result, the town never sleeps. Kind of like an "early bird gets the worm" theme. By the way, there is no excuse to go hungry for even if you do not own a boat and do not go fishing, you can help "pull the nets" and each person who helps gets some of the fish.

From Gouyave to the Dougaldston Plantation is only a stone's throw. There are a number of plantations that still operate on Grenada and Dougaldston is one of them. Watching the tour guides go through the history of the plantations and the various products is anything but boring. Just the smells of the fresh spices are enough to intoxicate you. From the Dougaldston Plantation, you can travel west to the Belmont Estate, which is also a working plantation and well worth the effort to visit. The tour guide gave us all samples of cocoa and took us through the history of how cocoa is processed. Perhaps it was the enthusiasm in this young woman's tone that brought everything to life, but she kept everyone's attention so well that every parent in the group wished their children's schoolteacher was this good. There is also a restaurant on the grounds whose elevation allows for beautiful views and whose menu and quality is anything but commonplace. The waitresses were dressed in what could be referred to as "creole country" attire. Their service was the best I have experienced anywhere in the Caribbean. Don't miss it, as it's wonderful experience.

From Belmont Estate, it is not far to make for St. Patrick, one of the parishes of Grenada. Here you can visit Le Morne de Sauteurs, or Leapers' Hill.

The French endeavored to extend their control over the whole of the island in the mid-1600s. Determined not to submit to French rule, the Caribs fought a succession of losing battles, and ultimately the last surviving Caribs jumped to their death off a precipice located in what is currently an old graveyard. I stood at the precipice, looking out on the Caribbean, and wondered if I would have had the courage to do what the Caribs did: jump to their death, every man, woman and child.

The day was spent, and so I made my way back to St. George's. Sitting on the rear deck of my boat afforded me an opportunity to take another look at St. George's Harbour. The sun was going down and the harbor was putting on still yet another face. It seemed to me in that moment that perhaps I never had looked close enough to see it all or to see it in a different way; perhaps a way where words to describe how beautiful it is are no longer necessary.

The following day I had to do some food shopping and went to the supermarket at the Spice Island Mall, the most modern supermarket on the island. They also sell wonderful luncheon meals that you carry away at really inexpensive prices — cheap, if you will, but really good. One of the stores at the west end of the mall is Susan Mains Art Gallery. If there is any one person who can capture the sense of what Grenada is, Susan does it and does it well. Her paintings of the Carenage are brilliant and evoke a sense of another time long passed but at the same time in colors and hues that still make their appearance daily.

No matter how many times you've been here, make the effort to see Grenada for the very first time. Pull up your anchor and do a series of mini-cruises. Take a taxi or a bus and explore inland; I have just scratched the surface, as there is so much more. All you need to do is go look for it!

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



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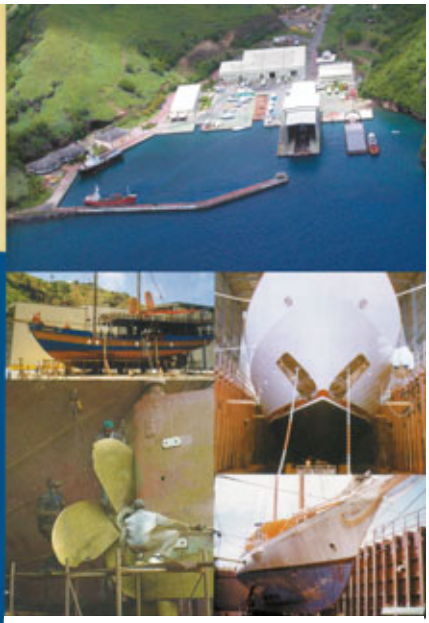
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ALL ASHORE...

MORNE DIABLOTIN – NOT FOR THE FAINTHEARTED

by Linda Lane Thornton

Despite having sailed some 60,000 miles in our 1973 Nicholson 35 sloop, *Coromandel*, my husband, Andy, and I are not just liveaboard yachties: we are climbers and hill walkers, too. So any new anchorage is a place to look around for the nearest pointy bit and think about how to get up it. In the Caribbean we had our most enjoyable experiences while anchored in Prince Rupert Bay, Portsmouth, Dominica, our proposed week's stay there finally stretching to three weeks as we sought out and walked several segments of the Waitukubuli Trail accessible by local bus and on foot from the town. Nearly every day, though, we would look towards Morne Diablotin and wonder. At 4,747 feet, it is the second highest peak in the Lesser Antilles after Mont Pelée in Martinique.



'Nearly every day we would look towards Morne Diablotin and wonder'

On April 12th, 2013, my birthday, we had a splendid day walking Segment 11 of the Waitukubuli Trail from Ross University to Borne, so we spoke to a taxi driver and asked him to take us to the start of the hike near the Syndicate Waterfall. The fare he quoted was not cheap (EC$60, or about US$23), and we later found that we could have got there for less, but the experience we had more than made up for the high fare.

It was a greyish morning, but several mornings had started thus and the day had improved, so we were not worried about the weather. We both had stout footwear — walking boots for me and hiking sandals for Andy — and I had the umbrella that seems to accompany us everywhere and which serves double duty as a walking stick. Our driver picked us up at the fishermen's wharf at 0700 and by 0730 we were assuring him that we would not need a lift back; we would make our own way. Quite how we would accomplish this was a mystery, but that was all part of the adventure. The road to the start of the hike first runs along the coast, where a signpost shows the way to the Morne Diablotin National Park. From this point, the road winds steeply upwards into the forest, past the signpost to the Syndicate Falls. There is a convenient parking space if you choose to take your own car.

The trail to Morne Diablotin starts at an elevation of 1,900 feet and is clearly signposted. At first the path is a series of steps up through the rainforest, sometimes constructed of wood or making use of tree roots and rocks. It was a steep climb that afforded ample opportunity to take breathers as we looked for the parrots, notably the Sisserou Parrot, Dominica's national bird which appears on her flag, we could hear so clearly, in addition to a host of other birds. It was cool, dim and humid beneath the canopy and a little rain in the night had made it damp underfoot.

Eventually we attained the ridge — then the real fun began! The thick rainforest with its wide variety of trees gave way to an area dominated by a single species of small, gnarled tree, more like a woody shrub. These had large, leathery leaves and a multitude of roots above the ground. In some places the path went under the roots, in others we scrambled up small, rocky defiles and in yet others we swung like gibbons through the roots a metre or so above the ground, hanging onto other roots as we passed. It was a glorious experience and took me back to childhood days spent on climbing frames in the school playground.

Finally we arrived at a point where a slight deviation to the left brought us to what would have been a viewpoint had we not been above the cloudbase. As I peered out through the mist I caught occasional glimpses of a terrace below, covered in the same shrubby vegetation. Undaunted, we pressed on along the ridge, water droplets beading our hair and clothes, hoping that the clouds would clear to give us a view.

A short distance along the ridge we came to what looked like a summit — and suddenly the clouds whipped away to the west. There spread below us was the sweep of the hills to the north, Portsmouth looking like a toy town to the north with *Coromandel* the merest speck in Prince Rupert Bay; Guadeloupe, Les Saintes and Marie Gallante lay on the distant horizon, the sea turning the east coast into a fringe of icing. Magical!

—Continued on next page

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We ate our lunches while contemplating the view and then, when the clouds began to close in again, debated whether to continue to the true summit, some 500 yards to the southeast, though only some 30 feet higher. After ten minutes of fighting our way through thickly tangled shrubs — it was evident that few people took this final stretch — we turned back to make our way down.



THORNTON (2)

A view of Prince Rupert Bay, with Portsmouth looking like a toy town and Coromandel *the merest speck*

The descent was made more interesting by the damp squelchiness underfoot, caused by a passing rain shower, short-lived but intense. Andy slipped into a puddle up to his knee, both soles came off my boots (I tied them back on with lengths taken from some lianas) and then I tumbled over, ending with my head pointing down the hill, upside down on my back, totally stuck, with Andy having to haul me upright onto my feet again, laughing immoderately as he did so, commenting on the muddy state I'd got myself into; feet, knees, bottom, hands, elbows and rucksack were blobbed with mud — I looked like a grubby little urchin.

Back on the tarred road again, we found a small stream and washed off the worst of the mud in the hopes that we would get a lift back to the Roseau-Portsmouth road from where we could get a bus.

And if not, then at least the walk was downhill. As luck would have it, we met one of the park rangers who gave us a lift all the way to Portsmouth, and who proved to be an inspired source of information on the vegetation, the economy and Dominica's budding eco-tourist image. An educational and entertaining end to a fascinating and enjoyable day.

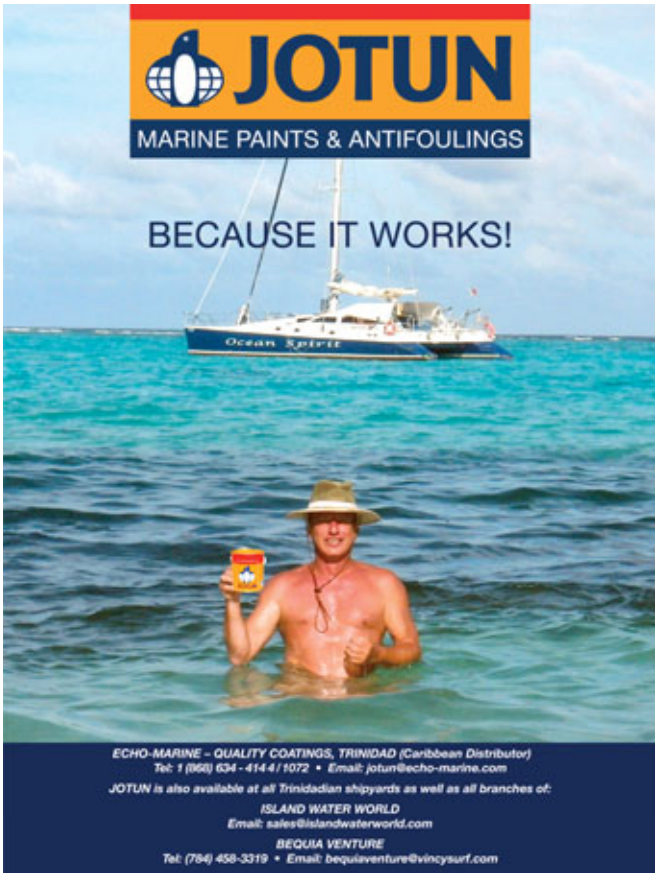


If you are thinking of doing this walk, my advice would be:

- Ensure that you have really good footwear, i.e. hiking boots or proper hiking sandals, and expect to get your feet wet if it has been raining.
- Take a waterproof outer garment, like a kagoul, as the high terrain can bring showers.
- Take a waterproof rucksack to hold everything, as you will need to use both hands for the scrambling bits.
- Take plenty of food and water, as there is no opportunity to get either on the trail.
- Walking poles would be an advantage.

The hike starts at 1,900 feet and although the actual walking distance is about only three miles, the steepness of the gradient needs to be taken into consideration. The trail is very clearly marked and maps are available from tourist offices. Allow about six hours for the ascent and return.







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NASA

SELECTED ON-LINE WEATHER SOURCES

"Red sky at night..." When was the last time you simply looked at the sky to forecast the next day's weather? For that matter, when was the last time you even tapped a barometer? Yet weather prediction occupies a large part of sailors' attention.

According to Wikipedia, it was not until the invention of the electric telegraph in 1835 that the modern age of weather forecasting began. Before this time, it was not widely practicable to transport information about the current state of the weather any faster than a steam train. By the late 1840s, the telegraph allowed reports of weather conditions from a wide area to be received almost instantaneously, allowing forecasts to be made from knowledge of weather conditions farther upwind. In the United States, the first public radio forecasts were made in 1925; television forecasts followed in Cincinnati in 1940 or 1947. The Weather Channel is a 24-hour cable network that began broadcasting in 1982, and cruisers have been known to cluster around Caribbean beach-bars during hurricane season as much for the TV as for the beer.


Long Distance Weather Forecasts Now Made By Machine

COMPLICATED weather forecasting computations can now be calculated automatically on the marvelously intricate machine shown at the left, the invention of Dr. Charles G. Abbot, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. With it he expects to calculate such things as variations in solar radiation to determine if they occur in cycles, and thus to lay the foundation for predicting what our weather will be ten or twenty years ahead. The new invention is similar to conventional calculating machines, except that it is designed for a particular use.

MODERN MECHANICS

This intricate mathematical calculating machine shown in photo above was designed for studying facts of solar radiation which may lead to long distance weather forecasts.

An article from Modern Mechanics *magazine, 1932*

The technology used to disseminate weather forecasts is continually evolving. Although it's been a long time since people tried seriously to predict the weather by examining onion skins or seeing whether or not the groundhog went back in his hole, it has also been a while since mariners routinely listened to good old WWV radio for marine storm warnings (Atlantic high seas warnings are still broadcast by WWV at eight and nine minutes after the hour on 2.5, 5, 10, 15 and 20 Mhz), because they no longer need WWV's "time ticks" to ensure the timing accuracy of sextant sights. The use of once-popular weatherfax has to a great extent been replaced by GRIB files.

Although SSB radio weather forecasts are still indispensable, today, with WiFi so widely available in the Caribbean, increasing numbers of sailors get their weather information from on-line sources. Here we present a selection that various Caribbean cruisers have recommended. Most include satellite and/or radar images.

Caribbean National, Regional and Island Weather Websites

- Cuba Met Institute: www.met.inf.cu (in Spanish)
- Curaçao Met Department: www.meteo.an
- Dominican Republic Met Office: www.onamet.gov.do (in Spanish)
- French West Indies Weather: www.meteo.gp/ (in French)
- Martinique Weather Radar: www.meteo.fr/temps/domtom/antilles/pack-public/animation/animMOSAIC2.html (in French)
- SXM Cyclone/St. Martin: www.sxmcyclone.com (in French)
- Trinidad & Tobago Weather Radar: www.metoffice.gov.tt/radar
- US National Weather Service (for USVI and Puerto Rico): www.srh.noaa.gov/sju

International/General Weather Websites

- Desperate Sailors: https://www.desperatesailors.com/page/weather/carib_sxm
- NOAA's Environmental Visualization Laboratory: www.nnvl.noaa.gov (great satellite images, animations and more visual storm stuff)
- PassageWeather: http://passageweather.com (provides seven-day wind, wave and weather forecasts to help sailors with passage planning and weather routing)
- Weather Underground: www.wunderground.com/tropical

Commercial Marine Weather Service Websites

- Buoyweather: www.buoyweather.com (supplies free two-day forecasts in addition to paid-for custom forecasts)
- Chris Parker's Marine Weather Center: www.mwxc.com (paid-for custom forecasts)
- Crown Weather Services: www.crownweather.com (provides a good Tropical Weather page in addition to paid-for custom forecasts)
- Storm Pulse: www.stormpulse.com (paid-for custom forecasts)

Hurricane Information Websites

- Caribbean Hurricane Network: www.stormcarib.com
- US National Hurricane Center: www.nhc.noaa.gov

In addition, surf and swell forecasts (great for those "iffy" anchorages) are provided at http://magicseaweed.com.

Finally, this www.tropicalwx.com includes a comprehensive list of other Caribbean weather sources, and www.docksideradio.com/east_coast.htm has a list of Caribbean and East Coast ham and SSB nets, including weather nets.

Did we miss anything? Send us your favorites!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2014

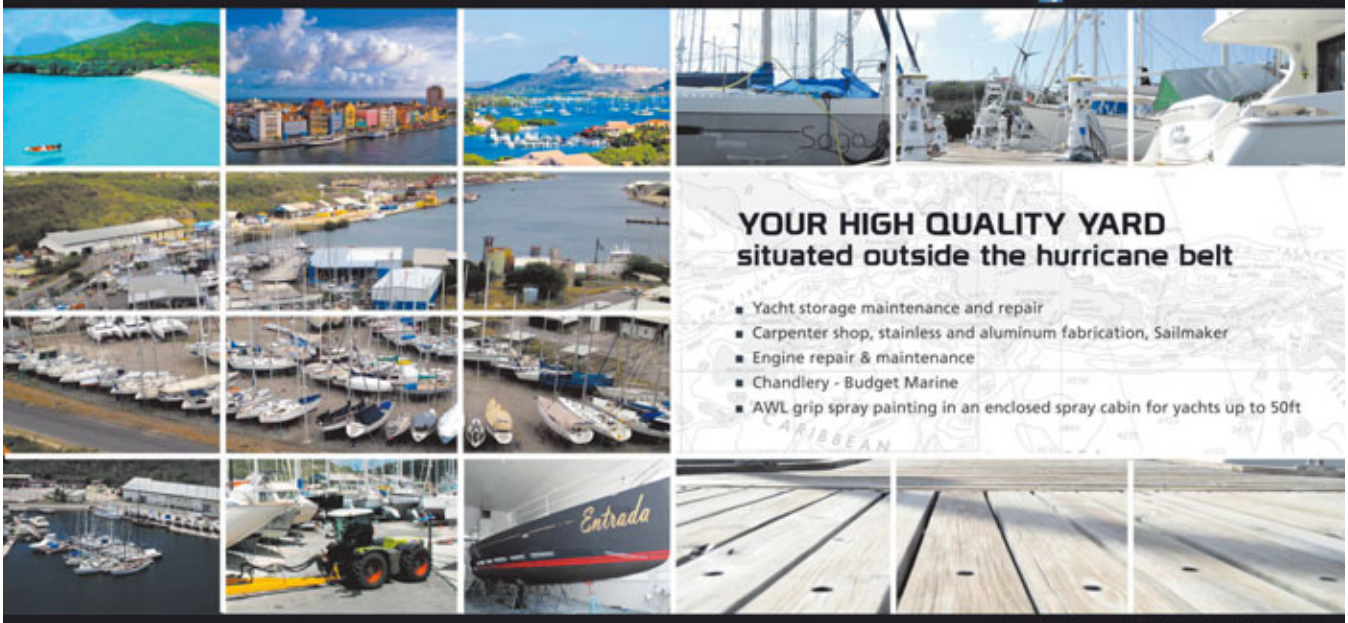
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CARIB Tails
An International Citizen Science Project for Yachters

by Nathalie Ward



WHALE AND DOLPHIN CONSERVATION

THE sea is slate-colored, smooth as asphalt. The wind isn't howling, but speaking in a firm voice — a day like so many in the blue latitudes, perfect and unending. I'm on deck, barely awake, as I slowly take in the sense that my horizon is suddenly changing shape.

A humpback whale bursts through the surface like a locomotive from a tunnel. Some 100 yards from the boat, plumes of mist erupt from the sea, but it's the harshness of its breathing — those explosive chuffs — that startles me most.

Anyone who sees a humpback is impressed by its enormity and grace. The size of a city bus, it rises from the sea firing vaporous plumes from its blowholes, and then slowly rolls into the depths, exposing a tiny dorsal fin on top of a small hump. A parting view may be a pair of 15-foot-wide tail flukes raised over the water like the outstretched wings of a massive seabird.

Celebrated by Herman Melville as the most "gamesome" of the great whales, theirs is a leisure society that predates ours by some 50 million years. Besides looking for food and feeding in northern latitudes, humpbacks spend their time in the winter months in the warm, tropical seas of the Caribbean, swimming, cavorting, conversing, wooing the opposite sex and giving birth and nursing their young.

A Sanctuary Concern: Protection Beyond Borders

Within the animal kingdom, the humpback whale makes one of the longest migrations of any animal. They are international citizens, acknowledging no sovereignty but their own, traveling through international waters of the North Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea without a passport.

The US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, within the Gulf of Maine, protects a shared population of almost 1,000 humpback whales that return from their tropical breeding grounds with new calves each spring. This population shows a slowed recovery rate as human impacts such as entanglement in fishing gear and vessel strikes contribute to mortality throughout their migratory path.

In 2007, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary created the Sister Sanctuary Program to develop strategic, science-based "sister sanctuary relationships" with other marine mammal sanctuaries in Bermuda, the Dominican Republic and French and Dutch Antilles to ensure the protection of humpback whales outside of US borders, with specific focus on international breeding and mating grounds in the Caribbean and along migration corridors.

What a Tail Can Tell: Photo-Identification

Knowing the identity of individual whales can be of critical importance to researchers. Photo-identification is a technique that enables scientists to identify an individual whale anywhere it may travel throughout its life by comparing black and white pigmentation patterns on the underside (or ventral portion) of the flukes, the two wings of the tail. These markings include both natural pigmentation and scars.

Using photo-identification techniques to help monitor the recovery of this endangered species, CARIB Tails is enlisting yachters as citizen scientists to help track the movements of humpback whales between their North Atlantic feeding grounds and their breeding grounds in the Wider Caribbean Region. The project is an international research collaboration between NOAA's Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, UNEP's Caribbean Environment Programme's Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife's Programme, and our conservation partners.

Since the early 1970s, humpback whales in Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary and elsewhere in the Gulf of Maine have been catalogued, not only with formal identification numbers, but also with names. By cataloguing individual humpback whales, scientists can monitor individual animals and gather valuable information about population sizes and migration patterns.

Individual humpback whales are identified by the black and white patterns on the underside of their (tail) flukes. When humpbacks dive, they often raise their flukes above the water's surface and provide researchers the opportunity to photograph the markings on the underside. Natural markings captured this way have allowed researchers to monitor the movements, health and behavior of individual humpbacks since this research began in the 1970s.

The FLUKE Catalogue: The How and Why

When new photographs of humpback tail flukes are received, they are matched against the photographs in the existing North Atlantic Humpback Whale Catalogue, which has been maintained since 1976 by Allied Whale at the College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor, Maine. Information about each whale sighting (such as date, time, location) is kept in a database. Using these kinds of data, it has been possible to learn that humpbacks mature at no earlier than four years of age, may have calves every two years, travel to the Caribbean in winter to mate and give birth, and appear to return to the same northern feeding area each summer.

The catalogue contains fluke photographs of more than 7,000 individual humpback whales. It is the result of collaboration between scientists, naturalists, citizen scientists and tourists who have contributed photographs of humpbacks from regions including North America, Norway, Iceland, Greenland and the Caribbean. Information gained from the Catalogue helps advance understanding of marine mammal conservation and habitat protection, raise public awareness, and motivate marine mammal conservation action and stewardship.

"Salt", also known as the "Grande Dame" of the Sister Sanctuary Program, has been seen on Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary every summer except one since 1976. She is also the first Gulf of Maine humpback whale to have been seen by researchers on Silver Bank off the Dominican Republic. Her sighting confirmed the north-south migration route of humpback whales.

Wanted: Your Help to Track Humpback Whale Migration and Your Photographs of Humpback Flukes

For more information about how you can participate in CARIB Tails, please visit the website www.caribtails.org. Thank you!

Nathalie Ward, PhD, works with the US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary



NATHALIE WARD/NOAA





Flukeprints are the 'fingerprints' of whale identification. By cataloguing individual humpback whales, scientists can monitor individual animals and gather valuable information about population sizes and migration patterns. Your photos can help!

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LIFT IT OR LOSE IT

Hoisting Your Dinghy Out for the Night

by Tor Pinney

These days dinghy theft is a fact of life in many Caribbean harbors. In parts of Latin America it's positively rampant. Whether the thieves are poor, moonlighting fishermen or regular professionals, they're mainly after the outboard motors, which are easy to resell for big bucks. Stolen dinghies are occasionally found a day or two later, engineless, adrift or ashore. Still, someone might just swipe a dink without a motor if it's an easy mark.

Dinghies sometimes disappear from docks in broad daylight. Locking yours to something solid every time whether or not others are doing it, ideally with chain rather than cable, is the best deterrent. Be sure to also lock the gas tank and especially the outboard.

Most stolen dinks disappear from anchorages late at night. It's better to lock your dinghy astern at the end of the day than not, but the professional thieves have cable cutters. Stainless steel chain is the most cut-resistant tether, but even that is not an absolute guarantee that your dink will still be there in the morning. That's why prudent cruisers lift their dinghies out of the water overnight in all but the most historically secure ports. In some places it's not even an option. You either lift it or you lose it, period. It's inconvenient, but much



less so than having to replace a dinghy and outboard.

There are several ways to raise a dinghy for the night, with variations ad infinitum. It's worthwhile figuring out in advance what works best for you, since some arrangements call for a bit of customization and experimentation. Most importantly, the process needs to be as quick and easy as possible so that you're never tempted to let it slide — because that may well be the night dinghy thieves single you out.

Obviously, if your boat is equipped with sturdy davits you're all set — as long as you use them every night. Alternatively, some sailors simply hoist their tenders onto the foredeck with a halyard. This necessitates removing and stowing the outboard and then re-deploying it in the morning, an onerous chore to repeat seven times a week, especially if the motor is larger than a few horsepower. That's why most skippers prefer to lift the dinghy and motor together alongside their vessel.

You can hoist the tender alongside a sailboat with a halyard, or with the main boom and sheet. Either way you'll first need to purchase or devise a three- or four-point lifting harness and the means for attaching it to the dinghy. This harness can be made up from strong lines, webbing, or stainless steel cables radiating from a beefy central, vertical lifting loop or ring. The harness needs two attachment points aft, spread well apart. These are typically on the transom — through-bolted eyebolts or pad-eyes work well — but straps that encircle an inflatable's pontoons aft will also serve. Then you'll need at least one harness connection forward. Some larger, hard-bottom inflatables come with forward lifting rings in the sole. If your dinghy's sole won't support these, then use the port and starboard (or the midship) towing rings on the bow. Wide webbing will spread the stress and chafe across the pontoons better than cable or line. Alternatively you can make up a broad lifting strap that passes entirely beneath the dinghy's bow section.

However you accomplish the attachments, the key is to position the harness' lift ring so the raised dinghy sits level athwartships, but with the bow slightly higher than the stern to encourage rainwater to run out through the transom drain. If there is no drain at the center base of your dink's transom, you'll need to install one. Otherwise an overnight deluge can fill it,

There are as many ways to hoist a dinghy as there are to skin the proverbial cat. Experiment until you find a method that you'll use regularly

adding hundreds of pounds to its weight — a quick way to find the weakest link in your hoisting system. Even an empty dinghy and outboard motor will put a lot of strain on the hoisting gear, so be sure that all the components — blocks, straps, lines, lashings and attachment points — are oversized and extra strong.

Finding the optimum position for the central lift ring takes some experimentation, so your harness lines have to be adjustable at least in the beginning. Because the weight of an outboard motor naturally makes the dinghy very stern-heavy, the lifting point needs to be well aft of center to compensate. If you're using a direct halyard (as opposed to a boom crane), it will lift the dink from a slight angle, not straight up. In that case the lifting ring must be offset athwartships over the dinghy, towards the mother ship a couple of inches. Set up what seems about right, lift your dinghy enough to clear the water, and look at how it sits. If the stern hangs dramatically lower than the bow, lower the boat and reposition the lift ring a little farther aft by adjusting the harness lines. If it hoists bow down, shift the ring forward. Make small adjustments. You'll be surprised what a difference in balance it makes just moving the ring an inch or two.

To use your boom to raise the dinghy, swing it out more or less perpendicular to the vessel and secure it there with guys fore and aft. Be sure the topping lift is strong and adjusted so that the boom is angled up a bit, ideally bisecting the angle between the vertical lift and the masthead. Once the dinghy is raised, reposition the boom inboard just enough so the dinghy rests gently against hull fenders, stanchions or shrouds to brace it against swinging in a chop or wake. Alternatively you can rig bow, stern and spring lines.

It's handy to use the mainsheet to hoist the dink via the boom since it's often already run through multi-purchase blocks to a stout winch. If you put a snap shackle on the sheet's base block you'll be able to transfer it quickly between its usual deck fitting and the dinghy harness lift ring. Note that if the mainsheet is normally positioned well forward of the boom's after end, then the weight of a dinghy and motor may cause undue flexing or bending of that spar. Alleviate this by temporarily moving the topping lift to the same position on the boom — a simple lift strap around the boom will be useful here — or by moving the sheet block aft so the two forces are in opposition.

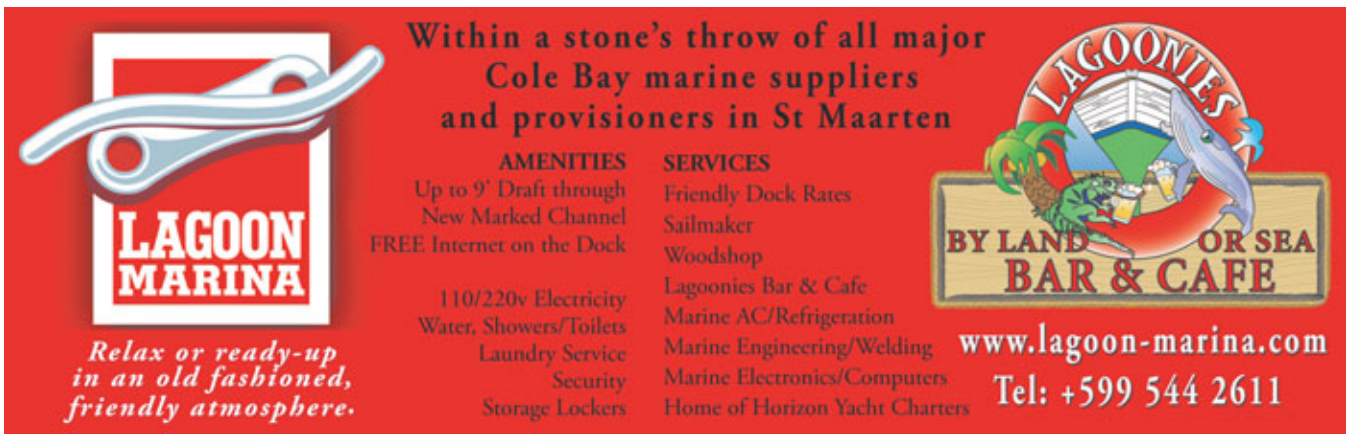
If your boat is equipped with an electric windlass or a large power winch, or even a big genoa sheet winch, consider leading the hoist line, whether mainsheet or halyard, to it using one or two heavy-duty snatch blocks secured to strong deck fittings. Raising a full-size dinghy and motor with an undersized winch is hard work!



A boom hoist will hold the dinghy away from the mother ship, but if you're lifting with a halyard the tender will rise up hard against the vessel's topsides. Protect the finish by removing the dink's inboard oar and/or any fittings that might scrape, and by hanging a mat or a couple of small fenders against chafe. Then secure the dink's painter snugly to the nearest cleat forward. Otherwise a blustery squall might lift its bow precariously. Finally, lead the dinghy's cable or chain to a deck fitting and padlock it.

Once you've worked out a quick and easy system for lifting and locking your dinghy, it becomes an end-of-the-day routine that pays a big dividend. As a fringe benefit it deters bottom growth, but mainly you'll sleep better knowing your precious tender will still be there in the morning.

Writer/photographer, marine industry consultant and lifelong cruising sailor Tor Pinney (www.tor.cc) has logged about 150,000 nautical miles under sail. His articles appear in boating magazines worldwide and his authoritative book, Ready for Sea! - How to Outfit the Modern Cruising Sailboat *(Sheridan House), is available in nautical bookstores and online. Tor is presently revisiting the Caribbean aboard his 42-foot ketch,* Silverheels.





JANUARY 2014

♈ ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)
Inspiration will sail into your harbor around the 8th, so concentrate on its positive energy and don't let backed sails in your love life put your imagination in irons. Progress may need many tacks, but it will be worth it.

♉ TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)
While romance is in a lull, not having that distraction will help your creative projects. There might be some rough seas in business around the third week but you will learn from them and ultimately sail out ahead.

♊ GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)
The second and third weeks are good for working on projects aboard, organizing and clearing the decks to get everything in balance so you are prepared for opportunities coming your way soon.

CANCER ♋ (22 Jun - 23 Jul)
Your sense of humor will be the steady hand on the helm while fluky winds and choppy seas in romance do their best to distract you. Keep the helm on a course for business matters and you will come through into clear skies and calm waters.

♌ LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)
A great idea will step aboard in the second week but it will take self-discipline for you to act on it by the third week. Steer towards your dreams and don't let contrary currents in business hold you back.

♍ VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)
This is a good time to set a creative course. Use your verbal skills to bring new winds into those slack romantic sails.

♎ LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)
Mars is in your sign from the 11th through the 23rd, so make as much way as possible in business at this time and don't let luffing sails in romance deter you.

♏ SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)
Your sense of fun will be of great assistance in sailing you toward your financial goals, especially in the third week, and will bring big payoffs over the horizon.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)
You archers are relatively aspect free this month, so keep those arrows flying and some are bound to land in good places.

♑ CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)
Use good humor to smooth any lumpy seas in your love life. Creative verbal skills will also still roiled waters, but that aspect will sail away after the 12th, so give it your best effort before then.

♒ AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)
Use renewed energy in the second week to make way in ingenious projects involving wordplay. Don't fret if business or financial projects are in the doldrums; it's only temporary.

♓ PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)
Your friendliness and sense of humor will be the steadying wind on your business or financial course this month, especially in the third week. Keep a positive attitude and you will sail toward a beneficial result.

Grooving with Noodles

Island Poets

Early in the morning just after the Net
Hog Island is invaded by a strange new set;
Dinghies are a-moving, collecting here and there
Bathing-suited bodies armed with colourful gear.

It's the monster noodle get-fit gang, gathering around:
Lots of gals, some game guys, the odd kid or hound.
We don't have to sweat and climb up any hills,
Pump iron at the gym, rely on lots of pills


TRUDY MARSHALL

While we cycle, push away, salute the sun,
We're smiling and chatting and having fun,
Sharing advice on how and where to cruise,
Encouraging each other with comments that amuse.

Instructions in English, French or Spanish —
We'll all be trilingual before we finish!
It does not matter come rain or storm;
Being thoroughly wet is quite the norm.

To the lazy, hung over and much-too-macho guys:
Pump it up with a noodle and find to your surprise
Muscles where muscles never used to be;
Toned body and happy heart never came so easily!

— Ruth Lund

parlumps marooned





Sharks: What's In a Name?

Every recognized species on earth (at least in theory) is given a unique two-part scientific name. Scientific names are usually made up of Latin or Greek words, prefixes and suffixes, that often describe the appearance or behavior of the animal. The names also tell something about the animal's relationship to other animals and may name people who were instrumental in the discovery of the animal or contain references to regions where the species are found.

Sharks are often classified according to their diet, body type, and their preferred climate. For example, *Carcharhinus melanopterus* is made up of the following prefixes and suffixes:

Carch means sharp; *Rhin* means nose; *Melan* means dark or black; *Pter* means fin or wing.

So, *Carcharhinus* is an animal with a sharp nose and *melanopterus* means an animal with dark or black fins. Sometimes, as is the case with *Carcharhinus melanopterus*, an animal's scientific name is related to its common name: blacktip reef shark.

The science of processing and naming living organisms is taxonomy. Most taxonomists agree that classification ought to reflect what we know about how organisms are related to each other. But what we know is constantly changing as new evidence becomes available. Like all human undertakings, there are controversies over what exactly we do know. There is no single correct classification, just classifications that are currently accepted by most systematists.

Common Names Can Be Misleading

Unlike scientific names, common names are not unique. Common names used for the blacktip shark include blackfin shark, blacktip whaler, common or small blacktip shark, grey shark, and spotfin ground shark. Using various common names for the same species or the same name for different species can result in confusion when discussing an individual organism. As a result, scientists use scientific names when they refer to living things.

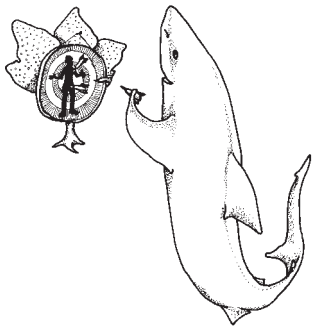
Mythical Monsters?

The popular image of sharks is that they are mysterious, terrifying, and cold-blooded.

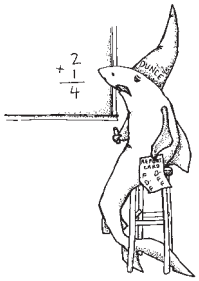
Yet the reality of the lives and behaviors of these creatures is almost the exact opposite of the myths that are told about them. Check out the myths. What is fact? And what is fiction?

• Most sharks are harmful to people. UNTRUE!

Contrary to popular belief, only a few sharks are dangerous to humans. Out of more than 350 shark species, only four have been involved in a significant number of fatal, unprovoked attacks on humans: the great white, oceanic whitetip, tiger, and bull sharks. Of all shark species, about 80 percent grow to less than 1.6 metres and are unable to hurt people or rarely encounter people. Every year around 100 shark attacks are reported worldwide. This number is far lower than the number of people killed each year by elephants, bees, crocodiles, lightning or many other natural dangers.



Caution is advised, however. In addition to the four species responsible for a significant number of fatal attacks on humans, a number of other species have attacked humans without being provoked, and have on extremely rare occasions been responsible for a human death. This group includes the shortfin mako, hammerhead, Galapagos, gray reef, blacktip reef, lemon, silky, and blue sharks. These sharks are also large, powerful predators, which can be provoked simply by a person being in the water at the wrong time and place, but they are normally considered less dangerous to humans than the previous group. On the other hand, we kill somewhere between 20 million and 100 million sharks every year through fishing activities.





• Sharks' brains are the size of peanuts and they are incapable of learning. WRONG!

Sharks' relatively large and complex brains are comparable in size to those of supposedly more advanced animals like mammals and birds. Sharks can even be trained to WINK, among other things!



• Sharks prefer human blood. PREPOSTEROUS!

Most sharks don't appear to be especially interested in the blood of mammals as opposed to fish blood. Most sharks prefer to eat certain types of invertebrates, fish and other animals. Some sharks even eat microscopic plants and animals (plankton).

• Sharks eat continuously. NOT!

Sharks eat periodically depending upon their dietary requirements and the availability of food.

Shark Word Search Puzzle

When is a whale not a whale? A tiger not a tiger? And a bull not a bull? When they are sharks, of course! Search for the 13 sharks listed below. Look across, down, diagonally and backwards. Some are BITING others!

SHARK Search

Z	D	C	A	M	W	S	L	B	T	Q	G
D	R	W	D	V	A	E	L	I	G	C	N
E	A	R	C	S	M	U	G	B	U	L	L
P	P	E	E	O	E	E	I	E	T	P	J
P	O	C	N	H	R	C	G	L	V	R	J
I	E	V	F	U	S	Y	I	A	Y	I	D
T	L	H	A	M	M	E	R	H	E	A	D
E	L	A	G	X	M	R	R	W	B	N	C
T	O	D	U	A	E	B	U	H	Q	I	V
I	C	M	K	E	Z	C	O	D	T	I	S
H	U	O	F	S	I	L	K	Y	D	E	R
W	D	E	P	P	I	T	K	C	A	L	B

BLACKTIPPED WHITETIPPED
BLUE
BULL
HAMMERHEAD
LEMON
LEOPARD
MAKO
REEF
SILKY
THRESHER
TIGER
WHALE

— *See Salty's Answers on page 41*



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STORMY CROSSING

by S. Brian Samuel

In 1941, the depths of the Second World War, 19-year-old Darwin Samuel, my father, left the safe shores of Grenada on a troop ship, bound for Britain. He nearly never got there.

In November 1941, a British troopship sailed into beautiful St. George's Harbour in Grenada. As usual with any visiting British naval vessel, there was much pomp and ceremony with the Administrator of Grenada, Charles Henry Vincent Talbot, resplendent in his feathered hat and ceremonial sword (Grenada was too small to warrant a full Governor). The next day, thousands of leaflets were distributed all across Grenada, announcing the purpose of this troopship's visit: men.

In the early days of the Second World War, coloured chaps from the colonies weren't exactly welcomed into the British armed forces. War or no war, racial superiority had to be maintained. On the application form you had to answer the question: "Are you of pure European stock?" Later on, when all their pure European stock was being annihilated by the Nazis, the British turned a blind eye to that question — anyone would do. But even then, most black soldiers found themselves restricted to support roles like logistics, while white soldiers got on with the real business of fighting.

But Britain needed men — of any colour — to build the bombs and tanks needed to defeat Hitler. So Whitehall decided to tap its colonies for manpower. Young men from the colonies were offered inducements to go and work in the British armaments industry: free technical training, a guaranteed job, and the possibility of a scholarship after the war was won. Not a promise, a possibility, and in those dark days there was no certainty that Britain would win the War in any case. That was good enough for Darwin — it was a chance. He figured that if he put in enough service during the War, after it was all over he would be able to pursue his dream: law.

In the colonial Caribbean of the 1930s, law and medicine — the professions — were the only guaranteed means of advancement, if you happened to be born black. Business and commerce were the sole preserve of the brown middle class. Blacks had no place in business, other than to take orders and load trucks. The colonial civil service also offered opportunities, but again, all the senior positions were filled by British civil servants or local whites.

But the legal profession, now that was where a man of any colour could make a name for himself — and a living. With a law practice you weren't beholden to anyone, you could put up your shingle anywhere and people would come. Lawyers are like undertakers: you may not like them but at one point or another we all need one.

Despite all Darwin's arguments, his father, Nathan Dennis ("ND") Samuel, wasn't impressed. ND took the view that if his son wasn't good enough for the British Army, then why should he go and work in their factories and risk getting bombed? Because, reasoned Darwin, those factories are *away from here*. And besides, it was England, the home of culture and learning. ND gave up, knowing you can't stop a young man when he's made up his mind. Darwin signed up.

Regardless of the opportunities awaiting him in England, first of all Darwin had to get there. In 1941, nowhere was safe from the German U-boat menace; even in the faraway West Indies, the War in Europe was being waged on and under the placid Caribbean Sea, with deadly consequences. U-boats would routinely sink British merchant shipping carrying strategic cargoes from South America to



Darwin was heading off into an uncertain future... away from here

Britain, sometimes within sight of the islands or even in their harbours. Even the wooden inter-island schooners were not safe; many West Indian sailors and passengers lost their lives. Our father used to tell us that late at night, all the way up in the hills of Perdmontemps, they would hear the U-boats re-charging their batteries as they surfaced in the deserted bays of eastern Grenada. It was even rumoured that German sailors would occasionally come ashore, seeking the delights of fresh food and female company.

As the troopship sailed northwards and Grenada's lush mountains slowly receded over the horizon, young Darwin could not have helped but feel butterflies — whether from seasickness, U-boats or otherwise. He was heading off into an uncertain future, to a foreign war-torn land, with no family or friends to greet him — at the tender age of 19. Those were different times; young people grew up more quickly then. Here was the one opportunity that presented itself, and our father grabbed it with both hands. He could not depend on his father for a livelihood; a young man was duty-bound to leave home and make his own way in the world — or die trying.

The ship left Grenada and sailed northwest, stopping at other islands and picking up like-minded young men at every port. All the passengers shared a common purpose and the mood of the boat heightened as it gathered momentum, island to island. Until they reached Jamaica — then the trouble started! The Jamaicans immediately started complaining: they didn't like the sleeping arrangements, why couldn't they have the comfortable berths occupied by them small islanders? Blame geography, replied those same pissed-off small islanders. The reply of the ship's officers was more succinct: sling your hook, below decks! Even after they sailed from Jamaica, the Jamaicans were still causing trouble, and in any conflict they were quick to pull out their weapon of choice: an Okapi ratchet knife, otherwise known as a Saturday night special.

After Jamaica the ship headed for New York. The ship left the sheltered waters of the Caribbean and headed into the Atlantic Ocean — in winter. As the ship headed northwards the temperature steadily dropped, increasingly traumatizing the ship's thin-blooded passengers. The mid-Atlantic in mid-winter is *not* the best place to have your first experience of cold weather. By the time the ship docked in a freezing cold New York, none of its passengers could be seen on deck to take in the breath-taking sights on display — except for one Darwin Samuel, huddled under dozens of blankets; he wasn't going to miss out on this!

He wrote on the back of a postcard: "Sailing into New York Harbor, under the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, past the Statue of Liberty, docking at the Hudson River Terminal in Manhattan's West Side with the Empire State Building looming overhead: unforgettable!"

The ship stayed in New York just a few days, enough time for the Caribbean contingent, travelling in groups for safety, to taste the pleasures of the greatest city in the world, the city that never sleeps. He told us of going to the world famous Apollo Theater, home of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1930s, and not understanding a word of what the Harlem "hep cats" were saying to him!

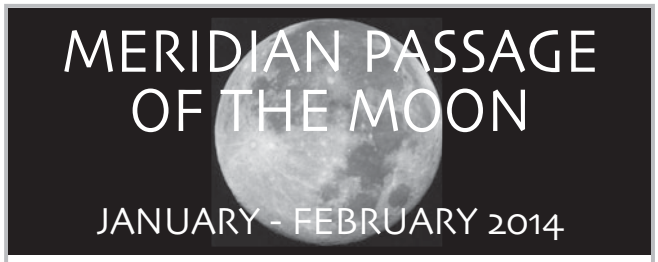
The officers took one look at the cabin occupied by Darwin and four other Grenadians and immediately claimed it for themselves. It was a comfortable cabin built onto the deck of the ship, with portholes on all four sides, plenty of ventilation and natural lighting. Dad and his Grenadian friends were told clearly by the ship's captain: sling your hook, below decks! If they wanted it officially: your berth has now, by order of His Majesty's Navy, officially been commandeered — *now* sling your hook! Dad protested but of course to no avail; he and his Grenadian shipmates had to go below decks and seek out whatever rough berths they could find — behind the Jamaicans. But God has a funny way with revenge.

In the middle of the Atlantic, the convoy ran into one of the feared mid-winter storms. As 60-foot waves smashed down onto the ship, all souls on board were battened down and tied to their bunks, praying with all their might that with each roll of the ship under tons of cascading water, the old girl would slowly right herself and continue head first into the next monster wave. Plus of course the perennial wartime sailor's prayer: that the next torpedo would hit another ship, not theirs!

The following morning our shell-shocked, seasick sailors gingerly emerged from below decks to survey the damage. They found to their horror that the storm had ripped away everything not firmly affixed to the ship — including our father's ex-cabin and all its British occupants, none of whom were ever seen again.

The meek shall indeed inherit the berth!

Excerpted from the forthcoming book The White Knight Box *by S. Brian Samuel.*



Crossing the channels between Caribbean islands with a favorable tide will make your passage faster and more comfortable. The table below, courtesy Don Street, author of Street's Guides and compiler of Imray-Iolaire charts, which shows the time of the meridian passage (or zenith) of the moon for this AND next month, will help you calculate the tides.

Water, Don explains, generally tries to run toward the moon. The tide starts running to the east soon after moonrise, continues to run east until about an hour after the moon reaches its zenith (see TIME below) and then runs westward. From just after the moon's setting to just after its nadir, the tide runs eastward; and from just after its nadir to soon after its rising, the tide runs westward; i.e. the tide floods from west to east. Times given are local.

Note: the maximum tide is 3 or 4 days after the new and full moons.

For more information, see "Tides and Currents" on the back of all Imray Iolaire charts. Fair tides!

January 2014

DATE	TIME
1	1204
2	1306
3	1405
4	1501
5	1554
6	1644
7	1733
8	1821
9	1904
10	1957
11	2046
12	2134
13	2222
14	2310
15	2357
16	0000 (full moon)
17	0042
18	0126
19	0210
20	0253
21	0336
22	0420
23	0506
24	0555
25	0627
26	0742
27	0841
28	0942
29	1044
30	1144 (new moon)
31	1243

February 2014

1	1339
2	1433
3	1524
4	1615
5	1704
6	1753
7	1848
8	1931
9	2019
10	2107
11	2154
12	2240
13	2324
14	0000 (full moon)
15	0008
16	0052
17	0135
18	0220
19	0305
20	0352
21	0442
22	0535
23	0630
24	0728
25	0827
26	0926
27	1024
28	1121

FRENCH NAVY Brings Dugout Canoe to Bequia

by Pat Mitchell

The logistics of getting a 35-foot replica Amerindian dugout canoe from Martinique to Bequia were daunting. Towing it would have demolished it. No hardy soul volunteered to paddle it, even from among the trustees of the Bequia Heritage Foundation who were hoping to install it in the new Bequia Boat Museum at Friendship Bay.

But the canoe was needed, partly to show how Bequia's first inhabitants reached our shores, which we know they did from extensive pottery finds, and partly to illustrate the vast difference between the hollowed-out-log style canoe and the more recent sprit-sailed double-enders that have reigned on the island from the time the American whaling ships plied these waters and some enterprising Bequia men purchased a couple of the mother ship's tenders. This two–bowed design proved brilliantly maneuverable in local waters, and was useful not just for whaling but for the important fishing industry which kept Bequians alive in the lean years of the late 19th century and well into the 20th century.



WILFRED DEDERER

The dugout Couloura *arrives at the shore, destined for the Bequia Boat Museum*

So how to get this canoe the hundred miles or so to from Martinique to Bequia?

The Honorary French Consul in St. Vincent, Dr. François Truchot, and Louise Mitchell Joseph, chairperson of the St. Vincent & the Grenadines National Trust, came up with the daring idea of requesting the assistance of the French Navy. On November 14th a French frigate anchored in Admiralty Bay. The dugout canoe, *Couloura*, was towed by rubber dinghy to the waiting crowd under the Almond Tree, which included the ambassador of France to the OECS, His Excellency Eric de la Moussaye, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of St. Vincent & the Grenadines, The Hon. Camillo Gonsalves, as well as the former Prime Minister, Sir James Mitchell, and the representative for the Northern Grenadines, Dr. Godwin Friday, and some rather nervous trustees of the Bequia Heritage Foundation — the horror of the canoe sinking on the way ashore must have been in a few minds. But of course the French Navy delivered it safely into the hands of local youths from the Bequia Traditional Sailing Academy, resplendent in their light green shirts, who lifted the canoe onto the waiting trailer for the trip across island to St. Hillary Point on the easterly side of Friendship Bay.

The French ambassador spoke of how the water can divide but also how it conjoins our Caribbean islands. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of SVG pointed out that historically it was canoes similar to the *Couloura* that brought ashore the survivors of a slave ship that sank off Bequia in the late 17th century. These unusually freed Africans were taken to the mainland and became known as the Garifuna. The Minister urged all Vincentians to visit the new museum.



CORNELIA BREWER

The whaleboat Dart, *en route to the museum many months ago*

After the canoe was safely installed between the whaleboat *Dart* and blackfish boat *Faith*, the chairman of the Bequia Heritage Foundation and Deputy Director of Grenadines Affairs, Herman Belmar, spoke about the museum's displays that, he pointed out, highlight Bequia's two longstanding and historically important activities — boatbuilding and whaling. A list of over 60 ships built in Bequia, mostly sloops and schooners, is one of the exhibits.

Louise Mitchell Joseph of the National Trust described the combined effort that brought the canoe to Bequia. Pat Mitchell thanked the donors, all from the private sector, who were responsible for financing the museum building. Visitors at the reception admired architect Thomas Dehen's design of the structure, and studied with interest the informative printed signs that accompany each exhibit.

The trustees are aware that much work needs to be done to make the museum fully viable, but they agreed that, with the impetus resulting from the arrival of the canoe, and with the establishment of a coherent exhibit in place, the way forward is becoming clearer for Bequia's newest educational and historical experience.

To reach the Bequia Boat Museum at Friendship Bay from Admiralty Bay, take the main road westward out of Port Elizabeth and turn left when you reach the hilltop where you can first view Friendship Bay. Take this road in a southeasterly direction up behind the old Friendship Bay Hotel, and when it divides, take the road slightly dipping down towards the sea (but not to the sea) but then straight on northeasterly towards St. Hillary Point. If anchored in Friendship Bay, pull your dinghy up on the beach if surf permits, and proceed past the old Friendship Bay Hotel as above. Visitors should note that most of the displays at the museum can be appreciated even when the building is closed, thanks to the open gallery that surrounds three sides.

Hopefully new funding will allow more much-needed facilities to be built, as well as regular staffing. Donations from the general public and from organizations will be most gratefully received. Interested persons may contact Herman Belmar in the Bequia Administrative Offices, (784) 458-3510, or Pat Mitchell at the Gingerbread Hotel, (784) 458-3800.

Although the Bequia Boat Museum is a work in progress, readers of *Compass* should find it a worthwhile visit even now. Try to choose a clear day when the view from on high above Friendship Bay is spectacular.

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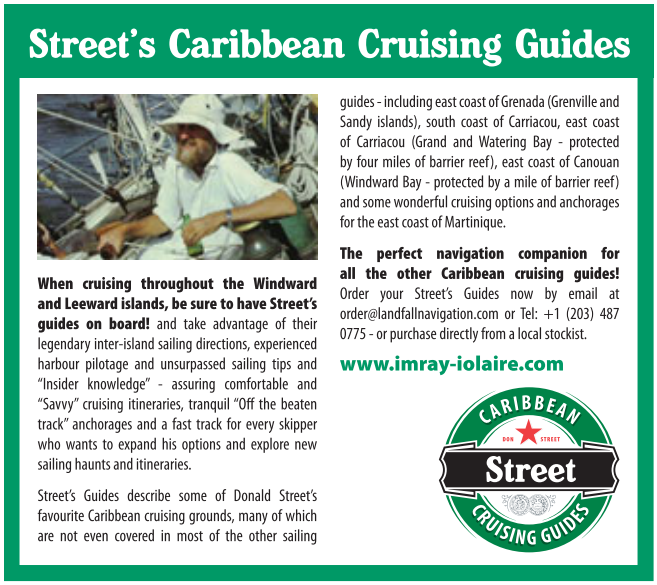
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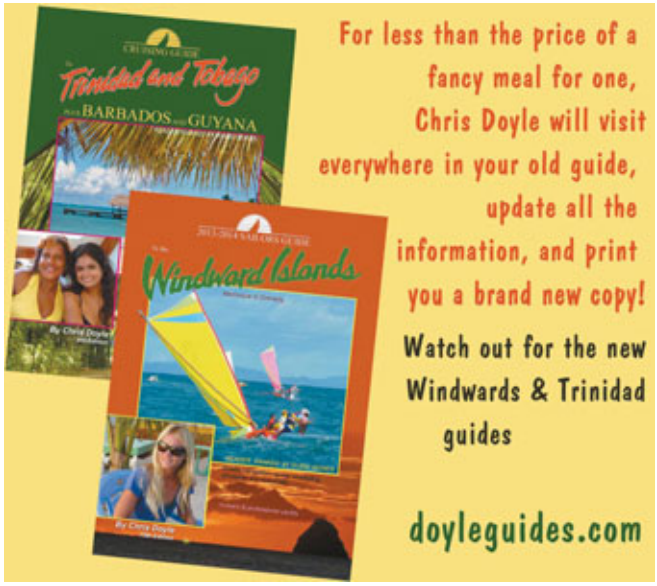


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BOOK REVIEW BY BOB BERLINGHOF

A Concise and Sweet Collection

***The Moon is Following Me**, by Cecil Browne, ©2009, Matador. Paperback, 123 pages, ISBN 978-1848762-794.*

These six short stories by Cecil Browne, a writer from St. Vincent, offer the reader a vivid reconstruction of small island village life in the 1960s and '70s. In the foreword, the author notes they are "nostalgic, not sentimental," and concludes, "These are 'real' people, individual, ambitious, mad, vengeful, naïve: they have universal appeal." Mr. Browne should be commended for his insightful summation of a concise and sweet collection.



The title story is set in Sans Souci School and is a bittersweet tale of first love. The town names throughout this collection may be confusing for Vincentians, but this is explained in the foreword: "I have taken liberties with the geography of the islands: the names of the villages were simply irresistible." By using real names, the stories resonate while still maintaining the aura of fiction because a village on the leeward side of the island may be adjacent to a windward town.

The protagonist, Chrissy Black, is so bored by his ordinary village that the teachers and happenings of the neighboring school seem exotic. "The only real excitement came from a stream that trickled past the school on its way through the banana field to the sea a mile away. During the rainy season the pupils prayed that it would overflow its bank and flood the crumbling concrete building. Once or twice a year their prayers would be answered and they would be sent home for three days until the schoolyard had been cleared of stones, mud, banana stalks and coconut branches, and the classrooms made ready for their return."

Chrissy's life is changed by the transfer of a pharmacist's daughter, Betty Laban, who is driven to school in a Land Rover. Betty has traveled all over the Caribbean and is friendly, very smart, attractive, and sophisticated. Chrissy is immediately jealous and resentful that all his mates fall for her. There is an undisclosed sexual undercurrent running between them which Chrissy rejects until the final scene when he is devastated to find out she is transferring out at the term's end. Betty tells him, "The medicine's not selling, she's losing money. She says it looks like people in SVG don't get sick." She tells Chrissy that she is his friend and it comes as a surprise to him. They part with the realization that life may pull them in different directions, but they actually meant a lot to each other and they will never forget it. The story seems to be a testament to that; it rings true to the reader.

"Take for Two" is the tale of Archie, a shy, self-sufficient, but lonely young man, and his attraction to Ruthlyn. Archie dreams of going to America to pick apples like his heroes, Fitzroy and Dennis, who always return with wallets full and stories of swashbuckling fun. The truth is very different, as Archie discovers, and when he returns he finds out that he has erred terribly by buying Ruthlyn an inappropriate present. To compound his error, she is pregnant with another man's child. In all his months of courtship, Archie had only received one kiss on the cheek. But Archie's resolve is strong and after three years of helping Ruthlyn and her baby, the story ends, "He had time, he was prepared to wait."

"Spanish Ladies" is the collection's only tale of tragedy and revenge, two undercurrents of village life that are recognizable as inescapable fact. "First, Second, First, Third" is about a woman's quest to form a local band, and a man's quest to court a much younger woman. The author skillfully weaves these two strands together, though the first half is by far more entertaining. The scene where the villagers audition for the band is my favorite in the entire book, as the variety of entertainers, some with homemade instruments like the wooden cylinder *baha*, are described with loving detail. The title of the story refers to the musician's chord pattern (1st, 5th, 1st, 7th) that the band uses for nearly every song. For variation they play it fast or slowly, or "mellow."

"Action Action" is the peculiar tale of a frigid, hardworking seamstress who is horrified that her husband is returning from England after 12 years, and that he might want to touch her. Caressing and hugging are revolting to her. In an improbable twist, she thaws out when she sees him in his uniform (as a guard on British Rail) and suggests that he should get a job locally as a policeman, fireman, or customs officer, something that will allow him to wear a crisp, new one.

The final story, "Taste for Freedom", was my favorite. Set just before and after Emancipation from Britain, it describes the poverty of slavery life and the hope of owning land from the eyes of 25-year-old Joel Morgan. Morgan leaves the estate after Emancipation and lives in the mountainous bush. He builds a bamboo shack and eats local fruit, which he sells to a nearby village on Sundays. One Sunday he discovers an interloper in his spot. "Walkback Charlie" challenges him to a duel of sorts: a "taste" whereby they each have to eat five different fruits and one "meat" the other has prepared, and not vomit! The conclusion is hilarious as the entire village turns out for the contest.

It is a fine line to walk separating nostalgia from over-sentimentality and cliché, but Mr. Browne's stories manage admirably and are highly recommended.

Available at Amazon.com and at bookstores in St. Vincent & the Grenadines.



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The Sky in January 2014

by Jim Ulik

The Holidays may be over but the night sky, during the first two weeks of January, may offer up a few gifts even with the demise of Comet ISON. What happened to ISON, the "Comet of the Century", as it passed the Sun? Did it leave behind a debris field of meteors? Many questions still remain.

For some, Armageddon will have to wait because Comet ISON couldn't survive the solar storm. All the "End of the Earth" prophecies that people attributed to Comet ISON will have to apply to the next comet that

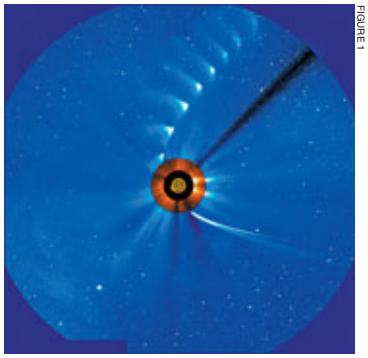


FIGURE 1

ISON's path as it rounded the Sun

travels through our solar system. There are at least 28 near-Earth objects in January alone! Well, the Earth didn't end so I suppose I need to resume paying those holiday bills? Wait, is Earth going to pass through ISON's debris field? For others, except scientists, the interest in the "Comet of the Century" will have to be postponed until another comet makes an appearance.

When ISON reached the Sun it was three miles wide and its atmosphere (coma) was the size of the United States. At that time ISON was traveling at 845,000 mph (1,359,895 km/h). After ISON rounded the Sun the comet broke apart and its speed reduced to 206,000 mph (331,516 km/h) and continues to slow.

Wednesday, January 1st - New Moon

The Moon will be directly between the Earth and the Sun. This phase occurs at 1114 UTC or 0714 hours AST*.

Thursday and Friday, January 2nd and 3rd - Quadrantids Meteor Shower

Between the evening of January 2nd and the pre-dawn sky of the 3rd will be the time to look for this meteor shower. The Moon will not obstruct viewing because it is going to set at 1924 hours. There could be up to 80 meteors per hour! Have a few cups of coffee and stay up or set the alarm for 0200 hours. Find Bootes in the northeast then look 90 degrees away from that constellation. That's where the brightest meteors will be because the meteors radiate out from Bootes.

Saturday, January 4th - The Earth at perihelion

The Earth reaches the point along its elliptical orbit that is closest to the Sun. It might be a good day to take in the sunrise because the Sun will appear larger in the sky. Sunrise is at 0631 hours and time of Earth's closest approach to the Sun (perihelion) is 0759 hours. The Earth will receive more radiation during this period because it is closer to the Sun. The southern oceans will absorb most of the extra radiation.

Sunday, January 5th – Jupiter at Opposition

Jupiter will be on the opposite side of the Earth from the Sun (opposition). Jupiter will also be at its closest approach to Earth and fully illuminated by the Sun. Grab a pair of binoculars, find Jupiter in the eastern sky and maybe you can spot one of Jupiter's Moons both above and below the planet.

Saturday, January 11th – Venus passes between the Earth and Sun

Well actually it will pass within five degrees of the Sun. The next transit of Venus won't occur until December 11th, 2117. Let's see, at *Mérengue's* average speed and if I set sail soon, I could almost make it to Tahiti in time for the event!

Also, over the next week Venus will make its transition from being an evening planet to a morning planet.

Sunday, January 12th - Comet ISON

This is the date the Earth was to travel through ISON's debris field. Scientists are continuing to study the remnants of ISON. Will there be a meteor shower? Stay tuned.

Tuesday, January 14th – Moon and Jupiter

The Moon and Jupiter are going to pair up tonight. The Moon will rise at 1656 hours and Jupiter will follow at 1711 hours, appearing slightly below and left of the Moon. Jupiter will still be at 100-percent illumination. Tomorrow they will go their separate ways again.

Wednesday, January 16th – Full "Wolf" Moon

It must be time for another Full Moon dinghy drift. Bring your drinks and maybe appetizers to share. The Moon reached its farthest point from Earth in its orbit on the 15th. So even though the Moon is full today it will appear slightly smaller and dimmer than usual. The January Full Moon is sometimes referred to as the "Wolf" Moon. It was named by Native Americans listening to the wolves howl outside of their villages at night.

Saturday, January 25th – The Moon and Saturn

Now the Moon and Saturn are on a rendezvous. They will be visible in the constellation of Libra after midnight. The Moonrise will be at 0105 hours and Saturn will make an appearance shortly after at 0122 hours.

Thursday, January 30th - New Moon.

This will be the second New Moon of the month. Well the second Full Moon is called a Blue Moon. Is anyone surprised that the second New Moon is called a Black Moon?

In conclusion, I would like to thank Scott Welty for bringing an interesting and informative column to the readers of *Caribbean Compass* over these many years. Unfortunately, Scott may not be able to enjoy the night skies he wrote about because of the amount of light pollution in his current residence of Chicago, Illinois. His viewing will have to be relegated to the Adler Planetarium. Or, Scott, how about Yerkes Observatory in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin?

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

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



FIGURE 2

The Quadrantids will appear to radiate outward from the constellation Bootes



FIGURE 3

Jupiter at 100-percent illumination and the position of its Moons at 1944 hours



FIGURE 4

Position of Jupiter and the Moon at 1900 hours



FIGURE 5

The position of the Moon and Saturn at 0200 hours



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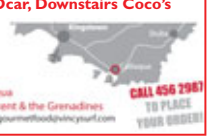
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THE SPICE LOCKER BY SHIRLEY HALL

GO GREEN:

Try Unripe Bananas!

Most of us know the banana in its ripe, yellow form. But in the Caribbean, cooked unripe bananas are an economical staple used in delicious and nutritious meals, often making a tasty side dish. Green bananas, commonly called "figs" (and having nothing to do with the Mediterranean fruit of the same name), are available in almost every Caribbean market and street-side veggie stall. In addition to plantains, there are a few types of bananas preferred for cooking rather than eating when ripe. "Cooking bananas", *lacatan*, and regular or short giant green fig, are the most commonly used. There is also the small, sweet finger-sized *sucrier*.

The bananas we have throughout the Caribbean were found by the Portuguese along the Atlantic coast of Africa and first transplanted to the Canary Islands. Perhaps Columbus or a close follower brought plantains to Hispaniola because there is a reference of the Spanish finding them growing in 1504 when they built Santo Domingo. Credit is usually given to a Spanish missionary, Friar Tomas de Berlanga, who in 1516 carried the plants to tropical parts of the Western Hemisphere. Since bananas multiply quickly, the banana became an essential food in many parts of the world. Bananas were the perfect crop to carry by ship to distant ports because the suckers can live for months if kept moist.

Bananas thrive in the hot tropics, with an average temperature of 80 degrees Fahrenheit (27°C) and a monthly minimum of 3 1/2 inches of rainfall. Major exporters include Ecuador, Costa Rica, Colombia, Honduras, Panama, and Guatemala.

Bananas do not grow simply from seed. Farmers start a crop by cutting growths (called suckers, slips, eyes, or ratoons) from the stems of mature banana plants. Suckers or eyes grow at the base of the tree and protrude through the soil and will grow right there into a new tree if not separated from the stalk. Once dug and separated, replanted suckers sprout in three to four weeks. In about nine months the plants mature to a height of about five to 30 feet.

The banana is very interesting to watch as it grows. When the plant is about to bear fruit it shoots up a different, bigger center leaf and then a large bud rises from the center of the bundle of leaves. The bud consists of small purple leaves called bracts. As the stem grows, the purple parts pull back to reveal clusters of small flowers, which become tiny, green bananas. Exactly how bananas ripen is a scientific mystery. Little bananas grow downward. Double rows develop vertically around the stem. As the sun ripens them, they begin to turn upward against the natural force of gravity! With the advent of digital photography, a nice family project is to take a photo of the bananas every day or twice a day as they develop.

Bananas not only taste good, but also are a healthy, quick-energy food packed with vitamins and minerals.

One trick to using green bananas is to first boil them in their skins after snipping off both ends, as they are much easier to peel after boiling. Boil them in an un-reactive pot. Once boiled and peeled, the banana pieces can be used in a wide variety of dishes. The most common way to serve boiled green bananas is with saltfish, fish or meat, or added to soups and stews. Boiled green bananas are also used to make salads, comparable to potato salads. Crushed they can be the crust of a Shepherd's Pie.

Boiled and Fried Green Bananas

2 hands or four pounds green bananas
4 Cups water
1 Tablespoon salt
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
1/2 onion, diced
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 seasoning pimento peppers (preferably red), seeded and chopped
chives for garnish

Wash bananas and chop off both ends. In a suitable pot, bring water with salt to a boil. Add green bananas and boil over medium heat for 25 minutes. Drain and cool. Peel and cut bananas in half the long way and then slice that into half. Heat oil in a skillet and add onion, garlic, and pimento. Cook until onion becomes transparent. Add green banana pieces and cook until all is well coated and heated through. Remove to a serving bowl and sprinkle with chives.



Green Fig Salad

1 hand or two pounds green bananas
4 cups water
1 carrot, grated
1 onion (purple Spanish preferred), diced small
1 stalk celery (imported preferred), chopped small
2 hard boiled eggs, shelled and sliced a quarter inch thick
1 Tablespoon cucumber relish
2 Tablespoons mayonnaise (light preferred)
1/2 Tablespoon salt

Cut ends off the green bananas. In an adequate pot put water, bananas, and salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat for 20 minutes. Drain and cool. Peel and cut bananas into quarter-inch-thick pieces. Place pieces in a bowl with all other ingredients. Mix and store in fridge until serving.

Curried Green Fig

1 hand or two pounds green bananas
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
1/2 Tablespoon curry powder
1/2 medium onion, chopped small
3 cloves of garlic, minced
salt and pepper to taste
1 Cup water
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin (*jeera*)
3 leaves chadon bene or cilantro, chopped very finely

In this recipe, the green bananas are NOT boiled first. To peel raw green bananas, Trinidadian chef Wendy Rahamut recommends the following method: oil your fingers, run the tip of a sharp knife along the length of the fig, making a one quarter inch incision all the way, do this at about one half inch intervals along the fig, use your thumb, and moving it along the cuts you just made, lift the skin as you go along, continue doing this until all the skin has lifted off.

Peel green bananas and cut into half-inch pieces. In a frying pan heat oil and add curry powder, onion, and garlic. Add three Tablespoons water to this mixture. When it starts to expand add the banana slices and salt. Stir until the banana pieces are coated with the curry. When it starts to stick to the frying pan add the remaining water and stir. Reduce heat, cover, and let simmer with occasional stirring for 20 minutes. Uncover, add cumin, and stir. Cook for five more minutes. Sprinkle with chadon bene. Cover and let sit for another five minutes or longer to absorb the flavor. Serve with rice or roti.

Shirley Hall is the author of The New Caribbean Home Garden Handbook.



VENEZUELAN CAUTIONS

Dear *Compass*,

I read the articles about cruising in Venezuela in the September 2013 issue of *Compass*. Having spent five years there, departing finally in 2009, I believe that just because a handful of foolhardy folks were able to sail the area without being harmed proves little about security in the region. I forward this letter from the State Department I just received.

Michael Rosner
S/V Panda
Republic of Panama

[*Editor's note: The letter below from the US State Department has been edited for length, deleting, for example, information pertinent only to US government personnel. Lest one think the US is being especially paranoid, see recommendations from Australia at www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/Venezuela: "We continue to advise Australians to exercise a high degree of caution in Venezuela because of high levels of serious crime and ongoing political uncertainty." As we mentioned in our September 2013 issue (www.caribbeancompass.com/online/september13compass_online.pdf), available statistics indicate that the rate of violent physical assault against cruisers is more than three times higher in Venezuela than in all the Lesser Antilles islands combined.*

The folks on Chaser2 *have told us that they recently enjoyed an event-free cruise from Curaçao to Puerto La Cruz, but on the other hand, the couple aboard* Explorer *were boarded, beaten and robbed while attempting to sail from Trinidad to Puerto La Cruz (see news item on page 5). Regarding Puerto La Cruz itself, cruisers there report that goods and services are cheap, but also see this report: www.safetyandsecuritynet.com/venezuela-bad-luck-or-bad-choice.*

As always, we urge any cruisers considering going to or through Venezuela to examine the safety situation for their proposed route and destination very carefully.]

Subject: Venezuela Travel Warning, November 22, 2013

The Department of State has issued this Travel Warning to inform US citizens about the security situation in Venezuela.

Tens of thousands of US citizens safely visit Venezuela each year for study, tourism, business, and volunteer work. However, violent crime in Venezuela is pervasive, both in the capital, Caracas, and in the interior. According to the non-governmental organization Venezuelan Violence Observatory, there were 21,692 homicides in Venezuela in 2012, amounting to a rate of 73 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, among the highest in the world.

Kidnappings are also a serious concern throughout the country. In 2012, 583 kidnappings were reported to the authorities. It is estimated that roughly 80 percent of kidnappings go unreported, meaning the actual number of kidnappings in 2012 is likely much higher. Common criminals are increasingly involved in kidnappings, either dealing with victims' families directly or selling the victims to terrorist groups.

US citizens should be vigilant of their surroundings at all times and in all locations… Whenever possible, US citizens should travel in groups of two or more persons; avoid wearing jewelry and carrying large sums of money or displaying cash, ATM/credit cards, mobile phones, or other valuables; and avoid walking at night in most areas of Venezuela or walking alone on beaches, historic ruins, and trails. Incidents of crime along inter-city roads, including carjacking and kidnapping, are common in Venezuela. Motorists should avoid traveling at night and always drive with their doors locked to deter potential robberies at traffic lights and on congested city streets.

For more detailed information on staying safe in Venezuela, please see the State Department's Country Specific Information. For the latest security information, US citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Bureau of Consular Affairs' internet website, where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, and Travel Alerts can be found. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook as well. You can also download our free Smart Traveler App, available through the iTunes store and the Google Play store.

NEW VOICES

Dear *Compass*,

Just flown back to Martinique from Brittany and found October's *Caribbean Compass* in Marin — another interesting number with some new voices!

I'm talking about the excellent and enjoyable articles "Hitching the Wind" by Francisco Pedro and also "Panama Canal Transit: The Little Boat that Could!" by Di Kilbride. Not the sort of voices we hear too often in this high-tech electronic age! More's the pity, because isn't this the real spirit of adventure behind all our travels and voyages? We may become blasé as our up-to-date machines speed from island to island, or we may choose to linger and enjoy a particularly interesting port or pretty anchorage, but people who voyage in spite of inadequate means deserve our admiration — so bravo to those aboard *Matira*, and to boat hitchers everywhere.

And thank you *Compass* for bringing us these unusual stories of adventure.

Jeremy Hobday
S/V Tchin
Martinique

ARE GUNS THE ANSWER?

Dear *Compass*,

Lynn Kaak and Ken Goodings' December article analyzing the viability of flare guns was a fun and unsurprising read. I hope readers drew the conclusion: Guns are not the answer.

My husband, Jim Hutchins, and I met Tina and Mark of *Rainbow* this week while we were in St. Croix. They are relieved to be back in their home waters. Understandably, they have equipped their boat with lights and bars to discourage would-be boarders.

—*Continued on next page*

PICK UP!

Ahoy, *Compass* Readers! When in St. Maarten/St. Martin, pick up your free monthly copy of the *Caribbean Compass* at any of these locations (advertisers in this issue appear in **bold**):

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—Continued from previous page

Having experienced piracy first hand and having researched the statistical record sources available, we are convinced that guns of any sort are not the answer. As soon as you raise a gun, you provoke immediate violence. The silliness of raising a flare gun whether 20 feet or two feet away means that whatever weapon the assailant has will be immediately used on you and/or your crew. Documentation available supports that in all cases where the yacht person drew a gun their own people were shot, a fight ensued and/or injuries resulted. We believe we survived the piracy incident because we remained calm and cooperative. We take responsibility for going too close to the Venezuelan mainland (we were 40 miles off shore). We allowed ourselves to become targets and paid dearly, fortunately not with our lives.

Staying away from known areas of violence (unless there is solid evidence that the perpetrators have been removed) and managing your boat to make it a less attractive target are worthy defenses. The idea of going on the offensive against perpetrators is foolhardy. It works in Hollywood movies and comic strips.

Best regards,
Ellen Birrell
S/V Boldly Go

PRAISE FOR CUBA GUIDE

Dear *Compass*,

Regarding the review of *A Cruising Guide to Cuba*, by Amaia Agirre and Frank Virgintino in the December issue of *Caribbean Compass*, among all the cruising guides published to date and in our possession at the Club Náutico, this work is, by far, the most interesting and widely illustrated of all. The excellent photographs reflect important aspects of the Cuban people's life and the natural beauties of the island, as well as relevant passages from the history of the Cuban nation.

Regarding the information provided for planning the trip along the Cuban coast, I think that it is very useful and interesting, not just for the inclusion of detailed nautical charts, but also for the proposed itineraries or recommended stretches of coast and photographs illustrating the coast line, cays, marinas and anchorages.

As I was reviewing the Guide, I felt a sense of orientation greater than in other similar publications and it has motivated me to undertake the journey to the heart of Archipelago de Los Colorados, Los Canarreos and Jardines de La Reina, as well as to enjoy the natural beauty, peace, harmony and simplicity of places unspoiled by modern life.

Another contribution of this cruising guide is, in my opinion, the spirit that one feels when planning a real navigation of pleasure, by proposing sailing stretches that allow a truly enjoyable cruise...

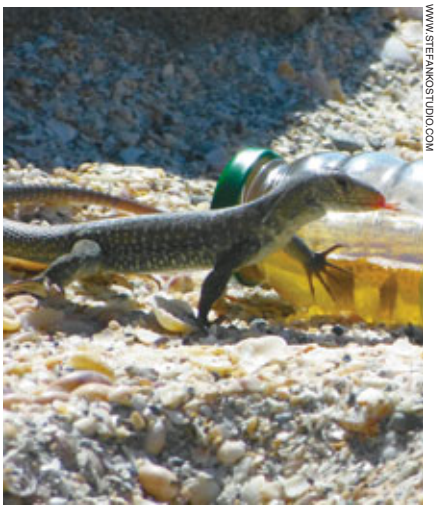
This new guide will assist and support all of us who strive with very modest resources but plenty of enthusiasm to develop the nautical tourism in Cuban waters. Because it shares our vision of Cuba as a nautical Paradise with an immense potential, we firmly believe that it can contribute to the prosperity that our people deserve.

Commodore José Miguel Díaz Escrich
Club Náutico Internacional Hemingway
Habana, Cuba

A CARIBBEAN 'AESOP'S FABLE'

Dear *Compass*,

We have returned to charming Shell Beach in Gustavia, Saint Barth's. It is one of our favored Caribbean destinations. Oiled and tanned bodies lounge under a golden sun, luncheon parties enjoy ceviche and caipirinhas beneath colorful umbrellas, warm blue waters beckon, volcanic outcrops and a carpet of shells form the crescent of beach.


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We see a brown anole lizard, perhaps seven inches in length, wandering in the warm sand, looking for a meal. He spies a flagon of juice, lying by the rocks. He seems to know it contains something tasty and tempting, so he approaches the glistening liquid.

ALAS! The bottle is closed. So the creature begins to use his front feet to scratch at the bottle-cap, trying to loosen it. He desperately wants the sweet amber liquid inside. The anole reminds us of a tiny puppy, scratching at a door to be let in (or out). It is humorous to watch, as the little guy tries scuffing from all sides to open the bottle-cap, to release his heart's desire, and to slake his thirst. How did this creature learn this skill? It is almost *human*. He tries and tries to scrape the juice bottle open.

But he cannot loosen the cap, becomes frustrated, and gives up. Somehow, we "feel his pain," as the little critter crawls off, unsatisfied and perhaps embarrassed. Shortly, the human owner of the bottle returns from the surf, retrieves the bottle, easily turns the cap, and takes a swig.

We wonder if, to avoid humiliation, the anole thinks, "Who needs it? That juice was probably sour anyway...." If only he could speak.

Carol Reed and Frank Stefanko
New Jersey, USA

ELVIS THE IGUANA

Dear *Compass*,

Some time ago, my wife, Kathy, and I had our 35-foot Island Packet sloop hauled out at Independent Boat Yard in St. Thomas to do some serious bottom work. We had our faithful companion Snow Ball, a white German shepherd, with us, so we decided to rent a house for the month with a big backyard for Snow Ball to play in. It was either that or carry him up and down the ladder of the boat every day to take his daily dump. As it turned out, we found a nice house with a fenced backyard and nice neighbors to boot. Bill and Nance lived next door and were also boaters, having a 32-foot sloop on a mooring at the Yacht Club in Cowpet Bay. They also had a large iguana named Elvis in a cage in their backyard. Elvis was their pride and joy, and I guess he was beautiful in an ugly sort of way.

It was on the second weekend, after two weeks of grinding bottom paint and repairing blisters, that we decided to take Sunday off. It was sunshine, blue skies and gentle tradewinds, and awful easy to just kick back. In fact, Bill and Nance told us they were taking their boat out for the weekend and would be back late Sunday. I decided to let Snow Ball run loose while I stayed outside and pulled some weeds from the flowerbed. To some people this is work; to me it's therapy.

Snow Ball came and watched for a while and then disappeared. After some time I looked up to see him standing there, with Elvis in his mouth. He proudly dropped him at my feet. Elvis was covered with dirt and very dead, but there didn't seem to be any teeth marks or wounds on him. All I could say was, "Oh my God, Oh my God." The wife heard me and called out, "Honey, are you alright?" I muttered, "Please come out here; you are not gonna believe this."

So after some discussion we came up with a plan. We washed Elvis off with the hose and put him back in his cage, just like nothing had ever happened. Monday morning I was out getting in my car to go to the boatyard when Bill called, "Good morning!" I replied innocently, "How did the sailing go?" Bill said, "It was a wonderful sail over to Coral Bay. Had a great time with some friends over there. But the strangest thing happened while we were gone. You remember Elvis, our iguana? Well he died last week and we buried him in the backyard but when we came home yesterday, there he was — back in his cage. Would you know anything about that?"

Woody Young
Culebra, Puerto Rico

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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

We want to hear from YOU!

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

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

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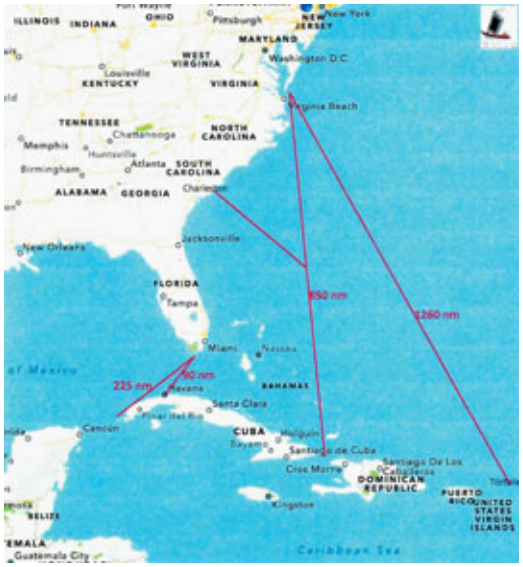
Letter of the Month

Dear *Compass*,

Don Street can be considered the Dean of Caribbean Cruising, at least for the Lesser Antilles. Moreover he is a wonderful example for all, as notwithstanding what age he has attained, he never stops educating. In the November 2013 edition of *Caribbean Compass*, he writes in the Letter of the Month his thoughts regarding "Coming South to the Caribbean". Don and I have exchanged opinions on this topic for a number of years, and much of what Don says, especially regarding the Lesser Antilles, should be carefully considered as he knows of what he speaks and of what he has sailed.

Don's strength is the Eastern Caribbean. For years, "the Caribbean" has largely been defined as the Lesser Antilles. However, the Caribbean is much larger than that.

If you examine a chart of the entire Caribbean, you'll see that when coming from the East Coast of North America, the easiest and safest way into the Caribbean Sea is via the Windward Passage. This entrance minimizes one's time in the Atlantic Ocean and also allows for sailing on a reach to a broad reach. The Windward Passage is not really the back door to the Caribbean for those coming from North America; it is the front door! Many will say that this is heresy, but a look at a map makes it quite clear.



Look at this map and the one on page three of this issue of Compass, *and you'll see that the Windward Passage, east of Cuba, can be a welcoming entrance to the Caribbean Sea*

Don agrees with me that jumping off from Bermuda to get to the Caribbean is not a good idea. Also he does not particularly care for the "thornless path" which has served so many for so many years who did not want an offshore route and I can understand his point of view as such a route can be tedious and complicated. Regarding the Windward Passage**,** Don objects and says that coming through the Windward Passage to go east to the Lesser Antilles involves a "500 mile slog to windward".

On this point I disagree, not because our Professor is absent minded, but because the Greater Antilles is not Don's strongest area of expertise; at least not those islands' south shores. Cuba, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico all have high mountain ranges. At night, cold air slides down the mountains and provides an offshore breeze if one sails within two or three miles of the shore and provided that the tradewinds were not blowing like stink during the day.

Once through the Windward Passage, often on a reach to a broad reach, to go east one simply needs to utilize those katabatic winds all the way to the eastern point of Puerto Rico. If you are in a rush, you can make the trip in three days; but why rush? There are so many wonderful harbors along the south shores of the Greater Antilles and instead of working to "get to the Caribbean" you are already *in* the Caribbean — a sea which has a reputation for being more user friendly than the Atlantic. There is also a bonus: you do not have to transverse the Mona Passage between the east end of the Dominican Republic and the west end of Puerto Rico, a passage that can be very challenging. The route from the eastern end of the Dominican Republic to the western end of Puerto Rico is south of the Mona Passage; it is the route that the ferryboat takes and can allow you to cross comfortably on most nights. I have sailed on a port tack from Ile-à-Vache at the western end of Haiti to the east end of Puerto Rico without using my motor, many times over. If you find this trip to be a "500-mile slog to windward", you are doing something wrong!

Don's favored offshore route is feasible, but why take it if there is a better way? If there is an alternative, why do so many set off from the East Coast and head for the Virgin Islands? Because we have, more often than not, defined "the Caribbean" as the Lesser Antilles. However, sometimes the shortest distance between two points on a cruising boat is not a straight line, especially if that straight line has an alternative that is a better route.

Additionally, Don's understanding of my reference to the "Caribbean's back door" misses the point. I suggested cruising the south coast of Cuba to those that would come into the Caribbean via the extreme west end of Cuba. I never intended it to mean that one should cruise only Cuba if one entered via the Windward Passage. It is far better, once through the Windward Passage, to follow the Greater Antilles eastward, than to take what Don refers to as a "Nantucket sleigh ride" to Colombia, something which I very much recommend that you do not do. In my book *A Thinking Man's Guide to Voyaging South* I refer to the area west of Aruba to Cabo Gracias a Dios at the northeast corner of Honduras as The Hole. I call it that because once you sail into it, it is very hard to sail out of it in any direction but west. The seas, winds and currents make it so difficult to sail eastward from there, that many, if not most, who have tried it have given up. Better to go eastward from the Windward Passage to the Lesser Antilles, and then follow the Lesser Antilles southward before turning west to the ABC islands and the points beyond. In other words, circumnavigate the Caribbean clockwise. If you sailed straight from the Windward Passage to Colombia, your best option from there would be to head west and out of the Caribbean.

The clockwise route is the logical route. With careful planning you can leave the East Coast or Florida and, by using the Windward Passage, quickly gain access to the Caribbean. By heading eastward on the south coasts of the Greater Antilles, you sail in the protected lee of those large islands before turning south to head down the Lesser Antilles chain. From Grenada or Trinidad, the heading is west to the ABC islands and then on to Colombia and the islands of San Andrés and Providencia, around the cape and on to the Rio Dulce, Belize and Mexico. You can consider Grenada or Trinidad for your first hurricane season in the Caribbean. For your second season it would be either Curaçao or Rio Dulce, depending on how much time you have and the distances that you want to cover.

If you are thinking Caribbean, think Windward Passage!

Frank Virgintino
Author of Free Cruising Guides

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WHAT'S ON MY MIND

Put the Trini Carnival on Your Bucket List

by Ralph Trout

There are many natural wonders such as volcanoes, rainforests, swamps, beautiful beaches, and spectacular coral reefs throughout the Caribbean, and every year we complain about how these wonders are getting improperly impacted by increasing numbers of visitors. But Trinidad carnival is just the opposite, the more the merrier! Trinidad carnival is a Caribbean wonder not to be missed.

I've only been a constant Trini carnival fan for a dozen years, and truthfully I was a bit doubtful and fearful at first. My first carnival was at the turn of the millennium. I had a broken shoulder from an auto accident and my *Sea Cow* was on the hard in Chaguaramas. Nevertheless, new Trini friends urged me to go for it, dance in the streets, do Jouvert, and swill rum while watching the beauties. I considered the carnivals I had visited in St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. Lucia, and even Mardi Gras, and was considering a no go. Then a lady at the auto rental convinced me by saying, "Don't worry, worst that's gonna happen is someone will hug you up!"



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Steel 'pan' bands and Trinidad are synonymous, and at carnival you'll see and hear — and can't help but dance to — the very best of the best

And she was absolutely correct. In some other places the sling on my arm might have been a sign for easy pickings. But I joined a few guys from the boatyard for Jouvert in Chaguaramas, at an all-inclusive fête at the Anchorage, and carnival became my personal fountain of youth.

Yeah, Trinidad gets a lot of bad press owing to crime, but it is a big island and the major tourism event is carnival. What does that tell you? Lock your stuff before you leave the boat and drink sensibly. Carnival is the best and worst of times. The best because it is the safest, with a police force visible. It is a constant party/lime and Trinis easily extend hospitality. It is the worse time because it is the only time the island is crowded. The maxi taxi system works round the clock to move the masses from fête to party and party to fête. Don't even try to get anything accomplished work-wise and forget about government offices. Trinis take their carnival almost reverently.

It is nearly impossible both time-wise and financially to participate in everything that is scheduled for carnival. Buy the newspaper and check what you want to see. Constantly happening are big fêtes of soca music — a sort of evolution of calypso — loud and raucous. Sunday is the start of the finals; at Dimanche Gras the Calypso Monarch is chosen and the King and Queen of the Bands are crowned. Each band parades huge, complex, beautiful costumes. Sunday afternoon usually has calypso legends such as the Mighty Sparrow and other greats at the best calypso nightclub in Port of Spain, the Mas Camp Pub. Later in the afternoon there is a traditional Old Mas at Victoria Square where you can view carnival as it was decades ago. At two o'clock Monday morning wake for a drenching with mud and paint to open the carnival with Jouvert. Join an organized group for this night-till-the-sun-comes-shining street party. You can also join a band, of which there are probably a hundred, pay all that money for a couple of days of guaranteed sunburn dancing in the streets. That is the full experience.

Or be a voyeur, get a pint bottle of rum and keep expenses low buying cokes or sodas. Get a wide-brimmed hat, sunscreen, a good camera with at least a 2GB memory card, plenty of batteries, and get ready for the beautiful posers of Trinidad. Food aromas will find you. Get home around dark and swear you'll do it again next year.

Every year carnival gets better organized. Police are very visible. The streets are cleaned almost immediately. Wouldn't it be great if you could recover that fast?

Trinidad's Carnival fun climaxes on Carnival Monday and Tuesday, which will be on March 3rd and 4th this year.

CALENDAR

JANUARY

1 Public holiday or "recovery day" in many places (New Year's Day)
1 Gouyave Sailing School Junior Regatta, Grenada. kevin_sailor@hotmail.com
1 – 2 Carnival Parade and Last Lap, St. Kitts & Nevis. www.stkittsneviscarnival.com
1 – 4 Crucian Christmas Festival, St. Croix. www.stxfestival.com
2 Public holiday in Cuba (Victory of Armed Forces Day) and Haiti (Founding Fathers' Day)
4 Free Public Clinic - Explore Salt River, St. Croix. Bush tribe Eco Adventures (340) 277-2503
6 Public holiday in some places (Three Kings Day/Epiphany)
11 – 18 Bitter End Yacht Club Invitational Midwinter Regatta, Virgin Gorda, BVI. Bitter End Yacht Club (BEYC), binfo@beyc.com, www.beyc.com
13 Public holiday in Puerto Rico (Eugenio María de Hostos Day)
14 – 4 Feb St. Barts Music Festival. www.stbartsmusicfestival.org
15 – 25 Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race Series. www.mountgayrumroundbarbadosrace.com
16 FULL MOON Parties at Trellis Bay and West End, Tortola, and at Pinney's Beach, Nevis
18 Around Antigua Race. Antigua Yacht Club (AYC), tel/fax (268) 460-1799, yachtclub@candw.ag, www.antiguayachtclub.com
18 Anguilla Dinghy Championship
21 Public holiday in Barbados (Errol Barrow Day), Puerto Rico and USVI (Martin Luther King Day), and the Dominican Republic (Our Lady of Altagracia)
22 - 5 Feb Mustique Blues Festival. www.discoversvg.com/index.php/en/mustique/events
23 – 26 Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest, www.bequiatourism.com/bequiamusicfest
25 Public holiday in Aruba (GF Croes Day)
25 Soggy Dollar Painkiller Cup, SUP race, Tortola, BVI. http://go-hiho.com
28 Public holiday in the Cayman Islands (National Heroes' Day celebrated)
30 – 1 Feb Jamaica Jazz and Blues Festival, Montego Bay. http://jamaicajazzandblues.com
30 – 4 Feb Grenada Sailing Week, www.grenadasailingweek.com
31 – 2 Feb SuperYacht Challenge Antigua. http://thesuperyachtchallenge.com
31 – 2 Feb Club Náutico de San Juan Int'l Regatta, San Juan, Puerto Rico. www.nauticodesanjuan.com
31 – 2 Feb St. Barth Fun Cup Windsurf races

FEBRUARY

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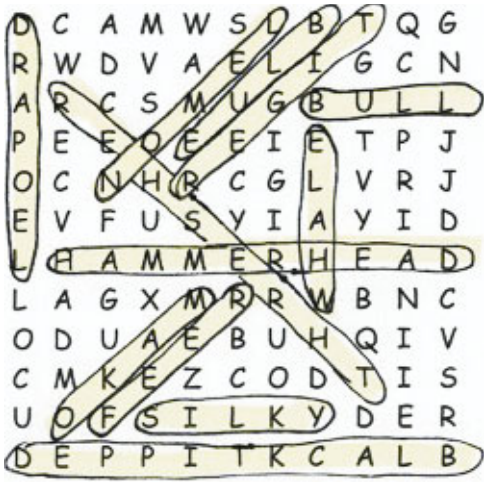

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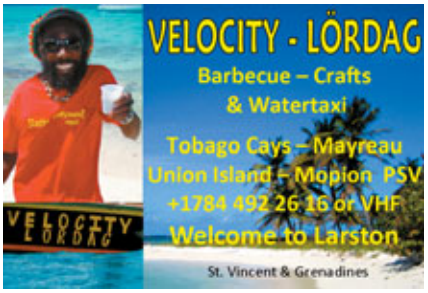
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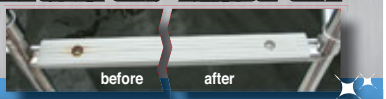
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