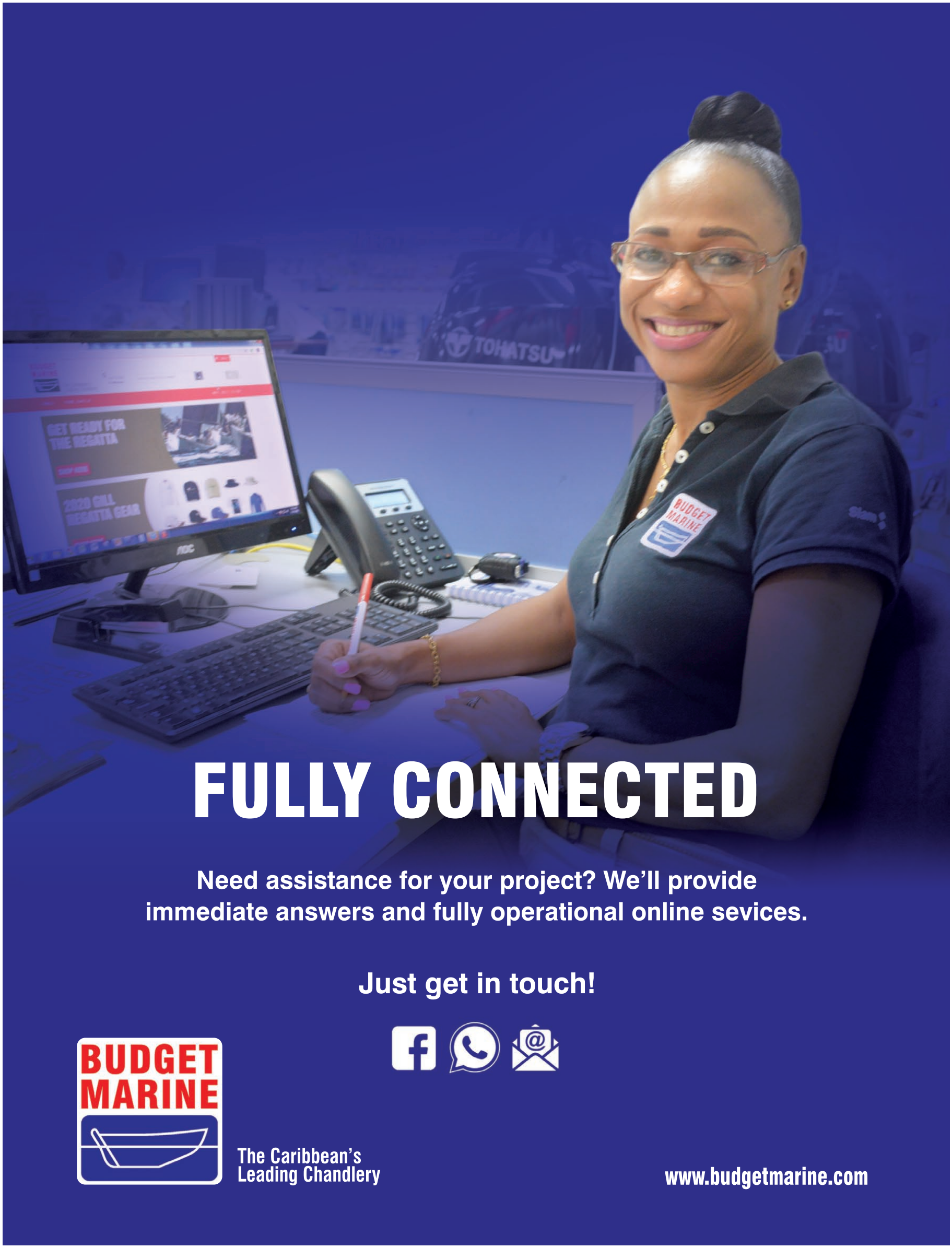
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The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

THIS IS REALITY

— Story on page 24

JAN HEIN



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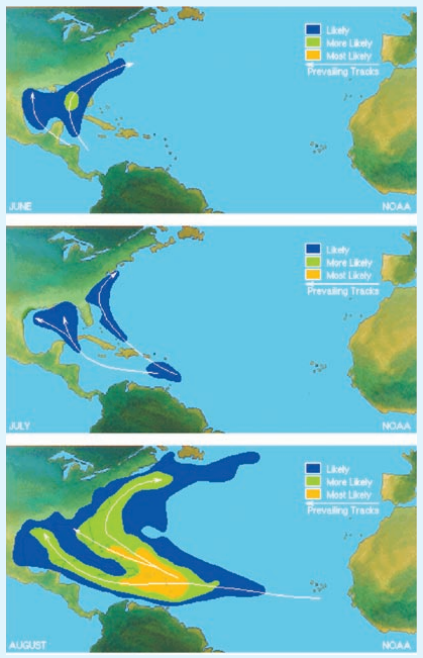
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MAY 2020 • NUMBER 296



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'What hurricane?' I asked 20



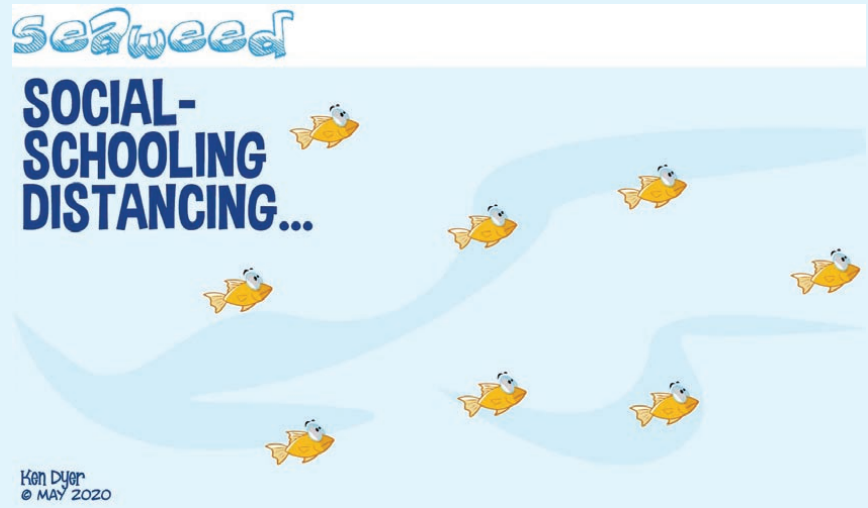
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KEN DYER

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On the cover: Photographer Jan Hein was on the scene at the latest vessel launching in Carriacou. See John Everton's report on page 24.



Click Google Map link to find the *Caribbean Compass* near you! **http://bit.ly/1fMC2Oy**

Info & Updates

If Anticipating Going to Trinidad

Jesse James reports: We are working on compiling a list of cruisers who have marina or boatyard reservations or would like to come to Trinidad for the hurricane season.

Hopefully at some point before the risk of hurricanes in the Eastern Caribbean becomes too great to allow movement, borders will open enough to allow, if not unlimited travel, limited travel to a destination of shelter.



PEAKEYACHTS.COM

We are reaching out to sailors and boaters who plan or hope to bring their boats to Trinidad for the hurricane season. Please e-mail your intentions to Bruce of *S/V Wild Matilda* (who is assisting in compiling this list) at *bamlicke@ix.netcom.com* and copy me, Jesse James, at jessejamesmembersonly@yahoo.com.

Include your current location and the number of people on board, and state if you have reservations in Trinidad or if it is your first time visiting Trinidad.

PLEASE NOTE: This is **NOT ANY INDICATION OF AN OPENING OF THE CURRENTLY CLOSED BORDERS** or an invitation to travel until such time as they are opened. Remain where you are! We are merely collecting information to facilitate the entry when it is possible.

For more information and latest updates contact jessejamesmembersonly@yahoo.com

Planning to Go to Grenada?

The Marine and Yachting Association of Grenada (MAYAG) has created a sub-committee of members representing marinas, boatyards, marine businesses, and some members of the MAYAG board of directors. The aim of this sub-committee is to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in Grenada, to ensure communication with our members and the yachting community and to work with government bodies on any marine- and yachting-specific issues that may arise.

The sub-committee has submitted a COVID-19 Protocol for Yachts Arriving into Grenada Territorial Waters to the Minister of Health and the Chief Medical Officer for review. This is essentially a health protocol which would enable yachts to arrive in Grenada in a safe and controlled manner in compliance with local health guidelines.

The group also launched the Grenada Lima database to collect data on yachts already in Grenada waters and yachts wanting to come to Grenada waters. This data is consolidated and is used to support the presentation of the protocol to the Government of Grenada. The group will be meeting with the Minister of Tourism and other officials to discuss the protocol in more detail and to explore a solution that might enable yachts to arrive in Grenada for shelter during the hurricane season.

If you are in Grenada or want to come, register your details on the Grenada Lima database at https://grenadalima.com.

Attention US-Bound Cruisers in the Caribbean

Barbara Theisen reports: The Salty Dawg Sailing Association is hosting a Homeward Bound Flotilla. With the effects of the spreading novel coronavirus, there is much uncertainty in the Caribbean. Ports are closing, flights are not available. Many boatowners are finding themselves unable to have crew meet them to help move their boats north for the summer, and the ability to leave boats for the summer in the Caribbean is becoming more problematic.

To help the sailing community, the Salty Dawg Sailing Association is organizing an informal flotilla to the US from the Caribbean. The Salty Dawg Homeward Bound Flotilla will depart from Antigua and the US Virgin Islands, or other islands where vessels are located, with weekly departures through May 20th.

—Continued on next page



—*Continued from previous page*

Keep in touch with us — things are still developing.

We will support vessels sailing either directly to the US mid-Atlantic or New England areas, or west toward Florida and then north along the US coast. As always in Salty Dawg rallies, departure and timing are at the discretion of the captain, and we offer maximum flexibility to all participants.

Included is weather routing from Chris Parker/Marine Weather Center, offshore tracking with position reports to a Predict Wind shared page, shoreside coordinator support all through the passage, and SDSA assistance in coming into United States waters.

To make sure we make this accessible to all, we are not assigning a fee for participation. You will be supported by a large group of very experienced volunteer sailors. However, we will have some expenses, and would appreciate donations. We normally would charge a fee of US$150 per boat to cover these expenses. We encourage participants to contribute what you can to help us defray expenses. When you register please make a donation to the SDSA, a 501(c)(3) organization.

For more information and latest updates contact info@SaltyDawgSailing.org.

USVI: Welcome, But Be Good Guests



PHIL BLAKE

Recognizing the influx of yachts, on March 27th, US Virgin Islands Governor Albert Bryan Jr. welcomed US-based and other arriving vessels to the territory. He further encouraged those not based in the territory to join, post-pandemic, the USVI marine family and economy.

However, as he has outlined in his Emergency Executive Orders for safety of those on shore, the Governor reminded all vessels to abide by the orders and compliance requests of agencies such as the US Coast Guard, the US Customs and Border Patrol, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR), and any further Emergency Executive Orders issued by the Governor.

"We're asking the boaters to please adhere to the mandates issued by the Governor by registering for an anchoring permit, completing the health assessment, practicing social distancing by remaining on their vessel and limiting trips to shore, and not to take board any passengers during this time. We also require that all vessels follow our requirements for the disposal of solid and liquid waste. For any questions please contact DPNR's Division of Environmental Enforcement at (340) 774-3320 in St. Thomas or (340) 773-5776 in St. Croix, or by e-mail at d*ee@dpnr.vi.gov*. We look forward to your return under normal circumstances when you may experience true Virgin Islands hospitality," says JP Oriol, DPNR Commissioner.

The Department's officers are now conducting patrols and telling boaters where to go online and get information.

All arriving persons must complete the passenger screening form/health questionnaire, which can be found at https://bit.ly/3bLgSDV. All arriving persons will also have to abide by a 14-day quarantine before coming on land.

"Boaters will need either a VI permit for VI waters/bays or an NPS (National Park Service) reservation, not both," says Nigel Fields, VINP Superintendent.

Both DPNR and the VINP remind all vessel operators that it is illegal to discharge or discard refuse of any kind within the three-nautical-mile limit of the territorial waters of the US Virgin Islands. More information on trash removal and crew support networks can be found at https://vipca.org.

DPNR also recommends vessels make use of online concierge services to the greatest extent possible for provisioning (including local produce); more information can be found at https://vipca.org.

More information and latest updates can be found at https://dpnr.vi.gov/environmental-enforcement and https://vipca.org/usvi-requirements-for-all-vessels-during-state-of-emergency

Panama Canal Transits Possible

After a temporary halt, Panama Canal transits for vessels under 65 feet resumed on April 9th.

According to Advisory To Shipping No. A-14-2020, the following temporary procedures for small craft transits during COVID-19 were implemented for all craft below 20 metres (65 feet) in length overall:

1) Upon arrival at Balboa Anchorage or Cristobal Breakwater, the small craft shall contact the corresponding signal station announcing its arrival and requesting anchoring instructions, if applicable.

2) All crew and passengers arriving in Canal waters on board pleasure yachts are required to remain aboard under observation and surveillance by Panamanian authorities for a period of not less than 14 calendar days, regardless of port of origin or number of days at sea.

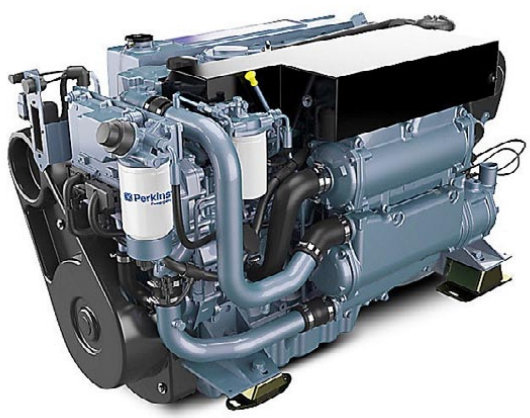
3) Upon completion of this 14-day period, they will be evaluated by the Ministry of Health (MINSA) to determine if there is any risk of contagion. Likewise, the master/skipper shall report to Canal and Panamanian health authorities if any passenger or crewmember on board shows virus-related symptoms or any other sickness.

—*Continued on next page*

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—*Continued from previous page*

4) In order for personnel on board to properly maintain quarantine, all transit arrangements shall be made by a representative ashore, such as a local agent or the corresponding marina where the small craft is anchored or moored.

5) The small craft representative shall call the ACP Admeasurement Unit (tel. 272-4577) in order to provide all the required information.



MARIO ROBERTO DURÁN ORTIZ

6) In addition, the small craft representative shall send to NTOT-AS@pancanal.com the following information:

- Yacht SIN number, name, flag, length (m), beam (m), arrival date confirmation (provided by the agent/representative or the marina)
- Arrival crew list
- Yacht's register
- Profile picture of the yacht
- Signed Release form
- Completed Handline Lockage Request form
- Copy of all crew passports

7) The agent or representative shall make arrangements for placement of the transit guarantee, or payment in cash, which shall include tolls and other maritime services, as well as the buffer.

8) Once the guarantee has been confirmed, the representative or marina shall call the ACP vessel scheduler, at 272-4202 to coordinate their transit date.

9) In addition to the master/skipper, the small craft shall have at least four line handlers available, as required by ACP regulations. These linehandlers must have already been on board the small craft during the quarantine period mentioned in (2) above.

10) All other transit requirements remain the same and are available at http://pancanal.com/common/maritime/forms/4352-2020.pdf.

11) On the day of transit, only the ACP transit advisor will board the small craft and disembark once his assignment has been completed. Only ACP personnel will be permitted to board or disembark the small craft.

The ACP is continuously monitoring the current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic and will announce any changes to these measures in a timely manner.

The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) requires that ships coming from countries with a confirmed case and/or with a crewmember exhibiting symptoms must notify the ACP at least 30 days before its arrival and of any crew changes within 14 days of arrival. In the event a crew member is a confirmed COVID-19 case, the vessel will not be permitted to transit and must quarantine for 14 days. Preventative measures for such ships include, but are not limited to:

- boarding of vessels by health authorities in order to investigate any cases
- use of personal protective equipment, such as masks
- holding the vessel in quarantine as a precautionary measure

If intending to transit the Canal into the Pacific, make sure you have somewhere to go. As this issue of *Compass* goes to press French Polynesia is not accepting any yacht entries. Check www.noonsite.com for the latest information on other Pacific destinations. All international and domestic commercial passenger flights out of Panama are still suspended.

The latest Panama Canal advisories are available at www.pancanal.com.

Martinique Boat Show 2021

Due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Martinique Boat Show scheduled for this month has been canceled.

The show's organizers look forward to welcoming you to next year's edition, which will run from May 13th through 16th.

For more information contact martinique.boat.show@gmail.com.

'Agents of Change' Are On the Way!

In the March issue of *Compass*, we invited readers to nominate your "Top 25 Agents of Change" and planned to announce the results in this issue. But it seems a lot of you were distracted… wonder why? So we'll try again:

We're taking a poll to find out who *Compass* readers think are the 25 most influential people in all facets of Caribbean sailing — cruising, racing, the yacht service industry, writing, youth sailing development, environmentalism, whatever floats your boat!

Who are the top 25 agents of change in the Caribbean sailing scene — people who have made a positive difference?

Nominate your picks (any number up to 25) and tell us why you think they have made a positive difference in the Caribbean sailing scene.

We'll share the results in a future issue of *Caribbean Compass*!

Send your nominations to sally@caribbeancompass.com.



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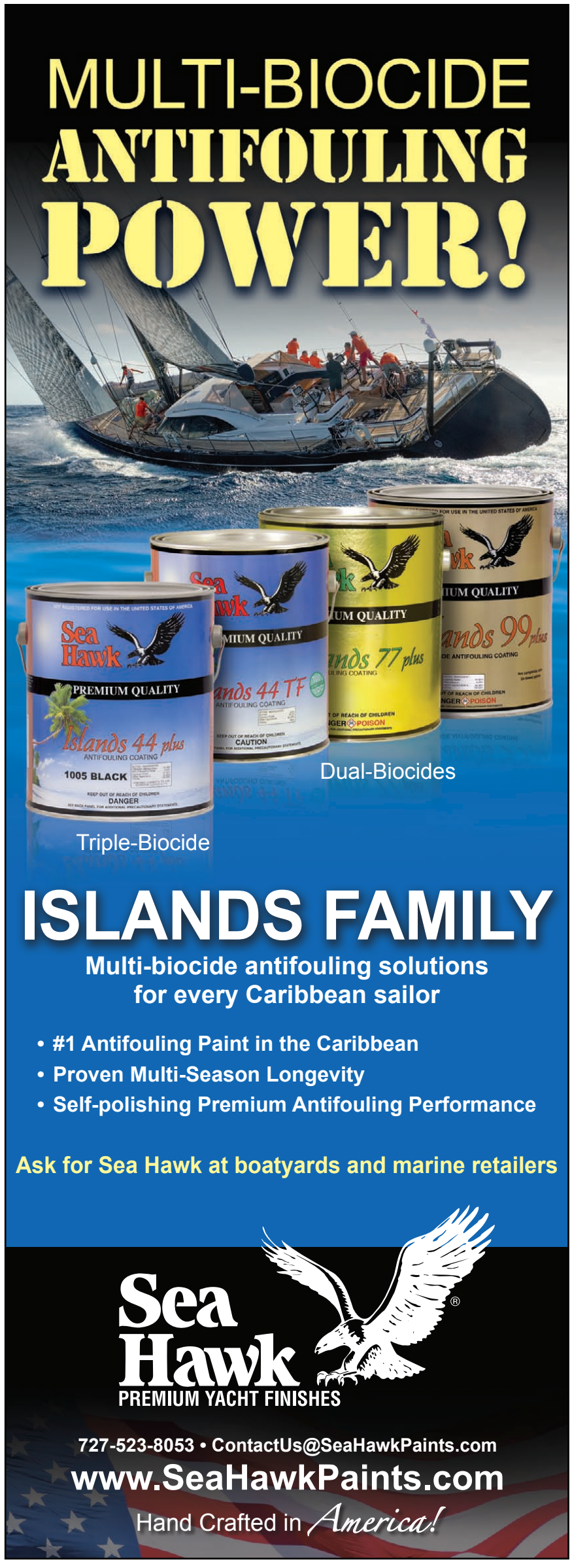
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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Budget Marine Ready to Assist Cruisers

Thierry Vigneron reports: As this issue of *Compass* goes to press, some Budget Marine locations are closed. We inform customers daily on the opening status via social networks. At open locations, the following measures are in place: hand washer at entrance, hand-sanitizer available, and social distancing practiced. All Budget Marine stores are offering services remotely and can be contacted via WhatsApp:



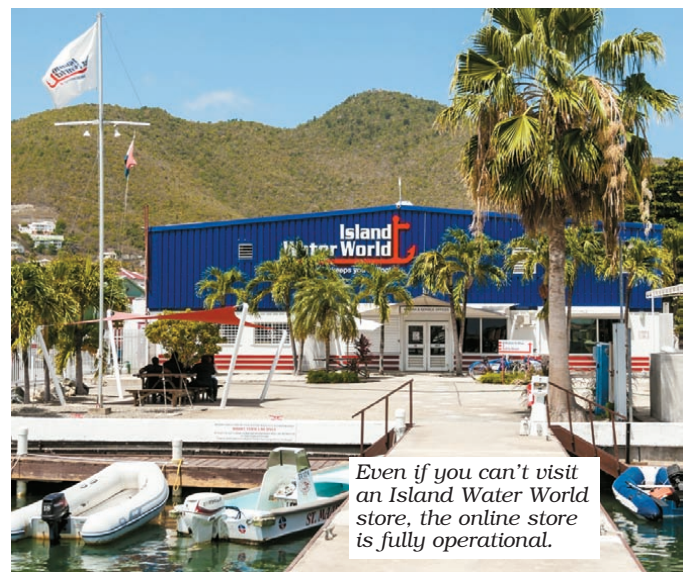
When Budget Marine locations are open, health precautions will be in place.

- Antigua, English Harbour and Jolly Harbour OPEN (English Harbour Saturday only) - (268) 764-8625
- Aruba - (297) 737-3796 OPEN
- Bonaire - (599) 700-7500 OPEN
- Carriacou - (473) 421-5930
- Curaçao - (599) 9-526-6779 OPEN
- Grenada - (473) 418-3933. OPEN M/W/F only, orders prepared for collection/ delivery. E-mail grenada@budgetmarine.com for price/availability using www.budgetmarine for reference.
- St. Maarten - (721) 559-2863. Closed, but can process some orders. Free on-island delivery. Export orders shipped with DHL, FedEx, Tropical, CMA-CGM etc.
- St. Thomas - (340) 474-2908
- St. Kitts - (869) 660-8933
- Trinidad (TTYC) - (868) 280-8015 OPEN certain days. Phone for details.

NOTE: We are ready to assist cruisers in a difficult situation with anything they need — not only products, but any kind of assistance. We can contact local boatyards and help with plane bookings and communications with family. Cruisers can reach me (Thierry, Regional Sales Manager) directly via WhatsApp (590) 690-887-772.
See ad on page 2 for more information on Budget Marine.

Island Water World Fully Operational Online

Sean Kennelly reports: The Corona/COVID-19 virus affects everybody. Many places are currently in full or partial lock-down and people and boats are stuck in areas where it might be difficult to get the parts needed to keep boat and crew safe and life comfortable. In those instances, Island Water World might be able to assist.



Even if you can't visit an Island Water World store, the online store is fully operational.

Island Water World has a fully operational online store and offers great FedEx rates. Visit *www.islandwaterworld.com* for our online catalog and shipping options.

We hope the situation will change for the better soon. For this to happen, it's very important for all of us, cruisers and the local community, to adhere to the rules of the country we are currently staying in. Please, respect those guidelines, so we can soon welcome you back in our stores.

Stay safe and healthy!

See ad on page 48 for more information on Island Water World.

Blue Lagoon Marina Special Measures

Sophie Hadley reports: Blue Lagoon Marina is a port of entry for St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Our marina agents pre-screen the boats via VHF before they arrive and ask that only the captains come ashore to clear in. A nurse, who also screens any arrivals, is stationed at our Customs and Immigration office.

At Blue Lagoon Marina and Hotel in St. Vincent, we have put measures in place with hand-sanitizers at each station/department and lots of extra cleaning.

Hurricane Season hotel rates are available.

See ad on page 18 for more information on Blue Lagoon Marina and Hotel.

Legacy Underwriters Offers Insurance Help

Agent Laura Lindstrom-Croop reports: Our agency, Legacy Underwriters, is working with our companies to handle the changes to cruising plans due to the coronavirus. It is important to check the navigation areas and hurricane limitations on your insurance policy.

I am more than happy to help people understand their policy. You can contact me via l*aura@legacyunderwriters.com*.

See ad in the Market Place section on pages 44 and 45 for more information about Legacy Underwriters.

Mac's Pizza: Stand By for Re-Opening News!

Kevin and Draci Carr report: We at Mac's Pizza & Kitchen in Bequia are looking out for the health and welfare of our staff and community by closing for 21 days, which commenced on April 2nd. We will review re-opening on a week by week basis after those initial three weeks.

—Continued on next page

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When we open again, Mac's Pizza & Kitchen, established in 1978, will continue to offer hundreds of pizza varieties, grilled local fish, big salads, Japanese-style seared tuna, burgers, tacos, and rich house-made ice cream. Stay tuned!



See ad in the Market Place section on pages 44 and 45 for more information about Mac's Pizza & Kitchen.

The Multihull Company Works Remotely

Things are changing on a daily basis, but we feel it's important to keep some kind of routine when life gets jumbled. In Grenada, Chris and Chrystal from The Multihull Company now work from home and are happy to do a current market analysis for your boat to keep busy. Send your information to *chris@multihullcompany.com or chrystal@multihullcompany.com.*

Live video walk-throughs are available for any boat for sale in Grenada if you can't make it here in person. As board members of MAYAG (Marine And Yachting Association of Grenada), they encourage you to join the MAYAG Facebook page as one resource for the latest information on Grenada.

Until things turn back to normal, they send you a virtual hug!



See ad on page 42 for more information on The Multihull Company.

Parts & Power Welcomes LP Marine

A new Caribbean Northern Lights dealer has been appointed in Trinidad & Tobago on January 1st. Parts & Power is delighted to welcome LP Marine into their dealer network and looks forward to working closely together.

LP Marine & Industrial Supplies Ltd was established in 1987 by company founder Leslie Persad. His interest in boating and fishing, coupled with extensive business experience, enabled him to develop the Volvo Penta brand in Trinidad & Tobago. In the ensuing years, the company forged partnerships with Vetus Boating, Duramax Marine, and Johnson Pumps - SPX Flow, to name a few.

These long-term relationships have enabled LP Marine to provide the local and regional markets with optimum performance and quality marine equipment, vessels, industrial products, and supplies. LP Marine is truly experienced in supplying marine solutions for the petrochemical and energy sectors.

Today, LP Marine is run by Ian Persad, with the head office (main retail outlet and warehousing) located at 176B Western Main Road, Pt. Cumana, Trinidad, West Indies.

The company stocks over 25,000 marine and industrial items. Diverse catalogs of marine spares and accessories are readily available for sourcing and parts can be delivered at a moment's notice. An experienced team is on hand to assist customers.

See ad on page 5 for more information on Northern Lights/Parts & Power.



Summer Specials at Shelter Bay, Panama

The Shelter Bay team reports: Visit Shelter Bay Marina at the Panama Canal during low season and take advantage of our specials. These offers are available through November 30th:

Water slips — 10% off slip rates*

Secure storage — 25% off haulout rate

Yard repairs — 50% off *

Boats for sale — 30% off slip rates

*Conditions apply.

Contact us for details via our website www.shelterbaymarina.com, by e-mail info@shelterbaymarina.com, or by phone (507) 6813-5327 or (507) 433-3581).

Dear *Compass* Readers

Now is a unique time to celebrate the Caribbean businesses that serve and support the yachting community. As you can see by the news items above, they are rising to the challenges of the times to continue to meet your needs.

Even if you don't need anything right now, or are not in a position to avail yourself of their services, send your favorite Caribbean businesses an e-mail and let them know you'll be back!





See why the Caribbean is worth defending.

Join The Nature Conservancy and help us Defend Paradise.

The Nature Conservancy works throughout the region to protect seas, coastlines, and coral reefs on which we all depend. We need your help to protect our waters and our way of life. To find out how you can make a lasting impact on conservation in the Caribbean and to join our campaign to Defend Paradise, visit **nature.org/defendparadise**.

The Nature Conservancy

DEFEND Paradise

Caribbean ECO-News

US$46-Million 'Blue Economy' Initiative Underway

A new US$46-million initiative to promote "blue" economic priorities, in support of the sustainable use and conservation of the Caribbean's vast and diverse marine ecosystems and resources, has gotten underway.

A press release states, "The project will promote blue economy development in the Caribbean region through marine spatial planning and marine protected areas, the ecosystem approach to fisheries, and development of sustainable fisheries value chains. The expected results of the project include focused climate-smart investments into national and regional marine spatial planning efforts that inform development and implementation of national blue economy strategies."

The multi-country project will focus on extending and strengthening marine protected areas to preserve marine ecosystems and ensure sustainable livelihoods to coastal and fishery communities. The project is also expected to result in the establishment of regional marine spatial planning for ecosystem-based fisheries, inclusive of sustainable fisheries value chains, and new or expanded marine protected areas in at least five Caribbean countries.

"Marine ecosystems account for over 80 percent of CARICOM States and territories, supporting not just fisheries, but also tourism, ocean transportation, energy, and other economic pillars. Despite threats that confront the region — not the least of which are climate change, ocean acidification, marine pollution, and irresponsible fishing — the Blue Economy model still holds great promise," the release noted.

This initiative of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in partnership with the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) is a four-year project funded by the GEF with a grant of US$6.2 million and co-financing of US$40.1 million. The Development Bank of Latin America will be the lead implementing agency while the Food and Agriculture Organization will be a co-implementing agency and the CRFM will be the project executing agency.

St. Martin Nature Books Available at Amuseum Naturalis

Nature lovers and book lovers have something to celebrate on St. Martin. Ten books about local wildlife are now available at Amuseum Naturalis: eight in English and two in French. Amuseum Naturalis, on the hill above Galion Beach in French Quarter, is open 9:00AM to noon, Tuesday to Saturday, and entry is free. All of the books are full of color images and stories about the island's unique nature. They are published by the Les Fruits de Mer association.



"The last edition of our wildlife guide was completely sold out, so it's great to have it available again," said author Mark Yokoyama. "Most of the other books are available in print for the first time. We're especially excited to have the long-awaited French edition of the St. Martin wildlife guide."

The first French edition of *The Incomplete Guide to the Wildlife of St. Martin* has been published thanks to a micro-project grant from the French Agency for Biodiversity's Te Me Um resource center and its members. Copies of the French and English versions of the wildlife guide are available to teachers.

For the general public, books are available for purchase at Amuseum Naturalis at The Old House for US$10 to $20. They are also available on Amazon. Digital versions can be downloaded for free at lesfruitsdemer.com.

Mentoring for Marine Parks Law Enforcement

Hosted by the British Virgin Islands National Parks Trust, representatives from protected area organizations and law enforcement agencies from six Caribbean countries met in March to address program planning and officer training in support of marine protected area law enforcement in the British Virgin Islands.

Specialists from the Belize Fisheries Department, Belize Audubon Society, the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources of the Turks & Caicos Islands; the Bahamas National Trust, the Royal Grenada Police Force and the Netherlands Caribbean Police Force joined representatives of the BVI National Parks Trust, the Royal BVI Police Force, the Marine Police Unit and the Customs Authority.

Dr. Cassander Titley O'Neal, Director of The National Parks Trust, says, "The challenge is to protect natural resources in the face of new and emerging threats that both we and our neighbours in the region face. We're strengthening our enforcement programme by partnering with territorial enforcement agencies to implement park laws and regulations, we're evaluating new technologies and we're building capacity through staff training in law enforcement."

Those who work on the front lines protecting the Caribbean's marine resources have a vitally important, but also challenging job to do given ever-increasing threats to the marine environment from visitor pressure, boat groundings, pollution and poaching. Yet if we are to maintain the coral reef communities and the diverse marine resources that depend upon them, effective protection from illegal activities is essential. The international invitees assisted the British Virgin Islands as mentors in marine law enforcement, sharing experience from around the region to create new best practice materials and approaches.

A trainer from the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force says, "We are seeing great strides forward in law enforcement capabilities in support of national park management in the territory. By increasing the pressure on those who purposely seek to violate natural resource laws, while at the same time educating those who may be unaware of rules and regulations, we send a clear and positive message in support of effective natural resource protection."

The activity was an initiative of the MPAConnect Network, which is comprised of 32 marine protected areas in 11 Caribbean countries and territories, working in partnership with the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coral Reef Conservation Program to share best practices and experience among coral reef managers in the Caribbean region.

For more information visit www.gcfi.org/initiatives/mpa-capacity-program or contact mpaconnect@gcfi.org.

Caribbean SEA Awards Dive Scholarship

Caribbean SEA is a St. Lucia-based NGO dedicated to empowering young people and community members to protect and restore their waterways, from the ridge to the reef.

Caribbean SEA recently announced the first winners of the Gary McNabb Scuba Diving Scholarship. The scholarship was established in the memory of Gary McNabb, longtime supporter of Caribbean SEA and former owner of Leisure Time Dive Shop in the US.

Mary Beth Sutton, Executive Director of Caribbean SEA, explained, "When I founded Caribbean SEA in 2004, Leisure Time was among the very first businesses outside of the Caribbean to support us, since Gary understood how important it is to protect the ocean. We couldn't have grown to where we are today without his help and support." Caribbean SEA decided to honor him by continuing to help young people learn to appreciate and care for ocean habitats through learning to SCUBA dive.

The Caribbean SEA Young Professionals Board held a poster and essay competition to determine the recipient of the dive scholarship. The entrants designed a poster accompanied by an essay illustrating three reasons we should keep our waters clean. When two entries stood out, the selection committee decided to add a second-place prize of snorkeling lessons. Mackenzie Carasco was awarded first prize. His poster was three-dimensional and included a fish scuba diving, since it couldn't breathe in dirty water. Mackenzie will be headed to Dive Fair Helen to learn to scuba dive. Stepharn Valery was awarded snorkeling lessons at the same dive facility. Both winners are students of Sir Ira Simmons Secondary School.

Neige Simpson, President of the Caribbean SEA Young Professionals Board, remarked, "I am excited to see how many talented, intelligent students participated in the competition. It's great to see young people express themselves artistically and based on such an important topic. Because the poster competition also included an essay component, we know that they've researched on the topic and hopefully learned valuable information that will keep them conscious of their environment. We are looking to make this an annual competition, so keep an eye out for notices in early 2021!"

For more information on Caribbean SEA contact Nadia Cazaubon at (758) 529-2425 or ncazaubon@caribbean-sea.org, or Neige Simpson at (758) 727-2295 or simpson.neige@gmail.com.

Wildlife Reserve Signs on Uninhabited Grenadine Islands

Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC) is bringing people throughout the trans-boundary Grenadines together through a shared resource – seabirds.

In December 2019, a crew consisting of members from Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines installed "Wildlife Reserve" signs on Battowia and Petit Canouan in the northern Grenadines. Working in cooperation with the SVG Department of Forestry, the signs inform the public of regulations protecting these vital conservation zones.



Battowia and Petit Canouan are two of the most critical nesting islands for seabirds in the entire Caribbean. Although both islands have been designated as National Wildlife Reserves since 1989, they continue to experience many illegal activities, such as seabird and egg harvesting, overgrazing of livestock, and burning of vegetation.

The transboundary Grenadines harbour tens of thousands of breeding seabirds in remote, isolated and inaccessible colonies. Some of these islands are globally significant for seabird populations, meaning that they harbour at least one percent of the global population for a species. While SVG has established Wildlife Reserves on many of their remote Grenadine islands, Grenada has yet to advance legal protection for seabirds and their nesting habitats.



The sign installation crew consisted primarily of fisherfolk from Carriacou and Bequia. Carriacou fisherman Vaughn Thomas lent his sailboat and sailing skills to access the offshore islands and directed the installation operation. He was assisted by Cassion Grant and Oron Compton, from Paget Farm, Bequia, who contributed their invaluable knowledge of both islands and surrounding waters. One team member recounted how he learned about the Grenadine islands through his grandfather, who taught him how to fish, build boats, navigate and other critical survival skills required for a young man of the Grenadines to make a living at sea.

While on Battowia, EPIC Project Coordinator and Seabird Biologist Juliana Coffey documented a sizable Magnificent Frigatebird colony. Magnificent Frigatebirds had not been recorded nesting in SVG or in Grenada in many years, and only four other colonies are known in the entire Lesser Antilles. This discovery, although remarkable, is not surprising given the lack of scientific investigations on offshore islands in the Grenadines. Fisherfolk had previously described nesting frigatebirds on the island, demonstrating the value of integrating local fisherfolk knowledge into research and conservation, as well as encouraging their participation in such efforts.

Through continued funding support from USAID, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and individual donations, EPIC will continue its seabird conservation efforts in the Grenadines. Formation of a transboundary seabird working group will allow for members from each island throughout both nations representing various sectors, such as government, NGO, fisherfolk and tour operators, to contribute their expertise towards developing solutions.

For more information contact Juliana Coffey at juliana@epicislands.org, (473) 422-9547, or on WhatsApp at (709) 770-6877.

New Effort in Carriacou Against Plastic Pollution

Richard Laflamme reports: Since March, an NGO on the island of Carriacou has been collecting waste plastic. The local Climate Save Actionist Club has received a grant from the Global Environment Facility. Residents can crush any fairly clean plastic and bring it to a "Re-Use Plastic" bin. In Project Violette, granulated plastic will be reused as aggregate inside concrete blocks. The rest will be shredded down and reused in other products.

The Climate Save Actionist Club's mission is: "By 2025, Carriacou will become a plastic-free island." Get a free membership by "liking" their Facebook page.

It is unrealistic that all plastic will be replaced by something more environmentally friendly but we aim to stop it from reaching the ocean and to drastically reduce waste in our landfill. Become part of the solution by refusing, reducing and replacing as much single use plastic as possible.

For more information visit www.climate-actionist.com, contact (473) 456-3474 via WhatsApp, or e-mail climateactionist@gmail.com.

REGATTA NEWS

The CSA Rating Rule Delivers

How do yacht measurers and race officers make competition fair when many different shapes and sizes of sailboats compete in the same event?

From the earliest beginnings of yacht racing, one of the most controversial aspects has been the creation and implementation of rating rules. The idea behind the rules is to level the playing field by handicapping the fleet, so a wide variety of yachts can compete equitably.

Elsewhere in the watery world, rating rules come and go. But not in the Caribbean, where the longstanding CSA Rule (named for the Caribbean Sailing Association) has been in operation for decades. It's the rule under which the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta and so many others are contested and one of the reasons why these tight racing events attract so many dedicated, competitive sailors.

"I'm always fascinated, looking at results in races (under the CSA Rule) where a few boats come within seconds on a standard race," said naval architect and CSA Chief Measurer Bastien Pouthier. "The CSA Rule is more than 60 years old. A retired British fighter pilot designed a mathematical formula to be able to race between friends fairly. The rule has been updated yearly with major revamps in between."

Pouthier continued: "Part of the reason for the CSA Rule's success is that it was developed for ideal Caribbean weather, steady 15-knot tradewinds." He explained that the rule was designed for displacement cruiser/racer-type yachts — the majority of Caribbean race boats — but also works well in varying breezes and with today's lighter displacement flyers. "I'm convinced that the CSA Rule works the best for our Caribbean events. Within two hours of measuring and 15 minutes of inputting our software, we can get a new entry racing. No other rule can deliver that."



LAURENS MOREL

The CSA Rule actually consists of different rules, to cover monohulls, multihulls, and classic yachts. As Chief Measurer, Pouthier has final say on matters, but he also oversees an impressive team that includes specialist Chief Technical Officers for the monohulls and multihulls. The CTOs are trained yacht designers with vast experience in designing, building, and racing yachts and who work with a group of 15 other measurers who are also hands-on veteran racers and cruisers.

Pouthier himself is a lifelong sailor whose career began in Normandy, France, racing Optimists in the Channel Sea. By 18, he became a sailing instructor and began his studies in engineering with the notion of becoming a car designer. He soon switched disciplines and matriculated to the famous Southampton Institute, which led him to a position in Trinidad as a naval architect. That's where and when he not only got bitten by the racing bug, but also got involved with the technical aspects of the CSA Rule. Now, he is in charge of overseeing it.

Pouthier passed along the following websites for those interested in learning more about the CSA Rule or obtaining a rating for their own boat. There's plenty of time to do so and it's fast and easy.

—Continued on next page

MEDITERRANEAN ► US EAST COAST			
Palma de Mallorca	-	Ft. Lauderdale	Mar 2020
Genoa	-	Ft. Lauderdale	Apr 2020
Genoa	-	Ft. Lauderdale	May 2020
Taranto	-	Ft. Lauderdale	Aug 2020
Palma de Mallorca	-	Ft. Lauderdale	Sep 2020
Genoa	-	Ft. Lauderdale	Sep 2020
Palma de Mallorca	-	Ft. Lauderdale	Oct 2020
Genoa	-	Ft. Lauderdale	Oct 2020
Palma de Mallorca	-	Ft. Lauderdale	Nov 2020
Genoa	-	Ft. Lauderdale	Nov 2020

MEDITERRANEAN ► CARIBBEAN			
Genoa	-	St. Thomas	Apr 2020
Palma de Mallorca	-	St. Thomas	Oct 2020
Palma de Mallorca	-	Le Marin	Nov 2020
Genoa	-	Le Marin	Nov 2020

US EAST COAST ► CARIBBEAN			
Ft. Lauderdale	-	St. Thomas	Nov 2020

CARIBBEAN ► US EAST COAST			
St. Thomas	-	Ft. Lauderdale	Mar 2020
St. Thomas	-	Ft. Lauderdale	May 2020
Le Marin	-	Ft. Lauderdale	Nov 2020
Le Marin	-	Ft. Lauderdale	Dec 2020

US EAST COAST ► MEDITERRANEAN			
Ft. Lauderdale	-	Palma de Mallorca	Mar 2020
Ft. Lauderdale	-	Genoa	Apr 2020
Ft. Lauderdale	-	Genoa	May 2020
Ft. Lauderdale	-	Palma de Mallorca	May 2020
Ft Lauderdale	-	Taranto Italy	May 2020
Ft Lauderdale	-	Genoa	Sep 2020
Ft Lauderdale	-	Genoa	Oct 2020
Ft Lauderdale	-	Palma de Mallorca	Oct 2020
Ft Lauderdale	-	Palma de Mallorca	Nov 2020

CARIBBEAN/US EAST COAST ► SOUTH PACIFIC			
Le Marin	-	Papeete, Brisbane, Auckland	Nov 2020
Ft. Lauderdale	-	Papeete, Brisbane, Auckland	Nov 2020

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—*Continued from previous page*

Here's Chief Measurer Bastien Pouthier's advice on how to get started:

• This is an informative page on our website: *https://caribbean-sailing.com/csa-rules/get-a-csa-rating.*

• You can also have a look at this overview*: https://caribbean-sailing.com/csa-rules/overview-of-the-rule.*

• Then, get in touch with the measurer on your island. The Regatta Organizing Authority and the CSA website list the measurers on each island*: https://caribbean-sailing.com/csa-rules/measurers.* The measurer will advise you whether the boat must be emptied or can be measured in racing trim.

New Event for 2021 Caribbean Multihull Challenge

Petro Jonker, chairman of the steering committee for the Caribbean Multihull Challenge (CMC), organized by the Sint Maarten Yacht Club, announced a new racing event to be incorporated into their third edition. Set for February 5th through 7th, 2021, the CMC is quickly becoming a staple of the winter regatta circuit in the Caribbean.

"For the second edition, held from February 14th through 16th this year, we tested a 60-mile drag race for ocean racing multihulls. They started in St. Maarten's Simpson Bay, went up to and around St. Barth, reached Tintamarre, sailed down the famous Anguilla Channel to the west end of St. Maarten, and headed back up to the finish in Simpson Bay. With the MOD 70 trimarans *Argo* and *Maserati* and the 63-foot *Shockwave* registered for this premiere event, we eagerly looked forward to the results. *Argo* won with an elapsed time of 3 hours 19 minutes and 22 seconds and now the record is set," said Jonker.

For the next CMC, organizers will establish the newly named "60 Mile Multihull Sprint" and invite two classes to compete for prizes on opening day. One will be the Ocean Racing Class, where spartan yachts like *Maserati, Argo, Shockwave*, and other daredevils will enter to contest the record. The second class will be an Ocean Cruising Class, where luxury carbon multihulls from builders like Gunboat, HH, and Marsaudon will vie for the title of fastest cruising multi.



The Custom 63-foot Shockwave *heading up to St. Barth's in the CMC 2020 60-Mile Multihull Sprint.*

LAURENS MOREL

Steve Burzon, CMC director of marketing and co-creator along with Petro and Robbie Ferron, said: "We constantly hear about how fast these lightweight luxury cruising multihulls are. The winner of the Sprint, which is open to all vessels that can finish the course in six hours or less, will be the proof. We can only imagine the prestige for a builder who can achieve a win in this new race."

Since the Sprint is incorporated into the overall event, the role of the boats' ratings will play a part at the regular prizegiving. But for the actual Friday Sprint, speed on all points of sail is the decider.

Entries are being taken, even now!

Visit www.CaribbeanMultihullChallenge.com for more information.

***Zig Zag* Lifts the Gosnell Trophy**

The 2020 Superyacht Challenge Antigua was held from March 11th through 15th, out of Nelson's Dockyard.

After a vote from all competing boats, the Gosnell Trophy for this Challenge was awarded to John McMonigall's Oyster 82, *Zig Zag*, skippered by Philip Howard-Smith.

A wind shutdown prevented racing on the final day, with results standing from Race 3. The 108-foot (33-metre) Javier Jaudenes sloop *WinWin*, sailed by Kim Schindelhauer and skippered by Ryan Taylor, won the Corsairs Class by a single point from the 112-foot (34-metre) Baltic 112 *Nilaya*, with Filip Balcaen at the helm.

—*Continued on next page*



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The Baltic 112 *Liara*, designed by Malcolm McKeon and sailed by Tony Todd, came in third.



LUCY TULLOCH

In the Superyacht Challenge Buccaneers Class, the Oyster 885 Firebird scored three straight bullets.

In the Buccaneers Class, the Oyster 885 *Firebird*, skippered by James McDonald, scored three straight bullets, beating *Adela* into second place. The 121-foot (37-metre) Dykstra sloop *Action*, skippered by Josh Gilchrist, was third.

In the Privateers Class, Peter Harrison's 115-foot (35-metre) Farr ketch, *Sojana*, skippered by Jonny Malbon, won on countback from the 108-foot (33-metre) Malcolm McKeon sloop *Missy*, captained by Matt McKeon. The 94-foot (29-metre) Southern Wind sloop *Aragon*, skippered by Nico Carpentier, arrived in third place.

"Winning three races in a row is amazing and it all happened because of a fantastic team," commented *Firebird's* skipper James McDonald. "It was nice to race against different boats in our class. Many congratulations to *Zig Zag*, our fellow Oyster. The win is very much deserved; we voted for them!"

The 11th edition of the Superyacht Challenge Antigua will take place from March 9th through 14th, 2021. The Notice of Race and entry form can be downloaded at www.superyachtchallengeantigua.com

2020 International Optimist Regatta Cancelled

Carol Bareuther reports: Organizers of the International Optimist Regatta (IOR), presented by EMS Virgin Islands, the TOTE Maritime Clinic, and TOTE Maritime Team Race, regret to announce the cancellation of this 2020 event, originally scheduled from June 15th through 21st. This decision was made in line with health and safety recommendations by the government of the US Virgin Islands in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have made the inevitable decision to cancel the IOR in light of the uncertainty inherent in this pandemic," says regatta director Holly Jenkins. "We spent weeks assessing this evolving situation and all possibilities of rescheduling, to no avail. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank our stalwart major sponsors, EMS Virgin Islands and TOTE Maritime, for their wonderful support. We look forward to welcoming our local, regional, national, and international junior sailors and their families and friends next year to race in this largest annual little boat regatta in the Caribbean."

IOR organizers, board members of the Virgin Islands Sailing Association, and the Commodore and Board of Directors of the St. Thomas Yacht Club encourage everyone to stay safe and minimize risks by following public health mandates during this global health crisis.

Updates will be published on the Facebook page www.facebook.com/InternationalOptimistRegatta and website stthomasyachtclub.org/sailing/regattas/international-optimist-regatta



DEAN BARNES

Last year's IOR in St. Thomas was a big success. The organizers look forward to welcoming you next year!





Trinidad, Part I:
Sailing is Magic for Kathryn Christopher

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

This month we feature one of Trinidad's sailing gems, Kathryn Christopher. Kathryn was one of two young adult sailors from the Eastern Caribbean selected in 2019 to participate in World Sailing's Training Scholarship program.

"Sailing found me at 12 years old, a shy, quiet girl, living 500 metres from the sea. At the time, I had a love for swimming but sprinting at maximum speed over the stretches of sea coloured in dark shades of indigo in a sailboat had never occurred to me. When I started in the Trinidad & Tobago Youth Sailing Program, I wondered what underwater inhabitants might suddenly emerge from the depths to grasp at any of my limbs which I dared drag in the water. At that time, the Trinidad & Tobago Sailing Association's two-week Learn to Sail camps included extracurricular archery practice and exploring the islands in our little bay of Chaguaramas. For the older kids, it also included learning the art of parallel parking a motor dinghy alongside the docks without stalling.

"It was not magical at first. I was the only girl amidst five rowdy boys who didn't understand that bouncing incessantly in a tiny dinghy would get everyone very sick, very quickly. They soon learned, however, that being rocked by the wake of powerboats when you are in a small sailboat is unpleasant. We became quite close friends after that. I cannot sugarcoat this: we were a terrible bunch by all standards. If the sun happened to peep out from behind the wispy arrays of clouds, we would all suddenly be splashing each other. With smirks, we'd pretend to be magically knocked out to windward by the boom and fall into the refreshing water. We spent our lunch hours crouched in rock pools betting cheese sticks on which snail would make it to the top of a rock first. We helped each other learn to tie bowlines with quick precision thanks to a promise from our instructor that if we could tie him to a bench in less time than it would take him to escape he'd take us to see a shipwreck.

"Suddenly, there was magic everywhere and in everything. Our instructors molded our mischievous talents into new learning points and new respect for the magic that came with the sailing environment. A lizard caught to scare someone became the lead character in the story, 'Mr. Zandoli and His Friends.' Following the story, the lizard was returned to a tree and offered a large helping of bread crusts for the remainder of our stay.

"Indigo patches of ocean were no longer scary, instead they housed schools of friendly stingrays that we ferociously protected by snatching up any garbage that we spotted while sailing. Our equipment was the best looked after, because misuse might mean losing the privilege of on-the-water obstacle courses. Onshore stretch sessions were cleverly disguised as fancy moves to attract more wind. We were allowed to be free souls but, in return, expected to be respectful in order to keep the freedom and those magical memories coming.

"This was my introduction to the world of sailing, a world where no task was seen as truly impossible, regardless of your personal capabilities. Solutions were formed from quick wit, duct tape and three-millimeter line.

"Swept up in it, I graduated into racing and there transformed into someone outspoken (staying quiet on a boat means loss of maximizing wind shifts), someone patient (a rushed roll tack only slows you down), someone convinced that no problem was without solutions and a passion to find them.

"Magicians don't keep their tricks to themselves. Over the years I became more deeply rooted in the local sailing programs, first as a weekend student, then a volunteer, an assistant instructor, instructor and now as administrator. Sailing is a sport that grabs you by the ankles and will have you head over heels in love in no time. I was no exception and I wanted to make sure as many people as possible would be able to have the chance to experience it like I did — swept up in the magic of it all.

"The spell was again cast last year, when I was introduced to the World Sailing (WS) Training Scholarship, a program targeted at instructor training and coaching development. Through encouragement from Tim Cross, a World Sailing coach developer, I started the application process, furthering my journey to improve my skills as an instructor.

"Once nominated by your country's MNA (IOC Member National Authority), the Olympic Solidarity Fund scholarship application process is relatively simple. It can become lengthier depending on whether you are self-funded or seeking funding through the MNA.

"From the Caribbean, Sylvester Thomas of Antigua and I were selected for the seven-week course, which took place in Portland, England in September and October last year. With others in attendance from Nicaragua, Brazil, Brunei and Indonesia, we had a colorful array of languages all asking to pass the pepper sauce at the dinner table.

"My initial expectations were that the program would simply provide tools to improve my coaching techniques and that I would experience how a well-established sailing club is run, thus giving insights to improve our club's potential. Instead, the seven-week course completely surpassed all of my expectations. The Training Scholarship not only covers the three levels of Technical Coaching outlined by World Sailing, but also teaches its participants the ways in which they might pass the knowledge they gain on to their peers at home, a technique which we practiced on each other. Ensuring this knowledge is not removed from a club when the Scholarship participants move on is a key objective. The main purpose, however, is strengthening each country's ongoing National Training Program development. After exposure to new teaching techniques, trying out different boats and wind-based sports, as well as interacting with others who have developed their own National Training Programs and resource management, we carefully examined our own country's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. From these we came up with a plan to improve the standards of sailing as well as participation levels at home.

A Caribbean United through Sailing

"Sylvester and I had a second vision in mind: a Caribbean united through sailing. As a region, we have already seen the manner in which coordinated keelboat regattas can have a positive impact on our communities by exposing other sailors to all that our islands have to offer. So, why shouldn't the younger generation of sailors experience similar positive impact through dinghy regattas?

"Thus begins our project to have similar training opportunities for the youth of the Caribbean, with each island making customizations to suit their conditions. Like our Caribbean neighbours who have attended the course before us, our first step is to take what we have learnt back to our sailing clubs and test the program outlines which we developed in England. Our aim is to offer feedback to our peers so that we can create a similar training baseline and select boat classes to recommend for training in each country. Coordinated fleet management will allow dinghy sailors to travel throughout the islands to continue their training in a variety of conditions, thereby making them better prepared for international events, as well as increasing regional participation in each island's dinghy regattas.

"It is also our hope that, through collaborations with the marine businesses in each of our communities, we can offer our Caribbean youth opportunities to learn marine trades such as sail fabricating, boat repair, and piloting. Maintaining jobs in the environment we've grown to love makes us stronger as a region.

"I dream that we will one day be a community truly united by this body of water that we share and that the magic that lies hidden in it will be seen by all."

It is clear that learning to sail and then developing herself within the nautical world has been magic for Kathryn Christopher. Who will be the next West Indian child to gain a deep appreciation and sense of stewardship for the marine world that surrounds them?

Next month in "Trinidad, Part II" we'll explore more of what is going on with sailing development in Trinidad and the unique role Kathryn is playing in that.



Feeling the magic!

Since 2014, Ellen Birrell and Captain James Hutchins have hosted 68 six-day, teen High Adventure Scouting USA charters. In summer 2019, with support from the University of the Virgin Islands, they introduced STEM citizen science turtle counts and benthic surveys to scouts onboard S/V Boldly Go.


Kathryn took this shot with her own GoPro, sailing a C420.

Tropical Season 2020:

What Will this Summer Bring, Where Can I Go, and When and How Might I Try to Get There?

by Chris Parker

Officially, hurricane season for the Atlantic north of the equator begins June 1st, and ends November 30th. This article will discuss seasonal forecasts, hurricane havens and risk minimization in the Caribbean, as well as timing and routing considerations for vessels departing the Caribbean.

Note that current restrictions on vessel movements might affect advice on hurricane havens and routing considerations. For up-to-date information on restrictions visit noonsite.com.

Seasonal Forecasts

Most credible seasonal forecasters predict an above-average number of Tropical Low pressure systems this season in the Atlantic Basin. There are several interesting drivers of expected above-normal activity in the Caribbean, Bahamas and Gulf of Mexico.

• ENSO: The El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) influences Tropical activity in the Atlantic Basin. El Niño manifests in warmer sea surface temperatures in the eastern Pacific off South America. In the Tropical Atlantic and Caribbean, El Niño typically induces stronger wind shear, which inhibits Tropical Low formation.

On the other hand, an eastern Pacific La Niña supports lighter easterly tradewinds (and hence less wind shear) in the Tropical Atlantic and Caribbean, enhancing Tropical Low formation and intensification.

The El Niño/La Niña cycle is presently neutral, but forecasts (see graph at right) suggest a weak La Niña may form during our summer (by August), and this could support more Tropical activity than normal in the mid and late parts (August-December) of the Atlantic hurricane season.

• Wind Shear: Strong easterly tradewinds cause wind shear (change in wind speed and/or direction with altitude), versus slow-moving upper-air in the Tropics. Shear inhibits Tropical Low formation through a combination of disrupting the vertical structure of a forming Tropical Low pressure system, and causing the Tropical Waves which spawn Tropical Low pressure systems to move westward at too fast a pace for their convective engine to keep up. If seasonal forecasts are correct, wind shear should decrease below normal (enhancing Tropical activity) beginning in August, and remain below normal rest of the year.

• Sea Surface Temperatures: Troubling signs for the entire season are sea surface temperatures (SSTs), which are running at least one degree Celsius warmer than normal throughout the Caribbean, as well as in the Tropical Atlantic east of the Caribbean (which is commonly referred to as the "Main Development Region," or MDR). Worse, SSTs in the Gulf of Mexico are one to four degrees Celsius above normal, which is a tremendous anomaly. (See image on page 17.)

Strong easterly tradewinds often mix the column of water, resulting in slightly cooler sea surface temperatures, so the below-normal strength of tradewinds expected from August onward may cause less mixing, and ensure abnormally warm SSTs persist all season.

Warmth enhances evaporation, and evaporated water (water vapor) is key to the latent heat cycle of Tropical Low pressure systems. Because we expect the positive SST anomaly to persist all season, oceanic heat content may be a key driver of enhanced Tropical activity through December.

One mitigating factor we have observed suppressing early season activity to a greater extent than normal in recent years, at least in the MDR Region (Africa to the Eastern Caribbean), is particulate matter in the atmosphere. Particulate matter, such as Saharan dust, filters sunshine and reduces evaporation. However, we have no skill predicting how much this may inhibit early-season Tropical Low formation in the MDR this year.

Forecast Summary

Meteorologists also try to make "analog" comparisons — comparing present environmental factors to previous years with similar environmental factors. Dr. Phil Klotzbach of Colorado State University suggests that 2020 may be analogous to the seasons 1960, 1966, 1980, 1996, and 2008.

"We look at these five analog seasons and four of the five seasons we selected had above-normal hurricane activity, while 1960 had near-normal hurricane activity."

The University College of London's well respected TropicalStormRisk.com group predicts Atlantic activity "25 percent above the 1950-2019 long-term norm and five to ten percent above the recent 2010-2019 ten-year norm."

Further, UCL predicts the ACE (Accumulated Cyclone Energy, which quantifies total accumulated wind from Tropical Low pressure systems throughout the season) has a 53 percent chance of being above normal (in the highest 33 percent of seasons); a 32 percent chance of being near normal (in the middle 33 percent of seasons), and only a 15 percent chance of being below normal (in the lowest 33 percent of seasons).

Together, the above suggest a high probability of more Tropical Low pressure systems and more total wind energy associated with Tropical Low pressure systems.

So, What is a 'Normal Season'?

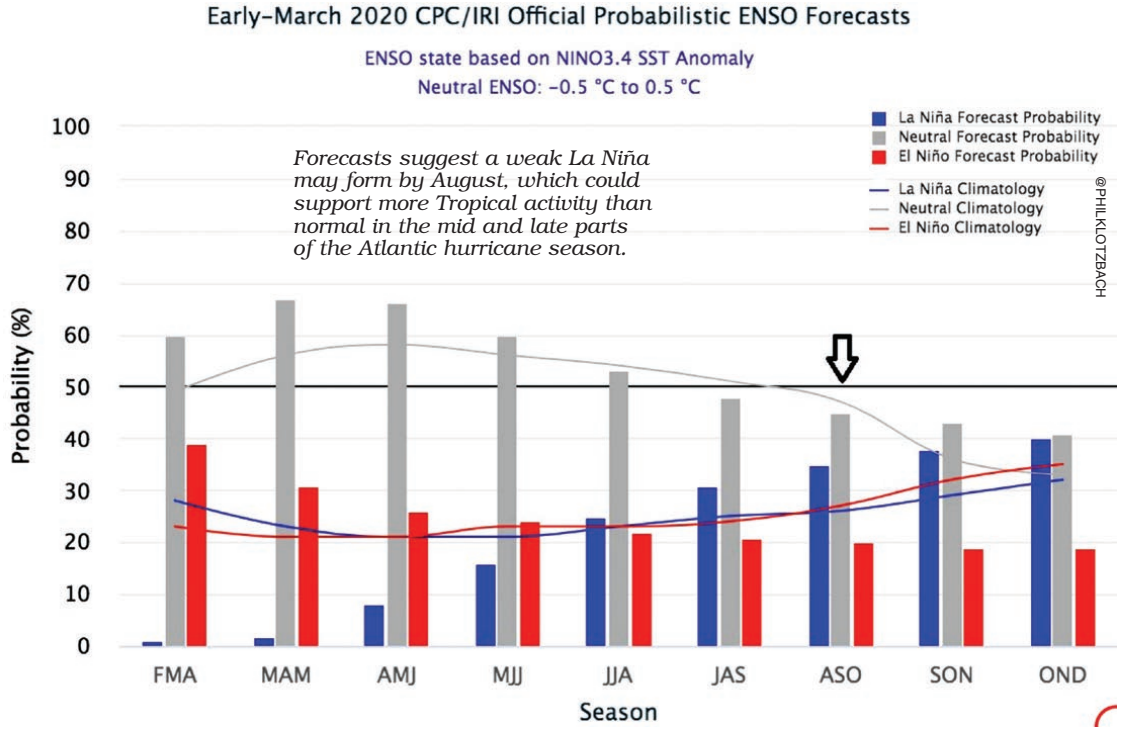
Contrary to popular wisdom, Tropical Low pressure systems (Tropical Storms and hurricanes) can form in the Atlantic north of the equator any time of the year. In the last 100 years the only month without a Tropical Low has been March. However, 112 years ago, in March 1908, a Tropical Low developed along a stalled cold front several hundred miles northeast of the Caribbean then moved southwest through the Leewards as a Category 2 hurricane! But that's not "normal."

Here's what is "normal":

• Mid-Season: Over 80 percent of Tropical Low pressure systems in the Atlantic form during a ten-week period, from mid-August (August 10th) through mid-October (October 20th). Most of these form in the MDR (between Africa and the Caribbean). These features begin as storms over Africa, and emerge into the Eastern Atlantic as Tropical Waves. As Waves propagate westward across the Atlantic, if environmental factors are just right, they can develop into Tropical Low pressure systems and some of these reach hurricane strength.

These are the classic Cape Verde Hurricanes, which are feared for good reason, and, as they move out of the Tropics, they can impact any area of the Gulf of Mexico, the US East Coast, the Canadian Maritimes, and the entire North Atlantic all the way to Europe.

—Continued on next page



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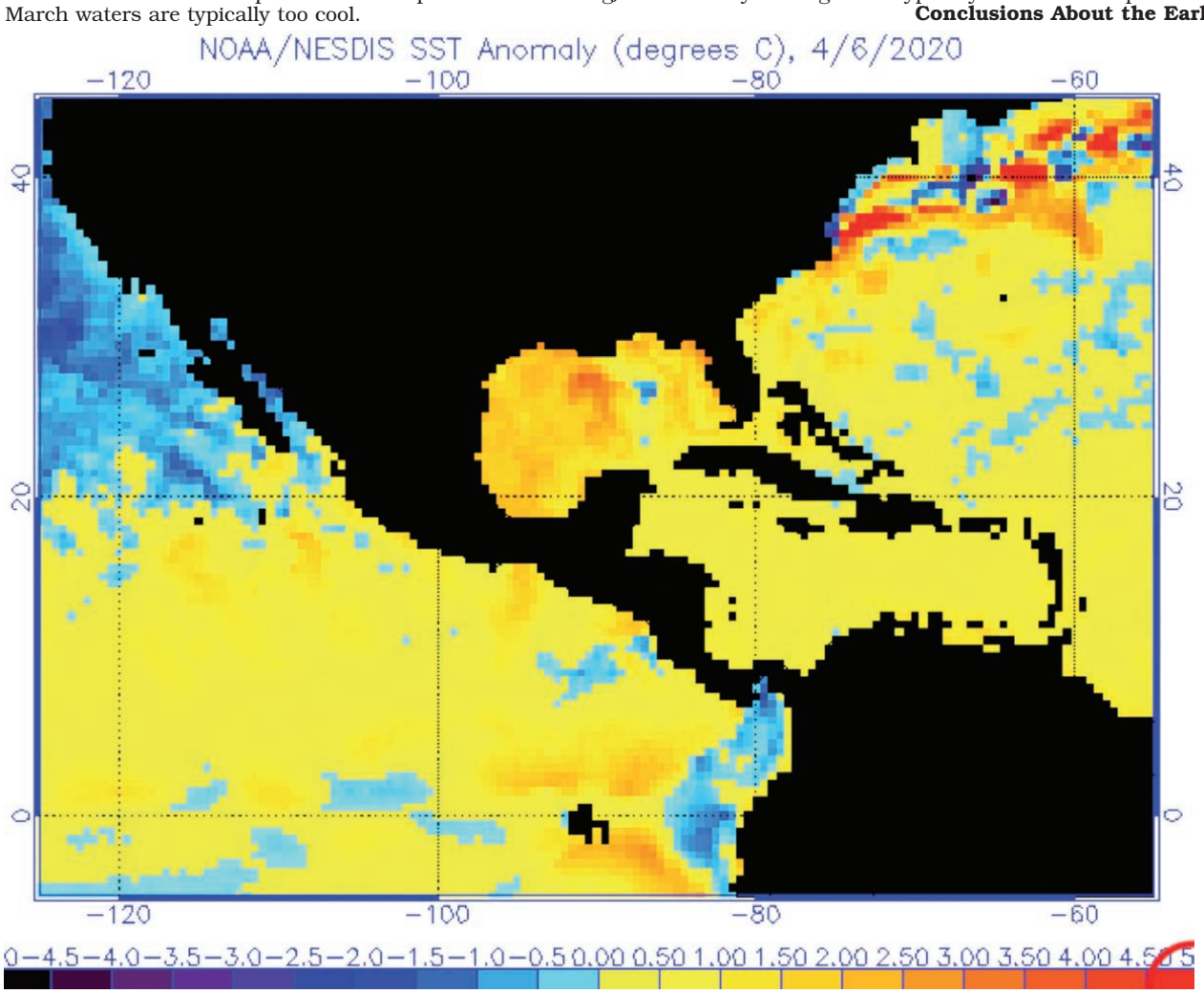
Some of these classic Tropical systems form as early as June and as late as November, but the bulk form mid-August through mid-October.

• Early and Late Season: Very few Tropical Low pressure systems form the other 42 weeks of the year (late October through July), and the triggering mechanism and geographic areas of formation are quite different from mid-season systems.

Early- and late-season systems most often develop when a cold front stalls over the ocean, and what we at Marine Weather Center call an "impulse" of energy (a cluster of persistent squalls) forms along the stalled frontal trough.

Normally the impulse does not last long, and a hostile environment near the stalled frontal trough prevents development. However, if the impulse persists for at least several days, and is quasi-stationary, and other environmental factors are supportive, then a Low with Tropical or sub-Tropical characteristics can develop.

Although this sort of Tropical Low formation can happen along a stalled frontal trough any time of the year, it happens most frequently from April through June, and again from October through December (when cold fronts penetrate deep into warm waters of the Tropics or sub-Tropics before stalling). In January through March waters are typically too cool.



Sea surface temperatures are running at least one degree Celsius warmer than normal throughout the Caribbean.

Early- and late-season systems typically develop in the southwest and northwest Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, the Bahamas, and the sub-Tropical Atlantic (north of the Tropics, but south of about 35°N latitude).

In the 50 years of the "satellite era" of meteorology (when geostationary satellites allow constant monitoring of the oceans) we have seen the following number of Tropical Low pressure systems in each month:

April = 4
May = 19
November = 5
December = 8

Almost without exception these formed along stalled frontal troughs, as described above.

During the past 50 years the months of June and July saw roughly 30 (June) and 40 (July) systems each month, some of which formed along frontal troughs, but others formed along westward propagating Tropical Waves.

August through October saw roughly 100 (August and October) to nearly 200 (September) systems total in the last 50 years — the vast majority of which formed along westward propagating Tropical Waves.

The image on page 18 shows typical areas of formation and track by month.

General Conclusions

The bulk of risk for the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, the Bahamas, the US East Coast, and the entire Atlantic from westward propagating Tropical Waves is August through October, with less risk in June and July.

In April through December (and to a much lesser extent January through March) folks should be very aware a Tropical Low could form along a frontal trough anywhere in the Atlantic Basin (including Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico) — except typically not in the Tropical Atlantic east of the Caribbean.

Conclusions About the Early Part of the 2020 Tropical Season

Although the risk of Tropical Low pressure systems is relatively low through most of July, unusually warm sea surface temperatures suggest greater risk for early-season activity — particularly developing along a cold front stalling in the Gulf of Mexico or the northwest or southwest Caribbean.

Above-average SSTs suggest slightly higher than normal risk for an early season westward propagating Wave to spawn a Tropical Low impacting the Caribbean (recall Tropical Storm Brett, which hit Trinidad on June 19th, 2017).

Some Hurricane Havens

Some Options

Unfortunately, current restrictions on vessel movements may eliminate (or just delay) your access to some common hurricane havens, but we rate very highly:

Up the Rio Dulce in Guatemala
Anywhere in Panama and Colombia
Guyana/Suriname

The above locations are either outside areas at significant risk, or, in the case of Rio Dulce, in a highly convex coastline where an approaching system would weaken significantly as a result of interaction with landmass of Belize and/or Honduras before impacting up-river areas of Guatemala.

If I were going to head for Guyana/Suriname: In May and June the squally ITCZ (inter-tropical convergence zone) can lift into this area, bringing variable conditions with intervals of inclement weather. Later in June or July, when the northern boundary of the ITCZ often lifts north of 12°N, vessels heading from from the southeastern Caribbean to Guyana/Suriname may find mostly mild conditions but adverse current. Meanwhile, I would stage in Trinidad/Tobago if possible, or in Barbados or Grenada (or as far south and east as possible).

Although the northern coasts of the Dominican Republic and Cuba are within the high-risk area, the greatest impact is caused by either the eye or the right-front quadrant of a hurricane impacting your location. Significant impacts in these areas are most plausible if a hurricane is moving west or southwest, while normal direction of motion is north of west. However, there are rare exceptions — Irma devastated parts of the north coast of Cuba when her eye stalled along the coast in 2017.

Although some consider Grenada, Trinidad, and the ABCs (Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao) "safe," there are far more instances of impacts from Tropical Low pressure systems in these areas than in Panama, Colombia or Guyana/Suriname. If your plans include Grenada, Trinidad, or the ABCs, ensure that you are prepared in case there is a Tropical impact (remember Hurricane Ivan in 2004).

Tropical Forecasting

Tropical forecasting has become very good. We rarely have less than two weeks of warning in advance of a possible system.

—*Continued on next page*

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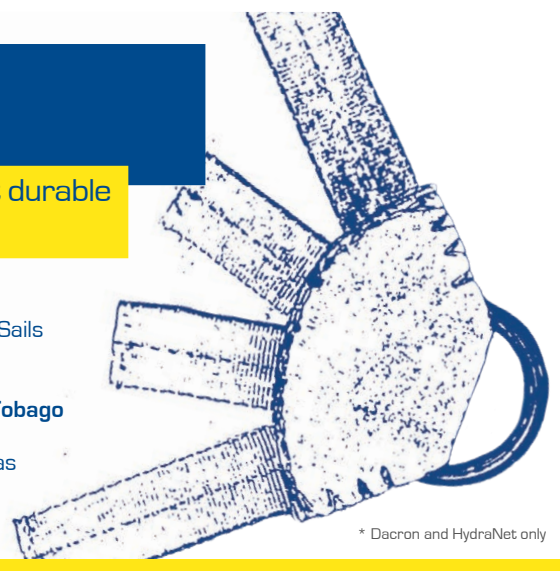
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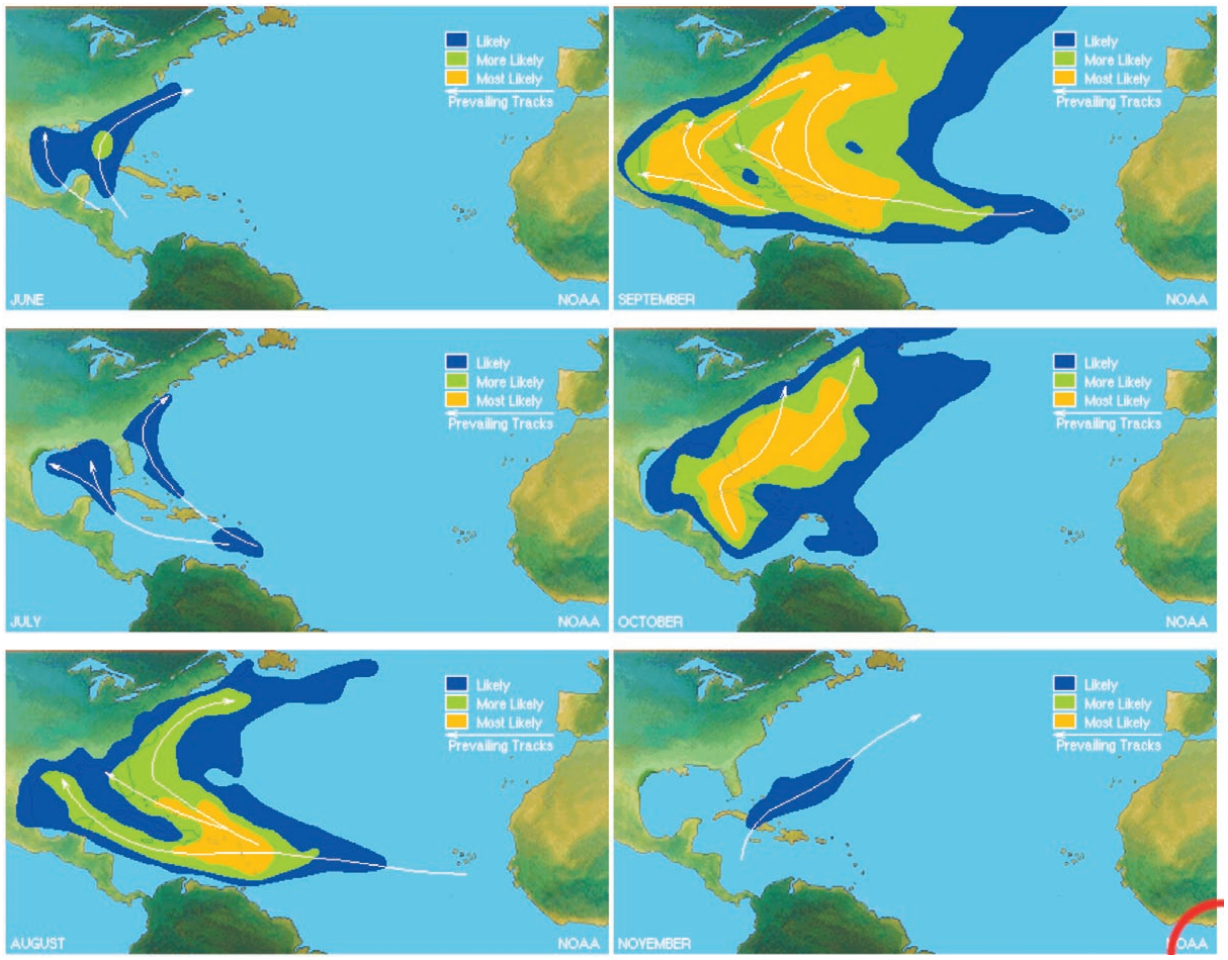


* Dacron and HydraNet only

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Of course the farther out we forecast into the future the lower our confidence, and the more risk there's a false alarm (the potential for a Tropical Low, but one fails to form). We at Marine Weather Center continuously probe forecasts for any potential Tropical Low formation in areas where we have clients, so there are few instances when a Tropical Low develops that was not flagged as a possibility well in advance.

If you want to minimize false alarms but still have ample time to move or prepare, then focus on threats within the next five to seven days.



Typical areas of system formation and track by month.

How To Go

Remaining in the Caribbean

This may be a viable plan for many folks — if you remain onboard and ready to cast lines and go sailing with a couple days notice. We typically have lots of warning before impact, and if you are prepared to sail as far to the southwest as necessary to get well south of the path of an approaching Tropical Low, then you should be fine. We work with a number of vessels each year employing this strategy, but it is critical that you depart early enough and work with a professional weather router, because you need to be absolutely certain you will be well south of the path of the system — without getting trapped with no place to go.

For Irma, Maria, Dorian and other systems, we routed vessels southwest from Puerto Rico, the Virgins and Leewards. Then, as these powerful systems passed well north of our clients, the vessels made gradual turns to the south then east then back north again, and after several days arrived back at their (often destroyed) departure point after a pleasant sail around the Caribbean. In the worst case, you might have to go all the way to the ABCs, Colombia or Panama, but eventually you'll get out of the path.

Departing the Caribbean for Europe

Departure anytime from now through the end of June is reasonable.

A sub-Tropical ridge (which in summer is typically referred to as the Azores-Bermuda Ridge or Bermuda High) was already fairly well established in mid-April. This surface-based High was supported by an anomalously strong upper ridge spread from the UK to areas south of Bermuda, through the Bahamas and Florida, all the way to Mexico and into the sub-Tropical eastern Pacific.

South of the ridge we found east-component winds, which in May should become east-southeast in direction, and may allow vessels departing the Eastern Caribbean to close reach in mild east-southeast winds most of the way to the Azores, with nonstop travel possible from the Eastern Caribbean to the Azores, the Madeira Islands, Portugal, the Mediterranean, and the Cape Verde Islands, and possibly even northern Europe. Sometimes this does not work out: wind south of the ridge may fail to veer south of east, or may be too light, or squally weather may encroach toward the south side of the ridge, or the ridge may shift around too much to allow vessels to remain in any "sweet spot" of moderate east-southeast winds and settled weather just south of the ridge.

The alternative is to move generally north (slightly north-northeast or even north-northwest is sometimes necessary) from the Eastern Caribbean, and work your way across the windless ridge. Then catch the prevailing southwest winds for east-bound sailing north of the ridge. This is the more conventional route, and the route more likely to be successful. Optimally you should time your departure from the Eastern Caribbean to reach the north edge of the ridge (where you intersect southwest winds) at the time when these southwest winds have penetrated farthest south.

Through most of May, the ridge is typically suppressed southward by Low pressure systems and cold fronts, so vessels moving north from the Caribbean usually make their turn to the east-northeast or east near about 30°/60°W. In order to avoid gale-force wind with cold fronts through the end of May (and often into June) it's common for vessels to pass about 32°N/40°W before turning northeast and riding the narrow zone of moderate southwest winds toward the Azores, on the northwest side of the sub-Tropical ridge and to the southeast of stalling cold fronts.

As we move through June, the ridge (and Low pressure systems and cold fronts north of the ridge) shift farther north, and vessels may need to get to 35°N in June and at least 40°N in July before turning generally eastward toward the Azores and Europe.

Heading to the US East Coast

If you're north of the ridge, then you need to be prepared for frequent intervals of gale or near-gale conditions associated with Low pressure systems, cold fronts, and impulses of energy between systems.

As we move into May and June, the ridge (and the Lows and fronts north of the area) shift northward. We typically see reasonable weather from the Eastern Caribbean to the Carolinas by the end of May, and to Chesapeake Bay in June.

Of course, these are just very broad generalizations, and it's important to work with a professional weather forecaster and router.

Chris Parker and his partner Michael (and Wizard the cat) lived aboard full time for 13 years (on a 30-foot Cheoy Lee, and then a Morgan 34), and cruised the Bahamas, Caribbean, Bermuda and US East Coast full time from 1999 to 2005.

Chris studied Meteorology in college for two years, and honed his micro-meteorology skills flying hang-gliders in the 1990s.

Marine Weather Center has been serving the Cruising Community for over 17 years, helping people like you not only in the Caribbean, Bahamas and along the US East Coast, but also throughout the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans, and in the Mediterranean Sea. It also provides unparalleled coverage of Tropical weather.

Marine Weather Center (Chris Parker along with meteorologists Stormy Stickle and Shawn Rosenthal) is unique in providing forecasts and routing advice by any combination of SSB Voice radio, e-mail, voice telephone, text message, fax, and interactive Internet Webcast. It provides economical annual subscriptions for SSB Nets and regional e-mail forecasts, and custom forecasts in discounted ten-packs.

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Evergreen Hurricane Season Advice

by Don Street

Given the changing circumstances created in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic, you might not be able to apply any or all of the information in this article to hurricane season 2020. If that's the case, save this advice for the future. Viruses come and go, but hurricanes happen every year.

There is an old hurricane season rhyme that goes, "June too soon, July stand by, August come she must, September remember, October all over." But things have changed. There have been more November hurricanes in the last 30 years than there were in the previous 150 years. There have been a few November hurricanes so late they ran into December.

June hurricanes, if they occur, are usually at the end of the month. Beginning in June, every four days check www.nhc.noaa.gov, where you will find a five-day hurricane forecast. If a low develops that may become a hurricane it will be tracked. If it becomes a hurricane, start tracking it. As long as the hurricane stays below 19 degrees north it will move westward, never altering course more than five degrees in 24 hours. Go to www.street-iolaire.com, to "If a Hurricane is Forecast," "Tracking Hurricanes" and "Hurricanes" to obtain solid information.

If a hurricane is aimed at your location, heading south is usually the best option, as most hurricanes tend to curve to the north as they approach the islands. This tactic isn't guaranteed, however, as sailors who headed from the northern islands to Grenada discovered in Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

Each time a hurricane comes through the Caribbean, a number of boats head for so-called hurricane holes. In my opinion, they are all too crowded and boats drag, damaging or sinking themselves and the boats they hit. However there are some hurricane holes where, if you arrive early and sneak up to the head of a mangrove creek, jam the bow into the mangroves and put out plenty of anchors astern, you have a chance of surviving.

Some cruisers will want to lay their boat up for hurricane season in a good safe marina. The year 2017, with Hurricanes Irma and Maria back to back, was the perfect test of the safety of marinas in "hurricane alley." Among those that passed the "Irmaria" test are Puerto del Rey in Puerto Rico, and, in the Virgin Islands, Compass Point Marina, the new eastern basin at Nanny Cay, and Green Cay Marina in St. Croix.

If you are considering considering laying your boat up on the hard, check how often the island has been hit by tropical storms and hurricanes in the last 30 years. (In "Laying Up in a Marina" on my website, www.street-iolaire.com, I give the number of times that major yachting centers in the Caribbean have been hit by named storms.) Ask the yard manager how the yard fared the last time it was hit.

Then look at the yard itself. Yards that have been concreted or otherwise paved have no problem with screw jacks sinking into soft, water-soaked soil, but tie-down points may not line up so straps can be secured to the boat at points of greatest beam. This is where a yard built on dirt or sand has an advantage. Nanny Cay in Tortola now ties boats down to seven-foot-long sand screws with a nine-inch diameter helicoil at bottom (Patriothelicoil.com), which can be driven in at the proper place for the boat concerned.

> *'Beginning in June, every four days check www.nhc.noaa.gov, where you will find a five-day hurricane forecast.'*

After 2017, many surveyors reported that tie-down straps often did not do their job: they stretched, allowing some boats to blow over. Again, Nanny Cay upgraded and now straps their boats down with straps with a SWL of 15,000 pounds (www.rachetstraps.com).

Torrential rain can be expected in tropical storms. Leave a through-hull open or pull the transducer so the boat does not fill up with water. Even if a hatch doesn't blow off, wind-driven water has surprising ways of getting in.

Mast in or out? If a hurricane-force wind is on the beam, chances of a boat with the spar or spars in place staying upright is minimal. If removing the mast is simply not possible, decrease windage as much as you can: put all gear below or in secure storage; remove all sails, dodgers, side curtains and biminis; pull all halyards through; and take down the boom and lash it securely in the scuppers. Leaving a roller-furling jib in place, no matter how tightly furled or how many lines wrapped around it, is the worst thing you can do.

If leaving the boat in the water outside of a marina is your fall-back option, examine the charts of the various islands to select the most sheltered harbour or cove where you can be on a permanent hurricane mooring. Forget about anchors; you'll want something that will take 20,000-pound load. Review the wind pressure figures and note how they skyrocket above 100 knots.

If borders are open and quarantine regulations have relaxed, cruising during early hurricane season will be an option. As I said in my *Cruising Guide to the Lesser Antilles* (available from iUniverse.com), the best months to sail in the Caribbean are June, July, and early August. It usually blows eight to ten knots, seldom more, seldom less, producing the highest *average* wind velocity of the year.

There is no reason to hole up for months south of the hurricane area. As long as you cruise Martinique and islands south, and check www.noaa.nhc.gov every four days, as suggested at the beginning of this article, you can continue cruising. You will be cruising in the hurricane box, but even if you do not have a named-storm-damage clause, you are covered for all normal insurance claims such as grounding, fire, and loss of rig, as long as these accidents were not caused by a named storm.

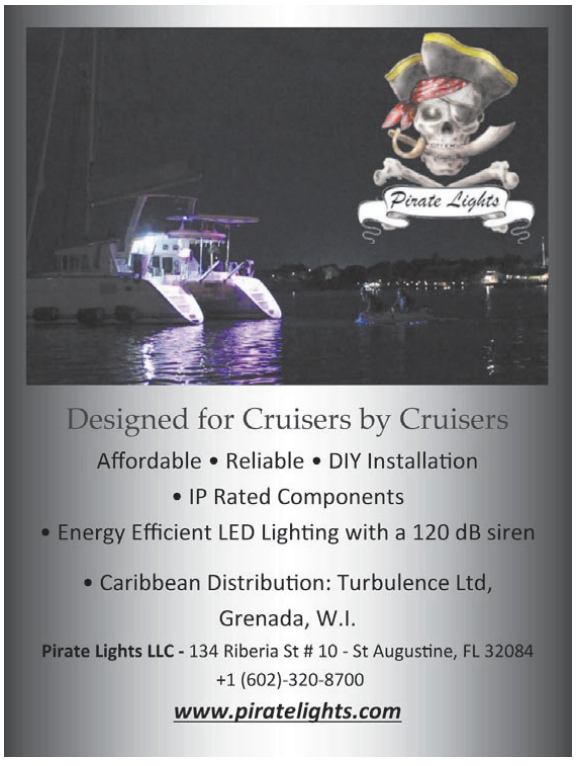
With all the losses caused by hurricanes in the last 15 years, not to mention the current pandemic situation, finding an insurance company that is willing to insure your boat in the Caribbean can be difficult. If you will be living aboard during hurricane season, one option is to forgo named-storm insurance, on the assumption that if a hurricane approaches you will head clear of it. If you are going to lay up ashore or in a marina in the hurricane box, ask the yard or marina manager what companies are insuring other boats there. Some yards and marinas feel that their lay-up procedure is so good that they are willing to insure boats in their facility.

Finally, two good "insurance policies" that are easily obtained are a big reliable hand-operated diaphragm bilge pump that will pump 30 to 35 gallons per minute, and a selection of at least five excellent anchors.

The best method of surviving hurricanes is to remember what Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest said at the end of the American Civil War when asked how he avoided being crushed by the enemy: "Be where they ain't!" Use the same method to survive hurricanes.

For more detailed information on laying up in a marina, laying up ashore, laying up afloat, securing for a blow, and cruising during hurricane season, visit Don Street's recently updated website at www.street-iolaire.com.







Hurricane Comin'

Part One: Hurricane Hugo, 1989

by David H. Lyman



The boat next to us came through Hugo okay, but with the jib in shreds.

Friday, September 16th, 1989

"Hurricane comin'..." said Ray Pentrack, the manager at the Cruz Bay Marina on St. John, in the US Virgin Islands. He was standing at the meat counter at the grocery store that overlooks this small harbor as I pushed my trolley past.

"What hurricane?" I asked. It was Friday, September 16th, 1989. I'd just flown in from Maine, looking forward to two weeks on *Afaran*, my 41-foot Lord Nelson cutter. She was moored over in Great Cruz Bay.

"Hurricane Hugo," said Ray. "We've got our hands full with the Hinckley fleet. Can you take care of your boat?" he asked.

"Sure, but what hurricane are you talking about?

"Hugo. She's a Category 3 now. Should make landfall on Guadeloupe tomorrow, and then hit us sometime on Monday."

"Shit," I said under my breath. A Category 3 meant winds well over 100 knots.

"Where are you parking the Hinckleys?" I asked. Ray's marina managed the Hinckley charter fleet that operated out of Cruz Bay.

"Some, we will take over to Chocolate Hole, some we will double anchor off Caneel Bay. A lot of private boats are heading over to Hurricane Hole on the eastern end of the island."

"I'll take a look. You say I have a day or two?"

"Hugo should be here Monday — morning," he said, and hurried off.

This was the first summer I'd left *Afaran* in the Caribbean. In previous years, I would sail from Maine to the Virgins every fall, returning to Maine the following spring. But these back-and-forth voyages were taking too much time away from what I really wanted to do — explore the islands. So that spring I had left *Afaran* on a rental mooring in Great Cruz Bay. I was planning to haul her out on Virgin Gorda in the British Virgin Islands for hurricane season, but it was now too late.



The scene at Coral Bay after Hugo.

I loaded up the trolley with extra jugs of water, more loaves of bread, canned goods, frozen chicken, peanut butter, jam, UDT milk, cereal, and lots of canned beef stew, my mind in hyper-drive. Was the boat ready? I'd not seen her since May. The fuel and water tanks were full. I had a traditional storm anchor, a 90-pound Yachtsman, under the forward berth, with 200 feet of five-eighths-inch nylon rode, chain and chafing gear. Would that be enough? Was I ready for this?

I piled the bags of groceries, my luggage, and my camera bag in the dinghy, which the yard had left waiting for me at the ferry dock, and motored around to Great Cruz Bay and *Afaran*.

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It was late afternoon when I loaded my groceries onto *Afaran's* deck, unlocked and opened the companionway, shoved back the hatch and went below to inspect the bilge. It was dry. I opened the forward hatches to let air through the boat, stripped off my clothes and slipped on a bathing suit, and then set about preparing to get underway. The weather channel on the VHF droned on in the background.



Boats driven ashore line the beach along Coral Harbor, St. John.

"A hurricane watch has been posted for Guadeloupe and a hurricane warning has been posted for the Virgin Islands. Hurricane Hugo is a Category 5 event. Winds are in excess of 140 miles per hour."

It was like listening to a judge passing sentence on you. I was see-sawing between thrill and dread. Excitement for the impending challenge, fear of the possible consequences. I pushed aside the dread part and got on with my check list: check the engine oil and coolant, turn on the refrigeration, pump the head to make sure it was working. I'd stripped off the sails in May, and would leave them off. With mask, snorkel and flippers, and a large galley knife, I slipped over the side to inspect the prop. Yup, it was a solid ball of growth. It took 15 minutes of scraping to get it clean. The hull would need a good scraping too, but not now. When I climbed up the stern ladder to the cockpit, the sun was already setting.

I started the engine and listened to it purr for a few minutes. Turned on the running lights, dropped the mooring pendant, backed away, turned and headed out of Great Cruz Bay, then north around Steven Cay. I turned east as darkness fell. I made it to the beach off the Caneel Bay Resort where I dropped the hook for the night.

Saturday, September 16th

The news on the radio was full of warnings, but you'd never know what was coming from the delightful breeze and blue skies that day. *Afaran* and I got underway, towing the inflatable, and headed east through The Narrows between the US and the British Virgin Islands. The steep green hills of St. John off to the right dropped straight into the sea. As we passed the island we turned south, then west around Privateer Point and into Round Bay. A few boats were in the process of anchoring in Hansen Bay. I motored farther north into Hurricane Hole, where numerous mangrove coves are tucked into the steep hills on the eastern shore.

While well protected from easterly and southerly winds, there were just too many boats there for me. Yachts were squeezed in together, bows riding to anchors, sterns tied to the mangroves. Crews were tying lines off to the underbrush, deploying anchors, rigging fenders. The scene looked like a boat show. The last thing I wanted was to break loose and hit someone else's boat, or be hit by someone else. I motored over to Coral Harbor. The anchorage is surrounded by high hills on three sides. The entrance, to the southeast, is guarded by reefs that jut out from shore.

I motored around with an eye on the sounder. I picked out a spot in mid-harbor in 15 to 20 feet of water and dropped the working anchor, a 65-pound CQR on chain, and then dove over the side. With mask, snorkel and flippers I swam back and forth, around the anchor, then around and under the boat, inspecting the bottom. It was all sand — no coral heads or rocks to foul the anchor lines or chain.

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The afternoon was spent preparing my boat for the worst. I rigged the 90-pound Yachtsman storm anchor, securing two nylon rodes to 30 feet of chain. I slipped the Yachtsman over the side into the dinghy, motored out and set it, creating a V with the rode of the first hook. To mark each anchor's position, I affixed a line to an empty gallon water jug. This, I figured, would alert others not to anchor between them.

All afternoon, it was hot, sweaty work. There was no wind in the harbor. Overhead, thin, milky clouds were beginning to gather, the only hint of what was coming.

I spliced a thimble into one end of a 30-foot nylon line, shackled it to the anchor chain, slipped on a three-foot length of re-enforced hose for chafing gear, tied off the bitter end, and let out 40 more feet of chain, until the snubber took the weight off the chain. Now the nylon line would stretch out before the chain became taut, cushioning the CQR anchor. I rigged chafing gear on the two rodes that ran over the bronze rollers on the bowsprit, then deployed a third anchor off the port quarter, just in case. I stowed all the deck gear below, but decided to leave the dodger in place, a place for me to hide out of the wind.

While I was eating a PBJ for lunch, the VHF and commercial radio stations on St. Thomas told of what was coming. Hugo would hit on Guadeloupe tomorrow morning with wind gusts to 140 mph. We would begin to feel the effects of the storm on Sunday evening. We could expect winds over 100 mph, with gusts to 140.

Toward evening I was beginning to worry. With little left to do, my mind began to conjure up all sorts of disasters. I began to remove the electronics, the Loran and satnav units. I would take what was valuable ashore with me, hole up in the Moravian Mission church, a stone building, and see what was left the morning after the storm.



Wrecks upon wrecks at Hassel Island after the storm.



The east beach on Hassel Island in Charlotte Amalie Harbor was strewn with wreckage.

There was a growing knot in my belly. Fear comes from anticipating the unexpected, of being faced with something you cannot comprehend, or fail to. If you have a good imagination, your mind can come up with all kinds of disastrous situations, but a good imagination should also come up with as many solutions. It's fear that drives the imagination, until a certain point. Then panic sets in and all creative problem solving ceases; we roll up into a ball and pray for deliverance.

My mind began dreaming a list of possibilities:

- An anchor line chafes through and parts.
- An anchor drags, or all anchors drag.
- Another boat drags down on us, sending both of us to the beach.
- A tornado spins off the eye of the hurricane, picks up my boat and smashes it on the shore.
- My boat is holed and sunk by another boat.
- We are driven ashore by wind, waves and surge.

The list goes on as the imagination spins out of control.

But, if we can anticipate the worst, we can prepare for it. Preparation is putting "pluck" in the bank for when we need it. Pluck is not luck. Pluck, an Irish word, is luck you create through preparation, training, experience. Did I have it?

Next month, Part Two: When in trouble, seek local knowledge. I needed to talk to someone.

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Top Tips for Staying Safe in the Boatyard

by David Carey

Safety on the water is often discussed. Rescuing a man overboard, what kind of life jackets to use? How many flares should you have and what type? What kind of first aid equipment and firefighting equipment do you need? While these are essential topics that must be addressed, what about the risks while your boat is hauled out on land? For many Caribbean boatowners, it's almost haulout time. Take the time to learn about a few common hazards you will find while working in the boatyard, and how to manage them.

Working at heights poses serious hazards. There is no soft water landing if you fall off the boat. Stay safe by ensuring all your lifelines are securely latched and in good condition; zip tie them in the closed position if possible. A fall from a yacht on stands can potentially be three to four metres; think of your lifelines as balustrades on an upper-level apartment. They are your last line of defense. Keep your deck clear of any trip hazards that could contribute to a fall; take the time to stow sheets, ropes and gear, and route shore-power cords properly.



Above: Ensure you have a ladder that is in good condition. Although flip-flops, as in the photo, are the ubiquitous Caribbean footwear, on a ladder they are a no-no; they will increase your risk of falls.

When boarding your yacht, ensure you have a ladder that is in good condition. Lash it securely to the yacht at the stepping-off point and ideally have heavy timber planks at ground level to stop the bottom of the ladder from sliding out. Loose rubble is not an adequate footing for a ladder! The safe angle for a ladder is 4-to-1, and you should not be stepping off onto the boat anywhere near the top rungs; find a taller ladder if need be.



Right: Examine the stands provided by the yard. If they are not in good condition have them replaced.

Examine the stands provided by the yard. If they are not in good condition have them replaced. Resist the temptation to make your own stands; ask the yard for the proper equipment.

Airborne contaminants are a constant hazard in most yards. Sandblasters used to strip hulls release silica dust into the air, sanders used on antifouling paints and fiberglass release contaminants into your work area. Many yards will accommodate your request to have your boat placed upwind of these processes. If that's not possible, try to schedule work so you are not downwind of these processes as they happen. If exposure is unavoidable, at a minimum wear a P2 disposable respirator to protect your lungs.

Musculoskeletal injuries from poor posture during boatyard work are common. Get something stable to stand on that gets you at the right height to perform a repetitive task such as sanding the hull without overstretching. Repetitive work in a bent-over position can cause lower back pain. Lifting heavy items out of the boat through the companionway puts you at risk of a lower back injury; proper lifting technique is very difficult to maintain in these situations. Use a halyard and ratchet straps to assist the lift or share the load among two or three people if possible. With all the winches and blocks that can be found on a yacht, there is no reason to be lifting heavy objects by muscle-power alone. Take a few minutes to rig up a sling and run a line through a block to a winch, then winch the load up.

Below: Working in a bent-over position can cause lower back pain.



Footwear in the yard should ideally be no different to that found on a construction site. Most cruisers don't keep steel-capped boots, but closed-in shoes are a must — no flip-flops. Often waste materials such as spilled paints, dust from sanded antifouling paint, diesel waste, epoxy products, and fiberglass accumulate on the ground. These are contaminants you don't want on your body. Open shoes mean you are walking on this unknown toxic mix of chemicals, which you will then track through your boat even after removing your footwear. Also, regular trips up and down your access ladder with flip-flops will increase your risk of falls. Boatyards often have wire-rope anchor points at ground level that await unsuspecting feet, and heavy stands, blocks, and other toe-stubbers are found throughout the yard.

Hearing and eye protection are crucial when using sanders and angle grinders. An exploding cut-off wheel can blind you; your eyelids are not fast enough to react to something spinning at 22,000 RPM, the speed of most angle grinders. Most chemicals used in the yard advise the use of eye protection. This rule must be followed when rolling on antifoul paints, as the paint tends to splatter off the roller and onto the face of the person applying it. These chemicals are toxic and difficult to remove from your skin. Keep more than one pair of safety glasses on board, as they inevitably get scratched and dirty. Noise-induced hearing loss is permanent and extremely debilitating. Power tools used in the yard usually emit sound loud enough to damage your ears. Noise also increases fatigue. Keep a supply of disposable earplugs handy.

Fatigue is a genuine contributor to workplace accidents. Seventeen hours awake is the equivalent of having a 0.05 blood alcohol reading. Decision making is affected, and the likelihood of injury increases. Couple this with extremes of heat in the tropics and fatigue can lead to poor judgment when dealing with all of the above hazards. Ensure that you are taking breaks as required. Take cold showers during the day in hot climates; most yards have showers for cruisers and employed workers — use them. Plan to execute difficult tasks in the morning or late afternoon to minimize time working in the direct sunlight. Ensure that you have a good supply of drinking water, and eat small regular meals to keep your energy levels up.

By keeping yourself safe in the boatyard, you will be able to avoid the types of injuries that can make cruising life difficult. If you are the kind of person who loves to work on your own boat, remember, it will cost you much more money if you have to pay someone to repair something because you are out of action following an accident. The initial investment to purchase the correct personal protective equipment is minuscule when compared to the amount of money boatowners spend on purchasing, maintaining, insuring and refitting their boats. Why should you treat your health any differently?

David Carey cruised the Caribbean for 18 months aboard his Moody 47 with his wife and three children. Following a career in aviation, he has worked as a safety professional for five years and has a Master's Degree in Work Health and Safety Management.

THE LAUNCHING OF REALITY 2

by John Everton

If you are ever in Carriacou and hear there is to be a vessel launching (always on a Sunday) make sure you go, whether it's your first or you've been to several. If you live in the world of boats this is truly a special occasion and deeply satisfying.

The launch of *Reality 2* — built by 71-year-old Nero McLawrence, mostly by himself over the past four years — on the beach in Windward on March 2nd was no exception. It was the fifth launch in Windward that I have attended over the years. The others included *Caleb C*, Cheesemon's fishing sloop, built mostly by Cheesie and Nero; *Mageta II*, built by Bernard Compton for his brother Uncle C to fish with after the *Mageta O* was lost ashore during Hurricane Emily; *Genesis*, built by Alwyn Enoe and sons to be based in Antigua, and then *Caleb C's* relaunching after a rebuild.

Arguably the best beach bar in the Lesser Antilles is Bernard and Laura Compton's



DAVON BAKER

Above: The rollers are in position.

Below: Preparing the rollers.

bar on the bayside where Bernard builds his vessels. Bernard and his son Eddie rebuilt the cabin top on my classic wooden *Gaucho* some years back. They are currently working on a fishing boat at their building site next to the bar — the shadiest spot in Windward at the opposite end of the village from Nero's launching site.

Every Carriacou launch I've attended had two things in common: 1) None has been over before the middle of the afternoon, although it is best to arrive in Windward early to witness preparations and give a hand if need be. 2) There appears to be a chaotic, disorderly atmosphere as every old hand seems to have a different idea on how to proceed — way more chiefs than Indians. Actually this is more appearance than reality, as this is the Windward way and there is an underlying cohesiveness that keeps things moving along in the time-honoured fashion.

I didn't arrive until 11:00AM for *Reality 2's* launching and missed the priest's blessing and the sacrifice of the goat. In fact Nero had gone home already and left the launching to the rest of the village shipwrights. Someone said his blood pressure was high. Understandable.

The finished vessel is held upright with stakes propped in the sand. The traditional way of launching is: after nailing protective planks onto the bilge area of one side of the finished hull, a man stands by each stake with an axe or hatchet and they all begin chopping the bottom ends off the stakes in unison while men push from the other side until the vessel is gradually lowered onto her side and her bilge rests on sandbags. In the meantime rollers have been placed under the keel from bow to stern with more rollers in position forward of the bow.

—Continued on next page



RONI EVERTON



RONI EVERTON

The author, at far right, with friends 'Tall Boy' and Reality 2*'s owner and builder, Nero.*

—Continued from previous page

After the "cutting down," a long heavy line attached to a large anchor set off shore is led through a block tied to a tree behind the vessel so men can pull on both sides to start her on her way toward the water. As she moves, men move and reposition rollers ahead to keep up with her forward motion.



RONI EVERTON

Above Reality 2 *safely afloat inside the Windward reef.*

Right: The string band kept things lively.

Below: Reality 2 *being towed into the sea.*

Nowadays this method is often abandoned in favour of using a machine. In this case a JCV was used to push *Reality 2*, with a tyre lashed against a plank nailed to her transom, until she reached the water's edge. There, a large powerboat with a powerful engine was waiting to tow her from the bow and "splash" her.

This ended up taking all day as the JCV had to manoeuvre and reposition in tight spaces in order to tow *Reality 2's* bow from port to align her properly on the rollers. This resulted in a bit of trailblazing between some trees to do so. Finally the JCV ran out of gas. More had to be sent for and it took a while to restart the engine. Luckily by this time the crew of ladies cooking and serving food for the large crowd started dishing out and so it was I was able to watch the grand finale on a full belly. Thank you ladies of Windward!

At the launching I had lots of time to meet and chat with many old friends, some from far away whom I hadn't seen in many years. It was probably the largest crowd I've seen at a launching yet.

As the launching concluded late in the afternoon, several people who had been there since the morning had left and missed it. But the string band did a great job of keeping everything moving and spirits from lagging in the slack times, including the time spent waiting on the machine to do its thing. Thanks for the music!

When the grand finale finally came it took about 15 seconds from the time the bow flew over the rollers and hit the water until *Reality 2* was fully afloat and travelling at a great speed behind the tow boat, accompanied by tumultuous roars from the onlookers.

It was definitely a launching to remember.

Reality 2 is 68 feet long, with an 18-foot 4-inch beam, a four- to five-foot draft, and 28 tons displacement before engine and ballast. She is framed with Grenadian white cedar and all other wood is Honduras pitch pine. Her planking is two inches thick and fastened to the frames with six-inch galvanized steel cut nails. She will be rigged as a single-masted motorsailer and sailed by Nero and his son Hubert to trade between the islands.

I returned to Windward a couple of days after the launch to check on statistics of *Reality 2's* construction and also to check on Nero. It was good to find him down by the dock, gamming with friends and feeling much better than he had on launch day.

An added bonus for visiting Windward again after the launch was to spend more time on the quieter side of the island in the most active boatbuilding village in the Lesser Antilles. Carriacou is the last island in the Caribbean holding on to the tradition of building and launching large vessels on the beach — long may this continue.

Not too many years ago the same tradition was practiced in Anguilla and in Bequia, and I remember when the schooner *Alexander Hamilton* was launched in Nevis.

The Monday after *Reality 2's* launching I happened to be at Tyrell Bay Marina's fuel dock to take *Alexander Hamilton's* dock lines after her refit in Grenada. The captain on board was Cal, one of boatbuilder Alwyn Enoe's sons. Cal and his brother Terry built the sloop *Free* under Alwyn's supervision for an owner in St. Barts. Terry had been one of the young men involved with *Reality 2's* launching.

John and Roni Everton sail aboard Second Star.



RONI EVERTON



DAVON BAKER



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To celebrate Compass's *25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee Year, every month throughout 2020 we'll be bringing you selected blasts from the past. In keeping with this month's cover, we thought this one from the December 2008 issue was particularly apt. In Carriacou at least, some things never change!*

Want more? See our Back Issues Archive at https://www.caribbeancompass.com/backissues.html

WHEN THE ISLANDS DISAPPEARED

A Trans-Atlantic Crossing During the COVID-19 Pandemic

by John Dillon

THE potential problems encountered on a transatlantic crossing are well known. Gales, breakdowns, man-overboard situations and more have all been well publicized. Ways to address these problems are well documented. But how does one plan for comprehensive port of entry closures as you approach your intended destination and what do you do to solve this problem?

This is the story of *Skua's* transatlantic crossing as the COVID-19 pandemic spread through the Caribbean and island nations began to shut their borders or severely limit entry by yacht.

It's a beautiful Caribbean afternoon with plenty of sunshine and a cooling ocean breeze. But something is amiss: the anchorage in Admiralty Bay, Bequia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines (SVG) is relatively empty and many shoreside activities have ceased. Businesses are ramping down operations or shutting their doors temporarily although this is the height of the cruising season. The government is not allowing any amplified music to be played, to avoid the gathering of crowds. The Bequia Easter Regatta, a highlight in the Caribbean, has been cancelled. All this is a result of the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus.

My wife, Darcy, and I are sitting aboard *S/V Kindred Spirit* in the harbor hosting Elena and Ryan, a young recently married couple from *S/V Skua*, a Tayana 37. They have just completed a 25-day non-stop passage from the Canary Islands to the Caribbean. Their story includes the typical conditions encountered on a long passage: periods of squalls and light winds, boredom, and mental and physical exhaustion. They were well prepared for their passage and did not encounter any breakdowns as the weeks passed.

However, they ran into a situation that was impossible to anticipate. One by one, the Eastern Caribbean island nations that lay before them closed their borders and denied entry to foreign yachts. Elena and Ryan had a problem and they needed to make some difficult decisions in spite of the mental exhaustion of a long passage.

As they departed the Canary Islands with landfall planned for Guadeloupe, the COVID-19 epidemic was in its infancy. But the COVID-19 storm was rapidly gaining strength as their days at sea ticked by. The growing pandemic was of concern to all the Caribbean islands. It was their high season, with international travelers arriving on cruise ships and entering via their airports. The Caribbean charter fleets were booked and the liveaboard cruisers and charter boats were all traveling inter-island. A major outbreak in these islands would be a disaster for their citizens as their medical facilities would be taxed beyond their limits.

The Garmin inReach that Elena and Ryan had aboard provided two-way texting during their passage. Ryan and Elena have a YouTube channel, a well-read blog and Facebook page that follow their adventures. As their passage progressed, it became apparent to some of their friends on Facebook that the COVID-19 virus was now a pandemic and cases were being reported in the Caribbean, most notably in their targeted landfall of Guadeloupe.

Jenny Durnan, a German living with her husband in the state of Washington, USA, cruised extensively as a liveaboard for 12 years and belongs to the Women Who Sail Facebook group, where she first met Elena online. As Jenny was monitoring *Skua's* passage along with the news reports on the spread of the virus through the Caribbean, she connected with Elena and Ryan to update them.

Jenny says, "When the first Eastern Caribbean islands started to be affected, I became quite nervous. Elena and Ryan kept their course until Monsieur Macron put France, and thus Guadeloupe, on lockdown."

Julia (Jules) Weeks also stepped in to offer guidance. Jules and her partner had done their own transatlantic crossing at the end of 2017 and were currently working on their hauled-out boat in Grenada. Jules is a friend of Jenny's on Facebook and also originally met Elena and Ryan on social media. As she was following their passage, she was well aware of the situation they were facing. Even with two-way texting communication, it became difficult to convey the fluid situation to *Skua*.

Jules explains, "Once I saw Guadeloupe close, I thought I should reach out to Jenny, in case she had not received that update. Not knowing how the situation would unfold in the world, I suggested to Jenny that she mention to *Skua* that they may want to consider making landfall in a location where they would want to be for hurricane season. Eventually, *Skua's* course was altered for Grenada.

"Not long after that, Grenada began implementing travel restrictions and MAYAG (the Marine and Yachting Association of Grenada) began asking if anyone knew of vessels making the Atlantic crossing with plans for landfall in Grenada. I notified Jenny, she got in contact with MAYAG and managed to get *Skua* and her crew on an approved list of pending arrivals for Grenada.

"A few days later, after Grenada confirmed their first case of COVID-19, the seaports shut down to all private yachts. I reached out to MAYAG to ask how that would affect vessels on the approved list. MAYAG stated the closure also included those vessels on the approved list and advised that *Skua* should change course for SVG. I communicated that to Jenny, she passed it on to *Skua*, and they altered course for Bequia."

When Jules contacted me from an unrelated Facebook post it was apparent that she and Jenny were trying to help fellow cruisers find a way to complete their passage. SVG already had one active COVID-19 case in quarantine, but their ports of entry remained open. However, restrictions were being put in place and the potential for closure was real. Time did not appear to be on *Skua's* side. I began e-mailing and texting Jules with any updates I could find.

Darcy and I continued to monitor the border status in SVG and everything appeared to be stable. Twenty-four hours prior to *Skua's* expected arrival, we visited the Bequia Customs and Immigration offices to discuss their arrival and to see if there were any changes that that *Skua* should be made aware of. Customs did not voice concerns, but as we provided *Skua's* information to Immigration the tone changed. *Skua* is a UK-flagged vessel and Ryan holds a UK passport, but Elena's passport is Italian. Immigration was very concerned with the situation in Italy, and suggested that *Skua* divert to another island. Our communication back to Jules was hard to write. *Skua* may again need to alter course for a new entry port with no assurance it would be open for their arrival. Jenny contacted *Skua* with the news and attempted to provide options, none of which were without potential problems in a rapidly evolving situation.

Elena summarized their crossing, the challenges they faced, the decisions they made, and their entrance to Bequia this way: "Our Atlantic crossing, which was our first-ever ocean crossing, went rather smoothly. The sailing hadn't been particularly difficult with only a dozen days of high winds and some squalls. Our wind vane did most of the work, leaving us to monitor the wind, sails, course and weather.

"Up until Day 15, we thought our main challenge would be our lack of sleep — being a light sleeper I had been struggling to sleep for more than one or two hours per night. On March 15th, we received news from Jenny that COVID-19 had reached the French Caribbean islands. From then on, our inReach started pinging more than 30 times a day. Jenny informed us, 160 characters at a time, about island closures day by day.

"First, the French islands closed their borders, then St. Lucia and Dominica. We altered course for Carriacou and then for Grenada, a safe haven for hurricane season. When Grenada closed its borders, Jenny reassured us that we'd be allowed in, as we were on a list of incoming boats crossing the Atlantic. However, as the first case of COVID-19 was found in Grenada, all yachts were told they would be denied entry upon arrival, regardless of their origin.

"We adjusted course for Bequia, and felt our hearts skip a beat every time the inReach pinged – had SVG closed its borders today? As darkness approached on the day before our arrival, we felt optimistic: all we needed to do was check in early in the morning, before any new restrictions may be implemented.

—Continued on next page



Left: Skua *and her crew, happily anchored in Bequia after their Atlantic crossing.*



Looks like lots of targets for transatlantic sailors, but one by one the island states started to close their borders.

Cruising Stations Help in a Crisis

by Joan Conover

This cruising season running up into the month of April 2020 was challenging for cruisers around the world. COVID-19's spread had the world's focus. With the rapid closure of borders and seaports, lock-downs and quarantines, or sudden denials of permission to enter, some vessels on passage were forced to change destinations or leave ports. Lucky ones found "shelter in place" harbors and stayed there.



Important ongoing efforts are being made by Jesse James in Trinidad.

As of this writing in early April, it continues to be a dynamic, "instant change" challenge for boats on passage to find a haven, or if forced out, another safe anchorage.

In the midst of all of this, groups of cruisers and marine businesses did what they could to help the cruising community. One group, the Seven Seas Cruising Association (SSCA), utilized the outreach of its members and its Cruising Station Host program to keep mariners informed, and kept centralized information sites for cruisers updated, regardless of membership or country affiliation. The SSCA helps where it can, as well as reaching out worldwide and sharing information with others.

The SSCA's COVID-19 effort has been nonstop since late December 2019, when hints of an epidemic flowed through the cruising community; messages began coming from Asia towards the Caribbean. Since then e-mails reporting vessel issues, illness, port status and new regulations have been received in the hundreds.

For the SSCA, Noonsite (www.noonsite.com) is the focal point for posting worldwide data inputs. For marina information mainly for United States waterways, information is sent to the Waterway Guide (www.waterwayguide.com). Other site links can be found at www.ssca.org. The SSCA HF Radio Station (KPK 8104 USB) supports the Caribbean, relaying messages from vessels, with Glenn Tuttle (www.boatwatch.org) being a key part. This unique effort to network on-the-ground and on-the-water reports, to research government orders that impact cruisers, and to use social media to collate data, has been and continues to be a tremendous effort by all involved.



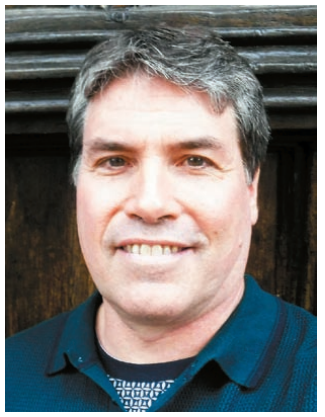
Above: In Cuba, Commodore Escrich receiving an SSCA award from member Addison Chan.

Below: Lee Miles provides information and assistance for cruisers in Colombia.



The SSCA has used its online database of members and cruising station hosts to provide reports about different countries' current yacht-entry status, and to answer questions. There are cruising station hosts scattered internationally. Some live aboard their yachts, and others are land-based with a maritime involvement. Key to the cruising station concept, a majority of hosts act as real-time information sources, a way to help SSCA member cruisers on their passages. In emergencies, such as the COVID-19 crisis, this cruising station system allows a unique outreach, and the cruising station hosts deserve tremendous recognition for their efforts.

Important ongoing efforts for the Caribbean include the information and assistance to cruisers provided by SSCA cruising station hosts. Particular thanks go to (in alphabetical order by country) Joe Karpinski in Antigua, Lee Miles and John Halley in Colombia, Commodore Escrich in Cuba, Denise Simpson and Michael Donovan in the Dominican Republic, Russ Goedjen in Panama, Jose Mendez in Puerto Rico, and Jesse James in Trinidad. Duncan Sweet in the Azores, Agustin Martin in the Canary Islands and Sey Samba in The Gambia provide an idea of issues affecting those sailing to or from the Caribbean. Other members and hosts have done the same in the Pacific and EU areas.



Chris Parker's inputs have been priceless over the past months.

As good examples, Russ Goedjen continues to communicate the rapid changes to the yacht entry regulations, Panama Canal transit status, and anchorages of Panama; and Jesse James has been diligent in keeping Caribbean cruisers informed in advance of changes in Trinidad & Tobago. Chris Parker of the Marine Weather Center *(www.mwxc.com)* has provided heads ups on emerging issues; his inputs have been priceless over the past months.

We give a thank you to the cruising community's "point of presence" volunteers in the Caribbean and outside for the continuing efforts to keep the cruising community aware.



At the SSCA HF Radio Station Glenn Tuttle plays a key part in relaying messages from vessels.

—Continued from previous page *When Islands...*

"As soon as the sun had set and we started seeing the glow of St. Vincent, the inReach pinged. It was Jenny: 'Little hiccup: John talked to Immigration and when they heard that there is an Italian national aboard they said 'potential no entry.' My heart sank. If Italian citizens weren't allowed into the Grenadines, what options did we have left?

"The last 12 hours of the crossing were the longest. We spent the whole night trying to think of a solution and we agreed that trying to check into SVG was worth a shot. We were confident we were COVID-19 free after spending 25 days at sea and having a clean travel history.

"After an endless night, we saw St. Vincent and Bequia on the horizon, and we made it into Admiralty Bay in the early morning. We had a shower and collected all the evidence we had of our travel history and proof that I was a British resident, but with an Italian passport. The Prime Minister was to make an official statement that night, and we worried it would be to announce the closure of SVG's borders.

"Ryan dressed in his wedding clothes — a light blue shirt and grey jeans — to look as respectable as possible. We grabbed all our evidence and jumped in the dinghy. Ryan tried to check us in, but the Immigration official refused us entry. Ryan tried to appeal to him, but he was firm. A Customs official decided to stop and listen to our case. Ryan explained our situation and mentioned that we understood that they were trying to protect their citizens, but that we wouldn't put the local people at risk — we were trying to gain entry only because we were sure we were COVID-19-free. The kind Customs officer told Ryan to e-mail over all evidence we had of our travel history and that he'd show it to a health official before giving us an answer. A couple of hours later, we were given the okay to check in. [*Editor's note: As of February 27th, all persons arriving in SVG from Italy had been required to be quarantined for 14 days, but although Elena holds an Italian passport, her proven travel history made it clear that she had not been in Italy recently and could enter without quarantine. As this issue of* Compass *goes to press, however, nearly all arrivals in SVG must complete 14 days' quarantine regardless of travel history.*] Ryan went back to the Customs and Immigration offices and was gone for a long time before he came back in the dinghy waving an SVG courtesy flag. I danced all around *Skua* as we raised it up to the starboard spreader.

"We feel like the luckiest people on Earth — we were able to make landfall on a stunning Caribbean island. We're so grateful to the Bequia people for accepting us into their wonderful country and we hope we can pay them back by adding our modest spending budget to their economy. We're looking forward to tasting the local food — the rum punch on arrival was great. Thanks to Jenny, Jules, John and Darcy for the shore support, which was fundamental to making our decisions day to day."

One by one the Caribbean islands were disappearing before them. But in a time of need a cruiser will always come to another's assistance. Satellite communication, a clear chain of communication, and social media played key roles in providing *Skua* with information. MAYAG has been a wonderful resource, being a liaison between the Government of Grenada and the cruising community.

And lastly, St. Vincent & the Grenadines Customs and Immigration deserve to be congratulated by taking the time to review and understand *Skua's* situation. While protecting the health of their citizens they also realized that granting *Skua* clearance would not endanger their citizens.

I'm sitting in the cockpit of *Kindred Spirit* watching *Skua* sway gently at anchor behind us. Elena and Ryan continue to rest after their crossing, appreciating the safe harbor Bequia has provided them. As with the other cruisers in the harbor, they too are minimizing their time on shore. This virus storm will clear and *Skua* will be able to venture out to visit and appreciate the rest of the beautiful people and islands of St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Their story is properly framed in the strong maritime history of Bequia. "Bequia Sweet" indeed.

[Editor's note: Shortly after Skua arrived in late March, Bequia and the other ports of entry in the Grenadines were closed to yachts, but yachts can still clear into SVG on St. Vincent at Wallilabou, Kingstown and Blue Lagoon. As of this writing, nearly all arrivals must complete 14 days' quarantine.]

John and Darcy Dillon are liveaboard cruisers on their Jeanneau 45DS Kindred Spirit*, currently at anchor in Bequia as they ride out the COVID-19 storm.*

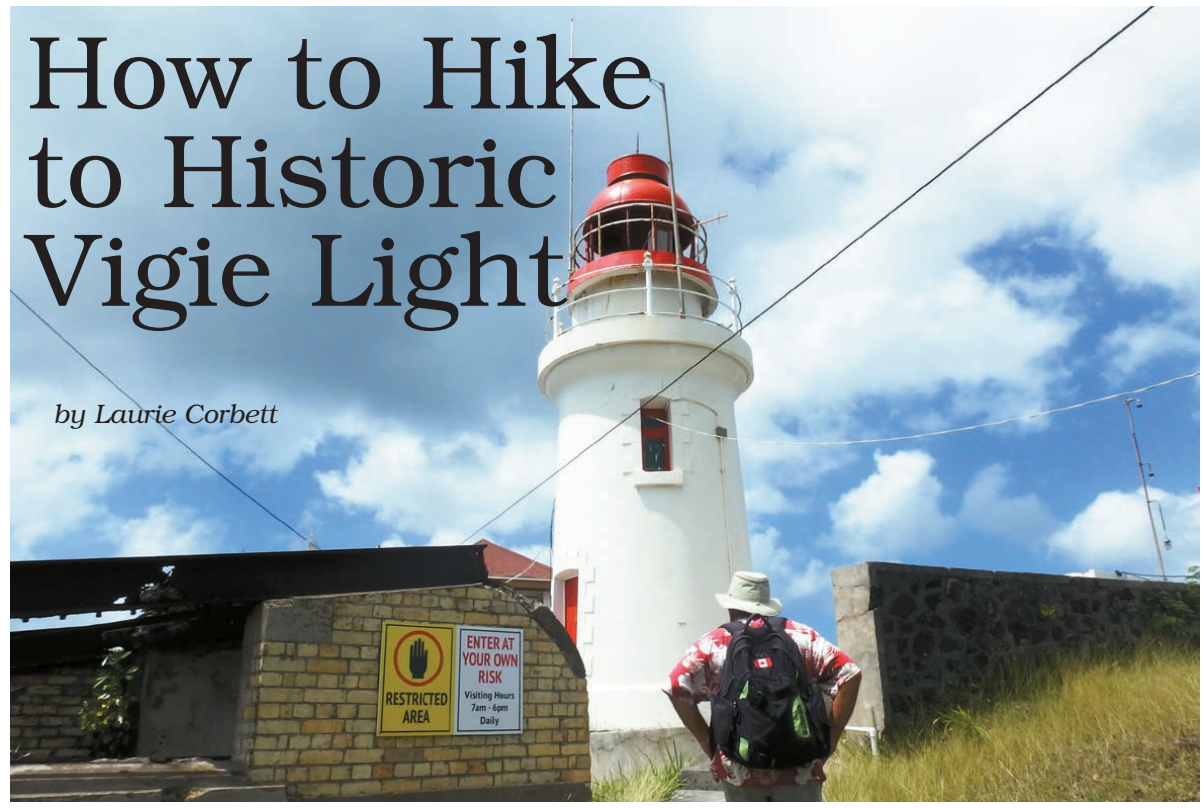


WILFRED DEDERER

Admiralty Bay, Bequia

How to Hike to Historic Vigie Light

by Laurie Corbett



THE hike to Vigie Light is one of our favourites in St. Lucia. Vigie means "lookout post" in French, and that is what it is, overlooking the entrance to Castries Harbour, the George FL Charles Airport runway, and the Caribbean Sea. Although the hill is not high or steep, it has vertical cliffs on all sides that fall to the sea and a gentle slope from the isthmus that connects it to the mainland. A flattened cone makes up the top, where we find the lookout post and the lighthouse.



Above: The lower Meadows Battery ruins suggest it was a placement for one large swivel gun.

Right: The hike to Vigie Light is one of our favourites in St. Lucia.

Here is how to enjoy it, if you are looking for a way to stretch your legs and mind.

Just outside the entrance to Rodney Bay Marina, cross the highway and catch a bus going towards Castries. And ask the driver to let you off by the airport round-about. Keep an eye on the traffic as you slip through it to the end of the runway, and start walking up the seaward side of the runway to the airport terminal. Traffic drops to near zero soon after the walk starts. Note the significant cemetery on your right, as well as a pretty beach. Also note the six lunch spots and the public washrooms in the beachside building opposite the terminal entrance.

The first right on the way up the hill takes you to the foot of a tall, failed hotel. You can save this for last, if at that point, you still feel undeserving of a stop. It is an interesting structure, and at least some people are using it to live in.

Carry on up the hill until you come to the Grand Road intersection. On the way, you will notice that Vigie is connected to the main part of the island by a narrow isthmus that includes the end of the airport runway and the road you are using. The runway ends abruptly at the edge of the narrow entrance to Castries Harbour. You will next notice numerous large yellow brick buildings. These were barracks constructed by the British around 1891, and apparently renovated in 1941 for use during the Second World War. Large and numerous, they once housed various grades of enlisted men, married and unmarried, and separated by race. Locals insist that the brick was accumulated here as ballast from ships which were under-laden coming from England to St. Lucia to pick up produce and goods, but I could not verify that. Now these former barracks house international embassies and government offices. See if you can spot all the embassies.

Turn right, and spiral up the mountain, following the signs to Vigie Light. On your right, another barracks is now the home of an all-male Catholic secondary school called St. Mary's College, teaching uniformed young adults. There is another children's school on the hill as well. It provides life-skill training to special needs kids.

Follow the signs and climb up to the hilltop, past an obvious old water reservoir to the lighthouse. Enjoy the view, but do not leave without taking a moment to chat with the radio-man on duty in the hexagonal building. Presently four men — Gabriel, Eric, Aron, and William — ensure that the office is always working. These men own the voices one hears on VHF radio Channel 16 that refer to themselves as "Vigie Light." Their job involves coordinating the almost continuous marine traffic entering and exiting this busy harbour with the planes that use the airspace over the narrow entrance. (A large regional airplane flying into a cruise ship would make for a very bad day, so don't be a distraction when they're busy!) The man on duty during one of our hikes remembers a day when there were six cruise ships in the harbour, and two more outside sending passengers in.

Also note, among the weeds, the remains of fortifications sticking out to command air and sea around the hill.

You get to see many of the sights in reverse order as you make your way back down to the Grand Road intersection. Once there, continue along on the right until you get a good view of the runway on the isthmus to Vigie. This was the site of a vicious battle. The British navy and army, leaving the occupation of Philadelphia in the spring of 1778, became embroiled in the British-French battles in the Caribbean. After the French attacked British and neutral islands, the British forces were ordered to retaliate with an attack on St. Lucia. They captured Vigie, and the French Navy and troops arrived from Martinique with what should have been overwhelming forces. They attempted a land battle with the British, and the British displayed the new knowledge they had as a result of their experiences in North America. As well, the British had time to install proper cannon to protect the narrow isthmus to Vigie. The French, attacking across the isthmus, using the traditional European style of linear formations, were terribly chewed up, with 400 men lost and 1200 wounded, as compared to the British 13 killed and 158 wounded. Indeed, the terrible destruction of the French on the battlefield actually demoralized some of the British troops. For a better description of this battle, see https://allthingsliberty.com/2016/02/the-battle-of-vigie-peninsula





Left: The cemetery next to the air strip contains grave-markers for some of the victims of the German U-boat attack during World War II.

Right: The former barracks now house international embassies and government offices.

You can now carry on with a pretty walk until you come to a ruin. As the sign says, these were the Married Women's Quarters, and they are deteriorating fast. Enjoy walking around this site, and the utility buildings down the hill from it, but please note — stay safe from falling masonry!

When you return to the road and carry on to the turn, you have the choice to turn left and follow a grassy road to a tunnel that leads to what is referred to as the Lower Battery. The ruins suggest that it was a concrete placement for one large swivel gun.

—Continued on next page

Take a Walk on the Wild Side:

Montreal Gardens, St. Vincent

SAILORS' HIKES BY CHRIS DOYLE



CHRIS DOYLE

Time for a break from sand and sea? Head for the hills of St. Vincent and immerse yourself in beautiful 'controlled jungle'

This article was first published in the April 2014 issue of Compass. *We'll be bringing you "blasts from the past throughout this, our Silver Jubilee Year.*

Given the excessive fertility of the wet tropical climate, it is surprising that there are not more public gardens on the larger islands of the Lesser Antilles.

The good ones we have include Jardin de Balata in Martinique, Jardin Botanique de Deshaies in Guadeloupe, the Botanical Garden of Nevis, and the National Botanical Garden on St. Vincent. By far the best at this time, in my opinion, is the seven-acre Montreal Gardens in St. Vincent. At EC$10 per person to visit, it is also a bargain.

These gardens lie at the head of the Mesopotamia Valley, a rich agricultural area, where it is tucked close to the central mountain range, which adds drama to many a view. The gardens are beautifully designed with winding paths, bridges, steps, a tunnel and a river. I have visited and loved this garden for many years. It was lovely in the early years, but this year it seems to have reached its apogee and I was completely blown away on my most recent visit by its intense exuberant wildness.

Gardening is a matter of controlling and orchestrating nature, selecting plants and providing a garden architecture that is appealing and, if done right, becomes a work of art. Most gardens tend to be somewhat formal: the plants well pruned and trimmed and neatly laid out. Tim Vaughn's genius has been to back off on the pruning and control over much of his garden and let the nature of his plants run riot. This has created a kind of controlled garden jungle — a riot of colors, leaf shapes and spectacular growth. The effect is breathtaking, like a visit to some fairytale land where you can, for an hour or two, feel like Alice in Wonderland strolling around in awe of the beauty. In the wilder parts, plants are allowed to encroach on the paths so you find yourself brushing though the vegetation, which adds to the experience, though if you come on a rainy day you might get a trifle damp.

The garden also has formal areas with lawns and careful order against a backdrop of wild rainforest-clad mountains.

This is not a place to rush, and it is a great place to bring a picnic lunch; several seating areas covered by roofs are tucked away among the leaves. The only sounds are rustling leaves, running water and birdsong. It rates as the number one attraction in St. Vincent on TripAdvisor, which is quite surprising as the visitor load is light and many cruise ship tour operators seem oblivious to its existence. (The current state of the narrow, winding road leading there might deter the big tour buses.)

Montreal Gardens is open from December to August, Monday to Friday from 0900 to 1600. The closest anchorage is Blue Lagoon. For those anchored in Bequia, it's possible to take the ferry to Kingstown, proceed from there, and get back the same day. I have usually gone to the Montreal Gardens in friends' cars or taken a taxi, but the more adventurous can take buses from Kingstown to the village of Richland Park, which is within hiking range. If you have a group, ask any of the local taxi drivers or tour companies about a rate.

For more information visit www.montrealestgdns.f9.co.uk.

—Continued from previous page

How to Hike...

Once you have a good look around, retrace your steps to the top, and find the upper Meadows Battery. The stamp in the concrete suggests 1898, and this is likely the construction date for the Lower Battery as well. The gun placements also seem to be for bolted swivel guns, but the 1898 guns may have been something else.

The men on guard at these posts on March 23rd, 1940, missed the 77-metre long German submarine *U-161* as it sneaked into the harbour, possibly behind a fishing boat. Her torpedoes quickly sank two vessels tied to the dock: the 7,970-ton Canadian passenger/freight ship *Lady Nelson*, and the 8,141-ton British freighter *Umtata*. On their way back out, the submarine was subjected only to some machine-gun fire from the two headlands. The *Lady Nelson* lost 15 passengers and three crew, but was refloated, became a Canadian hospital ship, carried out 30 crossings of the Atlantic and brought 25,000 wounded Canadians home. The *Umtata* lost four crew, but was also raised, and was on her way to Florida two years later for renovation, only to succumb to another torpedo northwest of Key West.

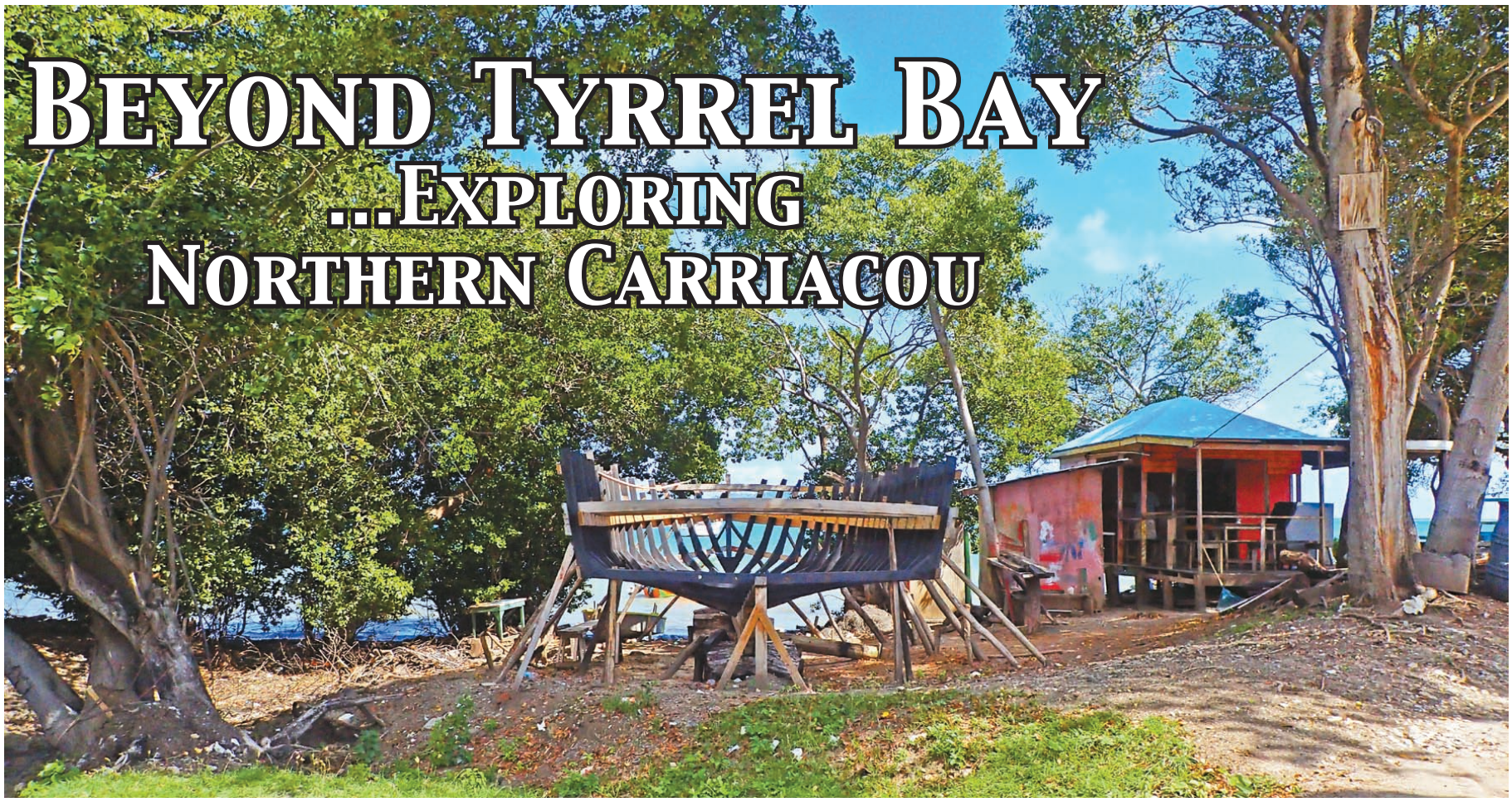
On your way back to the Grand Road intersection, you will pass the St. Lucia National Archives. The staff are very welcoming, and can show you numerous items of interest including a 1945 map of the Vigie site with all the buildings and barracks; a book called *Saint Lucia Historic Sites* by Robert J. Devaux written for the St. Lucia National Trust; another book, *A History of St. Lucia* by Jolien Harmsen, Guy Ellis, Robert Devaux; and a file about the U-Boat 161 incident with first-hand descriptions of the action. A picture of Pigeon Island taken before the island was connected to St. Lucia by the causeway that now houses the Sandals resort looks over the reading room. Surely, a complete day here would be worthwhile if one knew what to look for, and the friendly staff have numerous suggestions.

Now, it is surely time for lunch. You can choose a quaint shop under one of the embassies on the side street, or carry on down the hill to enjoy the beach restaurants.

On your way back to the bus stop, take the time to notice that a section of the graveyard is a war cemetery. Among other graves and monuments, you can pay homage to prominent military grave-markers for some of the *U-161* victims who were not repatriated, including four for the crewmembers of the *Umtata* with distinctively Islamic markings.

Carry on back to the bus stop, and enjoy a ride back to the marina.

Beyond Tyrrel Bay ...Exploring Northern Carriacou



The village of Windward is the traditional boatbuilding capital of Carriacou.

by Lexi Fisher

Carriacou holds a special place in my heart. I remember holidays as a child with my family in Harvey Vale, the village on the shore of Tyrell Bay, in a small collection of guesthouse cottages that are now, coincidentally, my home and office. We spent most of our time on the beach across the street, building sandcastles, snorkeling, and marveling at the bioluminescence that illuminated the waterline at night. I remember always being at ease with the quietness and simplicity of life here. Perhaps



that's why, nearly two decades later, after I had met my partner during our dive instructor training on the island, the choice to build our lives together in Carriacou was an obvious one.

After more than three years on an island of less than 13 square miles, we are still discovering pockets that are timeless and breathtaking in their raw, natural beauty. Most recently, we took a day trip to the northern end of the island and to the village of Windward, the traditional boatbuilding capital of Carriacou, to take photos and notes to include in the 2021-2022 edition of the *Cruising Guide to the Windward Islands*.

We were already regular visitors to Windward, but the main draw had always been Pizza Meh Heart. Affectionately known as Teena's, this pizzeria is in a cute traditional wooden building perched on a small hillside overlooking the main road and the sea beyond, and worth the 30-minute drive from Tyrell Bay. Teena, originally from Colorado, has been in Carriacou long enough to be considered a local. She serves both slices and whole pizzas, hot from the pizza oven, for lunch and dinner every day but Tuesday, when she gives the hardworking staff a worthy break.

The village of Windward is scattered along a coastal road that overlooks a broad, shallow bay. Beyond the barrier reef, Petite Martinique and Petit St. Vincent (PSV) sit quietly. The entrance to the anchorage is sometimes marked, but the marks are unreliable and entry is best when aided by local knowledge. With good weather and good visibility, it is possible for boats with less than a six-foot draft to eyeball their way in — with caution.

If you visit Windward by car (which is worthwhile), the adventure actually starts at Princess Royal Hospital, just north of Hillsborough. Perched atop the hill in Belair, it boasts one of the best and most accessible views on the island. From here we could see the entire southern part of Carriacou and the offshore islands of Isle de Ronde. On a clear day, the outline of Grenada looms in the distance.

From the hospital we traveled towards the coast past one of Carriacou's signposted historical sites: an old windmill once used to crush sugar cane.

The windward coastal road is dry and ragged, perched between sheer ocean cliffs and windswept shrubs. It left us with no doubts about the power of the ocean.

Ningo Well, another signposted historical site, is nearby and dates back to the 1740s. Huge and oval, it is a stark reminder of the horrors of slavery. It was built by enslaved people and then used to produce indigo dye, a process that released toxic fumes and resulted in many deaths.

On the same road is Tibeau Cemetery, set between a dramatic landscape of bare and twisted manchineel trees and crashing waves. Presumably due to a combination of erosion and sea level rise, many gravesites and their adjoining tombstones are now in the surf. The oldest gravestone we found was dated 1757. It is an active cemetery, so be respectful when visiting.

On the other side of Windward is the Petit Carenage beach (also known as Lilet). The Sanctuary and Nature Trail offer an easy walk, great for bird watching. It was dry when we went, but can be muddy and buggy in the rainy season, when insect repellant is a must. The path is well signposted and goes south past mud flats, a tidal pool, and an area of mangrove restoration, up a birdwatching tower, and onward to a mangrove nursery project. We followed the beach north to find a gazebo that houses information on the hawksbill and leatherback sea turtles that nest on the beach between March and August. Peak nesting season is June, when leatherbaTck and hawksbill nesting activities overlap on the same beaches.

Left: The point at Petit Carenage.

Below: Many tombstones at Tibeau Cemetery are now in the surf.



At the north end of Petit Carenage is Carriacou's northern headland, Gun Point. It is technically part of St. Vincent & the Grenadines — the line of latitude that divides Grenada and SVG runs just north of Petite Martinique, but cuts off a hundred feet or so of Gun Point. This was an easy hike through cacti and scrub (sturdy shoes are recommended). To get there, we followed the main road to just before the cutback at the top of the hill.

—Continued on next page

LOOK OUT FOR...

Waxing Poetic about Wax Apples

by Lynn Kaak



The delicate and delicious wax apple, also known as the plumrose, pomerac, java apple or maybe water apple, was brought to the Caribbean from Malaysia before the Second World War. Like many fruits called "apple" in the tropics, the name bears more testimony to the utter lack of originality of the English-speaking residents than it does to the nature of the fruit. The shape of the fruit is more pear-like, and the extremely thin (and edible) skin has absolutely no similarity to the hide of, say, a Red Delicious.

The fruits can vary in colour from light green with pink tinges to a bright red or even purple in some species. In the Caribbean, expect to find the greenish-pink ones, and occasionally the more red ones. The whole fruit, except for the single seed, or pit, is edible. The refreshing white flesh is juicy and has a satisfying crunch, with a sweet, delicate, almost floral flavour. It is eaten out of hand, or often used in fruit salads and compotes.

The "apples" are roughly two to three inches wide and high. While commercially grown in orchards in the Indian Ocean basin, around the Caribbean the trees tend to be found in home gardens and farms, or on old plantation grounds. The trees can be prolific in producing fruit if the conditions are right, and rarely will someone with a tree on their property tell you that you can't have any; usually "help yourself" is the response. A five-year-old tree can produce around 700 fruit, so there is plenty to go around, and then some. You'll see wax apples for sale in farmer's markets and sometimes along the roadside — vendors along Bay Street in Kingstown, St. Vincent often have an abundance. Eat when ripe; they don't keep particularly well.

As long as it is in a tropical area with a moderate dry season, the *Szygium samarangense* will happily grow with little to no intervention from humans. No high altitudes or cool temperatures will be tolerated. The trees grow five to 15 metres tall (16 to 50 feet) with a short trunk and a wide crown. The bark is a pinkish-gray with a tendency to flake. The wood is quite hard, but has a coarseness that does not lend itself to fine woodwork; it might be found in the construction of basic huts in same areas, but is not sought after. The fruit is the only real use, unless one wants the tree for its ornamental value. The leaves are large, which would be nice for shade if the branches didn't start so low on the tree. With early pruning, it should be possible to make a shade tree out of it.

The flowers are also plentiful, as makes sense with the wax apple's profligate fruit production. The blossoms grow in clumps of five to 30, generally at the end of branches, or where leaves have fallen off. At roughly two centimetres wide, they aren't large, but their fringe of stamens makes them look much larger than they really are. These yellowish-white to bright pink flowers are extremely attractive to bees. The scent they produce is also a nice touch — almost as delicious as the fruit!

—Continued from previous page *...Northern Carriacou*

The path starts to the left of the large pale-yellow house. Steep at first, it quickly flattens out. The path is unmarked and difficult to follow at parts, but the shrubs are generally low enough that it was easy to see what direction we were traveling in. We found an old rusted cannon among a lovely variety of cacti on the northern tip of the point, with a spectacular view of northern Carriacou and Union Island.

It wasn't part of our visit on this particular day, but if you continue driving around to the leeward side of the island (on a rough dirt road) you will come to the trailhead for High North, Carriacou's highest peak. It is a moderate to difficult hike, and takes about two hours. The trail is signposted, but to get the most out of the experience, hire a nature guide (see below).



The KIDO foundation maintains the conservation efforts and nature trails at Petit Carenage and High North. They train guides for High North hiking and wildlife watching, Petit Carenage nesting sea turtle watching, mangrove planting and restoration carbon-offset tours, and bird watching. Nature guides can be contacted through the Carriacou Tourism Office in Hillsborough (+1-473-443-7948).

Farther down the road is the path to Anse La Roche. A moderate hike, it has a nice view of Union and takes about half an hour to reach the beach. The anchorage at Anse La Roche is a short sail from Hillsborough and is a great lunch stop. Tim Garraway has built a small restaurant and beach bar here, though there is controversy over how it will affect sea turtle nesting.

If this all sounds like too much work and you are just looking for a great meal, Bogles Round House is nearby, and is one of our favorite places for a romantic dinner. It is a one-minute walk from the main bus route, or you can anchor off Bogles (Sparrow Bay) and dinghy ashore, swells permitting. If you have a group of six or more they will provide free transportation from Hillsborough or Tyrrel Bay, or you can take a taxi. The setting is almost magical, with its domed white ceiling and circular windows made from old wagon wheels and industrial machinery. A beautifully finished old tree trunk sits upright in the center, with one of its stubs shaped like a cow's head and adorned with a bell. Roxanne, the chef and owner, whips up a delicious fusion of Caribbean and International flavors, and never disappoints. She bakes her own bread and makes fresh homemade ice cream as well. Dinners are elegant, and they sometimes serve more casual lunches (call ahead to make sure they will be open). It is a popular place, so dinner reservations are recommended (+1-473-443-7841).

So, the next time you are in Carriacou, don't forget to go beyond Tyrrel Bay and Hillsborough and include a trip to the northern part of the island. Be careful though, it may just capture your heart, like it did mine.

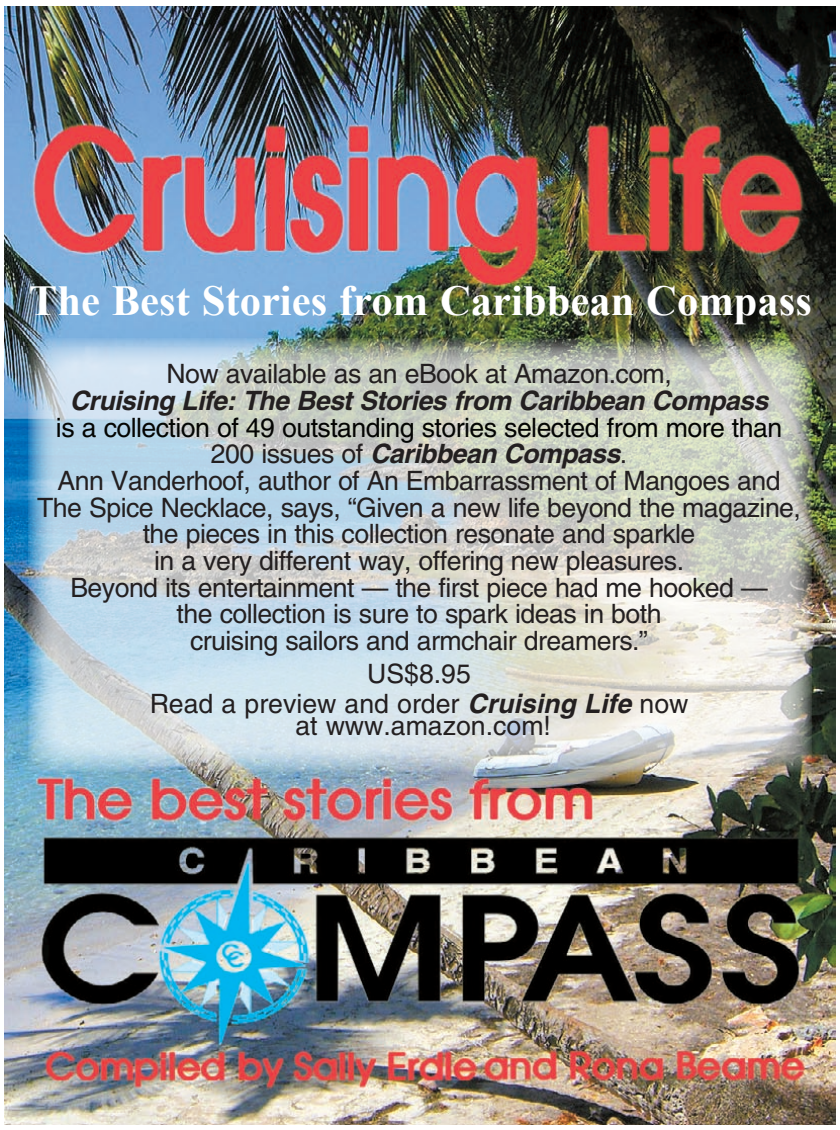


Above: Windward Village

Left: The Nature Trail offers an easy walk, great for bird watching.

Below: Beyond the barrier reef, Petite Martinique and Petit St. Vincent (PSV) sit quietly.







BOOK REVIEW BY NICOLA CORNWELL

Sailing Through Strange Times of Uncertainty

Without a Country: Sailing to Sanctuary, *by Christopher Berry. Self-published ©2019, 280 pages, ISBN 9781640104529*

I'm going to start this with a disclaimer: I know Chris Berry. Met him on a Rum Shop Tour (as you do) in Bequia and if ever there is a movie made from this book, he's got the props to play a leading man role: tall, dark, handsome, funny, charming, etcetera. Though perhaps I should mention he has an equally glamorous cool and groovy wife. I wanted to hate them both. Tried hard. Failed. But I digress, this is a book review, not a fangirl site. However, the "Hollywood flava" resonates, as the premise of this book of fiction, the first from Berry's fledgling pen, is the stuff of blockbuster movies — that is, the end of the world as we know it.

Blimey, is the man psychic too?

Now, under the current pandemic circumstances, there may be some of you out there who think this has already happened, so perhaps this is a timely, not to mention somewhat eerily prescient, book to read as you wait and sit in self isolation. The good news is Berry's apocalypse is the beginning not the end of the story. The bad news is the shit really hits the fan. The enemy is a virus, but of the computer variety rather than one of Mother Nature's fiendish creations. A clever bit of nerdy reverse engineering leads to a terrorist cyber attack on America's financial institutions, which causes a meltdown of epic proportions. A chartered financial analyst in LBS (life before sailing), Berry lays out a freakish but just about plausible scenario which makes one wonder what other devious things he was plotting at his desk back in the day.

Our heroes in this brave new world are two couples and a biggish cruising yacht called *Temerity*. The story revolves around their realization that things will never be the same again and the only way forward is to sail off to another life in another place (sound familiar?). Manly, capable Hank and his spunky wife Abby join forces with best friends and sailing newbies Luis and Olivia in a buddy-up tale of untethered life on the high seas searching for a future.

"They were lost in their individual thoughts: Abby thinking of her father and his foresight to provide them with the ability to escape, and Hank thinking about the weather and the forecasted wind shift. Together they sailed away from a country they no longer recognized as their own. 'We're without a country now,' Hank said, mostly to himself."

Along their way south they encounter pretty much anything you may have been asked about by curious (clueless?) landlubbers or encountered yourselves. A veritable gamut. Pirates, storms, officious Customs and Immigration officers, dodgy fellow cruisers, careless container ships, annoying relatives on board, challenges with provisioning, broken watermakers, the scourge of dirty diesel, arguments about navigation and yes, murder most horrid. Berry pretty much throws everything into the mix. There's even a bit of meaningless sex on the side.

On the downside, this means that while the premise for this book is good, the narrative and character development is a little shallow; as in most standard Hollywood blockbusters the action continues aplenty and at breakneck speed. There are also a few typos and self-publishing print glitches along the way, like "healing" not 'heeling" over, but one can always blame that on autocorrect spellcheck.

On the upside, as sailors, in similar fashion to what I know we all do when we're sitting safely dug into the harbour with a fresh sundowner in hand as we watch another vessel come in and drop the hook, we can get our "judgey pants" on and totally critique the decisions that are made on board (and don't lie, I know you miss doing that right now). There are simply boatloads of things you can decide you would or wouldn't have done in the same situation. In this respect Christopher Berry pretty much always lays out the logic for the decisions made by the characters in the book, leaving it perfectly poised for you to agree/disagree to your heart's content. Surely a bonus you don't usually get from your regular reading material, unless you're prone to picking on Chris Doyle.

"Hank decided on the spot; they would hand steer the boat much of the time and only use the autopilot to give the crew some relief when necessary…" "Can you run the numbers and tell me what our electrical usage will be if we do the stuff you mentioned and only use the autopilot, say four hours a day and the chart plotter and radar, say only two hours a day when sailing. And then what will our range be with the remaining fuel?"

So if you're bored with Facebook, hate jigsaw puzzles, have cleaned the bilges so much they're good enough to eat off and are looking for a novel that sails a bit close to the wind as regards these strange times of uncertainty, look no further than this one. Might make you mull things over.

This book is available on Amazon.com and can be found on Kindle Unlimited (free), Kindle (US$2.99) and paperback (US$9.99).

Nicola Cornwell sails on the Carriacou sloop Exodus.



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!

May							
DATE	TIME		21	1102		10	0445
1	1910		22	1148		11	0531
2	2003		23	1236		12	0613
3	2006		24	1327		13	0654
4	2149		25	1421		14	0735
5	2241		26	1516		15	0815
6	2336		27	1611		16	0858
7	0000	FULL MOON	28	1706		17	0942
8	0032		29	1758		18	1030
9	0120		30	1850		19	1120
10	0229		31	1940		20	1214
11	0327		**June**			21	1310
12	0423		1	2031		22	1406
13	0516		2	2123		23	1502
14	0606		3	2313		24	1555
15	0652		4	0000	FULL MOON	25	1647
16	0735		5	0011		26	1738
17	0817		6	0110		27	1827
18	0857		7	0209		28	1917
19	0938		8	0305		29	2008
20	1019		9	0357		30	2102

Hands Across the Sea: Boaters Bring Books to Caribbean Schools

by Chris Doyle

I am happy to say that for many years more than a few yachting people have helped bring children's books to the Eastern Caribbean. Years ago, Ann-Wallis White, a charter agent, would send them down on charter boats. An organization called Boaters for Books, which included Kathy and Dick Oberle and Melodye and John Pompa from the yacht *Second Millennium* (founders of the Caribbean Safety and Security radio net), did the same.

Wonderful though these efforts were, we have come to a new and much more professional approach with Hands Across the Sea, Inc. The founders, Harriet and Tom ("TL") Linskey, make a trip down the islands each year on their cat, *Hands Across the Sea*. You may well have seen it at anchor.



Entrepot Secondary School is the winner of the Hands Literacy Award for St. Lucia this year (hence the banner and smiles). The prize is US$1,000 worth of the books or literacy materials of their choice.

The idea, for them, took root many years ago when sailing the Pacific and noticing the paucity of reading materials in the lovely islands they visited. Previously, Harriet came from a corporate career and TL was a sailmaker, and then senior editor of *SAIL* magazine for eight years. The project came together for them in the Caribbean when they visited Union Island in the Grenadines and met with the principal of Stephanie Browne Primary School, who had managed to create a school library. It was a great effort, but she had to work with what she could get, which were often very old adult-level books. Seeing the need, Harriet and TL got to work. The Hands Across the Sea charity was born, and it has grown fruitfully over the years. Like others in this field, they started with secondhand books — I remember years ago getting all our friends to give us their used children's books to send down-island.

After a couple of years, the Linskeys realized that second-hand books were not good enough. The rather random selection could not be targeted; the people in the books were nearly all white, whereas most of the school kids were black; and the content was not always appropriate for the Caribbean culture. So they decided to get new books, which meant it was easy to send the same packages to all the schools. They negotiated with publishers, who came on board to help. They now work with the independent island nations in the Eastern Caribbean which were once British colonies. Hands Across the Sea is a registered US non-profit charity, making it possible for those in the US to give donations tax-free.

Hands Across the Sea works with local schools, mainly primary schools and remedial reading programs in secondary schools. While sending books is good, distribution and coordination in the islands is paramount, so they enlisted a team of retired educators who represent them. They are called the Literacy Link Team, and what a great team they have: in Antigua, Hyacinth Gonsalves-Barriero and Vernest Mack; in Dominica, Giselle Laurent and Lize Bardouille; in St. Lucia, Clara Paul and Sheila Serville; in St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Enna Bullock and Yvette Pompey; and in Grenada, Gloria Bonaparte and Bernadette John. Hands Across the Sea supplies the Literacy Link team members with the materials (videos and PowerPoint presentations) and the team members run teacher-training programs and student librarian programs. Hands Across the Sea also worked with the US Peace Corps to create a library manual for schools, and they work with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) on teacher education.

I personally miss the days where we would pester our friends for used children's books and have boxes of them sitting the garage awaiting collection, and others miss carrying boxes of books aboard when bound for the islands. But that was about us, and this is about the kids. The way Hands Across the Sea is operating now gets more new books to more children on more islands. So many books are now sent that they travel by cargo ship. Over the years Hands Across the Sea have shipped half a million books to about 400 schools and reached 125,000 children.

I met Harriet and TL recently in St. Lucia during the coronavirus scare. They had visited most islands but were not proceeding to St. Vincent and Grenada as the schools were all closed. Not really a problem: they and their team have for a long time been using Zoom for individual and group conferences. Maybe a lesson for the way things will be run in the future.

For more information, visit www.handsacrossthesea.net or www.facebook.com/handsacrossthesea.net

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The Sky from Mid-May to Mid-June

by Jim Ulik

"Step right up, step right up, step right up. You got it, buddy — the large print giveth and the small print taketh away."
— from *Step Right Up* by Tom Waits

The 110th anniversary of Earth passing through the tail of Halley's Comet occurs this month. In 1910 people believed that the approaching comet had toxic cyanogen gas streaming from its tail. Headlines like "Comet may kill all Earth life" were common. Charlatans would offer anti-comet pills, anti-comet umbrellas, gas masks or space on a submarine to escape the comet's gas. At least one business marketed properties in Hawaii that would offer a prime view of Halley's Comet.

A comet discovered just in December 2019 is becoming more visible as it approaches the Sun. The comet named C/2019 Y4 (Atlas) will become more apparent during the predawn hours toward the end of May. As expected, posts are already associating this comet with the COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus). Claims by celebrities with false virus cures such as drinking a silver solution or using a special toothpaste abound. While not as dramatic as Halley's Comet, this could prove to be the brightest comet in the last 20 years.

"We are buried beneath the weight of information, which is being confused with knowledge."
— Tom Waits

Saturday, May 16th

After midnight you can find Jupiter and Saturn still hanging together in the night sky. Below Jupiter and Saturn you will find Mars continuing its progression eastward. Last night the Moon appeared close to Mars but tonight it has shifted a few degrees towards the east.

Monday, May 18th

Throughout the last month Jupiter and Saturn have shared the same area of the sky. Jupiter is positioned on the edge of Sagittarius while Saturn sits on the nose of Capricornus. Look for the pair to rise above the eastern horizon around 2300 hours. Tonight is when the two planets reach their closest apparent approach. It may be hard to notice but over the next few weeks they are slowly separating.

Tuesday, May 19th

This day marks the 110th anniversary of the anticipated apocalypse of Earth as it passes through the tail of Halley's Comet. A photo caption from *Pearson's Magazine* (March 1910) placed below an image of environmental devastation stated, "If a comet were to sweep along the outer fringe of Earth's atmosphere, so tremendous would be the gale attending its progress that a vast tornado would be caused. It would take trees, houses, trains and ships in its embrace and probably devastate one complete hemisphere." The world was supposed to end with the comet's passing, so some people committed suicide. Periodicals publishing this information got the audience's attention even though the potential for damage and destruction caused by a comet passing Earth was unproven. Not unlike some current media outlets, the people quoted or interviewed for information were the extremists.

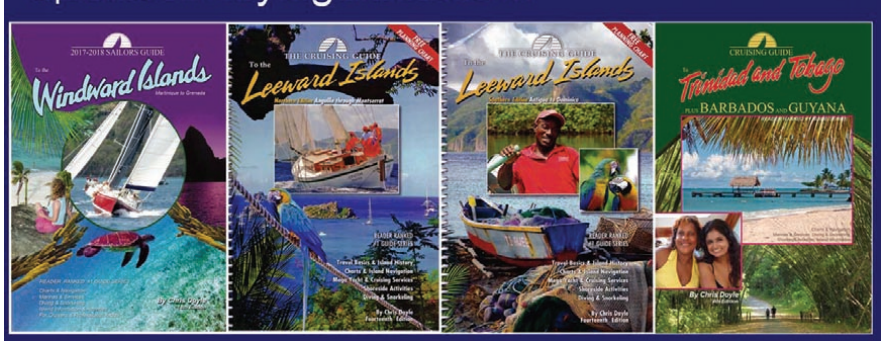
Other publications such as *The Perrysburg Journal* used the view of the majority of scientists to inform their readers. The paper's description was colorful and accurate. It read, "There is as little danger in that collision as there is in colliding with the odoriferous particles emanating from the highly perfumed dress of a person that has crossed the sidewalk a few seconds before you arrived on that spot."

—Continued on next page



Appearance of the Great Comet of 1811, view from the quai de la Vallée. Anonymous engraving. Paris, Musée Carnavalet.

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—*Continued from previous page*

After the passing of Halley's Comet a headline of an article in *The Garland Globe* stated, "Earth Passes Through the Tail of Halley's Comet Like a Cannonball and Old Earth No Worse; No Better; No Wiser."

Thursday, May 21st

As dusk approaches, Orion the hunter slowly sinks into the west. This constellation, a familiar sight during the winter season, is ending its transit of the night sky. Those who were anticipating seeing Betelgeuse explode will have to wait. The dimming of the red supergiant was a potential precursor to it going supernova. However, Betelgeuse is gradually returning to its normal state of brightness. We will have to wait until the early morning hours of mid-July to again view this well-known star. Just north of Orion after sunset is a close approach of Venus and Mercury.

Saturday, May 23rd

Venus has reached the end of its reign as a prominent apparition in the evening sky. However, a clear view of the western horizon after sunset this evening will provide a view of the conjunction between Venus, Mercury and a crescent Moon.

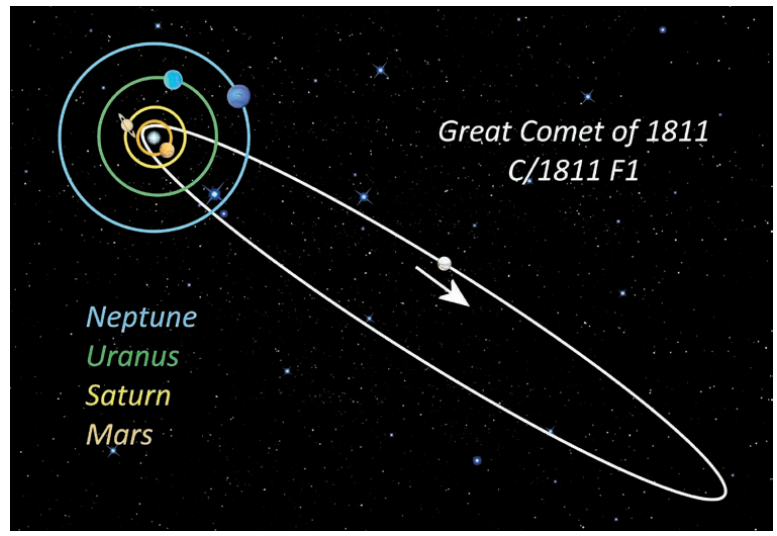
Monday, May 25th

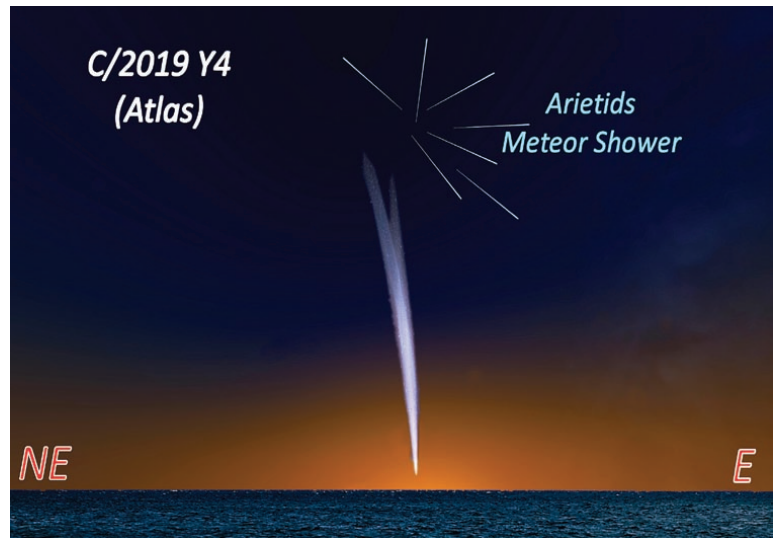
Today marks the 75th anniversary (1945) of Arthur C. Clarke's proposition to place communication satellites in geosynchronous orbits.



Tuesday, May 26th to Wednesday, June 3rd

Some of the best viewing of the comet C/2019 Y4 (Atlas) comet is around 0500 hours low in the east, as shown in Image 2. The comet was discovered through the telescopes of ATLAS (Asteroid Terrestrial-impact Last Alert System). This program is an asteroid impact early warning system being developed by the University of Hawaii and funded by NASA. Comet C/2019 Y4 will reach its nearest point to Earth on May 23rd and come closest to the Sun on May 31st.





Top right: The Great Comet of 1811 is about one fourth through its 3,900-plus year orbit. It should return during the 48th or 49th century.

Left: *Halley's Comet at Dawn. Elizabeth Shippen Green, artist (1909).*

Bottom Right: The location of C/2019 Y4 (Atlas) on May 30th at 0500 hours. The length of the tail could extend between five and ten degrees across the sky.

According to NASA's JPL Horizons, the comet could exceed Venus in brightness at perihelion on May 31st. As this time frame approaches we will have a better idea of how long the tail will stretch across the sky. Current estimations are from five to ten degrees.

Thursday, June 4th

This evening at dusk is a good time to spot Mercury. This gray and rocky planet will be located in the west-northwest sky near the kneecaps of the Gemini twins. It should be easy to spot because it has reached its greatest separation from the Sun. The bright star near the horizon southward is the double star Spica.

Friday, June 5th

Tonight is the Full Moon. As the Sun sets, the large orange Moon will be shining through the clouds. You may see some posts that there will be a lunar eclipse tonight, but it will not happen for us in the Caribbean. The eclipse can only be seen in Africa, Oceania, Asia, Europe and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

Sunday, June 7th

Look for the Moon to rise at around 2030 hours in Sagittarius. In a few minutes Jupiter will bust out above the eastern horizon. A few moments later Saturn will rise to follow the pair across the nighttime sky. Even though the Moon is two days past full the planets are far enough away so they can be easily seen. Tomorrow (June 8th) the Moon will be positioned closer to Saturn.

As the Moon passes to the western sky you may see some shooting stars high in the northeast. These are the Arietids. The maximum number of meteors is 50 per hour. The shower is active May 14th through June 24th.

Tuesday, June 9th

Something to look for tonight is the Herculids meteor shower. This is a variable meteor shower that can produce from one to 72 meteors per hour. The shooting stars radiate out of the northeast from the constellation Hercules. The bright star low in the northeast is Vega.

Wednesday, June 10th

Another active meteor shower is the Ophiuchids. Meteors from this shower may radiate across the night sky from May 21st through June 10th. The best time to see the shower is between 2100 and 2300 hours until the Moon rises.

Saturday, June 13th

After the clock strikes midnight Mars will begin to rise above the eastern horizon. Next to appear rising along the ecliptic is the Moon. Two hours later the Moon reaches third quarter phase.

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

Jim Ulik sails aboard S/V Merengue.



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The Pied-Billed Grebe — An Avian Submarine

Dear Reader, allow me to introduce you to the Pied-Billed Grebe, the submarine of the avian world.

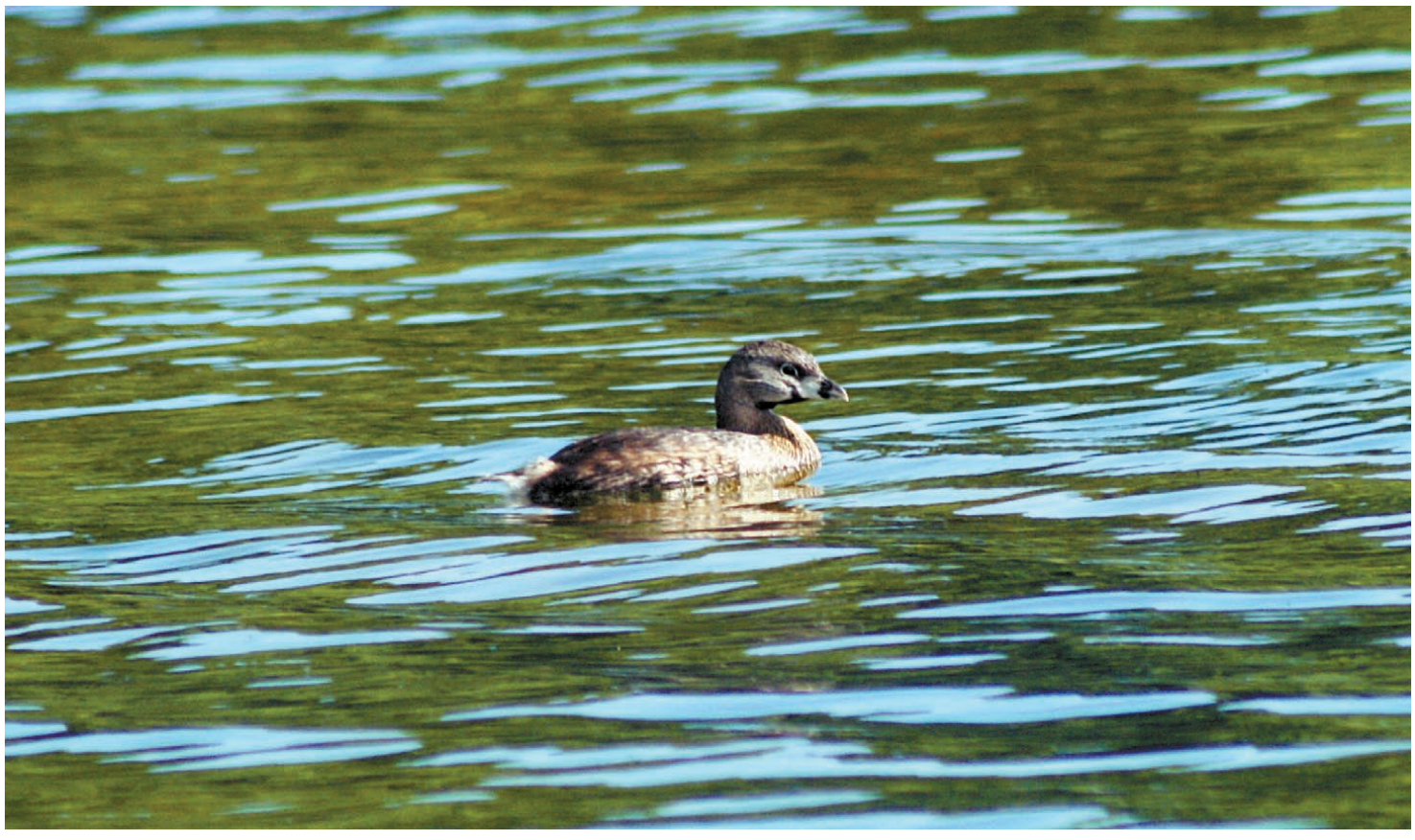
This densely-plumed waterbird has the unique ability to control its buoyancy by adjusting the amount of air in its feathers, body and air sacs. By expelling the air and flattening the feathers against its body, the bird sinks straight down to any desired depth, without any forward movement at all — just like a submarine — and floats as high or as low in the water as it wants, often exposing only its neck and head.

For instance, when faced with a threat, it can submerge its entire body except the eyes and nostrils and hold that position for several seconds. The Pied-Billed can sink gradually, dive head first, or "crash dive." The latter is used as an emergency exit — the bird presses its breast down until the body sinks; the head and tail disappear last, as lobed feet kick spray high into the air.

Its unique diving styles have earned the species several colourful nicknames, including devil diver, dive clapper, dipper, hell diver and water witch.

Once underwater, the Pied-Billed uses both feet for propulsion, swimming in a zigzag fashion, its head constantly in motion, peering around for its favorite food: fish, frogs and crustaceans.

This curious bird is aptly named by the scientific community as *Podilymbus podiceps,* meaning "feet at the buttocks." This refers to the manner in which its legs are positioned near its posterior to facilitate diving and underwater propulsion. Although this physical trait is typical among diving birds and allows them to excel in the water, it makes the Pied-Billed pitifully clumsy on land, requiring a long running start to become airborne. However, this little water nymph is essentially aquatic in nature and rarely needs to go on land, preferring to hide underwater when disturbed. It is rarely seen in flight, living its entire life in the water and only taking to the skies during migration.



This diving virtuoso is often heard before it's seen. It's bizarre call — a series of "wup, whut, kuck, kuck, kuck, kow, kow, kow" — can be described as the combination of a cuckoo, a braying donkey and a mad goblin.

The Pied-Billed Grebe can be found on the lakes, ponds, estuaries and streams of North, Central and South America, as well as the West Indies and Hawaii. It migrates at night from the northern part of its range to southern latitudes for the winter and may occasionally be found as far as Europe and the UK. One individual in England is known to have mated with a local Little Grebe and produced hybrid young.

The Pied-Billed is common in the West Indies and easily recognizable by its small, compact body, brown upperparts, whitish underparts and short, blunt, grey bill. During the breeding season, the bill becomes ivory to blue-grey with a dark, vertical stripe, from which their common name Pied-Billed originated.

Pied-Billed Grebes are aggressive, domineering birds that threaten, pursue and attack members of their own species and other birds, attacking them from underwater, causing their victims to flee in panic. Although both members of a pair chase intruders, males, which are larger than females, do most of the territorial defense, while their mates tend to cheer from the sidelines, offering occasional back-up by chasing an already retreating intruder. A paired female will not engage in fights unless another male attempts to mate with her, in which case she will chase him off with gusto.

During the breeding season, fearless Pied-Billed males defend nesting territory with Circle Displays, Bluff-Dives, Swimming-Shakes and Staring Contests. But when intimidation fails, they become outright vicious, diving and jabbing at the other grebe's body and feet underwater. Sometimes two males stand vertically above the surface — like wrathful, pocket-sized titans — trying to push each other underwater.

Couples are seasonally monogamous, but may remain together through several seasons and may spend the non-breeding period together. In the West Indies, birds breed any time of the year. The breeding season starts as single males advertise themselves with un-elaborate displays — swimming around with feathers sleeked, tail down, neck erect and head horizontal — but shamelessly flirting with every female they encounter, including paired ones. Potential partners approach one another with haughty upright postures, greeting calls and seductive head jerks. Once mated, pairs strengthen their bond with a popular display called the Triumph Ceremony: one bird retracts its neck, as if growing smaller, while the other stretches its neck high and raises its head, as if growing taller. Females usually grow smaller, while males grow taller.

Couples build several floating platform-nests, each with a different function: mating, egg laying (with a soft bowl to hold the eggs) and brooding. Each platform is anchored to emergent vegetation at the water's edge, or secured to waterlilies out on the open water. Birds dive for soft, flexible building material, either fresh or decomposing, from the bottom of the pond and harvest fresh lily leaves from the surface.

Females lay two to ten eggs, which both sexes incubate for equal amounts of time. Incubating birds do not have a ritualized shift change and may leave before their mates return to the nest. However, when leaving the nest unattended, the adults cover the eggs thoroughly with nesting material. This is not done to hide the eggs, but rather to stop them from overheating through evaporative cooling. The adults protect their precious eggs from danger by feigning an injury to one of their wings to distract potential predators. Usually one wing hangs limp while the theatrical bird frantically splashes and thrashes about, making slow, forward progress away from the nest. The apparently helpless bird will keep this up until far enough from the nest, at which point it will suddenly dive and disappear from view, leaving the gullible predator feeling rather silly, I guess.

Pied-Billed chicks are adorable — covered in white-striped, dark-cocoa down, except on lores (the skin between the mandibles and eyes) and cinnamon coloured markings on the crown and nape. They are born semi-precocial, that is with eyes open, covered with short, sparse down, and able to leave the nest one hour after hatching by hopping onto their parents' backs. They are able to swim, but will drown if they remain too long in the water. Extremely susceptible to chills and drafts, they are extensively brooded by one of their parents, while the other parent provides the meals.

Two weeks after hatching, these chicks become quarrelsome. In many cases the parents divide the brood, taking one group each under their wings, possibly to reduce competition for food and eliminate feeding hierarchy among siblings. They periodically bring the whole brood together for family time. Parents appear to influence the distribution of food by scolding misbehaving chicks, or temporarily ousting them from the feeding group. They tend to distribute the food randomly when all the chicks are the same size, but may favour a hungry chick whose lores can vary from pinkish to red-crimson, as they flush with blood during feeding to indicate hunger. Adults encourage offspring to become independent with rough pecking, nape grabbing and shaking. The youngsters may take up to 62 days before fully independent. They retain the white markings on the head, throat and neck until seven months old.

Pied- Billed Grebes are easy to overlook with their modest looks and preference for solitude. Yet they are almost surreal, with their goblin laughter and aptitude to appear and disappear under the surface. In fact, a few months ago, while visiting St. Antoine's lake in Grenada, I found myself unwittingly playing hide and seek with a Pied-Billed Grebe. A sinister brown head and neck rose silently above the water's surface like some kind of mythical serpent. Two dark, tear-shaped eyes scanned the surroundings, glanced in my direction and sank back under the murky water with scarcely a ripple, only to resurface a surprising long time later in a completely unexpected place. I must conclude that the Pied-Billed Grebe is a peculiar bird indeed.

THOSE SPLENDID SPONGES

Part 1: Vases, Balls and Ropes

by Darelle Snyman

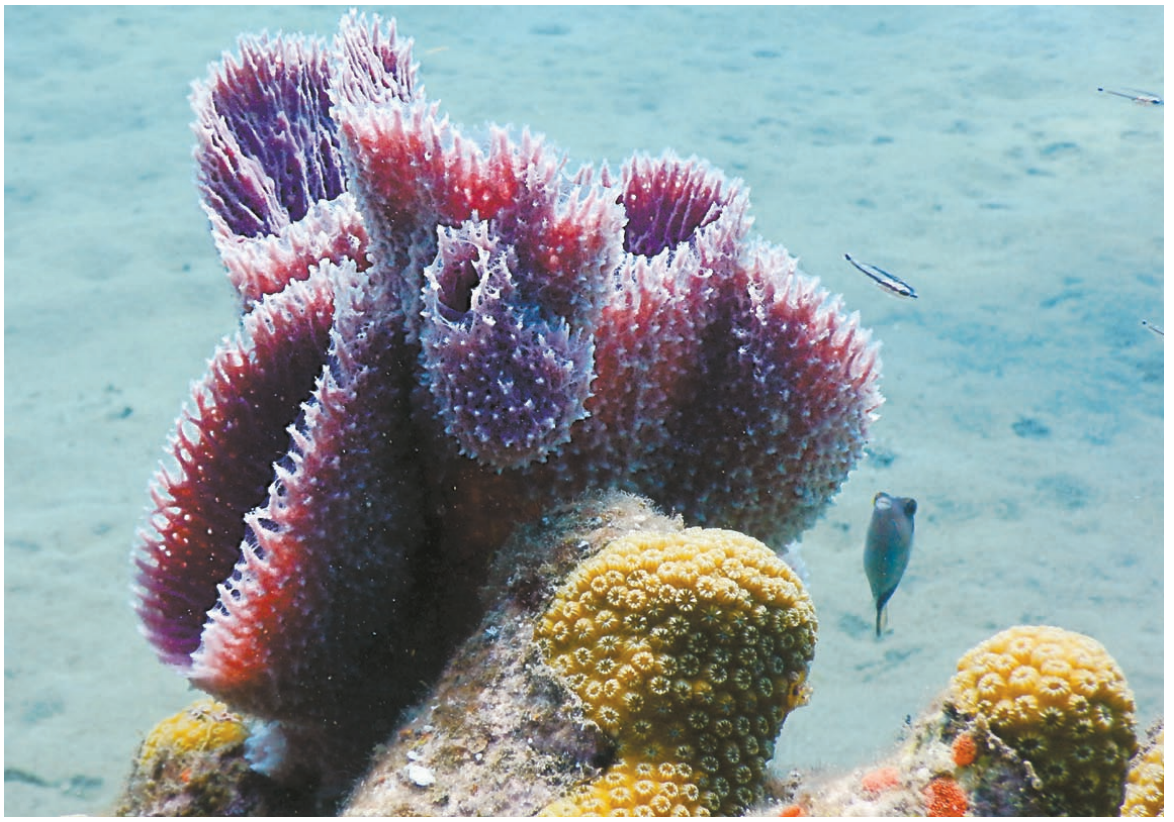
SEA sponges are probably the most overlooked group of creatures on a reef, yet these squishy, weirdly shaped plant-like animals usually exceed both coral and algae in numbers on a coral reef. As we see them every time we go diving and snorkeling, I thought it was time to get better acquainted with these unusual creatures.

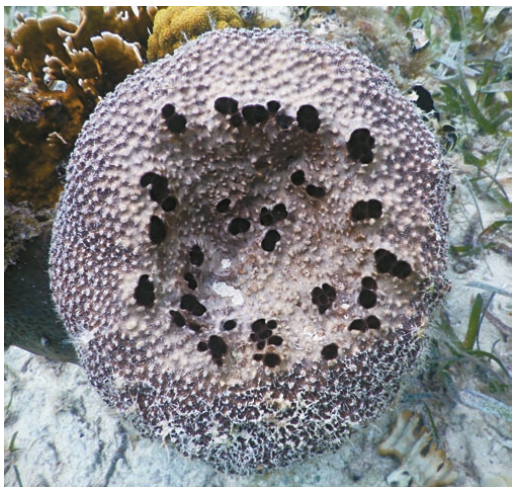
Sponges might actually have been the first animals on earth: recent studies of molecular fossils indicate that sea sponges have been around for 640 million years. Not bad for creatures that lack all the attributes you tend to associate with animals, such as eyes, ears, a mouth and a brain. Since then, these heartless creatures have diversified into the approximately 8,550 living species we know today. They are all classified in the large phylum *Porifera*, a term that comes from the Latin words *porus* (pore) and *ferre* (bear), meaning "pore-bearer," which refers to the porous nature of sponges.

These curious invertebrates have a very distinctive anatomy that sets them apart from other marine invertebrates.

—Continued on page 41







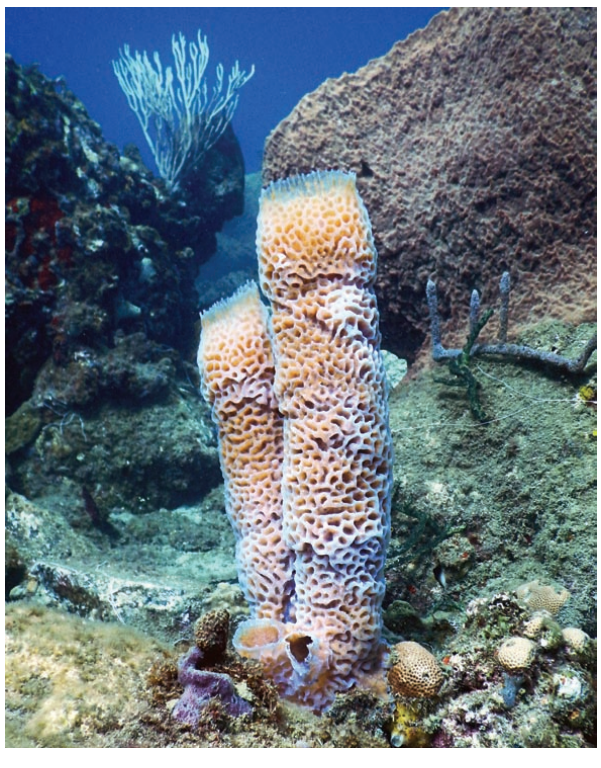
Above: The pink vase sponge occurs in different shades of pink, blue and grey.

Left: The erect rope sponge varies from a deep red to orange.

Bottom left: I found some beautiful examples of the azure vase sponge at Grand Anse d'Arlet in Martinique.

Right: A ball sponge that seems to be locally abundant in Belize is the black ball sponge.

Bottom right: The scattered pore rope sponge can be yellow, brown, purple or red.







The Food Fair

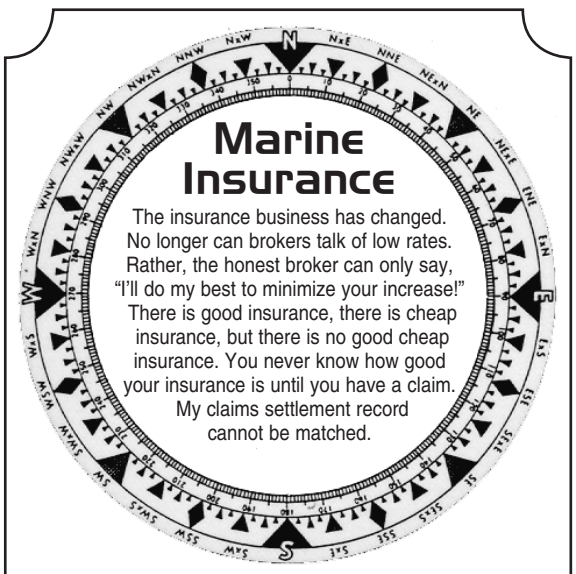
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Here's wishing the entire crew all the best for the future.

Just as I'm an ardent fan of the *Compass*, I'm also a fan of Paul and Sheryl Shard's *Distant Shores* sailing adventure TV Series. Recently, viewing the episode in which *Distant Shores* participated in the ARC brought to mind my earliest *Compass* articles in the late nineties, covering the finish of the ARC in St. Lucia. Happy days!

Since then, I have written about a variety of topics, from some good ole Caribbean recipes to destination pieces, personality profiles, and book reviews. I even covered a regatta and you also published one of my short stories. Yes, *Compass* opens the hatch for writers and readers of many interests.

The first time I picked up a copy of *Compass*, I knew I wanted to write for you. I will always be grateful to you for providing that opportunity to contribute to your magazine. Thank you!

Long live *Caribbean Compass*!

J. Wynner
Trinidad

THANKS TO CARIBBEAN ISLAND DECISION-MAKERS

Dear *Compass*,

Special praise goes to the governments of the small Caribbean states for protecting themselves from virus attacks. Many short-term tourists want to visit these island paradises with their warmth and beautiful beaches, which brings the risk of viruses that can destroy these paradises if done in an uncontrolled manner.

Governments are not only responsible for their own people, but also for tourists. Yet, there are minorities, such as long-term cruising sailors, who come back to the islands every year and are not only interested in the country and its people, but bring a lot of money to the local economy as well. The cruisers who sail their ships — their homes — in the Caribbean appreciate the local populations and conditions. These guests are also forced to keep their belongings — their yachts — safe during hurricane season. Countries such as Grenada, and especially Trinidad & Tobago, which are outside the normal hurricane zone, are suitable for this.

As of this writing on March 17th, the numerous cruisers who station their boats in Trinidad every summer are now prevented from returning. Each owner of these boats spent approximately US$10,000 there during hurricane season. All cruisers who previously left their vessels in Trinidad during the summer months ask those responsible for the new measures to rethink them.

The probability of yachters being infected by the COVID-19 virus while cruising inter-island exclusively within the Caribbean is very low. Most cases have arrived by air. Therefore, it would be appropriate to make a distinction between air arrivals and cruisers who were already in the islands before the COVID-19 virus existed. As cruisers, we cannot stay out at sea, we cannot evaporate into the air; we should be accepted as anybody else here in the Caribbean.

Due to the fact that we spend the majority of the year in this region, we cannot be compared to air travelers from virus-infected countries. After all, Trinidadian sailors move in the same waters as all the other nations' sailors do. We visit the same places. Therefore, it is illogical to ban cruisers from other nations and allow only Trinidadian sailors to enter Trinidad.

Angelika Grüner
S/Y Angelos

Dear Angelika,

Although I'm not sure if Trinidadians were still allowed to enter T&T in mid-March, before going to press we asked the Yachts Services Association of Trinidad & Tobago to reply to your letter. The reply below was received on April 8th.
Sally

Dear *Compass*,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the letter concerning the current restrictions on entering Trinidad and Tobago.

The writer starts her letter by praising the Caribbean governments for protecting themselves from the COVID-19 virus attack. She later states that it is illogical to ban cruisers from entering Trinidad on the basis that cruisers are less likely to contain the virus than arrivals by air.

Where this logic may contain merit that the risk may be lower in cruisers than air arrivals there is no way that one can be absolutely sure who has come in contact with the virus, hence the total ban on ALL arrivals including citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. We have several citizens that are stuck abroad that cannot come home as our borders are closed.

Not only are our borders closed but all businesses, restaurants, bars and all non-essential services are closed; no gatherings of more than five people are allowed including churches, funerals, etcetera. All boating activities other than commercial fishing have been stopped and cruisers have been instructed to stay in one area and not to move. So Trinidad-owned boats can not come into Trinidad either.

These are the same restrictions that have been imposed on the very many countries that are battling with this terrible virus. We are not unique in what we have imposed and our government considers it necessary. The only way to stop the spread is to stop it from passing from person to person.

Unfortunately this necessity is not convenient for many including the writer who is obviously concerned with the upcoming hurricane season. Let us pray and hope that we are successful in containing this virus and that we will open our borders before any bad systems develop.

We look forward to warmly welcoming the writer and our many other cruising friends to Trinidad hopefully in the not too distant future.

Cruisers can get all updates as they come to hand by visiting www.membersonlymaxitax.com

Best regards and stay safe,

Tommy Johnson
Ag President
YSATT

WEATHERING THE STORM OF COVID-19: ADVICE FOR SEAFARERS

Dear *Compass*,

Although the majority of your readers are recreational boaters rather than professional seafarers, I'm sure many of the tips offered below can be adapted to their circumstances.

In regards to the global pandemic COVID-19, men and women who work on ships are in a vulnerable position. Seafarers are "key workers" and are the lifeblood of the world economy. Many sailors are currently on vessels flagged in countries that are facing difficulties related to crew changes. Isolation on board is distinctly different from isolation on land.

The following tips are recommended for seafarers to get through this difficult time.

• Balance Your Time on the Ship

Seafarers have developed special skills that the general population will have to learn in order to cope with the quarantine measures in response to the COVID-19 virus. These include the inability to circulate freely because you cannot leave a vessel, times when you do not see your family for months, and how to manage boredom.

Dr. Kate Thompson, a counseling psychologist of the ISWAN network (an organization dedicated to supporting seafarers), suggests that sailors balance their time between physical exercise, quiet times, and appropriate socializing, taking social distancing into account.

• Limit How Much News You Are Watching

Being stuck on a ship during this period is difficult. News sources constantly provide updates and speculative articles as well as analysis. There is nothing wrong with staying up-to-date but this may not calm you. It is not a good idea to be threat-focused; rather, be focused on what we can do to improve our situation. Limiting the time spent watching the news helps to manage feelings of anxiety. Restrict your consumption of the latest news on COVID-19 by selecting credible news sources.

• Contact Your Family Instead of Rushing Home

It is normal to feel anxious and to want to go home to your family when there are threats of this kind. However, we have to be mindful of the dangers we could bring home with us. Rushing home might put your family at risk. While it is against our natural tendencies, it might be safer to check on your family remotely and often.

—Continued on next page

—*Continued from page 39* *...Those Splendid Sponges*

They lack the tissues and organs necessary for breathing, feeding and excretion. Instead, they possess specialized cells that perform these essential life functions. Tiny skeletal elements made of either silica or calcium carbonate, called spicules, give their bodies shape and rigidity. These spicules are supported by a spongy pro-



tein matrix called *spongin* which encloses a vast network of chambers and canals that open to the surface via small pores called *ostia*. Water is drawn in through these pores, oxygen and food particles are filtered out, and the water containing wastes is pumped out via larger openings called *oscula*.

Sea sponges are found in an infinite variety of colors, textures and growth forms, so telling them apart is not an easy task — as I found out while trying to bring order to my sponge photos. For the purpose of this article I followed the groups distinguished in the field guide *Caribbean Reef Life* by Mickey Charteris. According to the guide, the following six broad sponge groups can be distinguished based on shape: encrusting, rope, ball, vase, tube and barrel sponges.

Vase Sponges

Of these I will start with the vase sponges as this group includes one of my favorite sponges, the azure vase sponge (*Callyspongia plicifera*). This stunning sponge, wait for it, is vase shaped, and has a distinctive ruffled appearance on the outside while the inner walls are very smooth. I found some beautiful examples of this one-of-a-kind sea sponge at Grand Anse d'Arlet in Martinique. Their beauty lies in their alluring pink and purple coloring with a light blue fluorescent coating.

Although it seems as though sponges are just sitting around being pretty or dull, depending on the species, they are actually doing a very important job: they are continuously filter-feeding by pumping large amounts of water through their bodies, extracting bacteria, viruses and other microscopic particles from the water. Studies have shown that the azure vase sponge pumps an amazing six and a half litres of water per second per kilogram of dry sponge weight. During this process they absorb carbon and nitrogen, converting it into nutrient-rich filter cells that are released into the water to be eaten by larger organisms such as crabs and snails. Scientist refer to this as the "sponge loop" and it helps to explain why biologically rich systems such as coral reefs can flourish in areas of the ocean that have low levels of essential nutrients such as carbon and nitrogen.

Other beautiful vase sponges to keep an eye out for are the pink vase sponge (*Niphates digitales*) and the very variable branching vase sponge (*Callyspongia vaginalis*). The pink vase sponge occurs in different shades of pink, blue and grey; visible at the top is an almost transparent rim of new growth. The branching vase sponge has a distinctive spiky exterior and also comes in an array of colors, ranging from a dull green to a beautiful tan.

Ball Sponges

Ball sponges in contrast are less attractive. A ball sponge that seems to be locally abundant in Belize is the black ball sponge (*Ircinia strobilina*). This globular sponge varies from grey to black in color and is covered in spiny protrusions called *conules*. The excurrent openings or *oscula* are clustered at the top. This seemingly unappetizing sponge employs chemical defenses against fish predation. Studies where hapless rock beauties (*Holacanthus tricolor*) were force-fed with this sponge revealed that the fish exhibited a loss of balance and were temporarily paralyzed. No wonder fish want to bite us!

Rope-Like Sponges

The rope-like sponges, according to the guidebook, are difficult to identify and I concur. What a trying process! Within the same species there can be so much variation in terms of color and growth form that it becomes really confusing. Color and

Left: The green finger sponge has mottled green branches that are either sprawling or erect.



Right: The branching vase sponge has a distinctive spiky exterior.

growth are greatly influenced by depth, current and the availability of nutrients, hence the great variation.

The commonly seen erect rope sponge (*Amphimedon compressa*) generally exhibits vertical growth, but not always. Its coloration varies from a deep red to orange and its excurrent pores tend to be large, conspicuous and distributed over the entire surface.

The scattered pore rope sponge (*Aplysina fulva*) is more branched in nature with a smoother surface texture and the randomly distributed excurrent pores are farther apart. Coloration unfortunately is not a distinctive feature as they can be yellow, brown, purple or red in color.

The green finger sponge (*Iotrochota birotulata*) is more easily identifiable with its mottled green branches that are either sprawling or erect. I have not seen it, but they are often colonized by gold-colored zoanthids which give them a two-tone coloration when observed from afar. The toxin-containing zoanthid polyps resemble small sea anemones and deter predatory fish from feeding on the sponge. The zoanthid in turn benefits from the increased volume of food particles present in the water drawn in by the sponge through its fine pores.

Clearly sponges are more than just cleaning accessories!

Next month we will take a look at the weird and wonderful barrel, tube and encrusting sponges.

—*Continued from previous page* *...Reader's Forum*

If you do rush home, you may be quarantined in transit, as some seafarers have been shocked to realize. Many shipping companies purchase economical tickets which can include several stops in countries currently implementing *very* strict measures, including mandatory quarantine.

• If You Do Go Home, Please Self-Quarantine

If you feel sick, call your local COVID hotline. Remember that while you may feel strong and healthy, you may still be an asymptomatic carrier. This is a difficult time and it is wise to draw on all the resources available to you. In the words of Franklyn D. Roosevelt: "A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor."

If you need legal advice as a seafarer, email info@templestoke.com. I and other participating lawyers are offering this service free of charge. Further appointments may be set up if necessary. (This service is available to Spanish and French speakers by e-mail.)

Chevanev Charles

St. Vincent

Chevanev Charles is an alumnus of the International Maritime Law Institute in Malta. He is a practicing lawyer and consultant who specializes in international maritime law.

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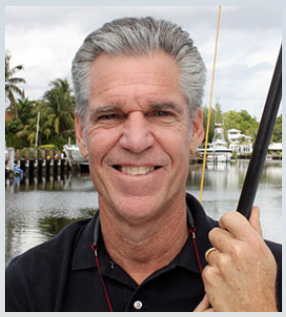
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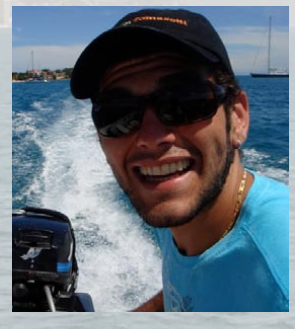
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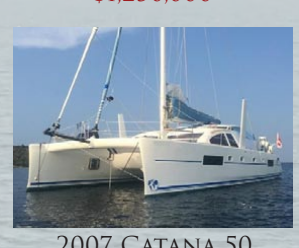
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2011 Lagoon 450
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CALENDAR

PLEASE NOTE: All information was correct to the best of our knowledge at the time this issue of *Compass* went to press — but events are being postponed or canceled to reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus, so please contact event organizers directly for confirmation.

MAY

1	Public holiday in many places (Labour Day).
1 – 3	Jazz 'n Creole Festival, Portsmouth, Dominica. http://dominicafestivals.com POSTPONED
1 – 4	Bahamas Carnival 'Junkanoo'. bahamascarnival.com
1 – 6	Grenada Chocolate Festival. www.puregrenada.com
5	Start of Atlantic Back Rally, Guadeloupe to Azores. www.atlanticbackcruising.com POSTPONED
5	Point Fortin Borough Day, Point Fortin, Trinidad. POSTPONED
7	FULL MOON
TBA	Cayman Islands Carnival, 'Batabano'. www.caymancarnival.com
9	Start of ARC USA rally from Tortola to Virginia or Florida. www.worldcruising.com
9	Start of ARC Europe rally from Tortola to Portugal via Bermuda, www.worldcruising.com
15 –17	Anguilla Regatta. anguilla-regatta.com
15 – 17	BVI Dinghy Championships, Tortola. admin@royalbviyc.org
17	Budget Marine Challenge, Curaçao.
20 – 27	Guyana Carnival. www.guyanacarnival592.com POSTPONED
20	Public holiday in the Cayman Islands (Discovery Day).
21	Public holiday in Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao (Ascension Day).
21 - 23	Combat de Coques regatta, Martinique. www.clubnautiquedumarin.com
21 – 24	Flavours of Grenada Festival. www.puregrenada.com
23 – 24	Foxy's Wooden Boat Regatta, Jost Van Dyke, BVI. westendyachtclubbvi.com
25	Public holiday in Puerto Rico (Memorial Day).
28 – 1 June	Barbuda Carnival 'Caribana.'
29 – 1 June	Petite Martinique Whitsuntide Regatta. www.puregrenada.com
29	Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Eid ul-Fitr, end of Ramadan).
30	Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Indian Arrival Day) and Anguilla (Anguilla Day).
TBA	Rudy Dovale Sunfish Race, Curaçao. CSSA, tiki-mas@hotmail.com
TBA	Baai Hoppen, Curaçao. Leden CYA, info2cya@gmail.com

JUNE

1	Public holiday in some places (Whit Monday)
5	World Environment Day
5	FULL MOON
5 – 7	Grenada Music Festival, https://www.facebook.com/grenadamusicfest POSTPONED
9	Budget Marine Challenge, Curaçao. CYA, info2cya@gmail.com
11	Holiday in some places (Corpus Christi)
13	Public holiday in BVI and Anguilla (Queen's Birthday)
14	Chase/Match Race, Curaçao. CYA
19	Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Labour Day)
21	Summer Solstice
21 - 26	Kite Surf Jam Antigua & Barbuda POSTPONED
21	Fete de la Musique, all French West Indies
25 – 27	St. Kitts Music Festival. www.stkittsmusicfestival.com POSTPONED
29	Fisherman's Birthday; local boat racing in many communities
TBA	Massy Stores Dinghy Regatta, Barbados. BYC, www.barbadosyachtclub.com

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

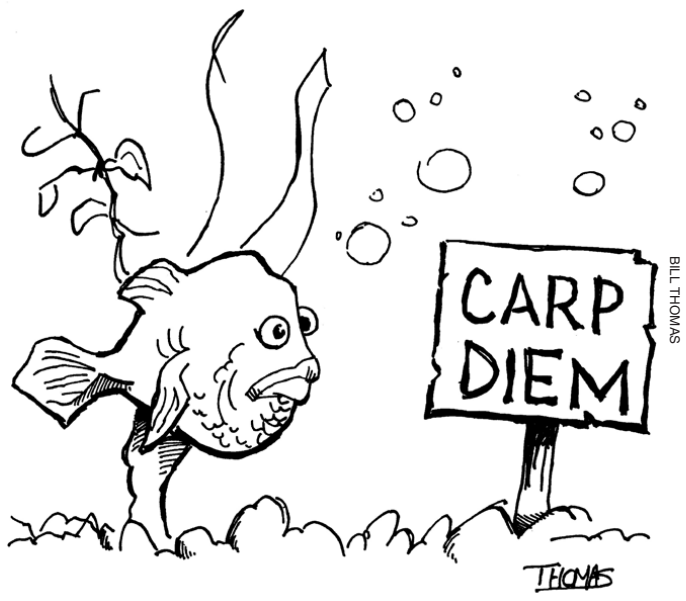
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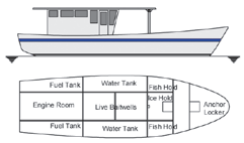
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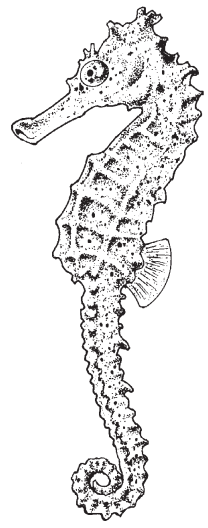


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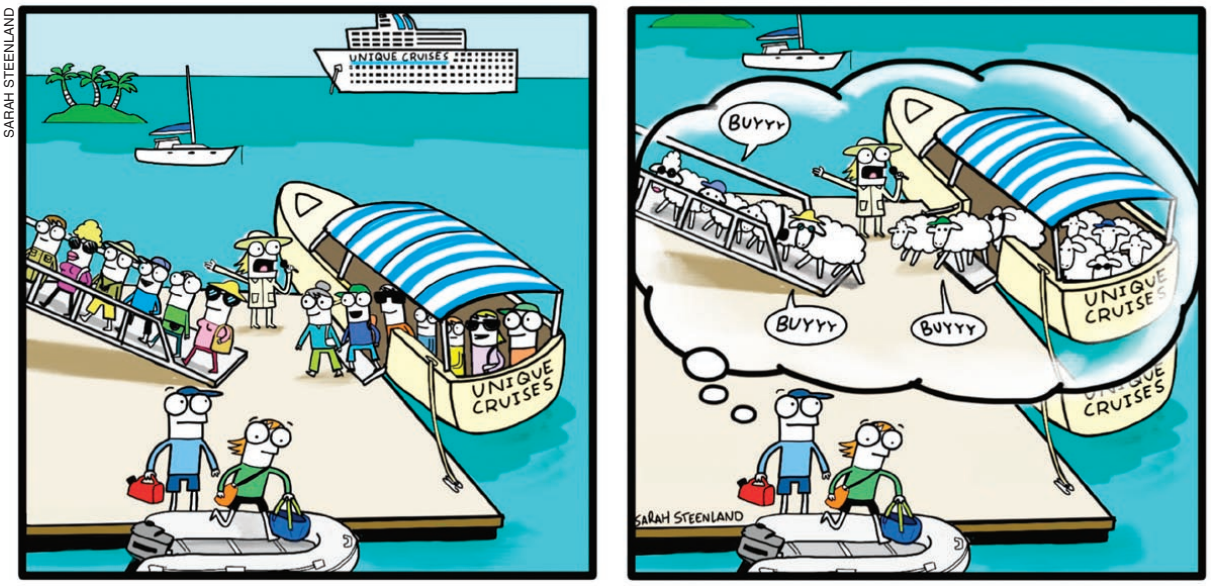


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Island Poets

Pre-Dawn Practice

Awake at four
to catch solitude
and thick prana
I know without a clock
that the sun's rays —
not seen in blackness —
are now felt by the roosters
who begin to crow.

With rag in hand
I ceremonially wipe
my yoga floor,
this cabin sole
of Finnish woods,
all three by ten feet of it.

Lit barely by the moon
through portholes
or shifting starry winks
from neighbors' masts,
I salute the coming sun.

Surya Namaskara done,
I plant my feet
feeling fathoms,
then the ocean floor of earth
beneath them,
moving now to lunge and reach,
stretching long
and ever-propped
by berth or chart table
to roll with swell
and my swaying home.

Standing postures done,
I climb above
to salt-sprayed deck,
stars my ceiling,
for a backbend,
twists,
and swaying headstand,
held with toes entwined
in taut mainsheets
running from the boom.

In half lotus then,
on aging teak,
in gentle wind,
there comes Chi Gung,
and the three-tiered
breath of fullness,
Viloma Kumbhaka.

I end
with palms joined
to honor the sacred in this
community here,
all nature,
all creatures,
and all people,
in the wider world.
And though dark prevails,
roosters have grown louder,
knowing an approaching
dawn.

— *Elizabeth Duncombe*

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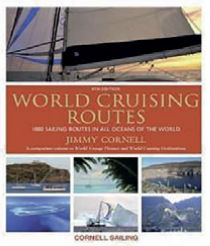
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