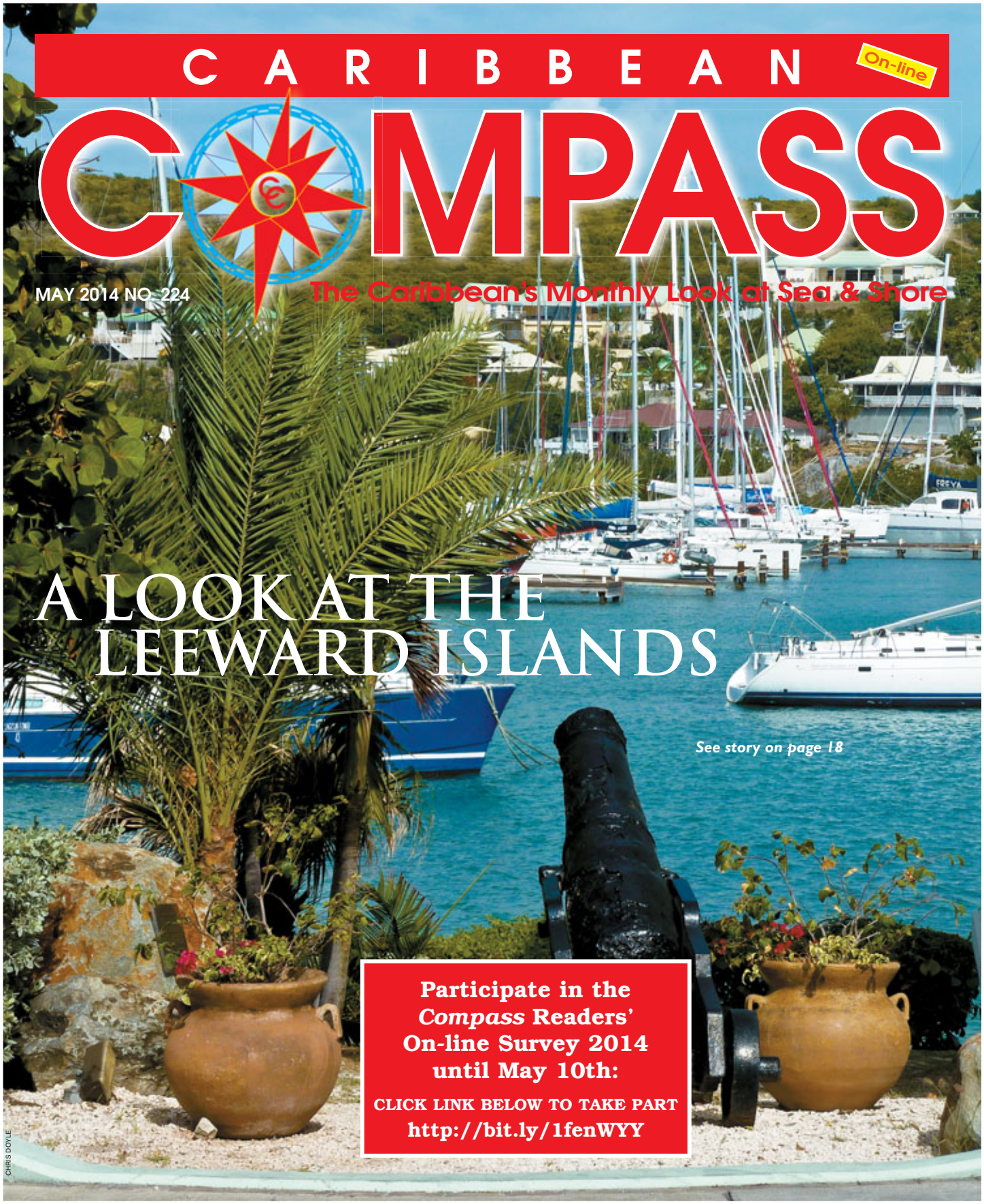
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COMPASS
MAY 2014 NO. 224
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore



A LOOK AT THE LEEWARD ISLANDS

See story on page 18

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CHRIS DOYLE

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

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

Compass Agents by Island:

Antigua: Ad Sales & Distribution - Lucy Tulloch
Tel (268) 720-6868, lucy@thelucy.com

Barbados: Distribution - Doyle Sails
Tel/Fax: (246) 423-4600

Colombia: Distribution - Marina Santa Marta
www.igy-marinasantamarta.com/en

Curaçao: Distribution - Budget Marine Curaçao
curacao@budgetmarine.com Tel: (5999) 462 77 33

Dominica: Ad Sales & Distribution - Hubert J. Winston
Dominica Marine Center, Tel: (767) 448-2705,
info@dominicamarinecenter.com

Grenada:
Ad Sales & Distribution - Karen Maaroufi
Cell: (473) 457-2151 Office: (473) 444-3222
compassgrenada@gmail.com

Martinique: Ad Sales & Distribution - Isabelle Prado
Tel: (0596) 596 68 69 71 Mob: + 596 696 74 77 01
isabelle.prado@wanadoo.fr

Panama: Distribution - Shelter Bay Marina
www.shelterbaymarina.com

Puerto Rico: Distribution - Sunbay Marina, Fajardo
Olga Diaz de Peréz, Tel: (787) 863 0313 Fax: (787) 863 5282
sunbaymarina@aol.com

St. Lucia: Ad Sales & Distribution - Maurice Moffat
Tel: (758) 452 0147 Cell: (758) 720-8432
mauricemoffat@hotmail.com

St. Maarten/St. Barths/Guadeloupe:
Ad Sales & Distribution - Stéphane Legendre
Mob: + 590 690 765 422
steflegendre@wanadoo.fr

St. Vincent & the Grenadines:
Ad Sales - Shellese Craigg
shellese@caribbeancompass.com Tel: (784) 457-3409
Distribution - Doc Leslie Tel: (784) 529-0970

Tortola/BVI: Distribution - Gladys Jones
Tel: (284) 494-2830 Fax: (284) 494-1584

Venezuela: Ad Sales - Patty Tomasik
Tel: (58-281) 265-3844 Tel/Fax: (58-281) 265-2448
xanadumarine@hotmail.com

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On the cover: Chris Doyle's photo encapsulates the Leewards' allure, which ranges from maritime history to modern yacht facilities



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Info & Updates

Antigua NGOs and CSA Join Forces

Three key non-profit organizations — Antigua Sailing Week (ASW), the Antigua & Barbuda Marine Association (ABMA) and the Caribbean Sailing Association (CSA) — have joined forces to open a year-round office in Antigua to serve the yachting communities of Antigua and the wider Caribbean.



TIM WRIGHT / WWW.PHOTOACTION.COM

Nadine McDavid and Ari James will welcome you to the new office in Antigua that hosts three key yachting NGOs

The office is now open upstairs at Antigua Yacht Club Marina to provide each of the organizations with a fully manned shop five days a week and to provide services to the three organizations and their members as well as providing members of the public with information about yachting in Antigua and the Caribbean generally.

All three organizations will utilize the expertise of the team at Mainstay Caribbean Ltd., a new business owned by Kathy Lammers and Alison Sly-Adams, both of whom have been involved in all three organizations for some time. Kathy Lammers says, "People involved in organizations of this type — not just in Antigua but in the wider Caribbean — know that one of the biggest challenges is attempting to put strategies into place when due to the nature of the organizations, there are no funds to employ people to do just that. Instead, such organizations rely on volunteer board members to help achieve their goals, who are often too busy with other commitments to ensure the desired results."

Being on the boards of the various non-profit companies, the duo realized that there could be an opportunity for each of the three organizations to grow if there were people in place to provide consistency in delivering secretariat and management services at the right level, rather than relying on board members to find spare time. Mainstay Caribbean Ltd. was created to do just that, utilizing shared resources across the companies.

The Caribbean Sailing Association owns and manages the CSA Rating Rule, which is the handicap rule used in the majority of keelboat racing in the Caribbean. The CSA also promotes the development of youth and dinghy sailing and promotes the Caribbean region as the premier yacht-racing destination in the world. Of the new partnership Peter Holmberg, President of the CSA, says, "We have been discussing this for some time and it is the next logical step. Having a dedicated Secretariat will help all our volunteer committees and our measurers better achieve their goals and, ultimately, give better service to all our members."

As marketing has risen to the top in terms of a priority for the Antigua & Barbuda Marine Association, its president, Franklyn Braithwaite, echoes Holmberg's comments: "We know Antigua is one of the world's leading yachting destinations, but that does not mean we can stop talking about it and telling the world what we are doing and why Antigua should remain at the top of their itineraries. Working with the other organizations will allow us to take advantage of consistent year-round marketing, particularly more cost-effective online marketing, which we have been unable to deliver to date." Braithwaite says he and his board look forward to the ABMA finally starting to realize its potential in terms of delivering value to its members.

Both presidents, however, make no bones about the continued need for board members, association members and volunteers to continue to support and do what they do for the yachting industry as it is that level of collaboration which makes every event and organization both different and successful.

Colombian Boat Show Booming

As reported in *Soundings Trade Only Today* (www.tradeonlytoday.com), the Cartagena International Boat Show, held March 22nd to 24th, grew exponentially in its second year, with a 165-percent rise in attendance from 1,300 in its inaugural year to 3,455 this year.

—Continued on next page

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Wilsons' Cruzan Canvas
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Kaya Atom Z



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There were 126 percent more exhibitors this year than last — 93, compared with 41 — and more than twice the boats. Exhibitors included 16 first-timers at the new US pavilion organized by the US National Marine Manufacturers Association. "I can tell you that our exhibitors within the US pavilion were very satisfied with the quality of attendee," Julie Balzano, who heads the export program for the NMMA, told *Soundings Trade Only Today*.

With coastlines on the Pacific and the Caribbean that have several major ports, the country is poised to develop the pleasure-boating industry, said Santiago Rojas, Colombia's Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce. The country is accepting marina proposals for at least one of the government-sponsored projects it has in the works.

Internally, the country is looking to partner with maritime schools to provide training for Colombians, Andres Cerda Nieto of the Cartagena Chamber of Commerce said during a March 21st presentation. A nautical education program in conjunction with Broward College in Miami has been discussed to help residents become trained and skilled in the boating industry, Nieto said.

The third Cartagena International Boat Show will take place March 21st through 23rd, 2015, and already has the participation of 50 companies, with 20 coming from the United States.

Private-Sector Clearance Fee at Le Marin, Martinique

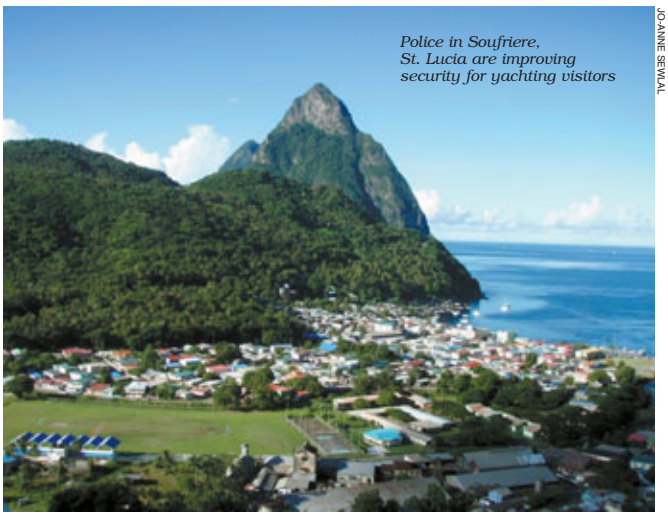
Some cruisers report being surprised to be charged a fee of 5 Euros when clearing in or out at Le Marin, Martinique, while there are no clearance fees charged at Fort de France. We are reliably informed that the difference is between government offices, which do not charge a clearance fee, and private businesses that house Customs computers, which are allowed to charge a fee for use of their premises (if they wish) for clearance.

Stepped-Up Security in Soufriere, St. Lucia

As reported in the St. Lucia press on April 5th, the Royal St. Lucia Police Force is well aware of the impact that crimes against yachting visitors can have on the tourism industry generally and in particular on the yachting sector. The Soufriere police have confirmed that action is being taken by lawmen to improve security after six incidents of burglary of yachts were reported last year, and three thus far in 2014. Acting Assistant Superintendent of Police Luke Jn. Pierre, who heads the Soufriere Police Station, says most of the incidents occurred in the Hummingbird Beach area and to a lesser extent at Malgretout.

Officers have been deployed to patrol the beach day and night, the Marine Unit is patrolling the waters, and some Soufriere Police Station personnel are currently taking a Basic Seamanship course facilitated by the Marine Department of the RSLPF. The Soufriere Marine Management Area and the Soufriere Regional Development Foundation have pledged a boat and fuel respectively for ongoing patrols.

The police have investigated the pattern of crimes by the perpetrators and are attempting to foster a community approach that will reduce opportunities for criminals to strike. The head of the Soufriere Police Station said, "Citizens need to do their share, particularly those with businesses on the beach. This is because there are several aspects to this problem and the police do not possess the resources to deal with every single one of them. This is also a social issue and there must be a multi-faceted approach in order to make a dent." A public meeting on April 1st addressed the issue of visitor harassment in the area.



JO-ANNE SEWLAL

Police in Soufriere, St. Lucia are improving security for yachting visitors

In February, Chris Doyle reported that "yachts may again anchor off the Hummingbird Restaurant, near Soufriere, St. Lucia, and tie to the shore from 1800 to 0600 hours. This used to be the most popular anchorage in the area and it is great news for those who would like to eat ashore. The Hummingbird security will keep an eye on your boat and dinghy while you are in the restaurant."

Refueling Pilot Project on Nevis

As reported in the *Caribbean Journal* (www.caribjournal.com), a pilot project on Nevis plans to set up a refueling facility for yachts.

In early April, 148-foot (45-metre) Perini Navi sloop *Clan VIII* was the first yacht to participate in what was a test run of the project; it was refueled by Delta Petroleum Ltd, hosted by the Nevis Air & Sea Port Authority. Colin Dore, chairman of the NASPA Board of Directors, said the first fueling was meant to be a test to "see if we are ready to accommodate that type of traffic."

—*Continued on next page*



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"A couple of months ago, NASPA started looking at the possibility of refueling yachts at Long Point," he said. "There is an upsurge now in yacht tourism within the Federation. There is Christophe Harbour coming on stream shortly and the Marina at Cades Bay, Tamarind Cove, coming on stream. We are trying to position ourselves to capitalize on whatever spin-off there will be from those activities." For now, the plan is to install a bulk station within the port at Long Point, he said.

Eight Bells

• JOHN GARNER. Cruising yachtsman John Garner died on March 26th, apparently as the result of a fire and subsequent catastrophic explosion aboard his Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 49, *Asante*, while sailing single-handed off the coast of St. Vincent. According to investigators, Garner, 63 years old and an experienced mariner, appeared to be properly abandoning ship: he was wearing a lifejacket, had organized a waterproof bag containing the ship's papers, and had deployed his liferaft, but apparently didn't get away from the boat before the fatal explosion.

First on the scene was a boat with staff and guests from Indigo Dive, who saw smoke about five miles offshore and responded immediately. By the time they arrived, the yacht had burnt to the waterline and sank shortly thereafter. The divers stayed on the scene until arrival of the coast guard, and local fishermen also came to assist. The St. Vincent & the Grenadines Coast Guard received a report of a vessel on fire at 11:59AM and arrived 18 minutes later. Garner was rushed to the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. His wife had left the boat the day before to fly to their home in Norway.

This incident underscores the need for vigilance regarding shipboard fire and explosion, even on well-maintained vessels such as *Asante*. Experts recommend that to avoid an electrical fire from one typical cause, never connect circuits, including solar panels or wind generators, directly to batteries without a fuse or circuit breaker. Deaths aboard boats owing to propane explosions are, sadly, not uncommon. Refer to the American Boat & Yacht Council propane and electrical system standards (http://portal.abycinc.org/?page=StandardsIndex), whatever your flag — they are comprehensive and sensible.

• RAWLE BARROW. Famous Trinidadian racing sailor Rawle Barrow died on the evening of March 28th at age 80. A founding member of the Trinidad & Tobago Sailing Association and a member of the Trinidad & Tobago Sports Hall of Fame, Barrow won bronze in 1959 as a member of the only West Indian Federation team that competed at the Pan American Games in Chicago, competing in the Flying Dutchman class. He went on to sail in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. In 1962 and 1966, Barrow won gold at the Central American and Caribbean (CAC) Games in Jamaica and Puerto Rico respectively. In 1982, Barrow was one of the originators of the international Angostura Yachting World Regatta (a.k.a. Tobago Sailing Week) and, aboard his beloved Beneteau 38, *Petit Careme*, continued to be a frequent and dominant competitor at regattas throughout the Eastern Caribbean until recently. His friend Nan Hatch says, "Rawle was a very special kind of sailor, competitive, honest, and he never did protest anyone!"



EVELYN DREW

A great sailor and a great man, Rawle Barrow of Trinidad will be missed

Rawle Barrow is survived by his wife, Merilee; children Charmaine, Rosalie, Wendy and Kent; eight grandchildren; and countless friends and former crewmembers.

Don't Miss Being Part of Our Readers' Survey!

Results are pouring into our *Compass* Readers' Survey 2014, and they are very interesting! (Who knew that so many sailors would use an online pre-clearance system if available, or how many boaters really like holding tanks?!?)

It's not too late to have your say. But act fast! The Readers' Survey will be online until the 10th of May at http://bit.ly/1fenWYY

Welcome Aboard!

In this issue of *Caribbean Compass* we welcome new advertiser St. Kitts Boat Works on page 16. Good to have you with us!



Port Louis Marina, Grenada: The ideal location for the Caribbean summer



Lying just above 12°N, Grenada is south of the main hurricane belt, which is why growing numbers of yacht owners are enjoying a warm welcome in the 'Spice Island' during the summer months.

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up to 40	$1.10	$0.99	$0.48
up to 50	$1.20	$1.08	$0.53
up to 60	$1.30	$1.17	$0.59
up to 65	$1.45	$1.31	$0.66
up to 75	$1.50	$1.35	$0.67
up to 80	$1.65	$1.49	$0.83
up to 100	$1.70	$1.53	$0.85

For yachts above 100 feet LOA, and for bookings of longer periods, please contact us for a personalised quote. Multihulls are charged at 1.5 times the standard rate. Weekly and monthly rates apply to yachts staying consecutively for 7 days or 30 days respectively.

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Port Louis Marina Attracts International Events

Camper & Nicholsons' Port Louis Marina in Grenada recently hosted many of the yachts taking part in the Oyster World Rally. This odyssey started in Antigua in January 2013 and has seen two dozen of the finest yachts in the Oyster fleet cross the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans on their circumnavigation.



The marina's Danny Donelan explained that Oyster owners have established a strong bond with the marina and with the delights that Grenada has to offer. "When we hosted the Oyster Caribbean Regatta last year it was clear that the owners and crews loved the island and were impressed with the facilities we provide for these special yachts. It's great to see their World Rally fleet also choosing to make Grenada one of their stopovers, and I know they will enjoy their time here."

This is one of a growing number of high-profile international events that are being drawn to Grenada and to Camper & Nicholsons' Port Louis Marina. The World ARC will be stopping here on their global rally for the next three years, and the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC) recently announced that their new Transatlantic Race will finish in Grenada this coming December.

Camper & Nicholsons worked closely with the Grenada Tourism Authority and the private sector Marine and Yachting Association of Grenada (MAYAG) to attract the RORC to race to Grenada, and the GTA and C&N are official sponsors of the event. Together C&N, the GTA and RORC are now working hard on planning the race, with MAYAG also active in mobilizing the island's marine businesses to service the race fleet when they arrive at Port Louis Marina.

The World Maxi Association will be joining the RORC Transatlantic Race, so we will see some of the world's largest, fastest and most impressive sailing yachts arriving in Grenada at the end of the year. This will significantly raise the country's profile in the international yachting market, and is another example of how Camper & Nicholsons Marinas are helping to drive this vital part of the Grenadian economy.

For more information on Camper & Nicholsons Port Louis Marina see ad on page 7.

Edward William Marine Insurance Seeks Agents

Malcolm Skinner reports: Edward William Marine Services offers private and pleasure marine insurance worldwide. The company, thanks to its association with a specialized marine underwriter, has gone from strength to strength. We have found that in areas where we have agents recommending our services we are a great deal more active and the agents themselves earn a good income on the commissions that they earn.

To date in the Caribbean we have a healthy portfolio of business that has been achieved purely through advertising in local media. We would now like to expand on this and are therefore looking to appoint one or two agents to cover the entire Caribbean region.

Ideally these people will already be working in the boating industry and have contacts on and around the various islands. We are only looking for one or at most two agents for the area in order to maximize the earning potential for the agents concerned.

For more information on this opportunity contact malcolm@edwardwilliam.com.

For more information on Edward William Marine Insurance see ad on page 38.

Curaçao Marine Update

Hurricane season is coming up! Are you making plans? Keep calm and sail on to Curacao! Don't forget to make your reservation in advance: space is filling up so don't wait too long.



Curaçao Marine is foremost a technical marina, where lots of technical maintenance and repair services are offered onsite.

Curaçao Marine's 60-ton Roodberg trailer has been fully operational as of mid-February. The first month the crew did a lot of tests and training to be able to take on the big ones. So far so good!

For more information on Curaçao marine see ad on page 14.

Dominica Sees Increase in Yachting Visitors

Victoria Hockley reports: Recently ranked one of the top ten ethical countries in the world by Ethical Traveller, the small island nation of Dominica is fast becoming a favourite destination for Caribbean travellers.

Hubert J. Winston, owner and managing director of destination management company Dominica Yacht Services says, "We have seen a steady increase in yachting arrivals into the ports of Roseau and Portsmouth every year for over ten years. Business is great; we had a wonderful season and are already looking forward to 2015."

Dominica's tropical rainforests, one of which is on the UNESCO list of World Heritage sites, cover two thirds of the island and are home to 1,200 plant species. With an abundance of rivers, lakes, streams, and waterfalls visitors are never far away from nature at its best. Hubert continued, "We focus on eco-tours because just two minutes inland from the coast, you will find nature at its best. Dominica is truly a unique island. Visitors can take a high-energy hike up to our famous boiling lake and a host of remote waterfalls including Victoria Falls, or opt for a more leisurely journey to the Trafalgar Falls or the Emerald Pool. You can even experience the beauty of Dominica's verdant forests by taking a flora and fauna tour. There really is something for everyone."

With a rich history and breath-taking landscapes, Dominica is a destination that combines eco-tourism and luxury travel to give visitors an experience of a lifetime.

For more information about Dominica Yacht Services see ad in the Market Place section, pages 42 through 45.

IGY Launches School Maritime Outreach Programme

At IGY Rodney Bay Marina in St. Lucia on March 28th, a group of 30 children from the Gros Islet Infant and Primary School embarked on a day of maritime fun hosted by the staff and management of Island Global Yachting (IGY). The School Maritime Outreach Programme is a new initiative introduced by IGY, which is designed to familiarize primary-aged children in St. Lucia with the joys of sailing and the potential of the maritime industries to offer a future career.



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The children, aged from six to ten, along with their teachers, were welcomed by Simon Bryan, General Manager of IGY Rodney Bay Marina, who introduced them to the operations of the marina, and presented the school with a certificate at the end of the day's programme. Bryan described the event as a huge success that went beyond the team's expectations.

"The kids had a fantastic time, and it gave them a great introduction to what we do at the marina. We like to think that these school children are the future employees of the maritime sector in St. Lucia. It is also a great opportunity to give back to the community. We'll be doing several events like this a year for kids from six to 12 years old, and there are other initiatives underway for teenagers and young adults, to get them involved in the maritime industries."

The day was filled with demonstrations and practical sessions, as well as entertaining activities, and the kids were split into teams of six to enjoy the hands-on experience.

A lesson in nautical knots kept them "tied up" and coming back for more; a visit to the "Pirate Ship" *Brig Unicorn* included a hair-raising crossing on the tiny (but very exciting) pontoon bridge, costumes, singing and dancing; a trip on an IGY tender took them out to the lagoon and the VHF radio training was a great hit as the teams communicated with each other using official maritime lingo from either end of the marina.

The students were also introduced to small boats and dinghies by former St. Lucia Yacht Club boathouse manager, Ryan Alexander, who is now an employee of IGY. The group was also given a short insight into the sport of sailing by Youth Sailing Coach, Steve Brajkovich, who encouraged the kids to give it a try, especially the girls.

IGY currently sponsors children from the Gros Islet community in the Youth Sailing Programme, and the company is committed to continuing their support.

IGY Marketing and Events Manager, Alana Mathurin explained the objective: "A lot of the children had never been in the marina, or on a boat on the water, so this was an opportunity for them to learn about what we do and maybe interest them in the maritime industries as a future career. The kids really enjoyed all the activities, and even those who were a bit scared of the water eventually warmed to the experience."

IGY would like to thank Gros Islet MP Emma Hippolyte, represented on the day by Rosie Fregis, community liaisons Kenson Casimir and Saralee Williams, Nick and Carmen Taylor of Bread Basket Café for providing lunch, and all the IGY staff who were involved in the event.

IGY plans to hold another School Maritime Outreach Programme event in June.

For more information on IGY Rodney Bay Marina visit www.igy-rodneybay.com.

Propane Refills in Dominica

Laurie and Dawn Corbett report: In response to the loss of the overnight propane-tank filling service in Portsmouth, Dominica, Portsmouth Area Yacht Security (PAYS) members are attempting to provide an alternative, with propane tank fills in Roseau being provided as part of unique island tours. Please ask your marine greeter for details.

Sailors intending on an extended stay in Portsmouth can consider a Tuesday drop-off at the local Budget Marine outlet for a Thursday return. PAYS is continuing to search for a stable and long-term overnight propane service-delivery option for Portsmouth marine customers.

PAYS is an association of yacht service providers dedicated to providing, in the Prince Rupert Bay area of Dominica, a safe and enjoyable location for cruisers and charterers. Their members include government trained and licensed marine and land tour guides, taxi drivers, restaurant owners, and others. Their group cooperation has resulted in overnight anchorage patrols, regular group barbecues, and other activities.

For more information visit Portsmouth Area Yacht Security on Facebook.

Health Service in Carriacou

Carriacou Health Services (CHS), located on Main Street, Hillsborough, offers testing services and specialist consultations that complement what is available at Carriacou's other health facilities. These services include X-rays, ultrasound and surgery.

For more information visit www.chs-health.com.

New Maine Cat 38

Maine Cat announces the introduction of the newest member to the Maine Cat family of open bridgedeck, high-performance cruising catamarans. The new Maine Cat 38 has been designed to fill the void in the sailing multihull market for an affordable, go anywhere, high-performance cruiser that can comfortably carry over two tons of payload. Her high-aspect daggerboards and rudders retract vertically to allow beaching and only 19 inches of draft when fully loaded. A slender beam-to-length ratio of close to 12:1 provides sparkling performance with a shorter rig and smaller, easier-to-handle sails. Maine Cat was the first production multihull builder to eliminate the typical "back wall" on the bridgedeck and create a huge "great room" cockpit with 360-degree visibility. This innovative design will be available in modular components that can be shipped inexpensively anywhere in the world with final assembly completed near your home waters.



The new Maine Cat 38 will be displayed at the upcoming Annapolis sailboat show on October 9th through 13th, 2014. A brand new Maine Cat 38 will be available in the Bahamas for bareboat charter the winter of 2015.

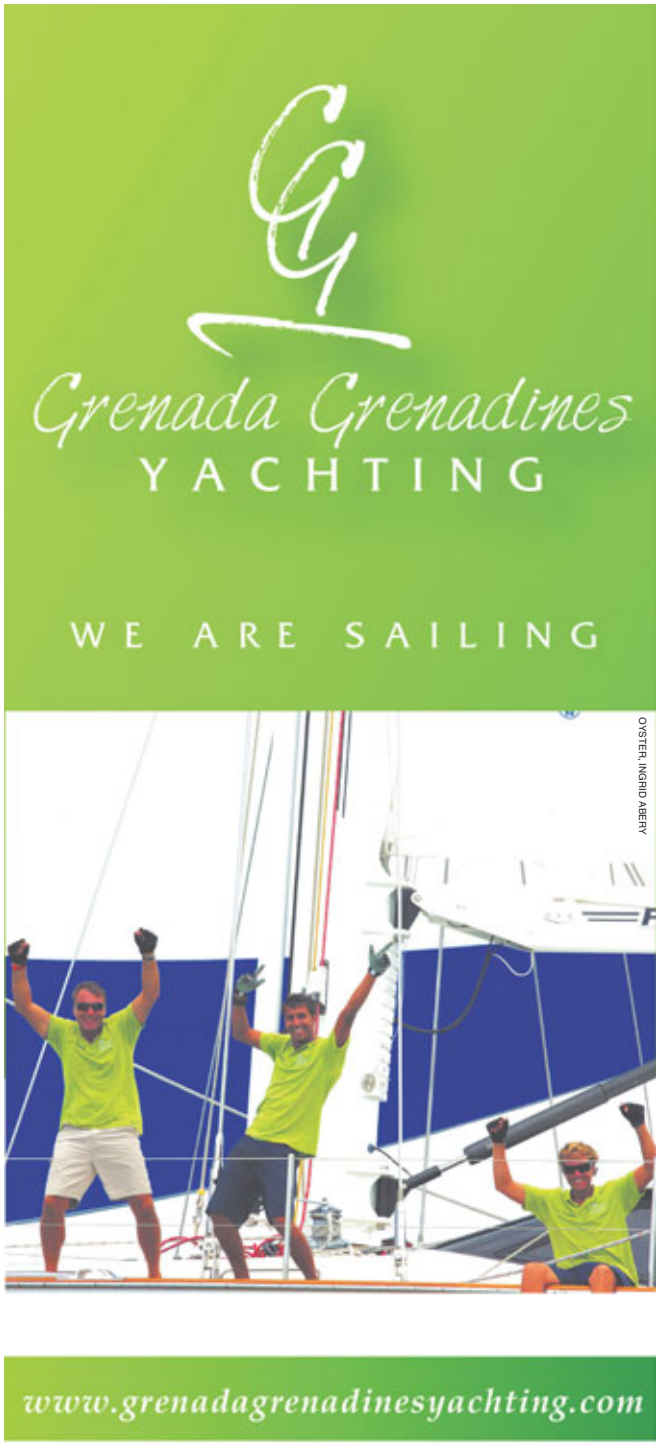
For more information visit www.mecat.com.

Ocean Cruising Club's 60th Anniversary Cookery Book

From the Galley of... includes more than 250 recipes that are regularly prepared on small sailing boats. These recipes were written by members of the Ocean Cruising Club, who have been caring for and feeding crew on the world's oceans for 60 years. Frances Rennie, who coordinated and collated the massive project, has lived with these recipes for more than a year. "Each comes with a story, naturally, and it has been a great experience communicating with adventurous cruisers all over the world. Scores sent in their favourites from the most remote regions. It was a thrill to collect their contributions."

The book is available at Amazon.com.

For more information on the Ocean Cruising Club visit www.oceancruisingclub.org.





Caribbean Eco-News

45th Anniversary of Project Tektite I in USVI

Forty-five years ago a small group of researchers took up residence in a unique underwater laboratory in Lameshur Bay on St. John, USVI. Sponsored by the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration



(NASA) and the Navy, Project Tektite was developed to provide an environment similar to space for training and scientific purposes, as well as to study marine life. It focused on conducting underwater research while breathing a mixed-gas atmosphere. The first Tektite project lasted from February 15th to April 15th, 1969.

As part of life underwater, the aquanauts left the habitat in dive gear to perform scientific experiments. One experiment studied the way sand tilefish made burrowing nests. In several experiments, the researchers were able to prove that the fish created a habitat by moving pieces of coral strewn on the ocean floor to one spot to build their nests.

The Virgin Islands Environmental Resource Station (VIERS), which operates the former Tektite site for the University of the Virgin Islands, marked the 45th anniversary of Project Tektite I with a celebration on March 29th. Public tours of the Tektite Underwater Habitat Museum at VIERS were offered. Recent museum additions include updated artifact displays, a miniature model of the interior of the underwater habitat, and life-size replicas of the habitat's control room and living quarters. Museum visitors have been on the increase each year since its founding in 2006.



Forty-five years ago, the Tektite project investigated the effects of living and working underwater for prolonged periods of time. If you are interested in visiting the Tektite Museum on St. John, contact info@tektitemuseum.org

VIERS' shoreside cabins, which served as the base camp for Project Tektite, are now used to support UVI's research facility within the Virgin Islands National Park.

Thanks to the University of the Virgin Islands and the St. Croix Source *for information in this report.*

For more information visit www.islands.org/viers.

The Latest on Lionfish

Jamaica is reporting a big decline in sightings of lionfish. Some four years after a national campaign got started to slash numbers of the venomous predator, Jamaica's National Environment and Planning Agency is reporting a 66-percent drop in sightings of lionfish in coastal waters with depths of 75 feet (23 metres).

According to a recent report by David McFadden of the Associated Press, Dayne Buddo, a Jamaican marine ecologist who focuses on marine invaders at the University of the West Indies, attributes much of the local decrease in sightings to a growing appetite for lionfish fillets. He said that Jamaican fishermen are now selling lionfish briskly at markets.

"After learning how to handle them, the fishermen have definitely been going after them harder, especially spear fishermen. I believe persons here have caught on to the whole idea of consuming them," Buddo said.

Lionfish, a native of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, have been colonizing the Caribbean for years. They have been such a worrying problem that divers are encouraged to capture them whenever they can to protect reefs and native marine life already burdened by pollution, overfishing and the effects of climate change. Across the region, governments, conservation groups and dive shops have been sponsoring fishing tournaments and other efforts to go after slow-swimming lionfish to try and ameliorate an already severe crisis.

But, McFadden notes, just because shallow coastal waters have seen declines, the fast-breeding species is hardly on the way out. Football-sized lionfish are daily caught in fishing pots set in deeper waters that spear fishermen and recreational divers never see.

In Jamaica, targeted efforts to remove them are ongoing even as a national lionfish project financed by the Global Environment Facility and the UN Environment Program project recently ran its course after four and a half years.

"I don't think we'll ever get rid of it, but I think for the most part we can control it, especially in marine protected areas where people are going after it very intensively and consistently," Buddo said.

Meanwhile, five teams from Union Island and Mayreau in the Grenadines caught 155 lionfish in the first Union Island Lionfish Derby, sponsored by the Tobago Cays Marine Park in early April. Lesroy Noel of the TCMP told *I Witness News* (www.iwnsvg.com) that the catch significantly reduced the population of the invasive predator in local waters.

Team Green Diamond won the EC$500 cash prize for bringing in the most lionfish, Team Kevisha got EC$300 for second place and Team Grenadines Dive claimed EC$200 for the third place.

—Continued on next page

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The EC$250 cash prize for the single largest lionfish went to Team Kevisha, for a fish that was 15 and a half inches long, and Team Grenadines Dive earned the same for getting the smallest lionfish, five and a half inches long.



BRIAN HICKS

Crunch! As reported at www.advancedaquarist.com, this photo taken near CoCo View Resort on Roatan shows a Mutton Snapper attacking a lionfish. The snapper bit the lionfish once, circled around, attacked a second time and then ate the whole fish

The day continued with samples of lionfish in a beer-egg-and-coconut batter served with a chili-and-orange-juice dip prepared by chef Digby Lewis from Anchorage Yacht Club, and both jerk lionfish and grilled lionfish created by chef Teroy Wilson of Big City Restaurant. For many passers-by, this was their first taste of lionfish and the response was very favourable.

"All in all, our First Annual Union Island Lionfish Derby was a great effort to control the voracious and venomous species in the waters around the Southern Grenadines," said Ken Williams, manager of the TCMP (tobagocays.org). "Not only did we get 155 of these invasive predators out of our waters, we also fed and educated lots of Union people and visitors alike."

However, with lionfish so widespread regionally, often at depths unreachable by divers, and in some areas carrying ciguatoxin, which makes them inedible, there is more to the battle against lionfish than hunting them for food. According to an April 9th article by Bill Kossler in the *St. Croix Source* (stcroixsource.com), preliminary results of a new study at Buck Island, St. Croix suggest that a tightly focused lionfish removal program may be able to preserve local fisheries from this voracious predator. Total eradication of the lionfish is unlikely, so the study instead will look at what sort of and how much suppression it will take, and at what cost, to preserve local fish stocks.

For the last year, the US National Park Service, Oregon State University, Reef Environmental Education Foundation and the University of the Virgin Islands have been working with dive volunteers to study different approaches to suppressing the lionfish population.

While lionfish have been in Florida for two decades, it was not until 2004 that one was spotted in the reefs of the Bahamas. Now the invasive species is found from the coast of North Carolina to the coast of Paraguay and throughout the Caribbean. It has been found in all types of environments, from coastal mangroves to 1,000 feet deep. In some areas where lionfish are unchecked, a 95-percent reduction in fish biomass has been seen.

Oregon State University conservation research fellow Stephanie Green said researchers collected data on lionfish population density's relationship to what proportion of the local fish communities are eaten, to select specific sites to target for lionfish removal. They carefully measured and laid out study sites in different depths and types of undersea terrain around Buck Island. Volunteer divers came out every two months and removed lionfish from the selected sites and tracked the efficiency and cost of culling lionfish below target levels.

One part of the puzzle is how many lionfish need to be present before local fish populations begin to plummet, Green said, showing data from a number of sites indicating that any more than two or three lionfish presages a sharp drop in local fish. How often they have to be removed to keep the numbers at a manageable level is another part of the study.

On some sites, they removed every lionfish and "as soon as we stopped, three months later, the numbers were right up to where they were before we removed any lionfish," Green said. But in other locations, periodic sweeps kept the numbers low enough.

They will be analyzing the data and should have some final results over the summer, Green said. Ultimately they hope to identify "the threshold density above which lionfish start to cause problems and things start to get bad," Green said. "Can we use that as a target for control? I think so. If we can keep lionfish below this sweet spot we can, I think, maintain populations [of local fishes]".

Unfortunately, 12 percent of the lionfish tested in the Buck Island study exceeded the US Food and Drug Administration's limit for the toxin that causes the illness ciguatera, making the "eat them to beat them" strategy less useful here than in places where this food-borne illness is not an issue.

While it remains to be seen what impact fishing and marketing of lionfish meat can have in the Caribbean, scientists are still researching what keeps lionfish in check in their native range. On that front, news from the Saba Conservation Foundation (www.sabapark.org) brings a ray of hope. Local fishermen in Saba reported that while gutting Blackfin Snappers (*Lutjanus buccanella*), which are caught in traps on the Saba Bank in depths between 90 and 108 metres, they regularly find lionfish of up to 20 centimetres (eight inches) in length in the snappers' stomachs.

The Foundation writes, "It would be a critical breakthrough if it can be verified that Blackfin Snappers feed on lionfish. Lionfish are thought to have no predators in the Caribbean and thus are spreading exponentially throughout the region, causing a tremendous threat to native marine fauna and local fisheries." Paul Hoetjes of the Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland in Bonaire and member of the Saba Bank National Park Steering Committee stated that it would be the first proof of natural predation on lionfish in the Caribbean.

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REGATTA NEWS

Grenada's New Junior Sailing Event

A new junior sailing competition in Grenada — the Dr. EP Stan Friday Glenelg Junior Sailing Event — sponsored and organized by Glenelg Spring Water, made an excellent start to the company's week of activities to mark its 20th Anniversary.



STEVE BRETT

A fleet of ten boats and 11 young sailors from GYC Sailing School and Gouyave Sailing School took to the water on March 16th at Grenada Yacht Club and, despite very light winds, enjoyed a full day of competitive dinghy racing. The sailors raced in two classes, 13 Years & Under and 14 Years & Over, and even with little breeze, completed six races throughout the day.

In the 13 Years & Under Class, prize winners were Trevell James (with five bullets) in first place, Jamill Charles second, and Shevin Joseph third. In 14 Years & Over, Shakeem Robertson was first, followed by Karzim James second, and Ralph Francis third.

The winners were presented with a selection of prizes provided by Glenelg Spring Water and all participating sailors received certificates to mark this new event. Dr. Michelle Friday of Glenelg Spring Water also presented first-place sailors in each class with a trophy, and there was a special prize for eight-year-old Tchidi Williams, the youngest sailor to take part. As a thank-you to instructors Kevin Banfield of Gouyave Sailing School and GYC's Randy Manwarring, the company presented donations to go towards maintenance costs and the running of their clubs.

Dr. Friday told the group that her father, Dr. Stan Friday, who was the founder of Glenelg Spring Water, had been a very keen sailor and a past Commodore of Grenada Yacht Club, so it was especially fitting to return to the club to run a sailing event in his name to mark the company's 20th Anniversary. She went on to say that Glenelg Spring Water was very keen to support the growth of sailing in Grenada, and particularly keen to be involved with young sailors. She announced that it was planned from now on to run this event annually as part of the junior sailing calendar of events.

To close the day, James Benoit from Glenelg Spring Water and President of the Grenada Sailing Association thanked Dr. Friday and the staff of Glenelg Spring Water for their time and support. He also thanked Grenada Yacht Club for hosting the event and especially Jill, the GYC secretary, for her help with registration, administration and scoring. Thanks also went to both Club instructors, Reece and Dennis, for mark laying and safety boat duties, and to Mikey from WEE FM and Steve Brett for their photography.

Winners Named at 41st St. Thomas International Regatta

Carol Bareuther reports: Top-quality competition, razor-close finishes and camaraderie that spanned decades for some and days for others proved that in spite of a new name, the St. Thomas International Regatta (STIR), held March 28th through 30th, has remained the "Crown Jewel" of Caribbean yacht racing. Nowhere was this more apparent than on the third and final day of sailing. No one easily walked



DEAN BARNES

away with a win. Plus, the podium was filled with teams representing the Caribbean, US, and Europe.

First-time racing in the STIR proved a charm for *Near Miss*, Franck Noel's TP 52. The Switzerland-based team finished by winning every race but one in the CSA – Racing O Class. That defeat came at the hands of the Netherlands' Peter Vroon aboard his Ker 46, *Tonnerre de Breskens 3*, which finished second. "The racing was very good, good competition and the courses were very nice around the islands," explains Benoit Briand, *Near Miss* team manager. "It would have been easy to make a big mistake and finish last in this class, but we sailed the boat properly and grew more confident as a team every day."

The final 300 yards of the regatta's last race is where the winner was decided in the CSA – Racing 1 Class. "It was really hard for us to race against the Melges 24," explains Puerto Rico's Jaime Torres, winner aboard his Melges 32, *Smile and Wave*. "We never saw the 24; it was an unknown target. "We just knew we had to race as fast as we could and it worked. Next year, we expect to have at least five Melges 32s here in the Caribbean and have our own one-design class."

The USA's Rick Wesslund soundly defended his last year's class win by once again championing the CSA – Racing 2 Class. What changed is that Wesslund and his long-time crew were sailing their new J/122, *El Ocaso*, rather than their former J/120 of the same name. "We didn't know how big a shift in gears it would be to sail the new boat, but we did it and we won," Wesslund reports.

Bad Girl, the USVI's Robert Armstrong's J/100, had a good day sailing against Puerto Rico's Jonathan Lipuscek's J/105 *Dark Star*. "We knocked heads with them all weekend fought them tooth and nail and ultimately beat them," says the USVI's Carlos Skov, *Bad Girl's* trimmer, about the competition with *Dark Star*. "I have to say the *Dark Star* team is a class act. Great sailing — that's what it's all about."

Team Line Honors lived up to its name by taking the prize in the fiercely competitive one-design IC-24 Class. Only three points separated the USVI's Taylor Canfield's *Team Line Honors* from second place finisher, Puerto Rico's Marco Teixidor aboard *Cachondo*. "Our only goal in the last race was to get him (Teixidor) in back of the fleet," says Canfield. "To do that, we match raced him at the start, then met him tack for tack once off the line. We were about a mile off from the rest of the fleet. When we came back in, we were able to get into the middle of the fleet and move up to second by the end to win overall by a three-point spread."

The BVI's Jon Charlton's C&C 41, *Reba–Team Red Stripe*, took first place in the CSA Non-Spinnaker Class. "I've never seen a Hunter 54 go so fast," says Charlton of his chief competition, the USVI's Warren Stryker's *Botox Barbie*. "Our team has been actively racing for the last four years and it's made a huge difference in our performance."

In the Beach Cat Class, it was the USVI's John Holmberg and crew Terri McKenna that finished first aboard their Nacra 17, *Flight Risk*. "There were challenging conditions with the big breeze and swell, and the difficulty of sailing by handicap, but we sailed our best and it turned out well. During the regatta, we were able to try different things like rig settings and measure ourselves against the other boats. That certainly helped us in our bid to represent the territory in the 2016 Summer Olympics."

Finally, in the new "Fun" or unmeasured class, it was the USA-based team aboard the chartered Moorings 4300 catamaran, *Kastor Polux*, which scored the prize. "Each year we try a different Caribbean regatta," says Randy Alcorn, tactician. "I have to say, the people were great and the weather wonderful. We couldn't ask for anything else."

Regatta winners were presented with engraved crystal compliments of Little Switzerland. The St. Thomas International Regatta is sponsored by Captain Morgan and Heineken, distributed by Bellows International; Little Switzerland; and the US Virgin Islands Department of Tourism.

For full results visit www.stthomasinternationalregatta.com or www.yachtscoring.com.

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St. Barths Bucket 2014: A Nailbiter Finish

Finishes at the St. Barths Bucket 2014 were extra close on March 30th and decided some class wins by mere seconds. The final day of the three-day series presented winds that again enabled a quick pace around the race course, this time in a "wrong way" (clockwise direction) around the island that measured 24.5 nautical miles for the Gazelles and Elegantes Classes and 21 for the Grandes Dames and Mademoiselles.



Perhaps most dramatically, the 45-metre Perini Navi sloop *Clan VIII* finished a mere five seconds ahead of another Perini Navi, the 58-metre ketch *Seahawk*, in Grandes Dames class, preventing *Seahawk* from snatching victory overall and allowing the 29-metre S&S sloop *Altair* to slip in and take the top spot on the scoreboard. "If it had been the other way around and we had finished ahead of *Clan VIII* by five seconds, we would've won the class,' said *Seahawk's* captain, Robert "Johnno" Jonstone, who called it a rollercoaster day: "So exciting, but so draining."

Right at the start, his team's giant spinnaker, with over 1,000 square metres of sail cloth, filled before it got to the lock at the top of the mast, and the halyard broke. "We crossed the line dragging it in the water," said Jonstone, "but we pulled it out and wooled it up; then while sailing on the back side of the island, we sent someone up the rig to sort things and change the lock over — it was an amazing effort." The *Seahawk* team then mustered the confidence to hoist the spinnaker again on the relatively short downwind stretch to the finish line, but bad luck was still riding with them. "We had 500 metres to go to the finish, and when the halyard went up it wouldn't jam in the lock."

Clan VIII and *Seahawk* crossed the finish line in third and fourth, with yet another Perini Navi, the 50-metre ketch *Silencio*, and *Altair* taking first and second, respectively. In final cumulative scoring, *Altair* was one point ahead of *Seahawk*, with *Silencio* falling into third and *Clan VIII* finishing sixth.

The 54-metre Vitters-built ketch *Marie* also had a tantalizingly close finish with Royal Huisman's 34-metre *Unfurled* and the 30-metre Swan sloop *Varsovie* to win the Elegantes Class and, in addition, overall honors, based on turning in the best cumulative score (6 points on the merit of a 1-3-2 scoreline) from among all classes.

"We had to win today, or if *Varsovie* won (which she did), we had to at least beat *Unfurled*," said Peter Wilson, who managed *Marie's* build and served as her safety officer here. *Marie* finished second to *Varsovie*, and *Unfurled* finished third, close enough to *Marie* that when Wilson was asked how far she was behind, he laughed and said, "40.1 metres!" It is 40 meters that must be left between these superyachts at all times while racing in order to ensure that no collisions occur, and it is because of this international superyacht rule that safety officers have great say in all decisions made by their afterguards.

Wilson said decisions had to be made quickly, especially on the back side of the island where the wind got very shifty. "We got in the traffic of the Perinis and that was an enormous part of our strategic plan for what happened next," said Wilson, explaining that his team helped force *Unfurled* into the bad air of the 54-metre Perini Navi ketch *Parsifal III*, which caused *Unfurled* to have to jibe away and lose precious time.

The 34-metre RP sloop *Nilaya* finished fourth on Day Three in the Gazelles class, and that performance, combined with two second-place finishes from the Friday's and Saturday's racing, was strong enough to give her class victory. The largest yacht here at 66.7 metres (216 feet), *Hetairos*, won the last day's race, with the 45-metre RP sloop *Visione* taking second, landing the latter yacht in runner-up position overall.

For Mademoiselles Class, it was the 27.5-metre Stephens yawl *Bequia* that made the power play to knock *Moonbird* from her first-place perch secured the day before. Again, it was down to the wire at the finish, with the Alloy Yacht *Blue Too*, *Bequia*, *Moonbird* and *Sarafin*, in that order, finishing within five minutes of one another.

"The take-away is that I don't know if there has ever been a better-weather Bucket than this," said Event Director and Race Chairman Peter Craig. "It was 15 to 20 knots, moderate-to-upper-end for three days, which was challenging for sailors and fabulous for spectators. Sailing to the superyacht rule can be a burden to get used to, but the level to which everyone sailed... you'd think you were at a conventional regatta."

For full results visit bucketregattas.com/stbarths.

ON THE HORIZON…

Opti Regatta, Clinic & Team Race in St. Thomas

The 2014 International Optimist Regatta, Sea Star Clinic and Sea Star Team Race will take place in St. Thomas from June 16th to 22nd.

Three clinic days, team racing and three race days for beginner and advanced sailors alike makes this one of the most instructive and competitive junior sailing regattas in the region. Plus, it's a great way for



DEAN BARNES

Caribbean sailors to get valuable experience on a crowded start line and for visiting sailors from colder climates to tune up for summer national and continental championships.

More than 100 eight- to 15-year-old junior sailors are expected to attend this St. Thomas Yacht Club and Virgin Island Sailing Association hosted regatta, sanctioned by the Caribbean Sailing Association.

Register now at www.regattanetwork.com. For the Notice of Regatta, Registration Forms, information on hotel discounts, etcetera, visit www.styc.net.

RORC Transatlantic Race Bound for Grenada

Grenada has been chosen by the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC) as the destination for the finish of its new 2,800-nautical-mile race across the Atlantic. The Grenada Tourism Authority and Camper & Nicholsons Marinas will host the first edition of the race, which will start in the Canary Islands on November 29th from Puerto Calero, Lanzarote.

Camper & Nicholsons Marinas are supporting the race by giving all finishers free berthing after arrival and discounted berthing for those who wish to stay for an extended period. The boats will be berthed in Port Louis Marina in St George's, the island's capital.

—*Continued on page 36*



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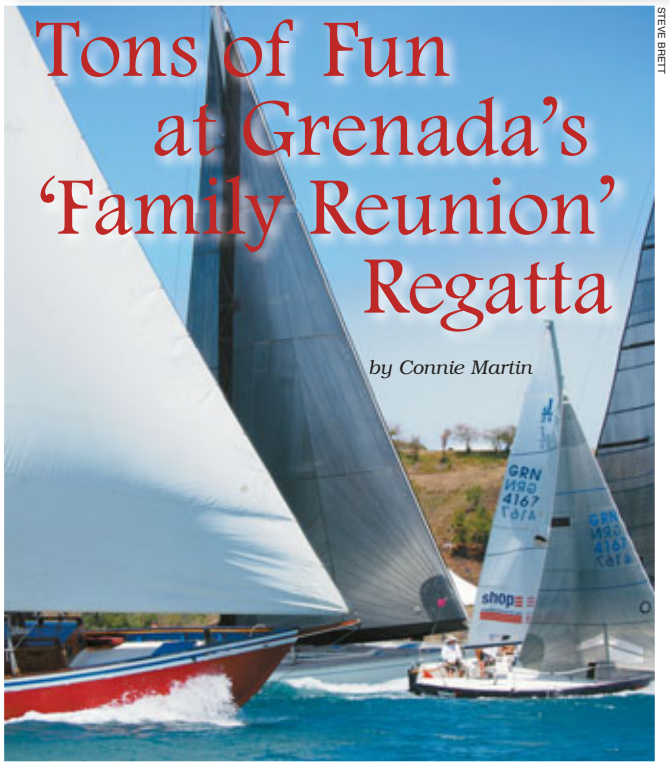
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Tons of Fun at Grenada's 'Family Reunion' Regatta

by Connie Martin



STEVE BRETT

Rarely are the words "we could have used more wind" spoken in connection with the South Grenada Regatta (SGR), where skippers normally batten down the hatches and battle in a wet and windy weekend of racing. But Mother Nature smiled upon the south coast of Grenada from March 6th through 9th this year and delivered some of the best racing conditions in the six-year history of the regatta, despite sailors having to hone their light-wind skills on the last day.

Still a young event, SGR may not have the numbers that other regattas do, but it does have a loyal following: racers attend because it's well-organized, has a fun "family reunion" vibe, and the host venue — Le Phare Bleu Marina & Boutique Hotel — offers outstanding facilities.

"About 90 percent of all possible boats in Grenada, both local and internationally flagged, are racing in this regatta every year," says Robbie Yearwood, skipper of the J/24 *IWW Die Hard*, who's participated in all but one SGR and has been overall winner twice before. "That's quite an accomplishment for SGR."

"I love this regatta," adds Yearwood. "It's very casual which is nice, the races aren't too long or too hard for novices, and it attracts a wide spectrum of sailors. We always have a lot of fun here, and I look forward to it every year!"

Big CSA Cruising Class

Fourteen boats participated this year. Many were faithful racers who come almost every year, but this year also saw the return of some boats that haven't participated in a while, and even a few first-timers.

Not one boat chose to race with spinnaker, so one downside of this year's regatta was that all CSA-measured yachts were amalgamated into one large Cruising Class, which had a few skippers grumbling about their handicaps. Three boats were entered in Fun Class, and only one was in Multi-Hull Class.

One boat missing from the roster this year was Mike Bingley's Beneteau 38, *Tulaichean II*, owing to a major rigging problem. Luckily for Mike, UK's Andrew Yates, long-time SGR participant and owner of the Dufour 44 *Piccolo*, had advised that he wouldn't be in Grenada to race this year. "When Andrew found out I was without a boat, he quickly offered *Piccolo* to me rather than having her just sit at the dock," says Bingley. Based on the results, both skipper and owner should be well pleased with the deal.

SGR's 2014 fleet racing program featured four title-cup races: two races each on the Friday and Sunday, March 7th and 9th. Three of the four courses were new this year, as were some unusual race marks, including the tugboat *Calico*. Near panic erupted for the lead boats the first time around this mark when skippers realized that *Calico*'s nylon anchor rode was floating some metres off the tug, forcing all boats to broaden their reach and avoid hitting each other and the tug while rounding their mark. Another unique mark was a floating spectator barge in the middle of Clarkes Court Bay, where great excitement occurred for both racers, who were wildly cheered on by an enthusiastic barge crowd as they made their mark, and spectators, who were thrilled to be in the heart of racing action where they could almost reach out and touch the boats as they spun around the barge.

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In Cruising Class, where boats ranged in size from a J/24 to a Swan 53, sub-classes developed. *Piccolo* was the fastest of the larger boats, with Jeff Rose on his Swan 48, *Roxie*; Peter 'Champie' Evans with his new Elan 37, *Quay 3*; and Dieter Burkhalter's Swan 53, *Blanquilla*, in hot pursuit. Although sometimes narrowing the gap from a few boat lengths to just a few feet, nobody could beat *Piccolo* across the finish line.

A great battle raged between long-time rivals, Jason Fletcher on his Albin Stratus 36, *Apero*; Jerry Stewart's Hughes 38, *Bloody Mary*; Robbie Yearwood on *IWW Die Hard*, and SGR first-timer Henry Crallan on the Swan 40 *Tabasco*, who were often neck and neck as they rounded the marks. Competition in the last race was particularly fierce with the lead changing several times. Danny Donelan on the traditional Petite Martinique sloop *Savvy* and Victor Cox on the Beneteau 432 *Adleme* were also quite evenly matched.

IWW Die Hard won most of the top Cruising Class honours and trophies, and was set to achieve the Grand Slam had it not been for *Piccolo*, who took first place in the last race. Strong performances by *Quay 3* and *Apero* had them taking the majority of second and third places.

Fun and Multi-Hull Classes

Competition was also tight in Fun Class, but Tom Batty on the IW Varvet 31 *Madonna* reigned supreme with bullets in all four races. Rene Froehlich's Nautiber 32, *Dione*, and Rodney Hall on the Achilles 18 *Caradow* alternated in second and third.

"It's *Madonna's* 40th birthday this year," declared Batty, "and despite tough competition, it was great to see that the old girl can still pick up her skirts and run!"

Richard Szyjan's F18, *Category 6*, was the only entry in Multi-Hull Class, thus taking first in all races. "Sailing plus sport plus speed equals fun," says Richard, and he was indeed having fun.

Winning Ways

Deservedly, Robbie Yearwood on *IWW Die Hard* was named SGR's 2014 Overall Winner. To what did Robbie attribute his success?

"The south coast requires a lot of strategy for small boats," replies Yearwood. "You have to read the conditions, which are very subtle, and read the fleet — see where they're heading and what they're experiencing."

"We were strong on tactics this year," Robbie continued, "and by paying attention to these and various other details, we could sail closer to our potential than anyone else."



ARTHUR DANIEL

Last year's overall winner, Jason Fletcher, commented, "*Apero* is set up for heavier winds and big seas, and we performed really well last year under those conditions. Robbie's boat is set up so well, and regardless of conditions he can sail his boat to handicap very well. Robbie and his *Die Hard* team are all good sailors; they're very hard to beat!"

In keeping with SGR's promise that "everyone goes home a winner", additional awards were given out after the formal presentations. Some were for significant achievements, such as Four Firsts Across the Line to *Piccolo*, Best Performing Swan to *Roxie*, and Lifetime Achievement to *Blanquilla*. Most Feared Competitor went to *Bloody Mary*, Best Dressed Crew to *Dione*, The Teaching Boat With Young Crew to *Adleme*, and Most Laid Back Boat With Cushions went — not surprisingly — to *Savvy*!

The final award, for Man Overboard During A Race, was a first for this regatta and also for *Tabasco*'s skipper, Henry Crallan.

"The third race threw up a new experience for us — losing one of our crew overboard on a downwind leg," recalls Crallan. "It should have been a straightforward affair, rounding up smartly and picking up, but having a poled-out jib slowed our reactions, and it took a long time to do this. One thing we did right was to have another crew focus on the man in the water, so we never lost sight of him," Crallan continued, "As it turned out, the mark boat saw the incident and reached him before we did, so it all ended well."

Match Racing Dismasted

Fleet racing may be the main event, but SGR's Match Racing is rapidly gaining popularity. This year's match races took place on two identical Rush 10 catamarans, which are not only available for charter in Grenada but, as Caribbean distributor for the Grenada Chocolate Company, will be delivering award-winning organic chocolate under sail to neighboring islands, thereby following the dreams of the late founder, Mott Green.

Ten teams registered; some were from fleet-racing boats, but this event also attracted additional island-wide racing enthusiasts, including a local sailing team from the community of Woburn, and two teams from yachts that recently participated in the Oyster World Rally.

Winds were high, and competition was exciting and often tight during the first round. At the start of the second heat, however, one of the Rush 10 masts came down and racing was halted. One crewmember was dunked, but thankfully no one was hurt, and given that each team had at least raced once in the first round, racers walked away happy, especially when SGR handed out prizes to all participating teams.

SGR's Junior Regatta

Also on the Saturday, SGR's Junior Regatta took place at Le Phare Bleu. Ranging in ages from nine to



KENNEDY MORGAN

16 years, 15 young sailors — six from the Grenada Yacht Club, and nine from Gouyave Sailing School — competed in Mosquito dinghies. Unlike the match racers, the juniors had a full and great day of racing.

—*Continued on next page*





—*Continued from previous page*

Winners in the Under 13 Class were Jamel Charles (GYC), first; Avin McPhie and Shevin Joseph (GSS), second; and Javon Noel (GSS) third. Winners in the Over 13 Class were Karzim James (GSS), first; Shaquille Derrick (GYC), second; and Trevell James and Shakeem Robertson (GSS), third.

"Junior Sailing has always been a part of SGR," says Jana Caniga, SGR Chairman. "We've watched these young sailors grow up and develop skills and confidence, and we were thrilled to see some of them crewing on fleet and match race boats this year."

... and More Fun!

Rounding out the regatta activities was a Pirate's Trail for the kids, and highly competitive 15-Horsepower Dinghy Time Trials, where previous years' winner, Mike Bingley, again placed first.

Last, but by no means least, SGR is known for its packed-house parties and top-notch musical entertainment, and this year was no exception.

Launching the regatta was a fantastic "floating" Dinghy Concert, featuring the Rocky Pontoons party band from Switzerland. Some guests came by dinghy and rafted up to the "stage" (the tugboat *Calico* in the middle of Clarkes Court Bay), but a much larger crowd hopped onboard the *Rhum Runner* at Le Phare Bleu for a fun-filled journey to and from the concert.



CONNIE MARTIN

The Rocky Pontoons performed again at Le Phare Bleu on the Friday night, and got the dance floor hopping on Saturday when special guests Gary "Doc" Adams, and up-and-coming Grenada artistes Tammy Baldeo and Sabrina Francis joined them on stage. The Sunday's entertainment started with an energetic performance by The Pan Wizards, and the final Regatta Wrap-Up Party featured the groovy tunes of the Royal Grenada Police Party Band.

From all accounts, this year's regatta was a great success. Many racers stated their intention to return next year, including *Bloody Mary's* Jerry Stewart. "The regatta was, as always, well run with good support from sponsors. The whole environment, the marina, bar, restaurant, welcomes competitors and spectators alike. *Bloody Mary* will be there next year and I would encourage others to join me."

"We're very grateful for the positive feedback we've received to date," commented SGR Chairman, Jana Caniga. "We had some of our best-ever racing conditions this year, a good selection of boats including some first-timers, record attendance at all our nightly parties, and everyone had a great time — and that's what this regatta is all about!"

Following a well-deserved break, the Committee will soon start planning next year's event. Mark your calendars: tentative dates are March 12th through 15th, 2015.

The SGR Committee thanks all race participants and guests, volunteers, and especially their sponsors, including Grenada Tourism Authority, Island Water World, Le Phare Bleu Marina & Boutique Hotel, North South Wines, Netherlands Insurance, and Westerhall Rum as Gold Sponsors; Budget Marine, Carib-Grenada Breweries, Chocolate Rush Transport, LIME, Real Value IGA Supermarket, The Moorings, and The Wireman's House/AC-DC Electric as Silver Sponsors; Act Art & Design as Bronze Sponsor; Grenada Chiropractic, Grenada Marine, Island Dreams Yacht Services, ModOne, Palm Tree Marine, The Canvas Shop, and Underwater Solutions as Mainsail Sponsors; and Art Fabrik, Carib Sushi, Coconut Beach Restaurant, Dive Grenada, Glenelg Spring Water, McIntyre Brothers, Mount Cinnamon, Sol, Surana's Mobile Massage, True Blue Bay Resort, and Umbrellas Beach Bar as prize sponsors and supporters.

For full results visit www.southgrenadaregatta.com.

2014 South Grenada Regatta Fleet Race Winners

NORTH SOUTH WINES VEUVE CLICQUOT CUP
Cruising Class
1) *IWW Die Hard*, J/24, Robbie Yearwood
2) *Quay 3*, Elan 37, Peter 'Champie' Evans
3) *Apero*, Albin Stratus 36, Jason Fletcher
Fun Class
1) *Madonna*, IW Varvet 31, Tom Batty
2) *Caradow*, Achilles 18, Rodney Hall
3) *Dione*, Nautiber 32, Rene Froehlich
Multi-Hull Class
1) *Category 6*, Diam F18, Richard Szyjan
CUP WINNER: *IWW Die Hard*

NETHERLANDS INSURANCE CUP
Cruising Class
1) *IWW Die Hard*, J/24, Robbie Yearwood
2) *Apero*, Albin Stratus 36, Jason Fletcher
3) *Quay 3*, Elan 37, Peter 'Champie' Evans
Fun Class
1) *Madonna*, IW Varvet 31, Tom Batty
2) *Dione*, Nautiber 32, Rene Froehlich
3) *Caradow*, Achilles 18, Rodney Hall
Multi-Hull Class
1) *Category 6*, Diam F18, Richard Szyjan
CUP WINNER: *IWW Die Hard*

WESTERHALL RUM CUP
Cruising Class
1) *IWW Die Hard*, J/24, Robbie Yearwood
2) *Quay 3*, Elan 37, Peter 'Champie' Evans
3) *Piccolo*, Dufour 44, Mike Bingley
Fun Class
1) *Madonna*, IW Varvet 31, Tom Batty
2) *Dione*, Nautiber 32, Rene Froehlich
Multi-Hull Class
1) *Category 6*, Diam F18, Richard Szyjan
CUP WINNER: *IWW Die Hard*

ISLAND WATER WORLD CUP
Cruising Class
1) *Piccolo*, Dufour 44, Mike Bingley
2) *Quay 3*, Elan 37, Peter 'Champie' Evans
3) *IWW Die Hard*, J/24, Robbie Yearwood
Fun Class
1) *Madonna*, IW Varvet 31, Tom Batty
2) *Caradow*, Achilles 18, Rodney Hall
3) *Dione*, Nautiber 32, Rene Froehlich
Multi-Hull Class
1) *Category 6*, Diam F18, Richard Szyjan
CUP WINNER: *Piccolo*, Mike Bingley

Le Phare Bleu Cup for 2014 Overall Winner
IWW Die Hard, Robbie Yearwood

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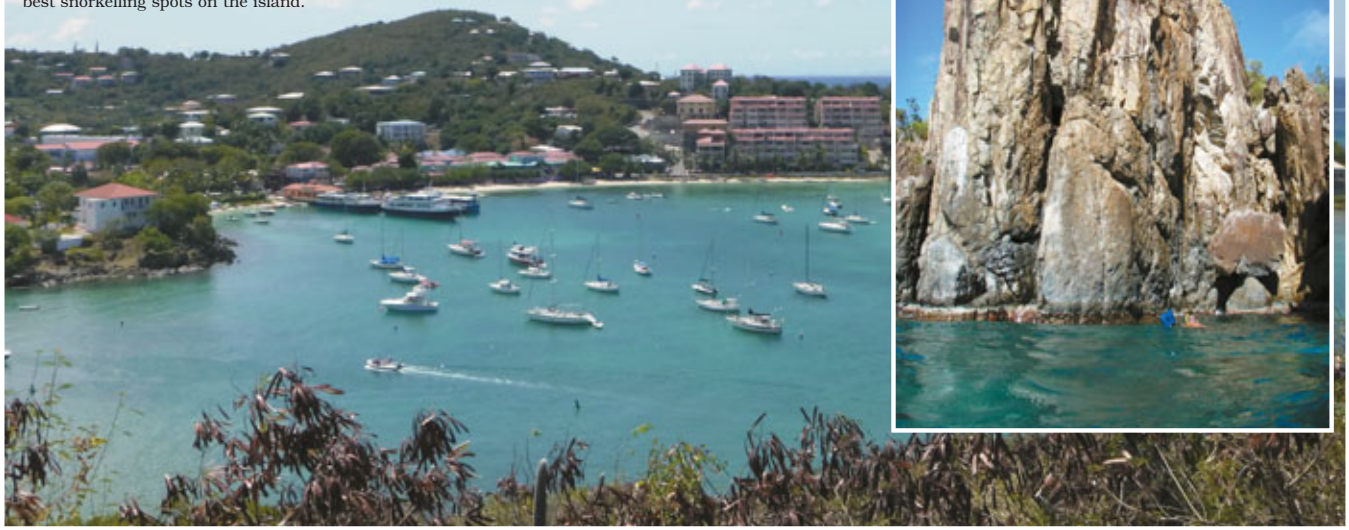
by Rosie Burr

DESTINATIONS

St. John in the US Virgin Islands is a hiker's heaven and a snorkeller's dream. Well maintained paths and trails throughout the island crisscross all over the land, many reaching right down to the anchorages below. Underwater, the snorkelling is fabulous in the surrounding coral reefs.

Over two thirds of the island of St. John is a National Park originally donated by Laurance Rockefeller in the 1950s when he fell in love with the island and bought up large parts of it. The US government then added to the park, including over 5,000 acres of underwater coral reef that is now a National Monument. More than 40 percent of the park is underwater. There are more than 20 different walks and hikes you can choose from, some easily accessed from Leinster Bay, Coral Harbor, Salt Pond Bay and Great Lameshur Bay. The US Virgin Islands National Park maintains moorings in various locations within the boundaries of the park. Day use of these moorings is free but a fee of US$15 per night is charged by an honor system, usually with a pay box on a floating pontoon. Check with the park office so you are aware of mooring buoy and national park regulations.

If you find Cruz Bay too chock-a-block with local boats to find anywhere to anchor when you come to clear in, you could always take a mooring around to the north in Caneel Bay and walk across from Honeymoon Beach with fantastic views out across the islands to the west at Lind Point. The trail brings you out by the National Park visitors' centre where you can pick up all the information you need about the hiking trails and best snorkelling spots on the island.



The anchorage at Cruz Bay is sometimes chock-a-black with local boats.

Inset: Snorkeling at Great Lameshur Bay.

Below: The US Virgin Islands National Park Visitors' Center

One of the highlights for my husband, Sim, and me was the hike we took from Great Lameshur Bay to the petroglyph site. There is a place to leave the dinghy at the dock by the ranger station. We set off early to avoid the mid-day heat. The south side of the island is fairly dry, the woodlands filled with dry shrub and plenty of prickly cacti. It is just over a two-and-a-bit-mile hike. On the way we spotted a deer — who knew these creatures would like tropical climates? — and a mongoose. Stripy and spotted butterflies fluttered about us. As we climbed higher the vegetation got greener as the ecosystems changed. The forest was peaceful except for the perpetual hum of distant insects, though strangely we never got bitten. The trail was well posted throughout and the paths well maintained — maybe too manicured for some but we liked it. We walked past sandbox trees (*Hura crepitans*) with their thorny trunks, and bromeliads clinging for dear life to others. Occasionally we caught a glimpse of the dazzling blue ocean.



Eventually we descended into the valley where we found the petroglyphs, or rock drawings, left by the Taino Indians before the days of Christopher Columbus. It is easy to see why this is a special place, perhaps sacred to the Taino people. Small, brown, freshwater pools are fed intermittently by a stream called "Living Gut". The drawings are carved into the rocks in several different places around the site. Some are reflected in the pools below them. It's hard not to think of this place as otherworldly, especially when some of the drawings look just like ET. Literally hundreds of dragonflies as well as hummingbirds and butterflies are attracted by the freshwater pools, making the scene even more extraordinary.

On our return we took a detour via an abandoned house completely overgrown with coralita vine. Back in the anchorage at Great Lameshur Bay, good snorkelling can be found in the rocky caves and grottos at the southeastern corner of the bay.

But our underwater highlight was the surprising mangrove snorkelling at the hurricane hole, Water Creek. Moorings with a two-day time limit are in place to protect the environment. Water Creek is a stunning spot where lush green mangrove meets deep blue sea — the contrast in colours is amazing. The best place to snorkel, we were told, was in the southern indentation of the bay. This is an "up close and personal" snorkel in very shallow water, with your snorkel often snagging the roots above. The water is clear, but be careful not to disturb the roots too much as the disturbed sediment will cloud your viewing. Baby lobster, small burrfish and Arrow Crabs hide in rocky crevices. Small barracuda and Queen Angel Fish loiter or dart in and out of the roots. But it is not the fish that grab your attention so much as the diverse ecosystem that clings to the mangrove roots. Vibrant colourful coral in all shapes and sizes hang or live in the forest below the water. Feather duster worms, fireworms, a variety of sponges, gorgonians, anemones and corals all live amongst the oysters in this underworld habitat. Swimming in sometimes murky mangrove water may not always appeal but if you like to snorkel, I recommend giving this mangrove fringe forest a try.

Rosie Burr and her husband, Sim Hoggarth, formerly aboard Alianna, *a 39-foot Corbin, now sail* Wandering Star, *a 44-foot custom steel cutter.*
Visit their blog at www.yacht.alianna.co.uk.



Above: Petroglyphs — rock carvings made by pre-columbian island dwellers
Below: The mangrove 'fringe forest' is a unique ecosystem and snorkeling experience



A SINGLEHANDED LOOK AT THE LEEWARDS

DESTINATIONS



Hitching a ride from Colombier to Gustavia, we passed St. Barth's airport... rather closely!

by Angelika Grüner

This was my first major solo voyage since my husband, Richard, died.

I left Trinidad at the beginning of December 2013, bound directly for the Virgin Islands. After 15 nautical miles of motoring, 12 knots of wind appeared from the east. With a reefed mainsail and full genoa, *Angelos* was doing seven and sometimes eight knots. It was fantastic; I guess because of the new moon I had some current with me. At five the next morning I passed the southwest corner of Grenada. It was dream sailing with the wind slightly south of east.

Unfortunately the weather forecast predicted a change, with strong wind on the nose and seas up to four metres. I decided to stop in St. Kitts to let the bad weather pass. About 35 nautical miles south of St. Kitts the genoa suddenly fell apart in 12 knots of wind! Really, it fell apart in bits and pieces. Richard and I had bought the sail in 1989 in Guadeloupe and during our sail around the world it was always used. I don't know how often I had patched it. This old sail had really done its job. But somehow the fact that I now needed a new sail caught me by surprise!

I reached St. Kitts along with two cruise ships, and hundreds of tourists strolled along in the tiny city of Basseterre. Check-in was easy and cost EC$30 or US$12. There were no forms to fill out; the officer just typed the ship's name in the computer and all the information came up. He only had to fill in the date and print two copies. I signed and was ready to go. The Saturday market had fresh fish out of an icebox at the beach and good-quality fruits and vegetables, mostly from Dominica, were displayed on old wooden tables nailed together from pallets, just like we had seen it done 20 years ago.

St. Martin

Rather than continue to the Virgins, I decided to sail to St. Martin, hoping to find a sail loft and order a new genoa there. In St. Kitts I had been told that the Dutch side charges for the bridge opening, plus a weekly fee of $20 for anchoring on the St. Maarten side, so I went around the west end of St. Martin to anchor "in France" on the north side, at Marigot Bay. The clear turquoise water was amazing. Asking other cruisers, I was told that check-in at Marina Fort Louis would cost 23 Euros. But if I would walk a bit and check in at the *capitanerie* at Port La Royale, I could do the whole process on a computer provided, and it would cost only 5.20 Euros.

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Of course I went to the capitanerie. The staff there was extremely friendly and I could use their WiFi for 1 Euro as well. Later I used their internet quite often.



Above: In St. Martin, a sweeping view from Fort St. Louis over Marigot and the Lagoon

Right: Homemade ice cream at the market was hard to resist...

Below: ...as was the budget-busting selection of pâtés and terrines on the French side of the island



The genoa shreds were badly entangled around the roller furler, and it was impossible to unroll it to get them down. I needed someone to hoist me up along the forestay to clear the mess and retrieve remnants of the sail for the measurements to get quotes on a new one. But the wind was too strong to work on it.

After some days I went into the lagoon, looking for calmer conditions. Before taking *Angelos* in, I had asked on which side the newly installed green markers have to be. "Port side" was the answer — twice. After the bridge I turned to starboard and promptly "parked". It turned out that I should have left the green markers on starboard! With the help of dinghies, and finally a powerboat with twin 250-horsepower engines, *Angelos* came free. But it was a hassle.

In the lagoon it was blowing like hell as well, and I had to wait a whole week to finally get the sail down. Where I had anchored in the lagoon, I quickly realized during my search for sail lofts that the distances to either side by dinghy were quite far. With my little 3.5-horse outboard it took me half an hour to get ashore and, of course, it seems I was always going against the wind, which was constantly blowing 20 to 25 knots. It nearly drove me crazy and I was always soaked. If I went to the Dutch side, to Cole Bay, that was all for the day. To visit the French side, Port La Royale, was for another day.

Meanwhile I found Mike at Shrimpy's, on the French side in the canal before the bridge, just opposite Budget Marine. He runs the net each morning except Sundays at 7:30AM on VHF channel 10. He and his wife, Sally, are a real source of information and very helpful. They run a laundry service, you'll find lots of second-hand stuff, they offer a good book swap and unlimited time on WiFi for US$3. If you buy his



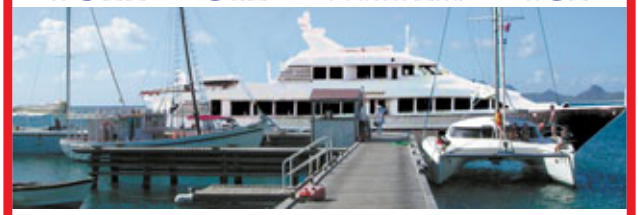
T-shirt for $10, you get free WiFi whenever you come in wearing it.

Because I could easily leave the dinghy at Shrimpy's or at Port La Royale, with the little town of Marigot behind, where I liked to stroll along the shops, I felt more comfortable visiting the French side. The supermarket Simply, a two-minute walk around the corner from Shrimpy's, is very well stocked, especially with the famous French patés, terrines, cheeses and wine.

I soon discovered that St. Martin/St. Maarten is very commercial. Big money seems to come easy from all those mega-yachts, and hardly any businesses are looking for "peanuts" from cruisers in comparison to what mega-yachts might spend.

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Lots of cruisers have caught on and now sit like spiders in their webs, waiting to offer their workmanship to other cruisers — sometimes for horrendous charges. Unlike in other places, where a fellow cruiser would have volunteered to hoist me up to clear the genoa, here it was not free. I was looking for an electrician, too, because the alternator wasn't charging. The first one I asked said he would not come out to the boat at all; the next one gave me a price of US$80 an hour, and I'd have to pick him up and take him back ashore. With my little outboard, it would have taken a billable hour to drive him to the boat and back! (Speaking of outboards, always lock your dinghy and the motor here, day and night.)

Before I went to St. Martin/St. Maarten, I had always heard that things would be much cheaper on that duty-free island. That might be true for electronic gear and items purchased at the big chandleries, Island Water World and Budget Marine. But things such as labour, workmanship, etcetera, are much more expensive than in the Windward Islands. For provisioning I spent a lot more than anywhere else because of all the goodies I found in the supermarket Simply; I could not resist. In the end, I ended up spending a lot more money in that "cheap island" than anywhere else in the past ten years.

By the middle of January 2014 the weather finally was acceptable to leave the "paté island". Now there is a causeway through the lagoon on the Dutch side. (The opening times for all three bridges are available at http://stmartinblue.com/st_martin_island_info/bridge_info.php and www.smyc.com/content/new-simpson-bay-causeway-bridge-opening-hours.) I used the two bridges towards Simpson Bay: both are much wider and deeper than the French-side bridge.

St. Barth's

Next stop was Ile Fourchue, where I really enjoyed anchoring, although there are ten free moorings. The scenery is better than ever: there are no more goats, and in January lots of greenery was thriving and the cacti were in bloom.

From there I went to St. Barth's, entering the bay at Colombier, which is quite large. Here I had my first — and for sure last — experience with picking up a mooring ball. With the friendly help of another cruiser I got the mooring attached to the boat, but at the stern. It took me one and a half hours in 12 knots of wind to get the line to the bow. To make the experience complete, the line got entangled around an anode, and I had to dive before I could get *Angelos* properly settled. Anchoring takes ten minutes! But the beach there is of fine sand; the water is turquoise clear. What more did I want? A nice walk leads along the hill to the next village, Flamandes,



Above: Gustavia, the main town on St. Barth's. Don't forget your plastic!

Below: The town of Basseterre, St. Kitts, where it's easy to clear in or out



where I found an *epicerie* to get bread. From that village a road goes over the mountains to Gustavia. There is no public transport, but hitching a ride was easy and I saw some of the countryside. The roads are steep, narrow and full of bends.

Gustavia is a very busy and glittery place. If you want to see all the famous designer shops in just one street, that is the place. Don't forget your plastic: in one shop I saw a pretty hammock woven out of fine leather, which caught my eye immediately — for just 25,000 Euros! Check-in/out in the capitanerie was easy, for eight Euros. You have 24 hours after check-out to leave. Anchoring in front of Gustavia costs nine Euros per day; anchoring in Colombier is free.

St. Kitts & Nevis

A weather window let me sail down to St. Kitts and farther on to Nevis. It is possible to check in at St. Kitts and check out in Nevis (or vice versa.) Basseterre on St. Kitts seems to be generally a rolly anchorage. The small spit of land at Ballast Bay in the south of St. Kitts is now cut open and a passage is dredged into the Great Salt Pond. Big developments are underway to turn it into a huge harbour for mega-yachts with hotels and so on.



Above: The fish market in St. Kitts, much the same as when we had seen it 20 years ago

Below: Charlestown in Nevis is a pleasant little old town with stone-and-wood buildings; Immigration and Customs are in the building on the right



Nevis has a nice long sandy beach in its lee. There are at least 25 mooring balls south of the Four Seasons Hotel towards Charlestown, and they are free of charge. But no more mooring experiences for me! I went much closer to the beach and anchored in two metres in front of Sunshine's beach bar, close enough to swim ashore with my watertight box in tow keeping my clothes dry. I had come to realize, now that I was a single-hander, that the nine-foot Caribe dinghy is far too heavy for me to lift up and down in wind and swell conditions. I can't maneuver it alone, and when it swings above deck and bangs around it is quite dangerous for me. And once launched, a dinghy often has to be pulled up on the beach, which I can't do alone either. Therefore, now I try to anchor very close to shore and swim out. Maybe a kayak would do the job; I have to think this matter over.

Charlestown in Nevis is a pleasant little old town with stone-and-wood buildings. People are very friendly. The only internet access I found was one computer in the public library, in the old government building. Even if you don't need the internet, the building is worth a visit inside. (Unfortunately the clock up on the roof with its huge weights is no longer working.) Provisioning is much better done in St. Kitts; fruits and vegetables there are much fresher. I had the impression Nevis gets the leftovers from St. Kitts.

For EC$3 a local bus brought me "close" to the Botanical Gardens in the south of Nevis. Close meant a 20-minute walk through the countryside. The Gardens are nicely maintained and seem to be in Thai hands; even the restaurant serves only Thai food. The boutique is well stocked. (Unfortunately some signs on the plants are missing, especially the ones I was interested in! Later I found a few of the names in books provided to me in the library.) Only one of the various fountains in the gardens was working. But the garden is well worth a visit to enjoy such beautiful and relaxing surroundings.

While in Nevis the weather did not permit me to head to Guadeloupe and I was getting fed up with waiting for weeks for the wind to moderate or go north of east. One morning I got out an old *Compass* to wrap something and noticed an article by Don Street in which he expressed the opinion that "anyone who is not able to sail in 25 knots shouldn't be sailing in the Caribbean!" This hit me in the face, and I again had a look at the chart. I abruptly decided to sail down to Tobago in one step; the wind angle was much better. Skip all the islands — leave them for the next time!

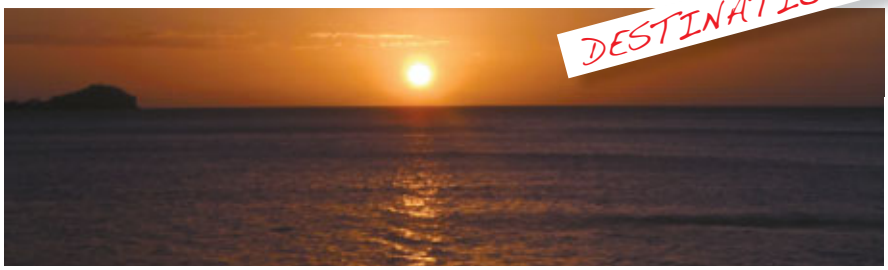
The wind and sea improved a bit the next day, and I checked out on a Saturday; no overtime fee in St. Kitts & Nevis! Even without a genoa I had a decent sail as far as St. Lucia. I easily motorsailed eastward along St. Lucia's south coast in calm water and then sailed down the windward side of St. Vincent toward Tobago. Sailing down the windward side of the Grenadines with a steady wind was much easier than sailing in the lee of the islands. It took me a bit more than five days.

Now in Tobago, I'm waiting for the arrival of the new genoa.

THE ISLAND SPELL OF ROATAN

by Bill and JoAnne Harris

DESTINATIONS



Sunset after another day of sailing, diving, hiking and hanging out in the Bay Islands of Honduras

After our spectacular cruising experiences in the islands of the Eastern Caribbean, we have now fallen under the spell of a group of islands in the Western Caribbean. The beautiful Bay Islands of Honduras include Guanaja, Roatan and Utila. Each of these islands is amazing, but very different from one another.

We arrived at Guanaja after a magical two-night downwind sail from Grand Cayman. We flew our brilliant turquoise-blue mermaid spinnaker the whole way under a bright moon. We checked in at Guanaja and spent two firefly-filled nights in Savannah Bight to explore the island, and then sailed on to Roatan.

Upon our arrival in French Harbour, Roatan, we cruised by charming Little French Cay and were welcomed by the sounds of the jungle. The wonderful squawking of macaws, singing birds, and monkeys combined with clear water and stunning white sand beaches was simply intoxicating. This area boasts a magnificent reef, abundant sealife, and Mr. Seymour Arch's Lobster City and Iguana Farm. The protected Marine Park is full of groupers, conch, snappers, cowfish and literally hundreds of lobsters crawling all over the place. Mr. Arch even brought out fish-cleaning scraps so we could hand feed the lobsters. Fascinating! We anchored in French Harbour for a few nights, and for us, this area had excellent holding. There are also several wonderful bays around the island where you can anchor.

Arriving in July last year, we had originally planned to stay only a week, and we were still in this paradise two and a half months later. We returned and stayed another three months beginning in December 2013.

Garifuna History

While here, we were filled in on some interesting Caribbean history. Before Christopher Columbus arrived in the Caribbean, Carib peoples from Venezuela traveled northward though the Eastern Caribbean. They conquered the Arawaks and called themselves Garifuna, meaning Brave People.

The Bay Islands were controlled and settled by English, French and Dutch pirates in the 1600s. They used Roatan as a headquarters for their attacks on the Spanish.

In the mid-1700s, a ship carrying slaves from West Africa ran aground in St. Vincent (some sources say Bequia), and the survivors started families with local Indian women, thus producing Black Caribs. After the so-called Carib Wars on St. Vincent, the victorious British exiled the Carib, or Garifuna, survivors to Roatan. From there, the population spread to Belize, Honduras and Guatemala. The population of Garifuna in Central America is now almost 100,000. We could see the similarities between the Eastern and Western Caribbean cultures. Yes, there is a Latin American influence, but still the thatched home designs, beautiful people, food, dance, traditional dress and more are extremely similar.

The Bay Islands have huge fishing fleets for lobster, shrimp and fish. Their number-one lobster co-op is with Red Lobster. We were amazed to see lobster traps piled as high as two-storey buildings on the boats. The boats stay out for months and come back with everything fresh-frozen and ready to sell.

Cruiser Info

Check in at Coxen Hole. Have extra copies made up ahead of time of your crew list, boat documentation, and passports for Immigration, Customs, and the Port Authority. For a 90-day stay, it costs US$3 per person to check in and US$5 per person to check out of the Bay Islands. An extension costs US$100 per person. For all of these fees, US dollars are accepted. The exchange rate at the time of this writing was 20 Lempiras to US$1.

—Continued on next page



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(We wonder why some of the islands we have cruised the last five years make it so financially challenging to stay longer than 90 days.)

Fuel stations, grocery stores, hardware stores, marine stores and great seafood markets are all located on the island. We found a dentist for Bill's root canal and crown, and teeth cleaning for both of us: Dr. Hayman Grant at Roatan Dental in Megaplaza. Dr. Elias Lizardo, a GP, is located at Wood Hospital in Coxen Hole.

Ask the Fantasy Island Resort when the fire dancing and Garifuna Show will be. It is not to be missed!

The *colectivo* taxis are shared with other passengers, not private. Confirm before you get into a taxi if it is a colectivo or regular taxi, since there is a big difference in price. To run errands in French Harbour, your dinghy can be left at the Roatan Yacht Club for US$2.50, or you can purchase food or drink and your dockage is free.

There is an excellent airport with flights via major airlines.

West End

This side of the island is full of restaurants, hostels, hotels, dive shops, great live music and lots and lots of bars. It is the place where backpackers, tourists, divers, students and locals all come together and have a great time.

The main road was paved only recently. Our first time to West End, as landlubbers on holiday in 2005, the road was sand and extremely thick ship's hawser was used for speed bumps. The mayor who took over a few years back promised he would pave the West End beachfront road if he won. He did, and the road was paved. However, we still prefer the old way; it had even more charm. Good thing is, the original speed bumps are still there.

Fantasy Island

We rarely stay in marinas, but Fantasy Island Resort, Marina & Dive Shop is located on an extraordinary island called, naturally, Fantasy Island. The marina offers reasonable rates with power and water, so we decided to stay for a couple of months. The dock master, Jerry Blakeslee, has truly transformed this sleepy marina into a cruiser's dream. We helped him build a *palapa* structure and then, when it came time, we climbed on top to lay the giant palm fronds for the roof. We then decorated what is now the Tiki Palapa Cruisers' Bar, which is run on the honor system: you pour your own drinks and pay at the end of the night.

We organized many fun events, such as a lionfish barbecue, Ultra Movie Night, Christmas, New Year's Eve, TexMex Night, a lobster barbecue, cruiser beach-game days, hiking and kayaking trips and more. During our stay here, we were greeted every day by hummingbirds, Capuchin monkeys, peacocks, iguanas, jutias, parrots and chickens. We felt as if we should be singing "The Farmer in the Dell".



Jutia for lunch? No, thanks! But the fish dinner Fausto prepared for us was excellent

If you love to scuba dive and snorkel as we do, then you will love it here! Roatan's Reef is part of the second largest barrier reef system in the world. It is also a very inexpensive place to get scuba certified. The Fantasy Island Dive Shop director, Daren Ebanks, and his staff have vast knowledge of this diving area. The numerous dive sites include incredible wrecks and outstanding walls, canyons, and swim-throughs. There is even a Roatan dive site book you can purchase at the shop. We have been diving all over the world, and this is some of the best visibility we have ever experienced, up to 100 feet. Dive the warm turquoise water and you will see an abundance of sea life, such as the most beautiful iridescent purple sponges, moray eels, sea turtles, goliath groupers, giant barrel sponges, huge purple and yellow sea fans that measure four feet across, and countless fish everywhere. Here and Cozumel are the only two places in the world that we have ever seen seahorses.

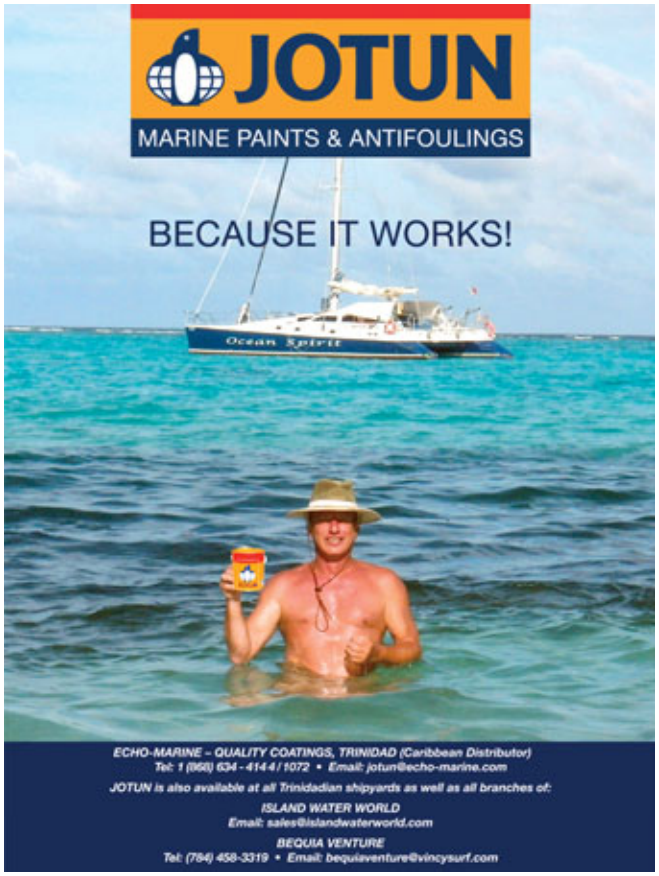
This is a wonderful place to have guests visit, too. They can either stay aboard or in the Fantasy Island Resort. Bill's son, David, was able to visit us here for his first vacation in over three years. He had lived here for work several years ago, and was happy to return. Nice thing is, the island has not changed very much. We took him snorkeling, scuba diving, island exploring, and then to West End to see all of the fun hangouts there. He came for four days, and extended his trip to spend almost two weeks with us.

Roatan Rescue

During our stay it was reinforced in our brains why we always stand by on VHF16 and the local cruising hailing channel. One night around midnight, we heard a VHF call from a vessel in distress. It was a 42-foot powerboat that had come from Florida with an American captain, a Peruvian owner and two crewmembers. The boat had hit the reef near Barefoot Cay doing 20 knots and was taking on water.

We, along with friends aboard *S/V Ocean Star* and *S/V Paulinchen*, assisted the distressed vessel by calling the Port Authority, the Navy, and Davis, the Marine Park Ranger. Davis responded immediately to help the men and protect the reef.

—*Continued on next page*



MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

MAY - JUNE 2014

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

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

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

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

DATE	TIME				
1	1354	22	0644	11	2251
2	1445	23	0734	12	2351
3	1534	24	0824	13	0000 (full moon)
4	1622	25	0914	14	0051
5	1709	26	1004	15	0152
6	1753	27	1054	16	0250
7	1837	28	1145	17	0347
8	1921	29	1236	18	0440
9	2004	30	1326	19	0532
10	2049	31	1415	20	0622
11	2135	**June 2014**		21	0712
12	2223	1	1503	22	0821
13	2315	2	1548	23	0851
14	0000 (full moon)	3	1632	24	0941
15	0010	4	1716	25	1031
16	0107	5	1758	26	1121
17	0206	6	1842	27	1204
18	0305	7	1926	28	1258
19	0453	8	2013	29	1344
20	0459	9	2102	30	1429
21	0552	10	2155		

—*Continued from previous page*

We remembered that our friend, Stephen, the water truck service owner, had assisted the fire department (*bomberos*) and a shipyard owner a month ago during a tremendous ship fire. Stephen's water truck and massive pumps were used to pump sea water onto the fire. We quickly Skyped Stephen and, between the terrible scratchy connection and dropped calls, explained the situation and that water pumps were needed. He quickly assembled with the bomberos and acquired a boat to shuttle the firemen and the pumps out to the sinking vessel. Unfortunately, after risking his life on this stormy night, Davis was unsuccessful in swimming a towline to the vessel. That night, the men of the vessel were safely delivered ashore. However, their boat broke into pieces. Furthermore, Davis later went to reclaim the fuel from the vessel, got overloaded and wrecked his boat on the reef, then the Navy went to assist Davis and their boat also broke up on the reef.



JoAnne, here with an underwater sculpture, took full advantage of the diving in the Bay Islands

We discovered later that these volunteer firemen do not have any snorkel equipment, a rescue vessel, lifejackets, towline, a fire truck in safe working condition, or a VHF radio. We made an announcement on the local cruisers' net the next morning and gave a shout-out to all the men who risked their lives to save the men in distress, and to try to save the vessels. We stated that the bomberos needed donations of everything that would be required to assist in a rescue situation. Two yachts immediately answered back and donated two VHF radios. At Happy Hour that night, we donated sets of snorkel gear, lifejackets and line and many other cruisers donated items. Another vessel used their chili cook-off prize money to purchase a VHF for the firehouse.

Cayos Cochinos

These "Hog Islands" islands — two small islands and 11 cays — are a National Park and are part of the Roatan Municipality, even though they are closer to mainland Honduras.

We sailed four hours to see this lovely set of islands. Unfortunately, *Ultra* is a boat and things did not go as well as planned. The rudder slipped on the post and the autopilot stopped working and we did loop-de-loops in El Caribe (Bay of Honduras) so we carefully hand-steered the rest of the way so as not to aggravate the rudder problem.

We arrived in this picturesque place and picked up a mooring. There is a park fee of US$20 for each crewmember (the captain is free) and US$10 for a one-day boat pass or $20 for the month.

The next morning we were greeted by a typical military gunmetal gray Navy boat, but this one had an amusing shark-teeth smile painted across the bow. How great! The Park Ranger politely asked for the fee and offered us info about the islands. A nice gentleman named Fausto paddled his dugout over to sell us coconut jewelry. He also invited us to come to visit his Garifuna village on a nearby cay. He said he would cook us a delicious fish dinner for US$8. We quickly said yes. It is important that if you say yes, you go, since he had the food hot and ready for us upon our arrival. All of the island children were there to eagerly pull our dinghy up on the beach.

We stayed a total of five beautiful days filled with excellent diving, hiking the mountain with local guide Robert to see the pink boa constrictors, and exploring the Garifuna village. The diving here was a wild experience. Since there is not too much traffic here, the sealife is not skittish. The sea turtles and fish actually came up to us!

Fun Fact

It is common to still see a local favorite of iguana on the menu (a.k.a. street chicken or bamboo chicken), however, the real bush delicacy is *jutia* or watoosa. This is a brown, rabbit-sized rodent that has the features of a rabbit and a gopher. We have heard from the locals that this delight was even served to Queen Elizabeth during one of her visits. That led to the media to dub it the "Royal Rat". If this does not whet your appetite, than you can also grab an ice cold Salva Vida local beer and a yummy *baleada* hot off the grill.

We look forward to sharing future articles with you about Guanaja and Utila. We know that Roatan and the other Bay Islands will leave you feeling spellbound, too!

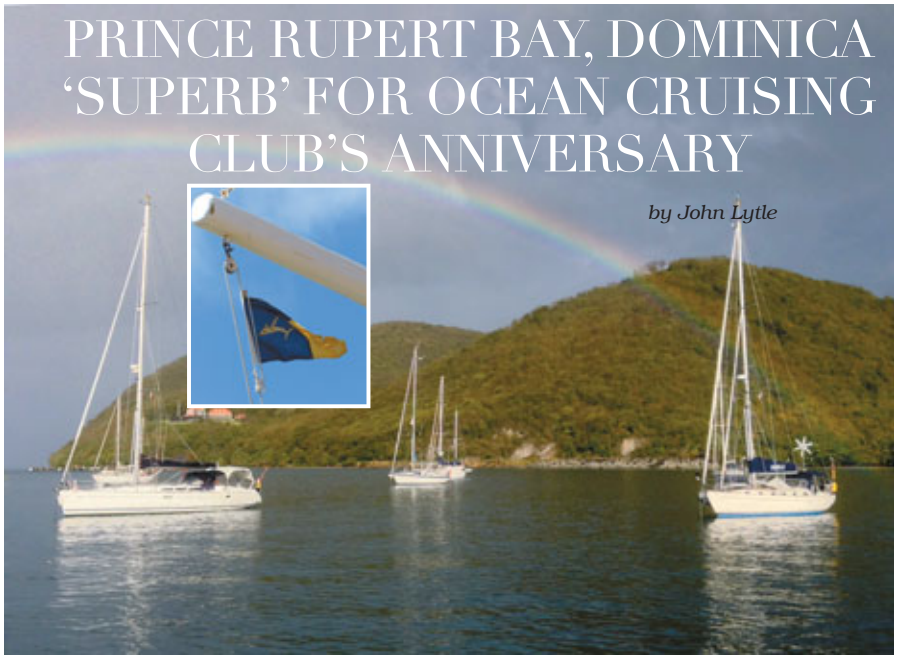
JoAnne and Bill Harris are from Clear Lake, Texas and both hold 100-ton USCG Master's Licenses. Aboard their trimaran, Ultra, *they are currently island hopping their way to Panama. They enjoy writing cruising articles and sharing their experiences. Follow their adventures at www.jandbyachtultraadventure.blogspot.com*





PRINCE RUPERT BAY, DOMINICA 'SUPERB' FOR OCEAN CRUISING CLUB'S ANNIVERSARY

by John Lytle



What better place for a cruising club to gather than Dominica's Prince Rupert Bay, with Fort Shirley in the background?

The very first celebration in honor of the Ocean Cruising Club's 60th anniversary year was held from March 12th through 16th in Dominica.

Founded in 1954 by the late Humphrey Barton, a celebrated British yachtsman and yacht surveyor, the Club has approximately 2,000 members worldwide. The qualifying requirement for membership is to have sailed over 1,000 miles non-stop between ports in a vessel under 70 feet.

A number of anniversary celebrations, mostly in the form of meets and rallies, have been organized in various parts of the world. The first to take place has been the meet in Prince Rupert Bay, Dominica, which was attended by 19 yachts and 40 members and guests. The event had been publicized on the Club website, on its e-newsletter, and by the Eastern Caribbean SSB Radio Net which the Club runs each day except Sunday. The majority of members in the area organized their schedules to be present. Yachts assembled gradually over the preceding week, but all had arrived by Wednesday March 12th and met for sundowners at La Playa Beach Bar, which we did each subsequent evening.

Prince Rupert Bay is a superb venue for a meet of this kind. It is sheltered from the tradewinds, has capacity for an almost unlimited number of yachts, and has excellent facilities for a celebration with endless possibilities for keeping everyone occupied over a number of days. Being in the centre of the Eastern Caribbean island chain, the meet attracted both northbound and southbound yachts.

The main event was a lunch in the newly restored Fort Shirley, the British fort on the Cabrits, which has dominated Prince Rupert Bay since 1774. It was abandoned finally in 1854, exactly 100 years before the Ocean Cruising Club was founded. The forest had taken over and the restoration, which started in 1982, is a major success story. The two main buildings, the Officers' Quarters and the Troops' Barracks, have been rebuilt and now house between them a large room suitable for weddings, dinners, receptions, lectures and events of all sorts with all the necessary facilities. There is excellent residential accommodation in bunkrooms and small apartments to cater for groups attending educational and environmental courses. Music festivals and other events are held in the well-maintained grounds. The history of the fort is graphically displayed for visitors.

Throughout the meet the Portsmouth Association of Yacht Services (PAYS), otherwise known as "boat boys" and Indian River guides, looked after us well and provided transport from the yachts to the Cabrits cruise ship dock before the lunch. The group were welcomed with a strong rum punch, expertly prepared by Charlie, a member of PAYS, and we met local author and historian Lennox Honychurch, who was to be our speaker.

Lennox is the mastermind behind the restoration of Fort Shirley and gave us an hour's fascinating talk about the maritime history of Prince Rupert Bay and the fort. He has published several books, but in particular *Dominica's Cabrits and Prince Rupert's Bay* is a great read, which can be purchased at the Cabrits.

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A cooking demonstration featured local favorites. Breadfruit is roasted on the beach

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- Indian River Bar & Grill
- Purple Turtle Beach Club/Restaurant
- Wop Wop Bar



—*Continued from previous page*

Lunch was prepared and served by Morica Casey and her helpers from the Indian River Bar and Grill. We enjoyed a superb feast of excellent local cuisine. After lunch, two of the older members regaled us with stories of sailing in the Leeward and Windward Islands 40 to 50 years ago, and a hilarious poem thanking the organizers was recited by poet Christine Webster of *Quadrille II*.



The interior of the Nature Isle begs to be explored, and OCC members accepted the challenge

We retired, well wined and dined, to our various craft and prepared for the next day's activity, a walk along the north coast path (Section 13 of the Waitukubuli Trail). The series of trails that have been established throughout Dominica is a wonderful way for walkers and hikers to experience the extraordinary natural environment of Dominica. Section 13 runs from Penville in the northeast to Capuchin in the northwest and is a moderately strenuous three- to four-hour walk, mostly in the shade of the forest and with some stunning views over to Marie Galante, the Saintes and Guadeloupe. It is an old mule track and was still a main route across the north end of Dominica until the road was built a few years ago. Twenty-one members of the group enjoyed the experience, stopping for a picnic while paddling in a clear mountain stream. Transport to and from the walk was again organized through PAYS.

On the Saturday, a cooking demonstration of local food was arranged by Martin Carriere and his wife, Florian. This was held in the PAYS Events House on the beach. A visit to the Saturday farmers' market to purchase ingredients was followed by practical demonstrations of cooking breadfruit, plantain chips, saltfish, hot chocolate, salads, etcetera. Another feast was prepared and consumed by the cooks and many eager observers.

The final official event was a drinks party in the PAYS Events House, but those who remained on the Sunday also enjoyed the weekly barbecue there. This is one of the highlights of a visit to Prince Rupert Bay, at which PAYS produce limitless rum punch, barbecued chicken and fresh fish with salads, followed by a really lively disco — all for EC$50. This is a great opportunity for cruisers to meet each other.

Prince Rupert Bay proved to be an excellent venue for this anniversary meet. Many crews were able to organize their own hikes and tours, visits to watch the Imperial Parrot in the rainforest, swimming in freshwater pools, the obligatory Indian River trip, and diving and snorkelling, in between the official engagements. Fort Shirley provided all that we could have wished for, with excellent catering, great backup by PAYS, and riveting historical background from Lennox Honychurch.

PAYS has transformed Prince Rupert Bay and is a close association of the "boat boys" who not only provide a friendly welcome and water-taxi service for visiting yachts but also organize tours and hikes as well as the weekly barbecue, and are a good source of advice on any local subject. The nighttime security patrols, which they fund from profits from moorings and the barbecue, have made Prince Rupert Bay a really safe and secure anchorage. Their successful organization should be a blueprint for other Caribbean Islands to emulate.

John Lytle and Christine Lytle are cruising the Caribbean aboard S/Y Oriole.

Photos courtesy of yachts Nyda, Kinabalu *and* Quadrille II.



Above: Hiking the Waitukubuli Trail

Below: Martin Carriere demonstrates making cocoa tea



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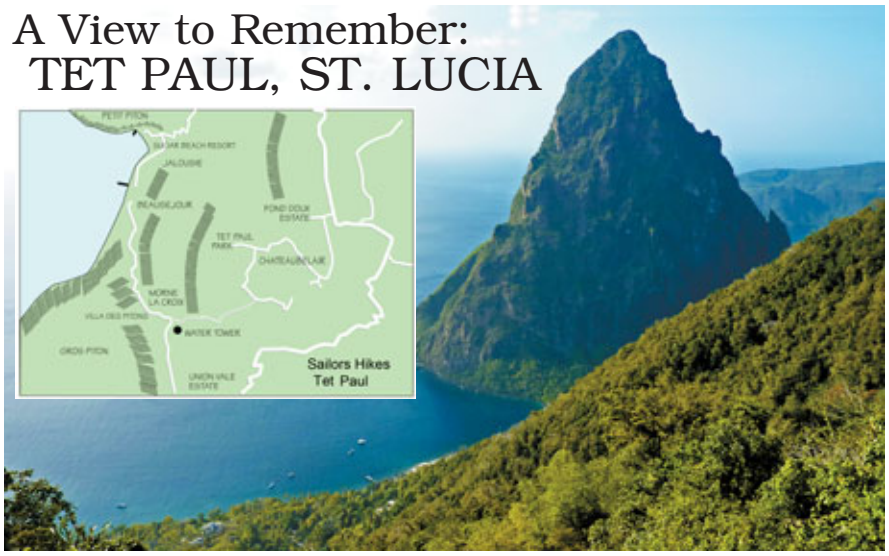
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A View to Remember: TET PAUL, ST. LUCIA



The sight of Petit Piton and the Pitons anchorage from Tet Paul Park is the perfect payoff to this hike.

One day I was chatting with a security guard at the western entrance to Sugar Beach Resort in Beausejour, which is located at Jalousie between the Pitons in St. Lucia. I was mentioning that I had just hiked up the ridge above the village of Morne La Croix, but the spectacular views of Petit Piton I remembered from the past now seemed to be blocked by rich people's houses (all two of them). He pointed to a ridge higher above Morne La Croix and said, "Look at that ridge up there — now see the little bit of a platform. That is where the view is, at Tet Paul."

I knew I had to hike up there, and an opportunity came some weeks later when my cousin's daughter, Monica, was sailing with me.

The Tet Paul Park is a community project under the auspices of the Soufriere Foundation, which provides employment for people from the small village of Chateaubelair high in the hills between the Pitons. The owner of the land in the olden days was Paul, and the park is at the precipitous head of this land; thus the name. The main attraction is a super-dramatic precipitous view of Petit Piton and the Pitons anchorage from a platform perched on the edge. They also have some organic gardens, a nice "old-style" house full of the things people used in those days including a calabash water carrier and a model of an old cassava-production hut. Entrance is at the moment US$5 per person, and you probably need to allow the same again for a tip, as the tour is guided.

Now you can reach this park by taxi and take in this view in half an hour or so, but that is not the real sailors' way. We like to start and end up on the waterfront, which makes the adventure a lot more interesting. Beach or tie up your dinghy on what is left of the dock at the western end of Sugar Beach. Come out to the road, go right (sort of ahead as you come out), and climb the hill to Morne La Croix. You could probably buy a Red Spot soft drink or some such here if you forgot to bring water, but better not to forget.

Continue up to the ridge where you will see a water tower and a magnificent house, "Villa des Pitons". This will take about 20 minutes. If you stand at the water tower and turn around looking back out in the Petit Piton direction you will see a clear trail leading uphill into the bush to your right. Follow this trail. The problem, in as much as there is one, is not to take one of the side trails. I noticed a place where you might be tempted to turn left over some open ground very shortly after the starting, and another higher up where another equally well-defined trail takes off to the right but heads downhill. Don't take either of those. The trail was the main way people from Chateaubelair and surrounding villages used to get down to Jalousie and the beach. They now mainly have cars so the trail is not in great shape with sometimes uncertain footing, but clear enough.

It is pretty much all uphill, quite a lot of it shaded, until you arrive at the tarmac road in the village of Chateaubelair. Turn left on this road, but before you have gone too far make sure you recognize your path exit for when you return (in our case, to come back, "turn right at the cow"). Continue uphill till the next T-junction. Turn left at this junction where you should see a sign to Tet Paul. Continue to the park. (This will take you about 30 to 45 minutes from Morne La Croix). Enjoy the park, where a guide will take you around; this part also takes about 40 minutes with a suitably long pause at the view. Our guide was called John and perfectly delightful. Retrace your steps to get back down.



The views along the way aren't bad, either



The Welcome Center. Spend some time at the park learning about vanishing St. Lucian lifeways

Footnote: By way of full disclosure, seeing as when I did this trip I did not yet know where to go, I called Anthony, who has the water taxi Livety *and who lives in Morne La Croix, to come and guide us (488-7820/717-2019). I was very glad I did because Anthony is a great guide. He really enjoys meeting you, showing you the sights and telling you about life here. Even better, he took us back a different way, which was really beautiful, but you could not do it on your own as it takes you right through Union Vale — a big private estate and St. Lucia's largest cocoa plantation, where they provide cocoa for the Chicago-based "Best Chocolate in the World Company". We passed though lovely farmland and met Anthony's daughter, all of which really added to the experience. If you want to do it that way, call Anthony, who will collect you from your boat, drive up to the ridge to begin the hike, give you a wonderful tour for US$30 per person (minimum four people or $120 US). He can also guide you up Gros Piton if you wish.*



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HUMPBACK WHALE MIGRATION

by Peter Stevick

There can be few experiences more exhilarating than coming across a whale unexpectedly while sailing. Encountering an individual animal the size of the boat is both thrilling and humbling. Throughout the Lesser Antilles, it is possible to encounter humpback whales during the winter months, and each year a handful of lucky boaters get to do so. Whales can be in the Antilles from as early as Christmas, and it is not uncommon to have sightings until sometime in May.

It is also possible to encounter whales while on passage from the Caribbean to Bermuda or the East Coast. The migration occurs on either end of the winter, though it is staggered, so some animals arrive fairly late and others may leave fairly early. The time that it takes animals to migrate even to the nearest feeding areas is nearly a month. This means that animals from the Eastern Caribbean are likely to be actively moving north through the open ocean mostly during May and June.



DANIEL STOLLMEYER

Humpbacks migrate between the Antilles, where they spend the winter months, and their summer feeding areas in the Gulf of Maine, off eastern Canada and western Greenland, around Iceland, and in the Barents Sea. Some whales from the eastern feeding areas migrate to the Cape Verde Islands. Since they are rarely seen in the open ocean, we know little about the exact routes that they follow

While memorable, these interludes are generally brief. After a while the whale, the vessel, or both have other places that they need to be, and they move off in different directions. Perhaps, with some luck, someone on board has some photographs to remember it by.

Where did the whale come from, and where does it go? Where are the humpbacks when they are not in the West Indies? Humpback whales are only regularly seen in tropical waters in the winter, while they are found in rich feeding areas at high latitudes during the summer months. This gives a rough shape to the North Atlantic population's annual migrations, but what of the travels of individual animals?

How do we study whale movement?

Unlike wildebeest on the Masai Mara or caribou on the tundra, it is not possible to simply observe humpback whales during migration to watch where they go. They are spread out over vast bodies of ocean, and constantly on the move. Most long distance migration takes place over the deep ocean, and except for a few places in the world where migration routes occur along coasts, humpback whales are almost never seen while migrating. Whales can spend a good deal of their time submerged, and even fairly short-distance travels near coasts can be hard to track successfully. Nor is it possible to catch whales and put distinctive marks on them, as is done with banding birds for studies of movement.

Distinctive natural markings

Fortunately, humpback whales have unique, individually distinctive markings on the underside of the tails or flukes. These natural markings, essentially a natural tag, are one of the most important tools in our understanding of the lives of humpback whales. It has been about 40 years since scientists first started using these markings for their studies in the North Atlantic, and the humpbacks here are now among the most extensively studied and well understood groups of large whales in the world.

A remarkable 7,800 different humpback whales have now been identified by researchers across the North Atlantic. The College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine coordinates a North Atlantic Humpback Whale Catalogue to compare identification of whales between areas and track them over time. This project relies on international collaboration on a grand scale. More than 670 individuals, research groups and ecotourism operators have pooled their work to make this possible. Many whales have long sighting histories; some have been seen over spans exceeding 35 years. Others have only been identified once.

Migration patterns in the North Atlantic

With nearly one thousand animals now documented by sightings in both their summer and winter habitats, much has been learned about humpback migration. Whales that winter in the West Indies have been sighted in all of the major known feeding grounds, as far to the west as New England and as far to the east as the Barents Sea. Distance does not seem to be an obstacle. While the 2,200-kilometre (approximately 1,200 nautical miles) migration from the Dominican Republic to New England seems impressive, especially to sailors who have made that passage, it is one of the shortest regular migration routes for humpback whales. For example, an individual feeding in the Russian Arctic traveled a distance of 8,800 kilometres (approximately 4,800 nautical miles). That is about as far as it is possible for a whale to travel in the North Atlantic, but in the South Pacific a whale was shown to migrate 600 kilometres farther, and the world record holder is a whale that traveled 9,800 kilometres (approximately 5,300 nautical miles) between Brazil and Madagascar.

Whales from all of the feeding grounds in the North Atlantic come together in the Antilles to mate and have their calves. They mingle widely together on their breeding grounds; animals from different feeding grounds are frequently seen in the same groups, and there is little to suggest that they chose to associate with other animals from the same region where they feed. If you come across a pair of whales off Dominica, one may spend the summer feeding off Newfoundland, and the other off Iceland.

A good deal of movement has been shown between different parts of the West Indies as well. Individuals from the Eastern Caribbean have also been sighted off the Dominican Republic, and animals seem to move quite freely between all of the areas where they have been photographed. There is no good evidence at this point to show that individuals from any particular feeding ground show a preference for one part of the Caribbean over another.

But of course

It is unlikely to be entirely that simple, of course. It has been shown, for example, that whales from the easternmost feeding grounds (Iceland and Norway) are more likely to be seen later on the breeding areas, and appear to migrate south later in the autumn and north later in the spring. Some areas, most notably south and east of the Anegada Passage, are much less well studied. The whales are more widely spread out, and less common. With only 50 humpback whales identified from these waters, to date, it is hard to say with certainty if there is, or is not, any segregation between these whales and those from better known and more heavily used areas like those off the Dominican Republic. Nor is it entirely clear if the whales from all feeding areas are equally likely to visit this area as they seem to elsewhere. There is also an apparently small, but little-known breeding area off the Cape Verde Islands. Animals from those waters are only known from feeding areas in the eastern North Atlantic, and no animals have ever been seen to move between the eastern and western winter grounds (i.e. between Cape Verde Islands and the Caribbean).

We have learned a remarkable amount about humpback whales just by collecting pictures of their tails. A good deal remains to be learned as more sightings of more animals accumulate. Perhaps that lucky photograph from a memorable day can contribute to learning more.

Visit caribtails.org for more information about humpback whales.

Peter Stevick has been studying the ecology of humpback whales since the 1970s. His work has taken him not quite from pole to pole, but nearly so, from Svalbard to the Ross Sea. He has conducted fieldwork across much of the North Atlantic, including the Dominican Republic and the Lesser Antilles. As a Senior Scientist at Allied Whale, College of the Atlantic, he has done extensive analysis of the North Atlantic Humpback Whale Catalogue data, which were the topic of his Ph.D. studies at the University of St. Andrews. He is particularly interested in large-scale, long-distance travel by whales, and recently documented the movement of a humpback whale a quarter of the way around the world, from Brazil to Madagascar.



Heading West for the Hurricane Season

Part One:

Island-Hop North Then Jump South

by Don Street

Come May it is high time for the cruising sailor to make plans for the summer hurricane season. Many plan to lay up their boats, or have already headed to North America or Europe. But the Caribbean offers many good summertime cruising options.

Although Grenada and Trinidad are popular summer destinations, given modern weather forecasting and communications, there is no reason the sailor in the Eastern Caribbean has to hunker down in one place for the entire hurricane season. With daily weather checks and "escape routes" planned, you can continue cruising the Windwards all summer.



Alternatively, you can cruise north and west along the island chain to the Dominican Republic and Haiti then cut south across the Caribbean Sea to the ABC islands to spend the summer cruising these islands or to carry on to Colombia and Panama, well south of the hurricane area.

From Haiti, you can also continue sailing westward, to Jamaica and the western Caribbean, a route that we'll discuss next month.

Resources

Charts and guides for the Lesser Antilles are abundant; I recommend getting all that are available — especially mine and Chris Doyle's, which complement each other with sailing directions and shoreside information — and cross-referencing them.

Once you leave the western end of Puerto Rico, charts are a problem. NOAA only does charts of territorial US waters and the waters in its possession. The DMA, now NGA, is responsible for charting international waters. However the NGA no longer produces charts for the public, only for the Navy.

For international waters there are the BA charts, expensive, but if ordered direct from Taunton, are updated by hand to date of shipment. There are a limited number of licensed distributors (Imray is one) that also update by hand to the day of shipment. But harbour masters and HO authorities in the Caribbean are notorious for notifying no one of changes made to harbours, buoyage, etcetera.

The alternative is Tides End Ltd. (sales@tidesend.com or https://tidesend.com). They have been producing photocopies of the US chart for years. The US Hydrographic Office is the only one in the entire world whose charts and information are in the public domain. All other HO offices protect all their information by copyright.

The Colombian HO office has done a lot of survey work on the Colombian coast and their islands in the western Caribbean. The Colombian government has produced a free cruising guide with excellent charts. It is available at www.cioh.org.co/files/Doc/Guia_Nautica_Turistica_de_Colombia_optimized.pdf or http://issuu.com/dimarcolombia/docs/guia_nautica_turistica_de_colombia_optimized?e=6984535/2119458. Chart updates are available at www.cioh.org.co "Avisos a los navegantes".



Cosmopolitan Curaçao (above) will be a contrast after visiting rustic Ile-à-Vache, Haiti (at left)

For the south coast of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, use Frank Virgintino's *Free Cruising Guide* and eyeball navigation. Frank reports the Dominican Republic is progressing rapidly with regards to yachting. He reports good solid well established marinas and that some of the smaller marinas are gradually being upgraded.

Just west of Punta Beata on the Haitian/Dominican Republic border, Frank reports some wonderful white sand deserted anchorages. Sailors who have stopped at Ile-à-Vache, Haiti have been bringing back glowing reports of a wonderful unspoiled island.

Take a Leap

From the Dominican Republic or Haiti, if heading south, you can reach to the ABCs or Colombia. It's about 440 miles from Boca Chica/Marina ZarPar, DR to Bonaire, about 540 miles from Ile-à-Vache to Bonaire, and about 470 miles from Ile-à-Vache to Santa Marta, Colombia.

If heading for Bonaire, be very careful: the western Los Aves light is flashing five seconds and the light at the eastern end of Bonaire is flashing six seconds. The only way to reliably identify which light you are seeing is to time the light through 60 seconds; then the difference will be obvious.

Also stand well clear of the east coast of Bonaire, as there is a strong westerly current. Peter Tangvald lost his boat, his life and daughter's life as he got too close to the north coast of Bonaire, misjudged the current and the boat was swept ashore. A number of other boats have also been lost on the east coast of Bonaire. Check the information on the back of Imray Iolaire charts D231 and D232.

You could happily spend the summer cruising Bonaire, Curaçao and Aruba. Aruba is well covered by the free *Aruba Cruising Guide* at www.aruba-cruisingguide.com, done by Sander Vellinga, the manager of Renaissance Marina. He is an experienced sailor and has lived on the island all his life. His information is detailed and accurate. He might also be able to provide a copy of the Colombian cruising guide.

On the back of Imray Iolaire Chart 1 the anchorage between Islotes Los Monjes is shown. Despite being in Venezuelan waters it should be safe as the island group is a military base.

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The Colombian Coast

For sailing along the north coast of Colombia, the only up-to-date cruising guide is the one previously mentioned. Cruisers Lourae and Randy Kenoffel wrote a very good three-part guide with waypoints to Colombia's Caribbean coast in *Compass* in 2001; it's available at http://www.caribbeancompass.com/colfin.htm. The old US DMA charts are out of date and not that accurate.

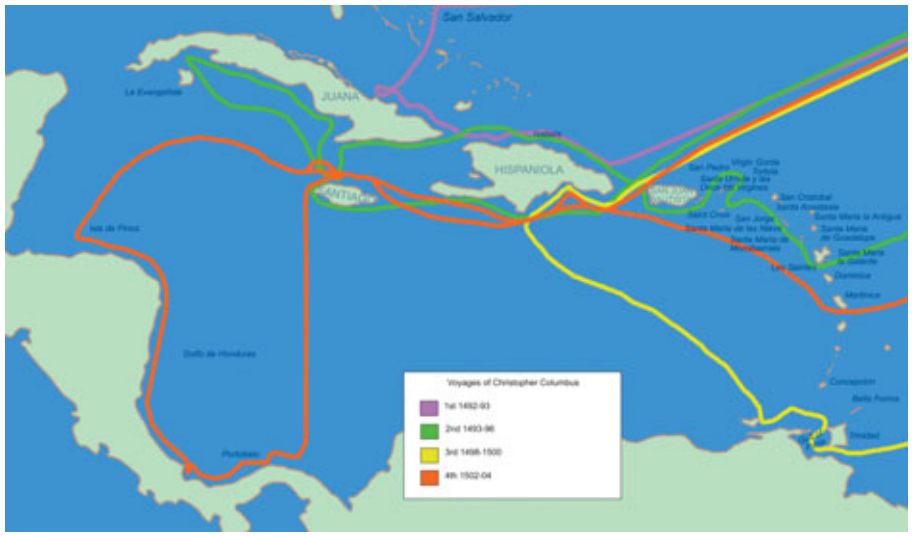
There are piloting directions on the back of Imray Iolaire Chart 1 for anchorages including windswept Bahia Honda, the big commercial port of Puerto Bolivar, and your probable first stop in Colombia, Cabo de la Vela. The depth between Cabo de la Vela and Cayo El Morro is, according to the Kenoffels, about 15 feet. Eyeball your way between or go around the island. Then work your way eastwards and anchor.

Next, 120 miles to the west, one finds the Five Bays, actually five small fjords extending back into the Colombian mountains. These were explored by Kit S. Kapp in *Fairwinds*, a 50-foot Alden ketch, in the early 1960s.

After exploring the Five Bays, head west, pass inside Isla de Aguja, and head south to Santa Marta. Enjoy the city of Santa Marta with your boat safely berthed in the new Marina Santa Marta. Reports from the marina have been excellent but it has also been said the infrastructure to support the yachting industry is still in the future. In years gone by, boats would anchor outside in Bahia Taganga to the north or Guira (Rodadero) to the south. In years gone by, security was a major problem. Today it is still not advisable to use either of these anchorages, as you will be continually pestered by vacationers paddling around in kayaks, canoes, et al.

When leaving Santa Marta plan your departure so that you cross the mouth of the Magdalena River in daylight to avoid the flotsam, jetsam, and trees that come down the river that could do serious damage to the boat if you run into them.

The only anchorage between the mouth of the Magdalena River and Cartagena is the anchorage behind Punta Hermosa where the US DMA chart is useless, as are waypoints given by visiting cruisers unless the waypoints are very recent — Punta Hermosa has been extending westwards for years. I have been comparing waypoints printed in web sites for many years and can see that the point is extending year after year. There is a small marina here, Puerto Velero, with a lot of wind and kitesurfing in the area. To enter, use eyeball navigation. Sail well past the point then head back northeast eyeballing it. Make sure you do this after 1200 hours so the sun will be behind you.



One hundred miles west of Punta Hermosa is Cartagena Bay. There are two entrances; the only really safe one is the Boca Chica channel. The wider Boca Grande is shallow and studded with submerged rocks, remnants of an old wall. Proceed to the inner harbour; do not anchor en route. Once in Cartegena, anchor among the yachts and ask advice as to where to lie and the latest news on the security situation. The infrastructure to support yachting is fairly good but it seems the harbour has become so foul that it is necessary to hire a diver to clean the bottom every three or four weeks. The anchorage is not all that good, as when the wind is in the south there is considerable fetch and an uncomfortable swell builds up. There is very little possibility of getting into a marina.

While in Cartegena hop in a cab and ask the driver to take you to the Colombian Navy Hydrographic Office. Once there, check the chart catalogue and buy modern Colombian charts to the areas you would like to cruise. They have a book of chartlets covering the area between Cartagena and Islas de San Bernadino.



Above: Sailing into Santa Marta Bay

Left: Plus ça change... Like many of today's sailors, after 'doing' the Antilles a couple of times Christopher Columbus cruised the western Caribbean

Fifteen miles south of Cartagena are Islas Rosarios, the playground for rich Colombians. They are covered by US DMA, available through Tides End. They are also undoubtedly covered by the Colombian charts.

To the south and west, anchorages can be found that are not particularly good nor are the charts for these anchorages good unless you obtain the above-mentioned book of chartlets. The best information on these anchorages is obtained via the internet.

By a series of day sails you can work your way along the Colombian coast to Sapzurro, the last anchorage on the Colombian border. Here you will find an anchorage that Dave Ferdening compared favourably to the best anchorages in the BVI back in the Sixties: palm trees, sandy beach, some small friendly rum shops selling bad rum but good cold beer at a cheap price.

Panama is well covered in guides by Zydler and Bauhaus. Both guides are excellent, buy both and cross-reference. Buy a few general charts to back up the excellent detailed chartlets in the guides.

As you cross to Panama you are immediately in the San Blas Islands, which, contrary to popular belief, were not discovered by yachts only recently. These islands were first brought to the yachtsman's attention by the late Alf Loomis, internationally famous yachting author. He sailed his little yawl, *Hippocampus*, from the US to Panama and wrote it up in the book *Cruise of the Hippocampus*, published in 1922. Loomis then wrote "The San Blas Indians: Their Rights and Independence", which was published in *Scribners* magazine in 1925.

Next month: From Haiti through the western Caribbean to Panama.

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An Unplanned Stay in Venezuela

by Jacky Genard

Let's be clear. This article is not expressly a criticism of the Venezuelan regime that could create problems for me if I ever have to go back to Venezuela by plane for professional reasons. This is just the story I lived the past two years. I have tried to tell it as exactly as possible. Its main purpose is to inform others who would like to sail to Venezuela, so that they might avoid the same mishaps. I have been sailing in the southern Caribbean since 1997.



The author with his boat and his cat, finally breathing easy in Martinique. As of this writing, he's preparing to sail home to France

July 2012

I am leaving the Chacachacare fishermen's harbour on Margarita Island at about 5:30PM on July 2nd, 2012, aboard my steel sailing boat, *Theleme*. I love this moment when the boat is slipping on the water towards new horizons, I am not seasick yet, and the world belongs to us.

I had come several times to Venezuela in the past 15 years, and had enjoyed my stays. But now, for many reasons, I was relieved to leave hot, windy and dusty Chacachacare and never return to Venezuela, at least not by boat.

I didn't know it was already too late.

Soon I see the dark green bow of the Guardia Nacional pirogue coming toward me.

"Ho, not a good sign," I think.

They tell me to go back to the pier for a search, which I do.

It was at a time when the Guardia Nacional had found several foreign sailing boats with drugs onboard and they thoroughly ransacked the boat. I even had to open my water tank and their drug-sniffing dog drank some of the water.

I am not a drug trafficker, there were no drugs onboard, but they found my hunting gun and discovered that I had not paid the "international price" for my diesel, as foreign-flagged vessels are supposed to do. On top of this, I was leaving the country after my outward clearance date.

The hunting gun I had bought in 2002 in Cumaná from a Frenchman who was selling his boat and had it onboard for my defense. Unlike the other countries I visited in the Caribbean, in Venezuela you are not asked if you have firearms onboard when you arrive. Therefore there was a *de facto* tolerance for guns on boats.

As for the diesel, I had bought some at the gas station, as other cruisers did, since nobody knew how to buy it at the international price.

My boat had not been ready for sea when I cleared out at the end of my boat permit, and I had stayed almost three months longer, working in the boatyard to prepare it.

"Do you have money?" the Guardia Nacional asked.

"Four Bolivars, 40 Euros and 22 US dollars." I had got rid of my last Bolivars because I was leaving the country, and had very little in foreign currencies since there is an exchange control in Venezuela and one cannot get them easily.

"Four Bolivars or four thousand?" In 2008, three zeros had been removed from the Venezuelan Bolivar, but it was still not clear to many people who continued thinking with the old currency.

"Four Bolivars," I said.

Apparently it was not an answer that could have saved me. I was put under arrest and led to the Chacachacare Guardia Nacional quarters. What a change in my plans!

They kept me for two days. On July 4th, I was led to court in handcuffs. There were a public lawyer, the French consul in Margarita, the public prosecutor and the judge. The court did not seem concerned that I had stayed after my clearance date, but I was accused of fuel smuggling and illicit carrying of a firearm — with a possible ten-year-maximum jail sentence. My case did not interest the French consul; she said it was a private concern. The judge told me to prepare my defense.

I was set free, but was not allowed to leave the island and the country, and had to sign in every month at the law courts. It was a hard blow for what I considered trivialities, since I had done neither more nor less than most of the other yachties.

I went back to work on my boat, which had been put on the hard in the boatyard by order of the Guardia Nacional. The enforced storage was at my expense, but the boatyard was kind enough to give me a special price. As the deck is made of fiberglassed plywood, I wanted to fix the places where rainwater could enter in the future, in case I got sent to jail for several years. And to give myself some hope, I prepared several other things on the boat in view of a future Atlantic crossing back to Europe.

It is strange how the human mind adapts itself to any kind of unusual situation. After a few weeks, I thought less about my situation and resumed the usual routine when I was in the boatyard.

The public defender represented me, but she was satisfied with only receiving the documents I brought her. During September, an acquaintance told me that a public prosecutor he knew could solve my problem for 20,000 Bolivars (at that time about US$1,700 at the black market rate). I declined the offer.

My yachtie neighbour Ricardo asked me if I had read Kafka, who speaks about the meanders of bureaucracy. I said no, not yet.

October 2012

In October, I was lucky to meet a local lawyer who had a sailing boat with her partner, maybe the only one like this in the country, since the others seemed to know very little about boating. (The public defender had even asked me once if there were fuel stations at sea!) So my brand-new lawyer knew about the problems we yachties have in Venezuela. One of the first things she asked me was if I wanted to leave the country. I didn't pay much attention, assuming that my case would be resolved shortly.

In November we had an appointment with the public prosecutor, whom the public defender had told me that it was impossible to meet. The public prosecutor was a respectable lady, and I saw immediately that she understood the situation. To see if I was smuggling fuel or not, she ordered a study by the harbour master to learn how much fuel I needed to go to Martinique. She ordered an examination of my gun. We also established that I would recover the full possession of my boat, which I was living aboard.

Time was passing; we were already at the end of 2012. I went about once a week to the prosecutor's office and asked if the reports had come from the police and the harbour master's office. My friend Hector in Chacachacare, who used to make the best and cheapest hamburgers on the island, told me, "When I was a boy, my father told me about how to do things in Venezuela: you go to see the right person, speak friendly with him or her and discreetly give him or her some banknotes. Like magic, everything becomes smooth and quick, when otherwise you would have had to wait hours, days, weeks…" But I was not born in Venezuela, and I was not ready to use Hector's method.

February 2013

By February 2013, the report of the local marine surveyor dispatched by the harbour master, and the one of the policeman who examined my gun, had arrived. The surveyor's report established that the fuel capacity of my tanks corresponded with the quantity I needed to go to Martinique. But the policeman didn't see any of the manufacturer's identification marks on the gun, and said that the serial numbers had been filed off, which I didn't know. The prosecutor said that all that interested her about the gun was whether it was requested by the police, which was not the case. Hope was coming back to my mind.

In March, the public prosecutor went on holiday for 45 days. When the time came in April to see her after her vacation, we learnt that she had retired and had been replaced by her assistant. After a few weeks, another prosecutor replaced the assistant, and a few weeks later, another one replaced him.

We were already in June. I had spent more time than planned on repairing my galley: behind it the hull was rusty. But I still hoped to put my boat in the water, go quickly to Martinique, and then cross the Atlantic. But the Guardia Nacional inspected all the boats that were going into the water. The anti-drug section inspected my boat on the hard, then delayed my authorization to launch, and then said they would have to do another inspection once the boat was in the water. Now it was July and I realized it was too late to cross the Atlantic this year. The lawyer talked to the new public prosecutor, who said he would see to my case soon. I decided to give up launching the boat for now: soon a favourable ruling would come for me with the new prosecutor, surely!

Although I had full possession of my boat, its situation in the country was not clear yet. I was not allowed to leave the country, but the boat was free. I decided to go to the harbour master's office to ask for a new boat permit. I was received by an officer I knew for several years. The first thing he asked me was, "After your stay here, do you want to come back with your boat to Venezuela?"

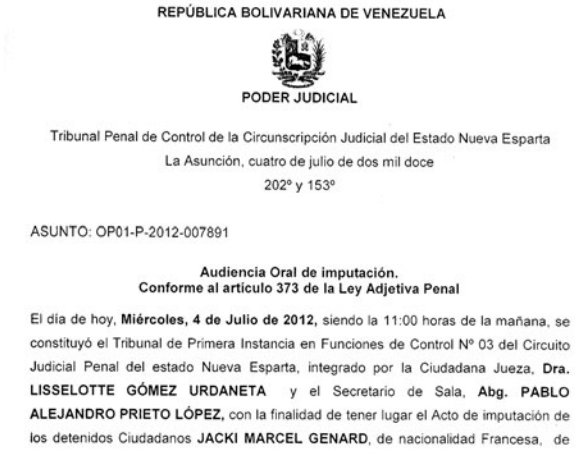
"No," I said.

Owing to my circumstances, I was given a special renewable three-month boat permit.

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In August, I met the public prosecutor with the lawyer, and he seemed to understand the situation. We asked for a dismissed case. About the gun, we argued that the year before, the captain of a US cargo ship had been detained for several days in Venezuela, as the Guardia Nacional found several rifles onboard, and then released. He knew the case, and promised he would have done his report for the court by mid-August. But by the end of September, nothing had been done. My yachtie neighbour Ricardo, one of only two foreigners who returned this year for a hull bottom job, exclaimed, "You are still here!"



REPÚBLICA BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA

PODER JUDICIAL

Tribunal Penal de Control de la Circunscripción Judicial del Estado Nueva Esparta

La Asunción, cuatro de julio de dos mil doce

202° y 153°

ASUNTO: OP01-P-2012-007891

Audiencia Oral de imputación.
Conforme al artículo 373 de la Ley Adjetiva Penal

El día de hoy, **Miércoles, 4 de Julio de 2012,** siendo la 11:00 horas de la mañana, se constituyó el Tribunal de Primera Instancia en Funciones de Control Nº 03 del Circuito Judicial Penal del estado Nueva Esparta, integrado por la Ciudadana Jueza, **Dra. LISSELOTTE GÓMEZ URDANETA** y el Secretario de Sala, **Abg. PABLO ALEJANDRO PRIETO LÓPEZ,** con la finalidad de tener lugar el Acto de imputación de los detenidos Ciudadanos **JACKI MARCEL GENARD**, de nacionalidad Francesa, de

The author was charged on July 4th, 2012. Eighteen months later, his case still unresolved, he sailed away

October 2013

Finally the public prosecutor's report was sent to the court in October 2013. The report had plenty of mistakes regarding my identity. The prosecutor had dropped the fuel-smuggling charge, but stated the illicit carrying of firearm charge. The worst was that he, or probably his assistants, had made a mistake. He referred to an article of the law that referred to guns with rifled barrels, of which possession was an offense. My gun has smooth barrels, like any common hunting gun.

The words of one of the boatyard workers I knew came back to my mind. He told me about the Margarita jail. He went there from time to time to visit his friends who were inside. When you were sent there, he said, you had to choose one of the two cliques and you had to comply with the rules of the clique chief, who had several armed bodyguards. And you had to find yourself a job to make your living.

I felt like I was sitting in the backseat of a car driven by a child at high speed.

I reviewed the Venezuelan law on firearms that was valid in 2012 and discovered that the possession of my type of gun was not an offense. Considering the prosecutor's report, I was detained in Venezuela from 2012 for an offence I had not committed. The infraction of not declaring it could have been paid for with a 20- to 200-Bolivar fine.

By mid-November 2013, the lawyer learnt that the preliminary hearing for my case had been scheduled for mid-August 2014 but would probably be postponed until the end of the year. The lawyer wrote a letter to the court, arguing that as the public prosecutor had dropped the smuggling charge and as the possession of my gun was not an offense, the prohibition on my leaving the country should be removed.

January 2014

The court denied the request to remove the prohibition; it would have to be decided at the preliminary hearing. At this moment I decided it was time to jump out of the car. It has to be now. At the end of the month, my boat permit will run out, and in February, my visa will do the same. My boat is ready to go in the water.

Time has passed; the people of the Chacachacare Guardia Nacional platoon have changed. The young guy who comes to take my data asks, "Where are you going?"

"To the Porlamar marina," I say.

"Ah, you are not going out of the country?"

"No, I stay here for a while."

Soon my boat is in the water; I stay at the boatyard pier a few days to finish preparing it. The Guardia sees me, but does not pay attention.

I know it's the worst season to leave Venezuela, with strong tradewinds coming from the east or northeast, exactly where I want to go. On the morning of Monday, January 27th, I leave the Del Caribe boatyard pier with my boat and my cat. At the end of the afternoon, I am motoring in front of Porlamar. Last night, I watched the weather forecast. Not good. The sea and the wind are rough. Nobody in view, I decide to continue. The rougher the sea, the less likely I will meet some kind of Venezuela Coast Guard. I know that if I am stopped at sea, I will probably be sent directly to jail. However, this time I have several thousand Bolivars: it could help me to negotiate my freedom. The passage will be terrible.

The anti-seasickness pills that I bought in Porlamar don't work. I vomit everything I eat and drink. I have to lie down almost all the time; I can't stand watch. The next day, north of the Testigos Islands, the engine stops. I am not in condition to fix the engine, but I set the sails and can only go due north, which lets me pass on Wednesday only 15 nautical miles east of the Venezuelan island of Aves, west of northern Dominica.

On Thursday, the boat is west of Montserrat. I start feeling better and tack to the southeast. My genoa starts to tear in wind strengths of 5 to 6 Beaufort, and on Friday I have to roll it completely and set a jib on my mobile stay. I pray God that He helps me to go east.

On Saturday there is a lull of several hours. I take advantage of it to examine the engine and discover that the fuel filter is just clogged. At that moment I know that my boat, my cat and I have a chance to make it. Soon the engine starts. The boat is 70 miles west of Martinique.

On Monday, February the 3rd, I arrive weakened but happy at Le Marin, Martinique. It will take me several days to realize I am free, but with the bitter feeling of having been robbed of almost two years of my life.

I must say that official harassment of yachts is not systematic in Venezuela. One has a chance to pass through the raindrops. And people are most of the time open and friendly.

By the way, in the meantime, I found a book by Franz Kafka.

And I still have a few thousand Bolivars to change in case somebody is interested in going to Venezuela.

—Continued from page 11 *…Caribbean Eco News*

Although CoCo View Resort in Roatan, Honduras, has reported Mutton Snappers (*Lutjanus analis*) actively hunting lionfish around the resort, the consumption of lionfish by snappers is subject to further research. The Saba Conservation Foundation will attempt to collect sufficient samples, in collaboration with the fishermen, to show that this it is not a freak occurrence and to draw some conclusions on comparative sizes of predator and prey.

Seabirds for Supper?

Recent research on the relationship between Caribbean residents and seabirds by Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC) has shed light on this otherwise unstudied subject. The research, led by partner organization Sustainable Grenadines, with support from the US National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and BirdsCaribbean, involved surveying stakeholders such as fishermen about their economic and environmental connection with seabirds. Here are some of the surprising findings:

Over half (67 percent) reported eating seabird eggs.

Almost half (47 percent) reported eating seabird chicks or adults.

Seabird harvest was not very important for making a living for most people, with few describing the practice as "somewhat important" (ten percent) or "very important" (four percent).

Most people collect fewer than 100 eggs per year but some collect more than 500.

Overall, even though seabirds and their eggs are a popular dish, people are generally not relying on seabird harvests for their livelihoods. Since there isn't a major financial incentive to keep harvesting seabirds, communities can be involved in conserving seabirds without losing income. And many fishermen reported that seabirds help them to find fish, so there is incentive to have more of the birds around as "fish finders".

In fact, at meetings where the research results were reported back to the community, it was clear that many individuals want to be involved in seabird conservation. This was great news for EPIC's volunteer warden program, which will be starting thanks to support from donors to our Save the Seabirds Campaign.

In April, EPIC began surveys for rats on some of the most important seabird nesting islands. Once the birds show up in force this month, EPIC will be studying how successful their nests are and figuring out if the seabird population can handle the impacts of harvesting and/or rats and other predators.

For more information visit www.epicislands.org.

Field Guide to Grenadine Birds Coming

Meanwhile, Alison DeGraff and Juliana Coffey are producing an avian field guide covering both the St. Vincent and Grenada Grenadines. This will be one of the first guides in the Caribbean to be inclusive of scientific and local ecological knowledge ("LEK") and folklore, representative of the rich avian biological and cultural heritage unique to the islands. The guide will be a valuable resource for training local bird monitors to participate in the Caribbean Waterbird Census and will enhance the overall conservation and management of Grenadine resources, targeting both locals and foreigners with an interest in the avifauna of the region. Highlights of the guide include:

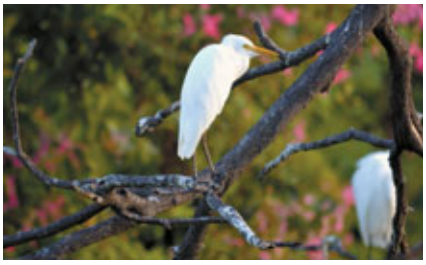
A complete and comprehensive checklist of all birds recorded in the Grenadines.

Over 130 profiles of bird species, accompanied with high-quality photographs taken in the region.





Clockwise: Hummingbirds, egrets and terns are among the birds that will be included in the new field guide to the birds of the Grenadines



Detailed maps that depict each of the Grenadine islands and showcase important bird areas and birding hot spots. If you have been bird watching in the Grenadines or nearby islands and have stories, hot spots, or photos to share, please contact akdegraff@gmail.com.

The volunteers now need financial support to enable them to finish documenting the LEK and folklore within the Grenadines: the final stage for the completion of this guide. Any funds raised will cover costs associated with travel, room and board expenses during the two-week LEK collection from Grenadine citizens, spanning the nine inhabited islands of the Grenadines, with any additional funds going towards printing and getting the guide back to the local communities.

Find the campaign at igg.me/at/grenadines-birds/x/5358981. For more information visit grenadinesbirds.tumblr.com.



MAY 2014

♈ **ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)**
Venus, the goddess of love, sails into your sign in the first week and although a new passion is slow getting underway it will be under full sail around the 30th.

♉ **TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)**
Before the 21st complete any onboard projects started last month. Don't let commercial concerns distract you.

♊ **GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)**
Mercury, the ruling planet of Gemini, enters your sign on the 8th and brings increased verbal skills as well as abilities in many other areas of your life. This will be a time of making good headway on whatever course you choose.

♋ **CANCER (22 Jun - 23 Jul)**
Jupiter is still making its way through Cancer, which brings positive energy and good humor into the main cabin. This will create a productive business environment on board.

♌ **LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)**
You will get freshening winds in your sails of love, so even though boat business is foundering there will be a positive vibe aboard the ship.

♍ **VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)**
Use your inventive talents to their fullest during the second and third weeks and don't let misunderstandings below decks blow you off course.

♎ **LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)**
Romance will be having rough weather and a lack of humor on your part will not help. Use your very capable verbal skills to keep things on an even keel.

♏ **SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)**
Creative efforts will be in irons but good humor will be aboard to help with financial efforts, at least until Jupiter moves out of Cancer in mid-July.

♐ **SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)**
Communications will be spotty this month and could include an ocean of misunderstandings. Romance will be at the helm so just shut up and feel the love.

♑ **CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)**
Finish up any projects aboard before the 21st and don't let rough seas in your love life throw your progress aback.

♒ **AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)**
Your gift of the gab will help you be successful in getting work done on the boat and building relationships with crew or workers. Compliment the efforts of others: it's always helpful to know one's work is appreciated.

♓ **PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)**
Loose lips sink ships: the potential for misunderstandings and arguments is strong. Don't say something that could cause discontent with others in the harbor, as it could come back to you over the horizon.

Island Poets

One Careless Moment

One careless moment and it's gone!
That plastic bag blew fast along.
It danced and played round on the shore
Then drowned in surf to dance no more.

"Oh what the heck, the ocean's wide —
It will disperse with wind and tide."

But in the sea the plastic glimmered
And in the sunlight turned and shimmered.
A hawksbill turtle swimming by
Perceived this meal with eager eye.

"Oh what the heck, the ocean's vast —
It will not linger, will not last."

He took one bite, and then a second.
The plastic blocked his gut, they reckoned.
'Twas many days 'fore his last breath,
He had a slow and painful death.

But there's more to this somber tale:
That plastic's strong, it will not fail.
The remnants of this plastic bag
Then found a handy place to snag.

A fishing boat, out in the ocean
Was trawling nets with steady motion
When suddenly the engine failed,
For plastic round the boat had trailed
And tightly round the prop had wrapped
And up the inlet, too, was trapped.
With engine seized, the boat was tossed,
The catch, the boat, the men were lost!

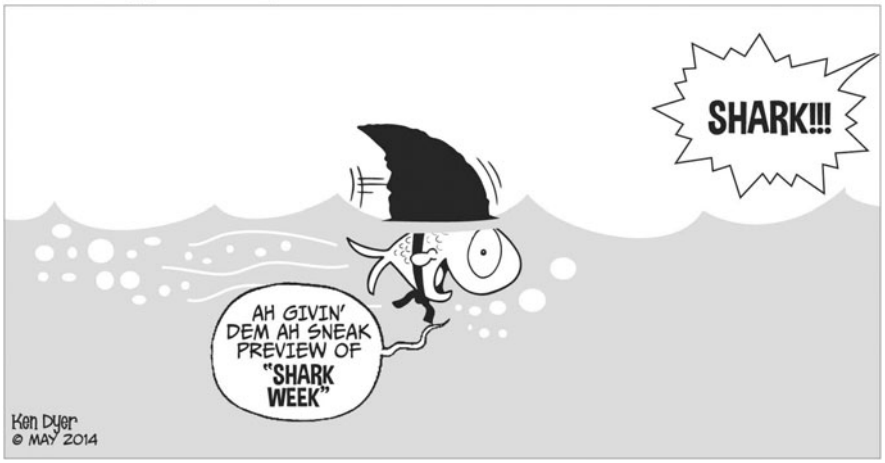
The ocean may be wide and vast,
But plastic years and years can last.
One plastic bag can cause great pain —
Make sure you don't lose one again!

— Christine Webster



WILFRED DEDERER

Seaweed



KEN DYER

The Sky from Mid-May to Mid-June

by Jim Ulik

Meteors in May

The barrage of meteors continues through June. May has a potential "fireworks" display. There will be 33 known Near Earth Asteroids (NEAs) passing near Earth from May 16th through June 15th. NEAs are asteroids whose orbits approach and/

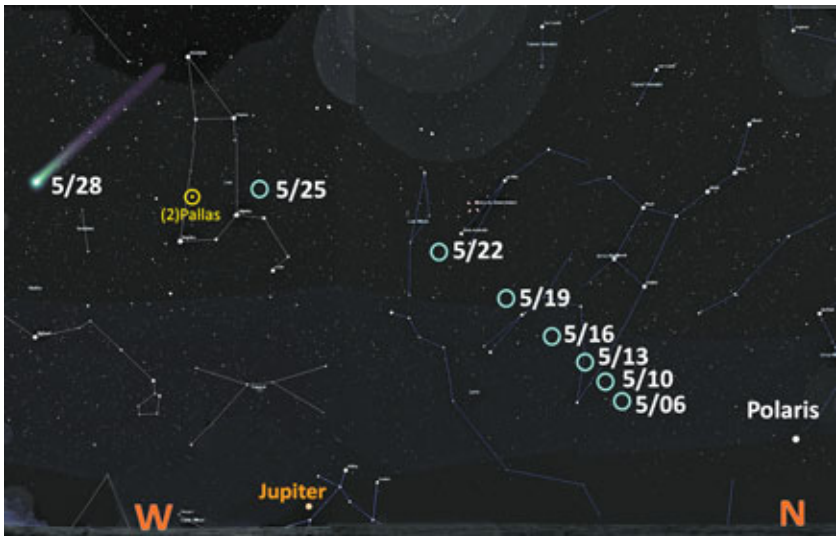


FIGURE 1

Comet 209/P Linear is brightening as it moves out west. Blue circles represent the comet's position in the night sky between May 6th and 28th. Also noted is Comet 2 Pallas' location on May 28th

or cross the Earth's orbit. Asteroids are studied because they were a source of Earth's water, organic material and minerals; they can provide valuable raw materials for future interplanetary exploration and are potentially a very high-consequence natural hazard if ignored.

Below are the dates the Sun will pass over a meridian at noon as we approach the summer solstice.

May 20th	20°
May 25th	21°
May 31st	22°
June 10th	23°

Saturday, May 17th

Over the next 30 days the closest known asteroid, which has an orbit of 3.9 years, will pass 957,444 miles or 1,536,000 km from Earth. That may seem a long distance but it is close enough to be classified and monitored as a threat for potential impact. That does not mean it will ever hit Earth. However, the orbits of asteroids are changed by the gravitational pull of the planets, Sun or by collisions with other objects.

Sunday, May 18th

The Moon orbits Earth every 27.3 Days. This should not be confused with the 29.5-day lunar month or the number of days from one Full Moon to the next Full Moon. At 0759 hours* the Moon will reach a point in its orbit that brings it 31,068.55 miles (50,000 kilometres) closer to Earth (perigee). Tonight the Moon should appear larger because it is about 11 percent closer than it was on May 6th.

Saturday, May 24th

Comet 209/P Linear reached its closest point to the Sun on May 6th. Today the Earth will pass through all the trails of debris from multiple orbits that took place between the years 1763 and 1924. Remember, orbits change over time. Meteor experts have made predictions that the meteor showers could produce 100 to 400 meteors per hour. One prediction has shown up to 1,000 meteors per hour in the United States and Canada. The potential storm will be a few days prior to New Moon, which occurs on May 28th. Unfortunately, the Moon will rise at 0223 just before the maximum storm at 0321. The apparent source of these meteors will be below the northern horizon until 0430 in the constellation Camelopardalis, the giraffe, which is about 20 degrees east of Polaris. It is hard to predict how many meteors we will be able to see in the Caribbean. Chances are the meteors will be more numerous in the northern Caribbean Basin countries than the southern.

Since March, Mars has been moving away from Spica towards the constellation Leo. It finally escaped the constellation Virgo at the end of April. Over the next month Mars' position in the night sky will shift back towards Spica and finally make its reentry into Virgo for a short stop on its way to join Libra. Mars is aptly named the God of War, as he appears to be constantly invading new territory!

Sunday, May 25th

Moonrise is at 0309. There will be a conjunction between the Moon and Venus this morning. The sliver of a Moon will be about two degrees above Venus. Both are positioned in the Pisces constellation.

Wednesday, May 28th

Comet 209/P Linear will be its brightest today and then will slowly begin to fade. The comet will also make its closest approach to Earth on May 29th, a mere 5,164,228 miles (8,311,020 kilometres) away. Figure 1 shows the positions in the night sky of the comet over time. On the 28th, Comet 2 Pallas can also be found in the constellation Leo.

Friday, May 30th

Jupiter, named after the king of gods in Roman mythology, is leaving the Gemini twins. The planet now begins its three-month crawl towards Cancer ("the crab" in Latin) where it will stay until October. This constellation represents the crab that once attacked Hercules.

Sunday, June 1st

Comet 2012 K1 PanSTARRS could be visible with binoculars as it is increasing in brightness into June. Maximum brightness won't occur until October. Just before the moon sets, look towards the northwest around 320 degrees and up about 45 degrees. Tonight the Moon will be setting at 2142 hours, providing good viewing prospects.

Thursday, June 5th

The shooting stars continue as the Alpha–Scorpiids meteor shower has another peak event tonight. Scorpius will be rising in the east just before sunset. Some meteors may be seen before the half Moon rises at 1159.

Saturday and Sunday, June 7th and 8th

Close conjunctions between the Moon, Mars and Spica will occur over the next two days. On the 7th, Mars and the Moon will meet with only 45 minutes of arc of separation. The Moon is 70.5-percent illuminated when it meets Mars. The illumination increases to 79.7 percent on the 8th when Spica and the Moon come within 29 minutes of arc of each other.

Tuesday, June 10th

The Ophiuchid meteor shower originating from the constellation Ophiuchus "the serpent bearer" will show some activity from May 19th to July. This is a minor shower that will peak tonight. Face east towards Ophiuchus and look up 90 degrees into the night sky to find the meteors. Finding many shooting stars may be difficult as the Moon will rise at 1613 hours and be near the Full Moon phase.

Friday, June 13th

2014 has only one Friday the 13th. Anecdotal evidence determined that Friday was an unlucky day to start passages or projects. The number 12 became a number revered by mathematicians, early astronomers and religious groups. Egyptians counted in base 12 and divided the sundial into 12-hour segments. There are 12 months in a calendar year, 12 constellations (signs) in the astrologers' zodiac, 12 labors of Hercules, 12 disciples and a dozen donuts.

—Continued on next page



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—*Continued from previous page*

More could be added to the list of twelves. Thirteen became an irregular number. Add a thirteenth person to the Last Supper and what happens? Invite 12 Norse gods to dinner and don't invite Loki. Loki shows up anyway and Balder (the god of light, joy, purity, beauty, innocence, and reconciliation) dies. Astronomically there are at least 13 constellations in the zodiac. The zodiac is defined by the Sun's path as it circles the Earth. That path also crosses Ophiuchus but he is rarely mentioned. Thirteen is just not a balanced number. Tonight, combine a Friday together with a 13 then add a Full Moon and, "You're travelling through another dimension, a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind; a journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination. That's the signpost up ahead — your next stop, the Twilight Zone!"

FIGURE 2.



Ophiuchus, source of the meteor shower and missing zodiac constellation, drawn by Joannes Hevelii in 1687

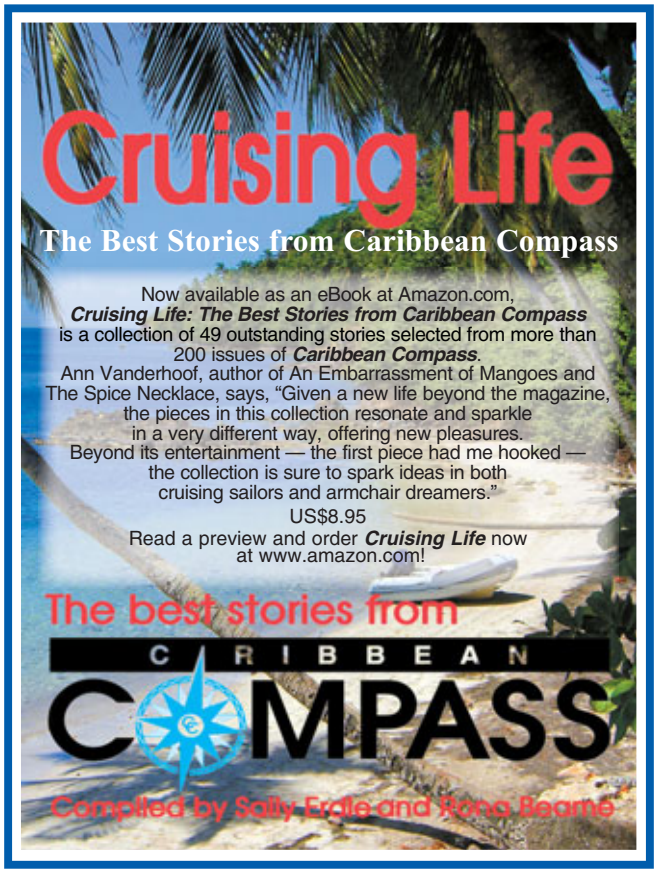
The Full Moon actually occurs at 0012 hours but doesn't rise on our side of the world until 1911.

Space News

On June 6th the ISS-RapidScat instrument will be launched by NASA for installation on the International Space Station (ISS). The purpose is to measure ocean surface wind speed and direction, adding to the arsenal of technology to improve weather and marine forecasts. That includes monitoring storms and hurricanes. Watch the ISS as it passes overhead. Find the dates, time and location in the sky for the passes over the Caribbean at http://spotthestation.nasa.gov/.

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

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



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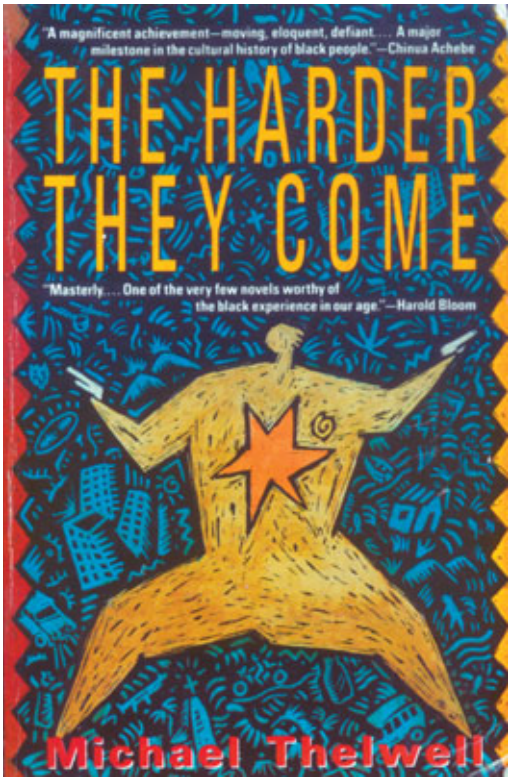
YOU CAN GET IT

The Harder They Come, *a novel by Michael Thelwell, Grove Press, ©1980, 399 pages with a glossary of Jamaican terms and idioms. ISBN 0-8021-3138-7.*

Michael Thelwell has created something miraculous out of the groundbreaking 1972 Jamaican film of the same name written by Perry Henzell and Trevor Rhone, and directed by Henzell. He has created an imaginative and impressive backstory and multiple additional characters to the story of Ivan Martin, a country "bwai" (boy) who finds himself trying to survive in the slums of Trenchtown. The story of Ivan Martin is based on the real life of Vincent "Ivanhoe" Martin, a notorious criminal known as "Rhygin'" who taunted police, committed numerous robberies and murders, and was eventually gunned down in 1948 after an extensive manhunt and a bounty on his head of 200 pounds. Rhygin', like Bonnie and Clyde in the USA, became a folk hero to the masses, and the film depicts him sympathetically as a reggae singer on the run. Songs like "You Can Get it if You Really Want", "The Harder They Come" and "Many Rivers to Cross" by Jimmy Cliff (who portrayed Ivan) popularized reggae before the advent of Bob Marley.

In his introduction, Thelwell states that his book compresses 60 years of cultural change, "some would say 'progress'," into one generation. This is evident when Ivan goes back to the country after five years and finds it completely changed. The shock of not being able to recognize his roots is too much to bear and Ivan becomes Rhygin'. For those who saw the film, the story of Rhygin's rise and fall will not be as scintillating as the first hundred pages, which depict Ivan's childhood up to the time he leaves for the city.

Ivanhoe Martin in Thelwell's novelization is a typical country boy being raised by his grandmother, Miss Amanda ("'Mando"). His mentor is "Maas Nattie" (Nathaniel) who teaches young Ivan the value of self-respect and warns him of the wickedness of the city. Ivan grows up in a mountain village, a descendant of the Maroons: runaway slaves whose self-sufficient ways and African customs form part of his daily life. He has typical boyhood friends, a first love (Mirriam), and his first taste of sophistication (Miss Ida, a shopkeeper and working girl). The reader is transported back before the Second World War in this depiction of idyllic country life, and it is by far the highlight of the book, fascinatingly authentic in its depictions of daily life, the stories, rituals, superstitions and legends of a vanished culture. The dialect employed is marvelous and the glossary at the end of the book is useful. There are so many fantastic characters crammed into Ivan's village that it seems like the entire book should continue in this fashion. Then Ivan's grandmother dies, and the action climaxes with an elaborate wake, burial ceremony, and Nine Night Feast, paid for by Maas Nattie from the sale of Miss Amanda's land. The culmination of the Nine Night Feast features a visit from the duppy (ghost) of Miss 'Mando herself, speaking through the mouth of the village idiot, who is in a trance from the drumming and liquor. Miss 'Mando offers a bleak vision of Ivan's future and the party comes to a crashing halt. Ivan has little choice but to set off for Kingston, where he believes a fortune awaits him as a singer.



Maas Nattie gives him the rest of his Granny's money and some very sound advice.

"Bwai, you a somebody. You come from somewhe'. All you generation dem is right yah. He gestured emphatically toward the earth.... *Good people, respectable. People say all kin' a t'ing — some say dem did proud. Some say dem did quick to anger an' love fight. But Ah nevah hear nobody say dat you people evah t'ief. No sah, not a man can say dem evah tek nutten, not a* ***penny****, not a* ***fowl****, not a* ***pin*** *whe' dem nevah work, sweat an' pay fe. You hear me, bwai?"*

"Yes, sah," Ivan murmured, tears in his eyes...

"Town people dem different, different bad, you hear Ah tell you? ... All kinds a people you a go meet dere. Some whe' no know no law at all, atall. Lie? Mi Gawd! T'ief? Ha' mercy! You no see t'ief yet. Wait, you see!... Some a dem — if dem tell you run — stand up. Dem say stand — run....

"You gwine have fe careful...No matter how you heart big, sometime you have fe take low. ...When you black an' no have money, you have fe tek low sometime. Is so life go- strong man nevah wrong an' poor man can't vex. Use your head, boy. Dem say 'coward man keep sound bone.' Now ah not saying you fe let people piss down you back an' you call it sweat. No. Not so! But you have to use your head more dan you mouth..."

Away from his Granny's gravesite his parting words were the most memorable.

He kicked his mount into motion and started away. Then he wheeled around, a huge impish smile on his face, looking at Ivan appraisingly, his eyes glowing with mischief. "Bwai, you full a you self now, eh? Money ina pocket an a go a town. ... So Ah talkin' to you as a man now, not as no more pickney. Dis is somet'ing Ah couldn't tell you down deh." He gestured toward the graves and his voice became conspiratorial: One mo' t'ing — bwai, you ***can'*** *done pussy. "You gwine ha' fe tek some an leave some. You* ***can' done pussy*** *so don't mek it rule you. You can' done it* ***a raas****." And with a rich, lascivious chortle, he turned the horse's head around and galloped off.*

It doesn't get much better than that!

Street's Caribbean Cruising Guides



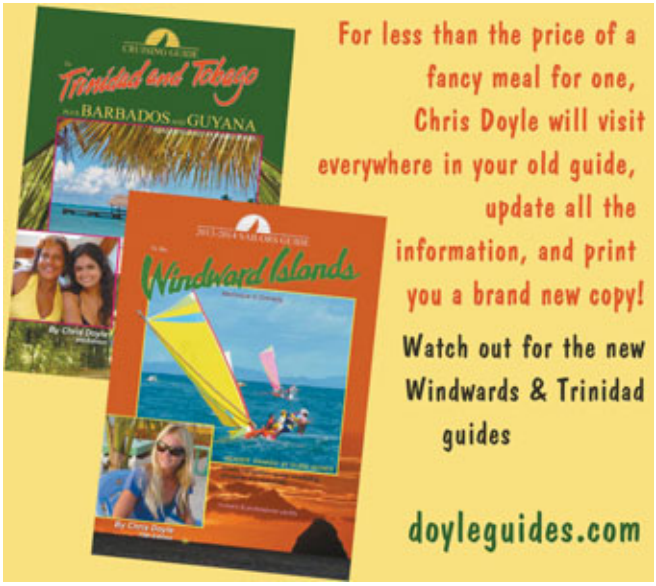
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Street's Guides describe some of Donald Street's favourite Caribbean cruising grounds, many of which are not even covered in most of the other sailing guides - including east coast of Grenada (Grenville and Sandy islands), south coast of Carriacou, east coast of Carriacou (Grand and Watering Bay - protected by four miles of barrier reef), east coast of Canouan (Windward Bay - protected by a mile of barrier reef) and some wonderful cruising options and anchorages for the east coast of Martinique.

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—Continued from page 13

Grenada's Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Hon. Alexandra Otway-Noel said, "The beautiful island of Grenada, with its quality infrastructure and welcoming people, has been ready to entertain a partner as prestigious as RORC for some years. Being chosen as host country for the first running of this new race across the Atlantic firmly establishes our island as a destination of choice for yachting events in the Caribbean from now on."

Alongside maxis and superyachts, the fleet will include the typical seasoned RORC racer. RORC Rear Commodore Steven Anderson was first to sign up for the race with his Corby 40 *Cracklin' Rosie*, and was joined by Nigel Passmore with his J/133, *Apollo 7*. The first foreign entry was from Spain, Ernesto Cortina's Baracuda 72, *Gran Jotiti*.

Yachts are expected to arrive in Grenada between December 11th and 21st, finishing in good time to enjoy a Spice Island Christmas. The prizegiving will take place on Saturday December 20th.



Left to right: Danny Donelan and Glynn Thomas of Port Louis Marina; John Burnie of the RORC; Alexandra Otway-Noel, Grenada's Minister for Tourism, Civil Aviation & Culture; Nick Elliott and Andrew McIrvine of the RORC; Mark Scott of the Peter de Savary Group; and Rudy Grant of the Grenada Tourism Authority

The RORC Transatlantic Race is open to boats with a minimum IRC Rating of 1.004 and welcomes multihulls, IMOCA 60s, Class40s and other offshore one-designs such as Volvo 65s to compete. The Race will also act as a feeder for yachts participating in the 2015 RORC Caribbean 600, held annually in February from Antigua and the start date allows time for competitors in the Rolex Middle Sea Race to get to the start of the RORC Transatlantic Race in good time.

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

Panerai Transat Classique 2015 to End in Martinique

The Canary Island of Lanzarote and Martinique in the Lesser Antilles are the departure and arrival ports for the Panerai Transat Classique 2015 (www.paneraitransatclassique.com), the next edition of the renowned transatlantic race for classic and vintage yachts. The regatta will leave from Lanzarote on January 7th 2015.

The race is again being organized by the Atlantic Yacht Club (France) in partnership with sports watchmaker Officine Panerai.

For more information visit www.paneraitransatclassique.com/home.html.

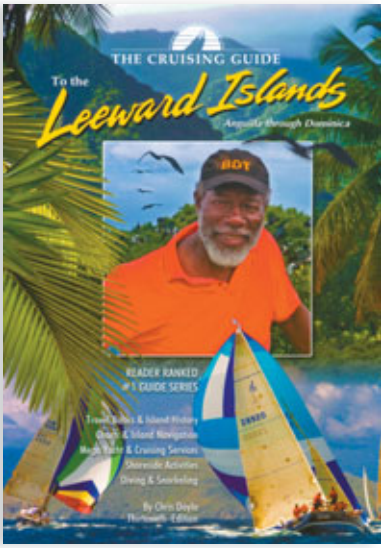
Colombia added to World ARC 2015 Route

The port of Santa Marta on Colombia's Caribbean coast will host the World ARC fleet for the first time in January 2015. Lying just north of the country's capital, Cartagena, Santa Marta is the oldest colonial city in South America and quite enchanting. Opened just three years ago, the new full-service Marina Santa Marta (see ad on page 6) is ideally placed to break the journey from St. Lucia to the San Blas Islands of Panama, giving World ARC sailors the opportunity to explore this beautiful part of Colombia. Tourism is growing fast in Colombia, and with the stunning Tayrona National Park, right next door to Santa Marta, there is much to offer the visitor.

For more information on World ARC 2015 visit http://www.worldcruising.com/world_arc.

THE LEEWARDS Between Two Covers

***The Cruising Guide to the Leeward Islands: Anguilla through Dominica**, by Chris Doyle. © 2013, Cruising Guide Publications and Chris Doyle. Soft cover, 518 pages, color photos and sketch charts. ISBN 978-0-944428-97-9. US$34.95.*



This is a whole lot of cruising guide, and the Leeward Islands deserve it. As Chris Doyle writes in his introduction, "You can find sophisticated nightspots with entertainment and gambling, as well as deserted and under-populated areas where you feel at the outer edge of the world. Some areas make for easy cruising with short sails; others include romping across longer open ocean passages. Still others make demands on your reef navigating skills. The variety is unparalleled."

For the reader's convenience, the Leewards — comprising ten main islands and stretching for some 200 miles — are broken up into three manageable groups that Chris has affectionately dubbed 'The Renaissance Islands" (Anguilla through St. Barts), "The Islands That Brush the Clouds" (Saba through Montserrat) and "The Islands of Mountains and Mangroves" (Antigua & Barbuda through Dominica).

This 13th edition, updated for 2014 and 2015, is in the by-now familiar six-by-nine-inch, spiral bound, soft (but water-resistant) cover format that his legions of fans have come to recognize as a "Doyle's guide". It lies flat, open to the page you want, and an extension of the back cover acts as an impossible-to-lose bookmark. At a hefty 518 pages, this latest edition is chock-a-block with accurate and up-to-date information researched by Chris himself, with scores of excellent sketch charts and abundant tantalizing photos. There's current info on navigation (including an extensive list of key waypoints), anchorages, Customs and Immigration regulations, weather, communications (including WiFi), marinas, haul-out facilities, chandleries, shore-side shopping and much more. Two of Chris's, and many sailors', favorite things — restaurants and hikes — get their due attention. Selected snorkeling and diving sites and the relevant regulations are also covered. Aerial photos give a special perspective on the most popular anchorages, and a comprehensive directory by island and service type will certainly be useful to anyone cruising the Leewards. The ads are tucked neatly into the text where they are easily seen but not disruptive to the flow of information. The book is attractive and enjoyable to read, as well as being informative.

Some budget-minded sailors might squawk about spending money on a cruising guide when cheap or free sources of information might be available. But at US$3.50 per island for this much solid and reliable information presented in what most consider the handiest format for active use aboard a boat, this book is a steal.

This book is available at chandleries and bookstores or from www.cruisingguides.com.

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Corn was domesticated about 10,000 years ago, most likely from a lost ancestor from the highlands of central Mexico. The oldest remains of corn found at archaeological sites in Mexico resemble popcorn-type corn. Corn is now produced on every continent of the world except Antarctica. The average ear of corn has 800 kernels, arranged in 16 rows. There is one piece of silk for each kernel.

Many traditional Caribbean dishes such as coo-coo, ducana, arepas, dumplings, porridge and fungi are based on cornmeal.

A really easy way to make cornmeal for dinner is to stir one cup of cornmeal into one cup of cold water, then pour the cornmeal mixture into a pot containing three cups of boiling water and a pinch of salt. Put a cover on the pot and let the cornmeal cook on low heat for about 15 minutes. The cornmeal should be thick when it is done. Spoon the cornmeal onto a plate and top it with tomato sauce or stir-fried veggies. Whether you call it polenta or cornmeal mush, it's easy, healthy, tasty and satisfying.

Polenta with Pumpkin and Spinach
4 Cups prepared polenta (see method above)
1 large onion, chopped small
2 Tablespoons butter or margarine
4 Cups cleaned spinach
1 hot pepper seeded and minced (optional)
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon cinnamon
4 garlic cloves, minced
2 large tomatoes, chopped
salt and pepper to taste
1 pound pumpkin, cooked and mashed
1/2 Cup cheddar cheese, grated (optional)

Sauté onions in butter. Add spinach and stir for five minutes until spinach is wilted and onions are translucent. (Add two Tablespoons water if sticking.) Add hot pepper, cumin, cinnamon, and garlic, and fry for three more minutes. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook for five minutes. Stir in tomatoes, cover and cook another five minutes. Add salt, pepper and mashed pumpkin and stir well, cooking uncovered for three minutes. Remove from heat.

Spread half of the prepared polenta in the bottom of a greased baking dish. Spread vegetable mixture evenly over polenta. Sprinkle with cheese (optional). Spread remaining polenta evenly over top. Bake at 375°F for half an hour or until lightly browned. Let stand five minutes before serving. Serves six.

Corn Cakes
2 Cups cornmeal
1 Cup all purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
salt, pepper and spices to taste
2 eggs
1 Cup milk
1 large onion, chopped small
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 sprigs parsley, chopped
2 Tablespoons oil
1 hot pepper seeded and minced (optional)
1 Cup fresh, frozen, or canned corn kernels, drained (optional)
2 Tablespoons oil for frying

Mix together all dry ingredients. Mix in eggs, milk, onions, garlic, parsley and oil. Stir in hot pepper and/or kernel corn, if using. Heat a large frying pan with two Tablespoons oil and add mixture by the spoonful. Brown cakes on both sides. Serves four.

Sweet Potato Pie
4 medium-sized sweet potatoes
2 Cups coconut milk
3 Cups water
1 1/2 Cups cornmeal
3/4 Cup all-purpose flour
1/2 Cup brown sugar
pinch of salt
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 Tablespoon butter or margarine, melted
2 Tablespoons lemon or lime juice

Peel and grate sweet potatoes, and then mix in the coconut milk and water. Add the dry ingredients and mix well. Stir in vanilla, butter and lemon juice. Pour into a greased baking dish. Bake at 325°F for two hours. Allow to cool before serving.

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





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Read in Next Month's *Compass*:

Bequia Easter Regatta 2014

Antigua Classics

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Compass Readers' Survey Results!

... and much more!



STAYING IN TOUCH

Dear *Compass*,

Thanks for the article "Caribbean 3G Phone and Internet Access" by Ian Hopkins in the February issue of *Compass*. I might be a little behind in my reading, but having just now seen the article, I wanted to mention that T-Mobile has a new program that allows the T-Mobile phones to be used in most of the Caribbean without extra data roaming charges and phone calls are 20 cents a minute for dial-out talk time.

The best part of the package is the unlimited 2G Internet. Whatever your current plan is in the USA is, it applies to any Caribbean island. This is, however, without the tethering option, but we have been able to tether to cell phones and tablets pretty consistently.

In practice, most areas have given us 3G service. From the field this is what we have observed:

BVI: 2G, but consistent service.

USVI: very poor.

Puerto Rico: Good solid connections and 3G.

St. Martin: Works well in Simpson Bay, but as soon as we are in town we lose all phone/data service.

Antigua: the T-Mobile connection has worked very well.

On the sail south, all the islands from Antigua to St. Lucia have given us good service as we sail by.

St Lucia: worked fair with 2G service.

All through the Grenadines we had 3G good service, using our T-Mobile phone for data. All this without extra charge.

The new T-Mobile program only came into effect in October 2013, so it's still new and getting worked out. It has improved a lot as the season has progressed. I am guessing next year will be even better.

Thanks again for putting out some information about cell coverage. It's a big issue on the yachts and it's nice to have a chip that works from island to island.

Scott Fratcher
Captain/Engineer
Catana 90 *My Orion*

LOVE THOSE GRIPES!

Dear *Compass*,

Good old *Compass*: never dull, always something with which to agree or disagree, squirm about or glow with contentment as it reflects our cruising lives. I particularly enjoy the letter page and the emotions it arouses in me and the correspondents. Frequently it tempts me, as do articles elsewhere in this robust publication, to pick up a pen — only to set it down again as lethargy and rum-and-coke take over my thinking processes.

For example, in the February issue (on the page opposite the pretty girl in a bikini, another pleasant feature of *Compass*), Frank Virgintino comments that THE cruiser (my capitals) who asked for a buddy boat went right to it: i.e. a crime-infested area. In the interest of objectivity, would it not have been more accurate to say that BOTH boats followed that course of action? All cruising skippers are responsible for their own actions. This is not commenting on these decisions, but rather a point of style in the article. However this was yet another occasion when the pen went down.

What overcame my lethargy this time was the article "What Drives Cruisers Crazy" by Laurie Corbett in the March issue. I admired the tactic. If you really want a good moan but don't want to appear misanthropic, blame your "small circle of friends".

However I have to take issue with Gripe Number Three (sailors who put up their mainsails while still at anchor). Firstly, I have never been hit by a boat under sail in umpteen years of sailing and cruising, but have sustained serious damage from a boat under power. Secondly I know some sailboats use their engines constantly and see the sails as very secondary propulsion. No problem with that. What I would respectfully suggest, though, is that being able to set and weigh anchor under sail is an essential skill, as is sailing in and out of an anchorage. A sailor who does not have these skills represents a hazard to his or her fellow yachties, for there may come a time when there is no choice in the matter.

How should one acquire these skills? How about "an uncrowded anchorage, with winds reasonably light... with the engine running with someone at the controls for any emergency"? I quote from the article. Seems perfect to me. Yet this is what unnerves our correspondent even with "a professional skipper" on board. Well, well.

Thirdly, the reason a sailboat ranges back and forth when weighing anchor under sail is precisely because that is the correct technique to accomplish the job. Let's have more flapping mainsails in "uncrowded anchorages" as cruisers hone their sailing skills.

Lastly, if I may address Gripe Number Ten. Unlike the cruiser depicted in the article, owing to my advancing years I can only pee around nine inches on dry land, I can't even write my initials in the snow anymore. However, over the side of the boat with a howling gale behind me....

I look forward to a vigorous riposte and another list of things that drive cruisers crazy!

Please sign me,
Captain Pugwash
The Good Ship Tickle Yer Fancy

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page

WE MIGHT GO THERE

Dear *Compass*,

The item in the March issue of *Caribbean Compass* about Santa Marta in Colombia has caused us to reconsider our plans for 2014, so rather than brave the eastern seaboard of the US, we might go there instead! I also enjoyed Don Street's bit about when to go north. Keep it up!

Kind regards,
Linda Lane Thornton
S/Y Coromandel

FLEXIBLE FINE?

Dear *Compass*,

My wife and I were literally en route from Guadeloupe to Antigua when we read David Southwell's account of his experience with Antigua Customs and Immigration in the April issue. It certainly got our attention! My first reaction was that anyone who has "traveled extensively" and visited "most of the good sailing destinations in the Caribbean" should know better than to wander off in a foreign country without completing the proper check-in process for that country. Antigua, like all the islands that we cruisers visit, is a sovereign nation and has every right to enforce their laws regarding who may enter (Immigration) and what they may bring with them (Customs).

However, the actions of the Customs and Immigration officers at English Harbour as reported by Mr. Southwell certainly appear to be heavy handed. If they were trying to make a point, I would suggest that they probably succeeded by the time they had confiscated his passport and ordered him to appear in St. John the next day. Had the outcome of his meeting with Mr. George and the "enforcement agent" been along the lines of "You made a serious mistake by breaking our laws and we could fine you a great deal of money. However, since you admit to your mistake and apparently meant no harm, your fine is only $500 US. Now go and tell every sailor you meet not to mess with Antigua's laws", I think the tone of Mr. Southwell's letter would have been much different. Instead, he is left with bitter feelings about Antigua and it is likely that message he will spread.

Chris Doyle rightly notes that we often make decisions about arrivals and departures at the various islands we visit based on our most recent knowledge of Customs and Immigration policies. However, we also make decisions concerning which islands to visit based partly on what kind of reception we are likely to get. If an island gets a bad reputation for outlandish Customs and Immigration policies we can simply choose to bypass that island for a friendlier place.

Ironically, my wife and I have cleared into Antigua numerous times over the past three years and in every case we have both gone to Customs and Immigration. In English Harbour I even joked with the agents that I brought my secretary because my handwriting is so bad! In Jolly Harbour, where you bring your boat to the Customs dock, the agents are often sitting on the porch that connects Customs, Immigration and Port and they can easily see both of us getting off our boat. Yet in all these years no one has ever said that we are breaking the law. Still, after reading David Southwell's letter and considering other reports concerning customs violations in Antigua, I decided it best to leave my mate on board and check in alone. By the way, the process in English Harbour, using ESeaClear, was quick, painless and pleasant.

Ralph & Mary Mills
S/V Restless Heart

Dear Readers,

It is our understanding that quite a bit can be left up to the discretion of the Customs and Immigration officers on duty or their supervisor. But we do want to stress that for violation of the law in question in Antigua, the fine on the books is a steep EC$25,000 (more than US$9,000) for each infraction. So rather than hoping that the officers are in a forgiving mood, or relying on your negotiating skills after the fact, it's probably best — as Ralph says — to toe the line when clearing in.

CC

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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CALENDAR

MAY

1	Public holiday in many places (Labour Day)
1	Around St. Barth Windsurf & Beach Cat Race. www.saintbarth-tourisme.com
1 – 4	6th West Indies Regatta, St. Barth's. www.westindiesregatta.com
1 – 4	Mayreau Regatta
3	Start of ARC USA rally from Tortola, BVI to Virginia and Florida. www.worldcruising.com
3	Start of ARC Europe, Tortola BVI to Portugal. www.worldcruising.com
3 - 4	Commodore's Cup Regatta, St. John, USVI. henstjohn@yahoo.com
5	Public holiday in Guyana (Arrival Day)
6	Public holiday in St. Kitts & Nevis (Labour Day)
7 – 11	Triskell Tour Guadeloupe & Dominica Regatta. www.triskellcup.com
9	Public holiday in some places (Ascension Day)
10 – 11	St. Barth Mini-Bucket. http://stbarthyachtclub.com
14	FULL MOON Parties at Trellis Bay and West End, Tortola, and at Pinney's Beach, Nevis
15 – 18	Barbados Regatta. Barbados Sailing Association, www.sailbarbados.com
16 – 25	St. Barth Theatre Festival. www.saintbarth-tourisme.com
17 – 18	BVI Dinghy Championships, Tortola. RBVIYC, www.royalbviyc.org
17 – 18	10th Annual Captain Oliver's Regatta, St. Maarten. www.coyc-sxm.com
17 - 18	Lowell Wheatley Anegada Pursuit Race, RBVIYC, www.royalbviyc.org
18	Public holiday in Haiti (Flag Day)
21	Public holiday in Cayman Islands (Discovery Day)
23 – 24	BVI Music Festival, Cane Garden Bay, Tortola. www.facebook.com/BVIMusicFest
23 – 25	40th Annual Foxy's Wooden Boat Regatta, Jost Van Dyke. www.foxysbar.com/woodenboatregatta
24	BVI Exquisite Boat Show, Scrub Island, BVI. bviexquisiteboatshow@gmail.com
25	Reef Jam marine conservation event, Frederiksted, St. Croix. www.reefjam.com
25	Budget Marine Challenge, Curaçao.
26	Public holiday in Guyana (Independence Day)
26	Public holiday in Belize (Sovereign's Day celebrated)
28 -31	Combat de Coques, Martinique. Club Nautique du Marin (CNM), www.clubnautiquedumarin.com
29	Martinique Yole Festival, Ste. Anne, Martinique. http://yoles-rondes.net
29 – 1 June	Windsurf & SUP Challenge, Curaçao. www.curacaochallenge.com
30	Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Indian Arrival Day), Anguilla (Anguilla Day), Haiti (Mothers' Day), and many other places (Corpus Christi)
30 – 1 June	Puerto Rico Heineken International Regatta and Dinghy Regatta, Palmas del Mar, PR. www.heinekenregattapr.com

JUNE

5	World Environment Day
6 – 9	Petite Martinique Whitsuntide Regatta. www.grenadagrenadines.com/plan/events/petite-martinique-whitsuntide-regatta-festival
7	Public holiday in the Bahamas (Labour Day)
7	Caribbean Laser Championship, St. Martin. http://laserchamps.com
7 - 8	J/24 Open Championship, Barbados. www.j24barbados.com
8	Whitsunday (public holiday in many places)
8 - 15	Pro Kids Windsurfing Event, Bonaire
9	Public holiday in many places (Whit Monday)
9 – 14	64th Ernest Hemingway International Billfishing Tournament, Marina Hemingway, Cuba. www.cubatravelusa.com/Hemingway%20Marlin%20Tournament.html
13	FULL MOON Parties at Trellis Bay and West End, Tortola, and at Pinney's Beach, Nevis
14	Public holiday in BVI and Anguilla (Sovereign's Birthday)
16 – 18	Sea Star Optimist Clinic, St. Thomas. internationaloptiregatta@gmail.com
17 – 22	Caribbean International Kiteboard Week, Bonaire. www.facebook.com/Kiteridebonaire
19	Sea Star Team Racing, St. Thomas. internationaloptiregatta@gmail.com
19	Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Labour Day)
20	Summer Solstice
20 - 22	International Optimist Regatta, St. Thomas. internationaloptiregatta@gmail.com
20 - 22	Curaçao Heineken Regatta. www.heinekenregattacuracao.com
21	Fête de la Musique, St. Barths. www.stbarth-tourisme.com
21	Summer Sailstice. www.summersailstice.com
24	Public holiday in Venezuela (Battle of Carabobo)
27 – 8 July	Vincy Mas (St. Vincent Carnival). www.discoversvg.com
29	Fisherman's Birthday. Local boat racing in many communities
30	Public holiday in the BVI (Territory Day)
TBA	Canouan Whitsuntide Regatta

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*



Letter of the Month

FROM TRADE WINDS TO NO WINDS

Dear *Compass*,

Further to the item about the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta in the April issue's Regatta News, I'd like to tell about our own experience.

The last race of this year's St Maarten Heineken Regatta took our Budget Marine/Gill team, racing in the CSA 5 Melges 24 class, from Marigot to Creole Rock (Grand Case) around the 'Reserve' mark. At this stage we went around in first position, closely followed by our nearest rivals as we were heading downwind to Blowing Rock, Anguilla. We rounded the rock in second place, just after the overall second placed Melges 24. Indeed at this stage we had won all three races so far and we had calculated that only a last place on the day would cost us our first overall position.



Blowing Rock? Whatever! As soon as we had rounded the rock, heading to the next mark off the coast of St. Martin, we saw the boats in front of us. It was like looking at a painting: beautiful, but oh, so still. No more wind; gone just like that.

We are heading straight in to the hole while the other five boats in our class cleverly tried to go around it. Decisions, decisions…

Heading back to Marigot is really no option as it is totally off course. We are still doing four knots in the correct direction. Shall we keep going?

The boat 20 meters in front of us is not moving at all, boats to the left are coming to a halt, to the right they seem to have turned around! Some boats farther ahead are on port tack, we are on starboard tack and we are going in exactly the same direction! Look — someone is hoisting their spinnaker, also going in the same direction.

We are no longer moving. In the mayhem I believe we made a conscious decision to go straight into the hole. When I say "mayhem" it's probably also weird because we all panicked, but quietly. In my memory I believe we were all whispering our thoughts.

At this stage we are last, last of our fleet, and the boat we do not want to come first is now in front of the pack. Crap! (Not the actual word that was used.) We are floating but not moving. In some sort of desperation I looked up to the sky, big drops of rain coming down, dark clouds beyond and a very happy windex making 360s at a lazy pace. Some excitement from one of the team: "We are doing 0.5 knots — yeeehaaaa! Oh, wait, it's -0.5 knots; that means we are going backwards." Now is a good moment to start crying, or, if we were a bareboat, to open a beer and play some depressing song by Tom Waits.



It took a while to agree and all five crew — Chris Marshall (Trini), Derek Little (Aussie), Bas de Rooij (Dutch), Rene Edwards (Frisian), Andrea Scarabelli (Italian), Lomig Henry (Breton) — had their ideas of how to address the situation, but truth is that all ideas merged into one. And this is where I believe we won the regatta. This team is so experienced and clever; I am still amazed by their knowledge and their skills.

There comes a time you realize there is no escaping: the hole is gaping in front of you and you are going into it. The same happened to all our competitors. So the team started to discuss what the best way was to enter into certain catastrophe. A bit like chess, thinking several moves ahead paid off. Things started to happen exactly in the way the guys had predicted it. I've been in similar situations in the Heineken Regatta 2012 and always thought that the boats picking up wind first were just lucky, but I know better now. Anticipation is the key. And picking up wind first we did; we finished the race first with a lead of over ten minutes on the second Melges 24!

It was fantastic racing, thanks to great organization by the regatta and a super Budget Marine/Gill team who have taught me a lot about preparing, planning, tactics, patience, and so much more: a great combination of nationalities and characters.

Bas De Rooij
St. Maarten

Wishful Thinking About 'H' Season

by Stan Louden

In 1989, when I first arrived in the Virgin Islands, I lived on my boat in Cruz Bay Harbour on St. John. It was a lovely quiet little place, with only one ferryboat going in and out, four times a day, to transport and return working people between St. Thomas and St. John.

The few live-aboard yachties all went ashore at about four in the afternoon to sit around the waterfront park, and sip afternoon beers, and tell tall tales to each other. Also in the park, a group of local people would gather to socialize. Within this group there was an obviously much older group of native people, and I sidled over to get to know them.

They were all warm, friendly and happy people, who easily welcomed conversation with anyone who was interested.

Mr. Gumbs became my special friend since he was quite a historian of the life in the islands of 50 years ago. He knew how to make salt and how to cure fish with his product; he knew how to make cement by burning fish bones and shells to an ash, and then mixing it with sand. He knew how to scoop a great bounty from the sea, and he provided sustenance for many people. He was a practical man and a wise man; I suppose he was about 75 at that time.

The recent weather this past winter and spring made my mind cast back to my many conversations with Mr. Gumbs. He described weather patterns of 50 years ago that were much like our experiences in 2013. He said, "Ya know, Mishter Stan, when I was a young man on Tartala, we had tremendous rainstorms; we had latsa waata, all de time. Today, we ina drought. And ya know, with all dat rain, years ago, we had no hurricanes; 30 or 40 years went by wit no hurricanes. We called dis late summer season de rainy season. But, dis drought tells me — hurricanes."

Well, that was in 1989 and it was only a few months later when I experienced my first hurricane — Hurricane Hugo — the worst, most powerful hurricane of that century.

So, these memories of the observations of a wise old local gentleman caused me to reconsider our weather of the last three years, compared with my memories of the weather over the last 25 years.

The recent 23 years here in the Virgin Islands beginning with 1989 were very dry, with little rainfall, and consistently hot all year round. But two years ago a change became noticeable: we had a rainy winter and spring, and in 2013 year a tremendously rainy winter and spring. Also, beginning with these previous two years, I have experienced such cold winters, from December through March, that I have had to curl up at night in a wooly blanket. And why does this matter? Well, because in 2012 and 2013 we had very little hurricane activity.

> *From December through March,*
>
> *I had to curl up at night in a wooly blanket.*
>
> *Why does this matter?*

Could it be that the heavy rain and cool winters are a result of a slightly cooler Atlantic?

Could it be that we are entering a period, like the one Mr. Gumbs described from 70-ish years ago, in which the Virgin Islands got a lot of rain, and no hurricanes?

There is some tantalizing scientific evidence that tentatively supports the contention of "planetary cooling". Astronomers have recently admitted their consternation about the lack of sunspots and solar activity. They speculate that the sun may be going into a period of quiescence. And they further speculate that this has happened occasionally through recorded history. The last important cycle was in the 1600s during a mini-Ice Age called the Maunder Minimal. This cold period lasted from 1645 to 1715.

The Farmer's Almanac (www.almanac.com/sunspotupdate) also offers conclusions about the relationship between solar inactivity and cold weather: "It is expected that Solar Cycle 24 and Solar Cycle 25 will be relatively quiet-to-average cycles, leading to a cooling pattern over the next few decades."

Other authorities are stating that the solar cycle is the weakest it has been in a hundred years. For a detailed discussion go to www.skyandtelescope.com/community/skyblog/newsblog/The-Weakest-Solar-Cycle-in-100-Years-216752671.html

So, back to "Wishful Thinking": I think that an optimistic thinker who sees that we have begun to have rather chilly winters and tremendous rainfall activity here in the Eastern Caribbean can conclude that it will be very difficult for Mother Nature to form hurricanes under these circumstances. Perhaps —just perhaps — we are going into a period of low hurricane activity, here in our Caribbean, a period that could last for many years.

Such a blessing that would be.

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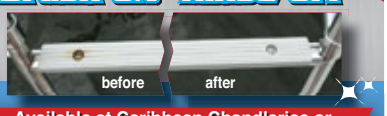
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SUMMER LAY-UP TIPS

by Don Street


PAM SHANNON

The below has all been said before, but hey — summer comes every year! This is a short summation.

After some disasters in the yacht yards in the Eastern Caribbean at the end of the last century and the beginning of the present century, the yards have greatly improved their lay-up procedures.

However, there are things that you, the owner or skipper, must do.

Before you lay up the boat, carefully check that there are no termite nests or termite tracks in the area. Even though the boat may be fiberglass, there is usually a fair amount of interior wood trim. I have heard of one case where the termites got into the boat and had a veritable feast that was expensive to rectify.

Mast in or out? That is something you must discuss with your insurance company and the yard.

After your boat is laid up, it is good to double check everything and upgrade if necessary.

If on screw jacks, there should be one each side for every ten feet of overall length. The screw jacks should be wired so they cannot unwind, and secured together port to starboard by re-bar welded to the jacks. The feet of the jacks should be on plywood pads so the jacks cannot sink into soft earth. The boat must be tied down with straps to dead men so that the boat cannot be blown out of the jacks (or out of a specially fabricated steel cradle if the boat is laid up in one).

All sails, dodgers, biminis, weather cloths, etcetera must be removed. All halyards except for the main halyard should be run up to the masthead or their exit slot. This will minimize both windage and UV degradation.

You should check and make sure the boats on either side of you are also properly prepared. It is no good properly preparing your boat only to have the boat next to you that is not properly prepared fall over against your boat.

It is essential that a speed gauge, depth-sounder transducer or seacock deep down in the bilge be left open. Even if no hurricane comes by, you are leaving your boat for the entire rainy season. The boat should be watertight regarding rain, and cockpit scuppers should be able to take care of rainwater that lands in the cockpit. But cockpit scuppers get clogged up, mast boots develop leaks and the owner returns to find two feet of water in the boat.

Pull a transducer or something else well down in the bilge and — very important — secure a coarse mesh wire across the hole. I have heard of one case where a rat climbed up through the transducer hole and did massive damage to the interior of the boat, especially wiring.

Finally, tape a big sign on the inside of the companionway hatch saying, "TRANDUCER (or whatever) HAS BEEN PULLED! REPLACE BEFORE LAUNCHING AND CHECK BILGE BEFORE REMOVING BOAT FROM SLINGS."



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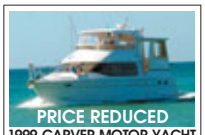
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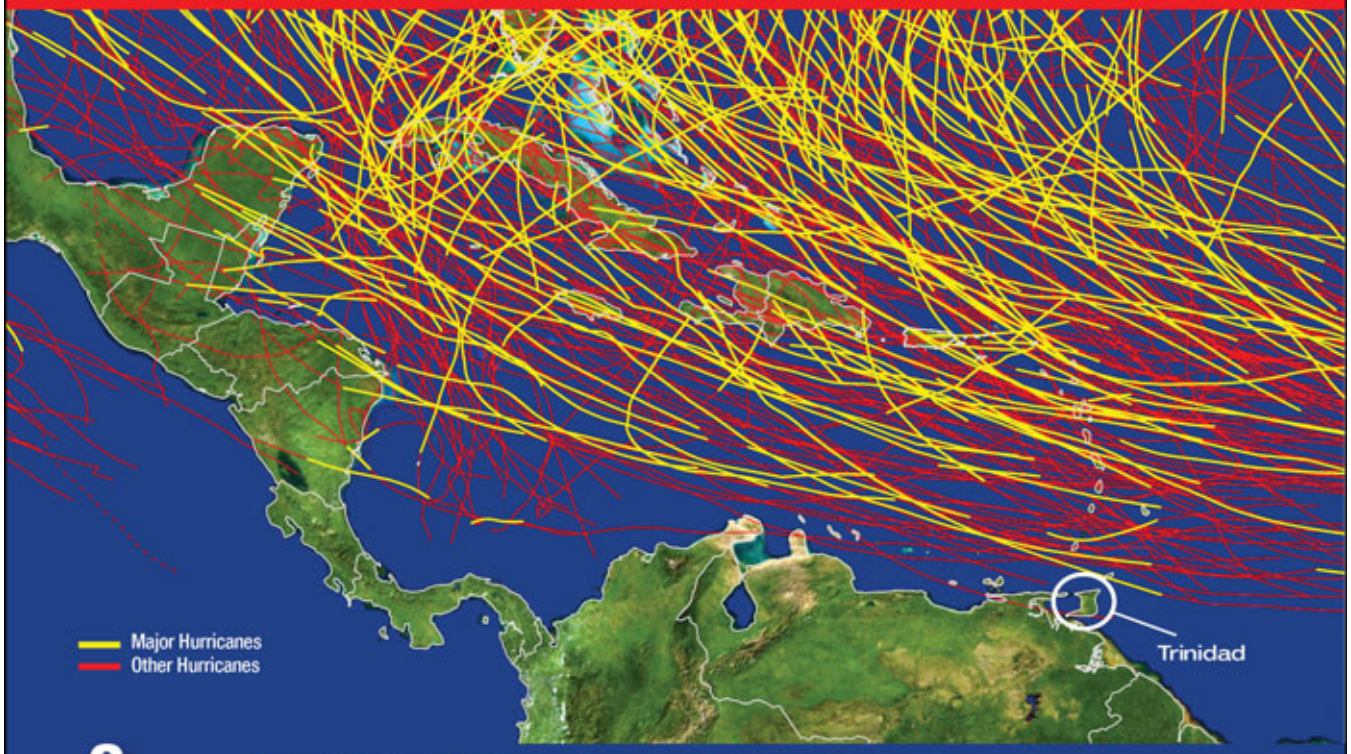
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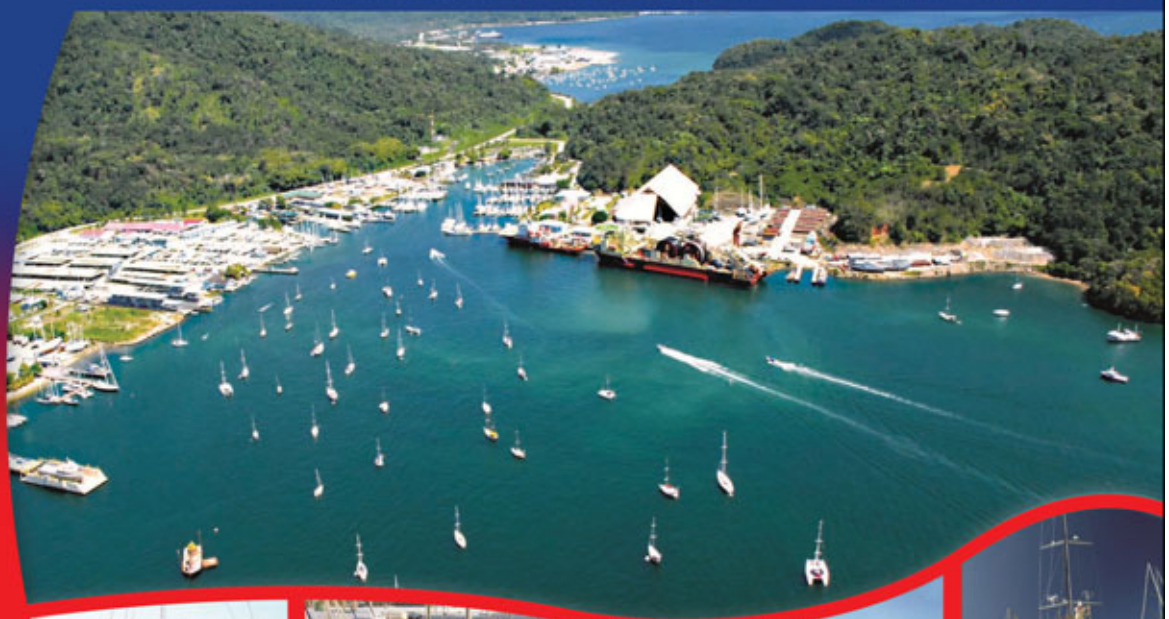
MP = Market Place pages 42 to 45
C/W = Caribbean-wide

Hurricane History 1851 to 2012 - Source: NOAA



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