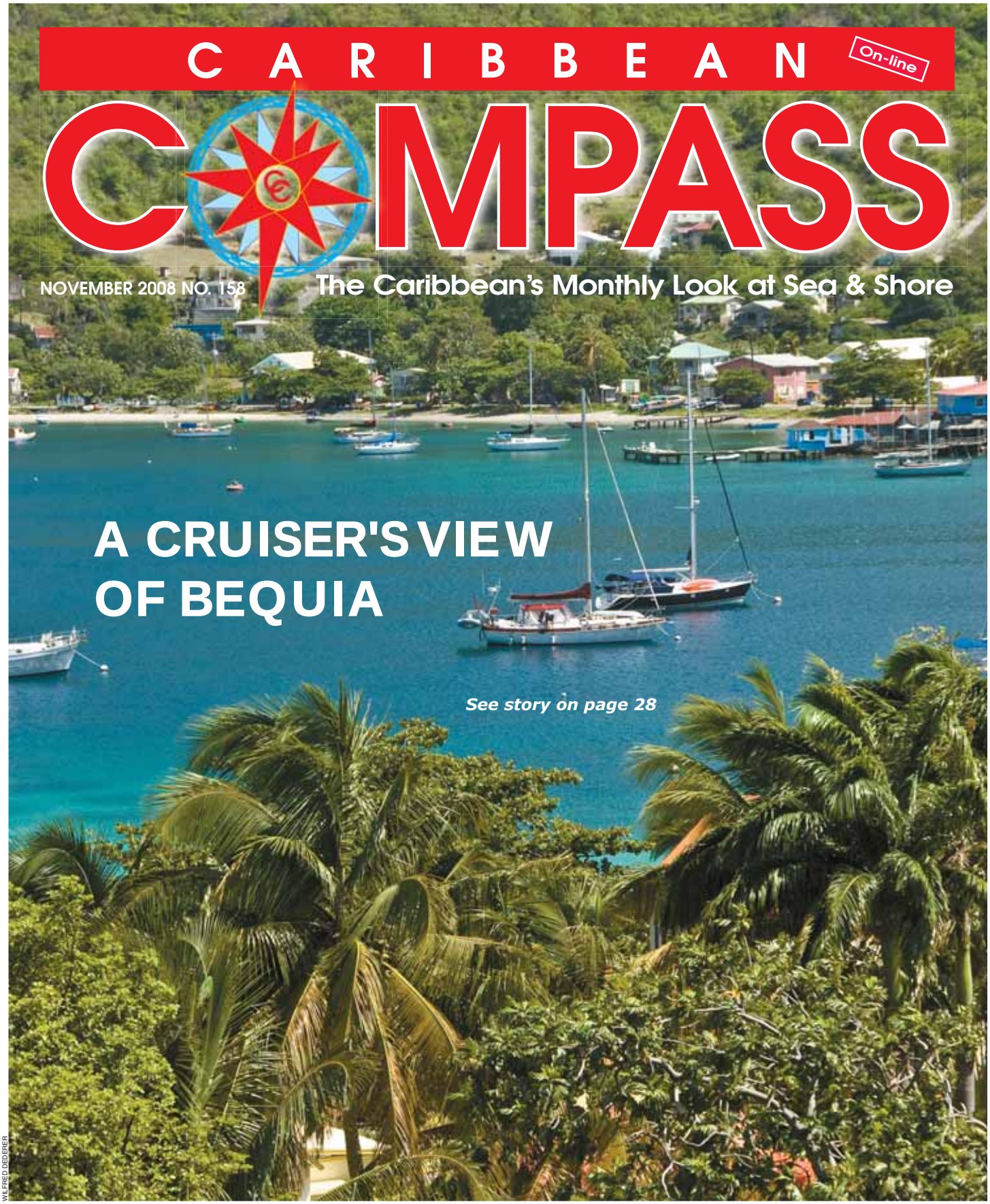
CARIBBEAN On-line
COMPASS
NOVEMBER 2008 NO. 158
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore



A CRUISER'S VIEW OF BEQUIA

See story on page 28

WILFRED DEDERER

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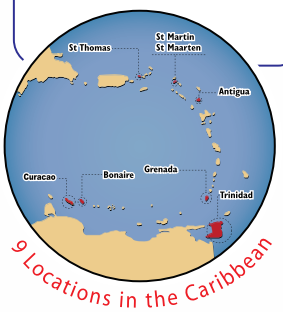
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photo: www.yachtshotsbvi.com

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CARIBBEAN COMPASS

The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

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NOVEMBER 2008 • NUMBER 158



CONNELLY-LYNN

Repo Man
Reclaiming a stolen yacht 32



TERI JONES

Go Cariaco!
Venezuela's 'gulf course' . 18, 23

Bimini's Tops
A Bahamian favorite 25



SALLY ERDLE

Art Afloat
Cruisers get creative 39

Tobago Tour
Revisiting ashore 26

Caribbean Christmas
Trinidad's holiday traditions . 43

DEPARTMENTS

Business Briefs 9	Cruising Kids' Corner..... 38
Eco-News 10	Dolly's Deep Secrets 38
Regatta News..... 14	Book Reviews..... 40
Meridian Passage..... 32	Cooking with Cruisers 44
Cruising Crossword..... 36	Readers' Forum..... 47
Word Search Puzzle..... 36	What's On My Mind..... 50
Island Poets..... 37	Caribbean Marketplace..... 51
Sailors' Horoscope..... 37	Classified Ads 54
Cartoons..... 37	Advertisers' Index..... 54

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See Writers' Guidelines at www.caribbeancompass.com. Send submissions to sally@caribbeancompass.com.

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CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

1	All Saints' Day. Public holiday in French West Indies
1	Independence Day. Public holiday in Antigua & Barbuda
1	D Hamilton Jackson Day. Public holiday in USVI
1 - 2	Women's Caribbean One Design Keelboat Championship, St. Maarten. director@bigboatseries.com
2	19th West Marine Caribbean 1500 sets sail from Hampton, VA to Tortola. www.carib1500.com
3	Independence Day. Public holiday in Dominica
4	Community Service Day. Public holiday in Dominica
6 - 11	Le Triangle Emeraude rally, Guadeloupe to Dominica. ycsf@orange.fr
7 - 8	BVI Schools Regatta, Royal British Virgin Islands Yacht Club (RBVIYC), tel (284) 494-3286, rbviyc@rbviyc.com, www.rbviyc.net
7 – 9	Heineken Regatta Curaçao. www.heinekenregattacuracao.com
7 – 9	BMW Invitational J/24 Regatta, St. Lucia. slycmembers@gmail.com
8	St. Maarten Optimist Open Championship. director@bigboatseries.com
8 - 10	Triskell Cup Regatta, Guadeloupe. http://triskellcup.com
10 - 15	Golden Rock Regatta, St Maarten to Saba. bea@goldenrockregatta.com
11	Veterans' Day. Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI
11	Armistice Day. Public holiday in French West Indies and BVI
13	FULL MOON
13 - 21	Heineken Aruba Catamaran Regatta. www.arubaregatta.com
15	Start of Spice Race from England to Grenada. www.spicerace.com
15 - 16	Nanny Cay IC24 Nations Cup, Tortola. RBVIYC
19	Discovery Day. Public holiday in Puerto Rico
22	Pusser's Round Tortola Race. RBVIYC
23	ARC 2008 departs Canary Islands bound for St. Lucia. www.worldcruising.com/arc. Also ARC flotilla in St. Lucia, slycmembers@gmail.com
24	Start of Transatlantic Maxi Yacht Cup, Canary Islands to St. Maarten. www.yccs.it
27	US Thanksgiving Day. Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI
28 – 29	Coral Bay Thanksgiving Regatta, St. John, USVI. tel (340) 513-4022
28 - 30	Course de L'Alliance Regatta, St. Maarten/St. Barths/Anguilla. www.coursedelalliance.com
29 – 30	Rodney Bay to Marigot Bay Overnight Rally, St. Lucia. slycmembers@gmail.com
29 – 30	Quantum Sails IC24 International Regatta, RBVIYC

DECEMBER

1	Independence Day. Public holiday in Barbados
3	Saba Day. Public holiday in Saba
4 - 9	47th Antigua Charter Yacht Meeting. www.antiguayachtshow.com
5 - 6	Gustav Wilmerding 18th Annual Memorial Challenge, BVI. West End Yacht Club (WEYC), Tortola, BVI, tel (284) 495-1002, fax (284) 495-4184, mvh@surfbvi.com, www.weyc.net
5 – 7	JHR Caribbean Regatta, Jolly Harbour, Antigua. www.jhycantigua.com/regattas.html
5 – 7	Carlos Aguilar Memorial Match Race, St. Thomas. www.styc.net
6	St. John Christmas Music Festival, USVI. stevesimonlive@yahoo.com
6 - 9	St. Maarten Charter Yacht Exhibition. www.mybacaribbeanshow.com
7	Start of J/24 and Big Boats Series, St. Lucia. slycmembers@gmail.com
9 – 12	The Superyacht Cup Antigua. www.thesuperyachtcup.com
12	FULL MOON
13	National Day. Public holiday in St. Lucia. Boat races.
13 - 14	Quantum Sails IC24 International Regatta, BVI
14	St. Lucia Yacht Club ARC Fun Day. slycmembers@gmail.com
19	Separation Day. Public holiday in Anguilla
19 - 21	Carriacou Parang Festival. collinswallace@hotmail.com
20	Commodore's Cup Race, BVI. RBVIYC
21	Winter Solstice
21 - 28	Hightide Series, Antigua. Antigua Yacht Club (AYC), tel/fax (268) 460-1799, yachtclub@candw.ag, www.antiguayachtclub.com
21 - 29	Chanukah (sunset to sunset)
25	Christmas Day. Public holiday in many places
26	Boxing Day. Public holiday in many places
31	Nelson's Pursuit Race, Antigua. AYC
31	St. Barts New Year's Eve Regatta

All information was correct to the best of our knowledge at the time this issue of Compass *went to press — but plans change, so please contact event organizers directly for confirmation. If you would like a nautical or tourism event listed FREE in our 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.*

ATTENTION EVENT ORGANIZERS!

The *Compass* annual calendar of events for 2009 is now being compiled. Send information for your FREE listing to sally@caribbeancompass.com.

Cover photo: Wilfred Dederer, Admiralty Bay, Bequia

Info & Updates

Moorings Installed in Grenada Bays

According to a report in the October 9th edition of the Grenada newspaper *The Barnacle*, "Vessels that use the Flamingo Bay, Dragon Bay, Moliniere Bay and Grand Mal Bay now have improved mooring facilities. This comes after the placement on October 8th of permanent anchors that (vessels can) safely tie onto, eliminating the need to drop anchor." Four moorings were placed in Flamingo Bay and four in Moliniere Bay, while Dragon Bay and Grand Mal Bay each received two. These bays, popular with day charter boats, dive operators and cruising yachts, are located on Grenada's leeward coast just north of the capital, St. George's. Grenada's famous underwater sculpture park is located at Moliniere Bay.



CHRIS DOYLE

Along with three other coves on Grenada's west coast, Dragon Bay now has yacht moorings available

The Barnacle reported: "The Grenada Board of Tourism collaborated with the Grenada Ports Authority to place the moorings in their positions. The GBT will also continue to work along with the Ministry of Fisheries in their thrust to extend the present scope of the Marine Protected Area (MPA), as well as its mandate to monitor and enforce all laws regarding the protection of the marine environment."

On-Line Yacht Clearance Updates

The first phase of an electronic clearance system for yachts traveling in the Caribbean, called eSeaClear, was launched on July 1st with a pilot project in St. Lucia. Yacht skippers can submit the relevant information via the internet at www.eSeaClear.com. The system will have progressive roll-out around the region.

Yachtsmen participating in the trials of eSeaClear so far have provided much valuable feedback, and as a result the system has already seen some amendments to make it even more user-friendly. For example, the website now provides for free text entry of home port and engine type, the ability to change a password, a more secure registration process, contact-sensitive help for the calendar picker, and a new icon on the notification list showing which notifications have been cleared by Customs.

Want to check it out? Visit www.eSeaClear.com.

Navigational Software 'Reborn'

Jan and Judie Glodowski report: A large number of cruisers will be pleased to hear that navigation software The CAPN is being reborn. Most of us loved the software and were greatly disappointed when Maptech bought the package. Maptech did not want competition for their offerings and promptly put CAPN on a shelf to die. Mariners still kept buying CAPN and it just would not go away. Recently Maptech went on the chopping block; when Maptech could not be sold as a whole, its divisions were sold off individually. For aficionados, the news that Star Technologies Corp. bought The CAPN could not be better.

On our sailboat, *Meridian Chaser*, we have used CAPN for years. It is a well-thought-out piece of work that has been an invaluable aid to navigation. We welcome this newest evolution. With 30 years experience supporting the space industry, aircraft designers and the US Navy, the people at Star Technologies bring a whole new perspective and promising future to the venerable CAPN.

For more information visit www.thecapn.com.

Panama Visa Updates

Panama's new Immigration law (Law #3 of 22 February 2008) is reportedly now in effect and applies to all visitors arriving on yachts. It allows for the issue of a 90-day tourist card to passengers and crew of yachts on arrival. The 90-day period may be conditional on the prior issuance of a cruising permit for the same period of time.

After the initial 90-day period of the tourist card, a visa may be issued, also conditional on the prior issuance of a cruising permit. The visa requirements listed are: attorney authorized to execute the request; three photographs;

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…home nation ID card; US$500 deposit in guarantee posted with the Immigration service; US$100 charges per person; copy of electronic paid return ticket (no specification as to where or why); proof of a contractual relationship with a yacht club or marina (the nature of the contract is not specified); and a letter from the captain or owner of the vessel, making him responsible for the other people with visas.

Eight Bells

Long-time Caribbean cruiser Pam Jost passed away on October 1st after a six-month fight with esophageal cancer. Pam and her husband Steve sailed aboard *Viva* and frequently shared their extensive cruising adventures, highlighted by Steve's superlative photos, in the pages of *Caribbean Compass*. A Celebration of Life service was held for Pam at the Josts' homeport Cabrillo Beach Yacht Club in California on October 18th.

A Blue Water Cruising Trophy has been established and will be presented in Pam's name to recognize all of the CBYC blue water cruising sailors, past and present. In her memory, a donation can be made for the Pam Jost Blue Water Cruising Award. Checks should be made and mailed to Jolene Burton, 2784 Hollyridge Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90068, and marked for the Pam Jost Trophy Fund.

Condolences can be sent to Steve at jostphoto@aol.com.



STEVE JOST

Pam Jost, adventurous, fun loving and free spirited, was typical of many cruisers. Her homeport yacht club has established a Blue Water Cruising Trophy in her name

Cruisers Site-ings

October 2008 marked the second year since "the cruisers' friend" in Trinidad, Jesse James, launched his Members Only taxi service website: www.membersonlymaxitaxi.com. Congratulations, Jesse!

While many people in the Caribbean were wondering just what effect the seas generated by Hurricane Omar (see story on page 8) were going to have on their island or coastline, a surfer's website displayed great computer-model graphics of the projected wave patterns — check out magicseaweed.com.

Cruisers Treat Young Readers to a Sail

Aubrey Millard reports: Four cruising sailboats recently took 29 young Grenadians, ages seven to 15, plus some parents and teachers, for a two-hour sail. A few cruisers anchored around Prickly Bay and Hog Island have been volunteering Saturday mornings, working on reading and literacy skills with the Mt. Airy Young Readers group, a community program led by Jeanne and Everest Pascal. On September 13th, the reading group was invited to go sailing on *Wild Cat*, a 38-foot catamaran (thanks, Pam and Chris), *Blue Tang*, a 42-foot Hallberg Rassey (thanks, Guy and Kevin), *Debonair*, a 30-foot cutter (thanks, Larry and Deborah), and *Veleda IV*, an Ontario 32-foot sloop (thanks, Aubrey and Judy). Extra life jackets were provided by other cruisers, so there would be sufficient for all.

The group was returned by dinghy to the public beach near the Calabash resort in Prickly Bay, where all enjoyed swimming and a picnic with refreshments provided by cruisers and parents. Many of the children enjoyed swimming with the life jackets on, a good opportunity for them to become accustomed to them. On the beach, the children were entertained by Jeanne with a spelling quiz on nautical terms. A large nautical Word Find puzzle was made up by Judy Millard of *Veleda IV*, for the kids to work on at home. (*We'll share this in a future issue of* Compass!)

There is a large cruising community at anchor and in the several marinas in the bays on the south end of Grenada. (Actually there are far more boats at anchor than in the marinas.) A recent count of boats in Mount Hartman Bay, Clarkes Court Bay, Hog Island, Prickly Bay, the Lagoon, and the anchorage north of Grand Anse Beach indicated there were more than 170 boats at anchor, plus 50 docked in the various marinas (Clarkes Court, Whisper Cove, Phare Blue, Martin's, and Prickly Bay Marinas). These figures do not include the many boats on the hard in Grenada Marine and Spice Island Marine, or the boats in the Grenada Yacht Club, Port Louis, or True Blue.

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Considering that each boat with live-aboards spends, on average, EC$5,000 a month, that would be an economic benefit to Grenada of (220 x 5,000) EC$1,100,000 monthly. This amount goes directly into the local economy — for taxis, tours, groceries, fuel, marine supplies, local produce, fish, computers, DVDs, restaurants, entertainment, and to other local merchants and services — not through any government agencies or foreign-owned investments. In addition, this benefit is maximized by cruisers staying in Grenada throughout the hurricane season, a time when cruise ship and other tourist income for the island is reduced in the off-season.

The cruisers appreciate the hospitality of Grenada and are happy to participate in and contribute to the social and economic life of this enjoyable island. Activities such as volunteering to help with reading skills and taking kids for a sail provide the cruisers an opportunity to contribute to the community socially, as well as economically. Thank you Grenada for your hospitality.



MILLARD

Members of the Mount Airy Young Readers Group are now 'seasoned salts' after enjoying a sail aboard cruising boats visiting Grenada. Cruisers have been helping teach reading skills — another way of saying 'thank you' for the island's hospitality

Pre-Columbian Sailors Brought 'Bongs' to Caribbean

We all know that the Caribbean island chain has been used in recent years as a drug-smuggling corridor, but who knew that this was an ancient tradition? According to a report in the October 21st edition of CaribWorldNews, North Carolina State University's Dr. Scott Fitzpatrick says her team unearthed in Carriacou the first physical evidence to prove that the people who colonized the Caribbean from South America brought heirloom drug paraphernalia on their voyages.

"The research team used a dating technique called luminescence to determine the age of several artifacts found on the Caribbean island of Carriacou, and discovered that the items dated back to between roughly 400 and 100 B.C.," said a statement. The items tested were ceramic inhaling bowls and snuffing tubes that were likely used for the ingestion of "hallucinogenic substances".

Fitzpatrick and her team theorize that the colonizers passed down the paraphernalia from generation to generation as they traveled through the islands. The study, "Evidence for inter-island transport of heirlooms: luminescence dating and petrographic analysis of ceramic inhaling bowls from Carriacou, West Indies," will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Journal of Archaeological Science*. Similar artifacts were found on Puerto Rico and Vieques Island, over 750 km away.

"This may be the first evidence for inter-island transport of drug paraphernalia in the Caribbean," added the statement.

Welcome Aboard!

In this issue of *Compass* we welcome new advertiser Tobago Carnival Regatta, page 12. Good to have you with us!





Oh No - Omar!



DIANE GIVEN HAYES

Tropical Depression 15 developed on October 13th at approximately 14.8°N, 69.6°W. Two days later it was Hurricane Omar and, traveling on a northeastward course, its eye passed approximately 15 miles east-southeast of St. Croix in the US Virgin Islands as a Category 3 storm with winds of 125 mph and higher gusts.

As "Wrong Way Lenny" had done in 1999, Omar generated seas that battered usually protected coastlines all along the Lesser Antilles as far south as Venezuela, scouring sand off beaches and damaging some shoreside buildings. Heavy rainfall associated with the storm caused flooding in Antigua, where reports said 15 inches fell in three hours.

According to the USVI government, Omar sank or submerged 47 vessels in St. Croix: 33 in Christiansted Harbor, 11 near the St. Croix Yacht Club in Teague Bay, one in the vicinity of Cotton Valley and two near Salt River.

Hurricane Omar did not score a direct hit on any landmass and no deaths were reported.

The day after Omar. In hardest-hit St. Croix, many boats were driven into the boardwalk in Christiansted Harbor (above), while the yacht Kamani *was safely tucked into the mangroves at Salt River (far top right)*



MARILYN COOK



B. NOEL

Above: Torrential rains caused flooding in low-lying parts of Antigua such as Pigott's Village



Normally sheltered west coast bays were inundated by heavy surf in Roseau, Dominica (left), Soufriere, St. Lucia (below), and Admiralty Bay, Bequia (right, 2)



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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Grenada's Port Louis: A Cleaner Marina

The Government of Grenada and Camper & Nicholsons have agreed that environmental issues are of paramount importance in the development of marinas. During a meeting between Grenada's Minister of Tourism Hon. Peter David and Camper & Nicholsons officials, environmental protection was discussed extensively.

Camper & Nicholsons' Port Louis Marina General Manager Clyde Rawls discussed the steps Camper & Nicholsons is taking to ensure that the environment is protected. "Camper and Nicholsons has been in the yachting business since 1782. We have a long tradition of environmental consciousness and advocacy," the General Manager said. "We will adopt best practices from the marina industry and apply them here at Port Louis.

"In Grenada, we started by continuing the clean-up of the lagoon. As you know, there were old wrecks and other debris in the lagoon. We have done an extensive clean-up, which has resulted in significantly improved water clarity," Rawls remarked. "During our construction phase we are also taking steps to ensure that there is minimal disturbance to the environment. Many of our docks will be floating docks (which) can be installed with minimal disruption to the lagoon bed. Yachts in our facility will not be allowed to empty their waste tanks into the lagoon. They will have to connect to our pump-out system where the waste will go to our sewage treatment plant," Rawls explained.

Camper & Nicholsons will also put mitigating factors in place to ensure that the lagoon stays pristine. Boat owners will not be allowed to paint their boats or do heavy repairs in the lagoon.

As a result of Camper & Nicholsons' ongoing effort to clean up Port Louis Marina, Grenada has a new wreck dive. A Cuban fishing vessel recently became the 17th wreck in Grenada's diving portfolio.

Last month, a sunken 50-foot Cuban fishing vessel was removed from the Port Louis Marina area and relocated off Grand Anse Beach at a dive site called The Valleys, which is part of Boss Reef. Phil Saye, president of the Grenada Scuba Diving Association, said, "The new wreck site will enhance an already amazing dive site and offer divers a rare chance to view a piece of maritime history." The Cuban fishing vessel is rare in that it is made entirely of concrete, probably built in the 1970s as a Cuban attempt to build low-cost ships. As there is very little information on the history of the boat, including her proper name, she's been called *Daisy*, in honour of the barge operator who put her in her new home.



A sunken Cuban-built fishing boat is now Grenada's newest wreck dive site

This is the second wreck that Camper & Nicholsons has donated to the dive association's efforts to add new dive sites. Recently a small barge was removed from Port Louis and relocated in Dragon Bay as the first attraction in what the Grenada Scuba Diving Association hopes will become a new snorkeling destination.

In 2007, the Peter de Savary Group removed the wreck *Hilda* and sank it outside Moliniere Bay as a dive site.

For more information on Port Louis Marina see ad on page 21.

Errol Flynn Marina, Jamaica, is New Rally Stop

Port Antonio, Jamaica, and Errol Flynn Marina have been added to the itinerary for the 10th Annual Transcaraibes Yacht Rally, which will include a three- to four-day visit in late April 2009. An estimated 15 to 20 yachts, mostly from the French Departments of Guadeloupe, Martinique and Saint Martin, are expected to participate, according to rally organizer Stéphane Legendre. The rally will also include stops in the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba. The decision to include Errol Flynn Marina in the 2009 itinerary came as the result of several rally participants recently stopping at Port Antonio and subsequently urging the organizers to include Jamaica in future itineraries. One goal of the event is to focus attention on the various marine facilities of the Central Caribbean. Both the Jamaica Tourist Board and Port Authority of Jamaica (owners of Errol Flynn Marina) will be working closely with the organizers to ensure that the Jamaica visit is a highlight of the rally.

For more information on Errol Flynn Marina see ad on page 22. For more information on the Transcaraibes Yacht Rally see ad on page 51.

Technicold by Northern Lights Launches Website

Technicold by Northern Lights, an industry leader in marine climate control and refrigeration, announces the launch of the brand new website www.technicold.com.

Since purchasing Technicold from Rich Beers Marine, Inc. in January 2008, Northern Lights has been developing the marketing campaign for the custom solutions and advanced technology of Technicold's line of onboard air conditioning, air handling and refrigeration solutions. The significant first step in that evolution is the Technicold website.

The site has been designed with the same easy-to-use visitor interface as the Northern Lights marine generators website.

For more information on Northern Lights see ad on page 42.

Bequia's Wallace & Co Moves to New Location

From the first of December, customers are invited to meet their old friends Jogi, Bip, Kerah and Allan at the new location of Wallace & Company chandlery in Port Elizabeth, Bequia. Bip says, "The bigger premises and convenient location next to the Porthole Restaurant on the waterfront will make it possible to extend our well-known range of fishing, diving and boating supplies and services.

"As a duty-free chandlery, we will continue to provide the boats in transit with all their requirements. As you all know, we go the extra mile to handle your special requests with transshipment in coordination with our broker and the Customs authorities."

Jogi, Bip, Kerah and Allan will be there to help you with their expert advice. If you want to catch a fish, Jogi can set you up with a professional fishing charter or help you select the right equipment for catching one yourself. He has fished these waters for more than 20 years and he has been extremely successful in international fishing tournaments, including the famous catch of a 435-pound marlin off the coast of Bequia.

Bip will help you find the perfect snorkeling or diving equipment for the whole family. If you need prescription glasses, no problem. Wallace & Company carry special masks and equip them with the glasses you need for each individual eye so you can truly admire the underwater beauty with total focus.

Long-time staff Kerah and Allan will be at your service with the professionalism, good humor and friendly attitude Wallace & Company are known for.

Bip says, "Come and see us and be ready for a surprise!"

For more information see ad on page 29.

Comprehensive Cargo Services in St. Maarten

Managing Director Eric Bendahan reports: CIRExpress of St. Maarten is pleased to announce our new services for all shippers and consolidators. We specialize in expert freight forwarding and warehouse management. Our goal is to help you find better ways to manage your cargo.

—Continued on page 42



CARIBBEAN ECO-NEWS

International Coastal Clean-Up 2008

International Coastal Clean-Up Day 2008 was officially celebrated on September 20th, with participation from communities throughout the Caribbean during the month. Most of the litter collected along beaches and shorelines was generated by human activities and included millions of fast-food containers, plastic soda and water bottles, and other items of non-biodegradable trash symptomatic of a "throw away" society. Garbage on beaches came from on-site events, such as picnics and "beach splashes", as well as that washed to the location via storms and drains. Some of it also originates from dumping by vessels at sea.

FUNDACION LA TORTUGA



Why are we leaving so much mess for our children to clean up?

Thousands of volunteers collected tons and tons of trash and cleaned hundreds of Caribbean beaches, and everyone involved is to be congratulated on another annual job well done. But as the saying goes, it is better not to make a mess than to have to clean one up. Why are we citizens, residents and visitors to the Caribbean creating this appalling amount of garbage every year?

For International Coastal Clean-Up Day 2009, let's not see how much trash we can pick up, but how little there is to pick up!

Progress on Protected Area for Grenada Dove Slows

Mt. Hartman Bay is a popular anchorage on Grenada's south coast, where cruisers and Grenadians alike have been watching developmental versus environmental issues play out in recent years. Many were stunned when much of Mt. Hartman National Park, habitat of Grenada's endemic national bird, the rare ground-dwelling Grenada Dove (*Leptotila wellsi*), was given over for development as a Four Seasons resort. Mt. Hartman, also known as the Dove Sanctuary, was Grenada's only official national park.

The American Bird Conservancy reports: Since 2006, scientists and environmental groups, including American Bird Conservancy, have been working with the developers on Grenada to address the threat to the critically endangered Grenada Dove posed by a new Four Seasons resort. In response to these concerns, developer Cinnamon88 greatly scaled back their plans, and Mt. Hartman National Park, the dove's population stronghold, was reconfigured to maximize the protected area. The new plan was approved this summer, and construction has begun.

Meanwhile, to offset the loss of habitat at Mt. Hartman, work continues to establish an additional new protected area for the dove in the vicinity of Beauséjour, on Grenada's west coast. This effort has stalled over a competing proposal for a housing project. The government is looking for an alternative location for the housing project, a daunting challenge on a small island. New concerns have also arisen over a proposal to open a quarry at Beauséjour, on a site directly adjacent to occupied dove habitat.

In yet another twist, a general election was held in Grenada on July 8, 2008, which brought the opposition National Democratic Congress into power for the first time since 1995. Discussions with new Prime Minister Tillman Thomas' Administration over the dove have only just begun, but it is hoped that the change in government will provide new opportunities to advance dove conservation.

Sea Turtle Hatching Observed in Venezuela

"Turtle watching" is the eco-tourism-driven activity of watching sea turtles lay their eggs on Caribbean nesting beaches. Through organized tours, many people have had the unforgettable experience of seeing huge leatherbacks and other types of sea turtles coming ashore, digging their nests, laying their eggs, and returning to the sea.

More infrequent is the opportunity to see the eggs actually hatching and the baby turtles making their way to the water. Fundación la Tortuga researchers at Isla la Tortuga in Venezuela had this experience in late September.

It has been estimated that one female turtle can lay as many as a thousand eggs in one nesting season, but out of those thousand eggs perhaps only two turtles will reach maturity. We can help by guarding turtle nests from poachers and predators such as pigs and dogs, by not purchasing items made from turtle shell, and by keeping our Caribbean Sea free from trash such as plastic bags, which turtles often choke on. All species of sea turtle are listed as endangered.

Sea turtles are essential to the health of many marine ecosystems. For example, their grazing helps keep sea grass beds healthy and their nesting provides nutrients to sand dune vegetation that protects fragile coastlines.

JOSE VOGLAR (2)



Tiny turtle hatchlings head for the sea in Venezuela. They could live for 80 years, but due to predators and hazards such as carelessly discarded plastic bags and fishing nets, very few survive to adulthood

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MARINE MAMMALS NOW PROTECTED BY CARIBBEAN-WIDE PLAN

by Nathalie Ward



CONNELLY-LYNN

It's a *first* — a conservation plan to protect whales, dolphins and manatees throughout the Caribbean!

The Marine Mammal Action Plan for the Wider Caribbean Region was adopted by the United Nation Environment Programme's (UNEP) Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Programme's Conference of Parties (COP-5) at the beginning of September 2008.

It's been a long history in the making. The Caribbean's marine mammal program had its beginning in 1991 at the first SPAW meeting (in Martinique), wherein all marine mammal species were listed on Annex II — endangered animal species, which required protection.

One of the goals of UNEP's SPAW Protocol is to develop specific regional and national management plans for endangered, threatened or vulnerable species in support of national biodiversity conservation efforts. In order to achieve this, Parties of SPAW developed a draft *Marine Mammal Action Plan (MMAP) for the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR)* in 2005 (Barbados). This framework of activities was developed in order to assist governments in the region with their efforts to develop and improve marine mammal conservation practices and policies. The Action Plan also aims to promote regional cooperation on research, information and education and enhance the exchange of technical expertise.

After five long years under development and negotiation by Parties and NGO efforts including meetings, e-groups and workshops, the SPAW's Scientific and Technical Committee (STAC) agreed at the recent meeting in Guadeloupe (July 2008) to forward the MMAP to COP-5 for consideration and final adoption (in Antigua September 2008).

The MMAP will set a framework and specific recommended actions to protect the populations of marine mammals in the Caribbean region from a variety of threats related to the following areas: Coastal and Watershed Development; Pollution and Marine Mammal Health; Protected Areas and Other Management Regimes; Research; Marine Mammal Watching in the Wild and Associated Activities; Marine Mammal Standings; Marine Mammals in Captivity; Acoustic Disturbance/Underwater Noise; Vessel Strikes; and Climate Change.

The US delegation successfully initiated three priority actions for the upcoming SPAW/MMAP Workplan and Budget. The first is a marine mammal stranding response workshop in partnership with France and the Eastern Caribbean Cetacean Network (ECCN) in the fall of 2009. The second is an offer by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources to train personnel from neighboring Spanish-speaking countries on marine mammal rescue and response. The other priority actions are related to information collection and data exchange with priority actions for whale watching and stranding programs.

What's next? The challenge is to translate the text on paper into ACTION! It is time for a toast — a CELEBRATION for the future protection of whales, dolphins and manatees in the Caribbean! It's been a long journey but so worthwhile. Please join all of us who have worked over the past 15 years to make the MMAP a reality and raise your glasses high.

From chin to nose,
Many a gallon flows.
— Bertram Wallace, Bequia, SVG

What is SPAW?

The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment for the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention, 1983) is the only region-wide environment treaty that protects critical marine and coastal ecosystems, while promoting regional co-operation and sustainable development.

In April 1990, Parties to the Cartagena Convention adopted the Protocol Concerning Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW Protocol), a regional agreement for biodiversity management and conservation for the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR). The SPAW Protocol became international law in June 2000. To date, there are 12 Member Parties including: Barbados, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, France, Netherlands, Panama, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, the USA and Venezuela.

What is STAC?

A Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) of government-designated experts and experts from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and scientific institutions, was established by the Protocol. The STAC plays a pivotal role in recommending to the Contracting Parties the species to be listed in the Annexes. The STAC provides a unique opportunity to meet and reach consensus on biodiversity issues relevant to SPAW and other Caribbean conventions.

For UNEP working documents of MMAP from COP 5 Meeting: www.cep.unep.org/meetings/2008/v-spaw-cop/meeting_documents_viewSee.

Dr. Nathalie Ward has served as marine mammal consultant for UNEP/SPAW Protocol and its draft Marine Mammal Action Plan since 1990. On behalf of the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary and the National Marine Sanctuary Programme, she served as a member of the US delegation at SPAW's recent Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee meeting in July (Guadeloupe). She divides her time as a marine biologist and marine mammal educator between Bequia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines and Woods Hole, Massachusetts.



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Grenada Sailing Festival

Record Participation at Bahamas Optimist Championships



ROBERT DUNKLEY/WWW.DUNKS.SMUGMUG.COM

A record 81 boats competed in the 2008 Bahamas Optimist National Championships held on Montagu Bay in Nassau, New Providence on September 27th and 28th. For the fourth time since its inception in 2005, the Bahamas Opti National Championships were held on Montagu Bay, organized by the Bahamas Sailing Association (BSA) together with the Nassau Yacht Club and the Royal Nassau Sailing Club.

Thirty-nine boats participated in the first edition of the regatta back in 2005. This year, a record total of 81 boats entered in the Championship Fleet and the Green Fleet, with young competitors coming from New Providence, Eleuthera, The Abacos (including Man O War, Elbow and Guana Cays), Grand Bahama and Long Island. This is a clear statement of the growing success of the BSA National Sailing School programme, which started in 2004.

Seven races were on the schedule and all seven races were completed, although the very first race of the series on the Saturday morning was abandoned due to a lack of wind. With an excellent final score of 9 points, Danny de Cardenas of the Royal Nassau Sailing Club became this year's Bahamas National Champion. He was followed by two-time National Champion Christopher Sands of the Nassau Yacht Club with 10 points. Theran Mailias from Long Island took third place with 24 points.

In the Green Fleet, Spencer Cartwright finished first with 9 points, Enrico Rio took second place and Alton Jones the third, both with 32 points.

The organizers say, "Congratulations to these 81 young sailors — and let's see if we can reach 100 boats on the starting line next year!"

The Organizing Authority extends its appreciation to the sponsors for their support: Rotary Club of East Nassau – Gold Sponsor; Kentucky Fried Chicken, Lyford Cay Foundation – Silver Sponsors; KPMG, Ministry of Sports, Ministry of Tourism, and Odyssey Aviation - Bronze Sponsors.

For more information and full results visit www.bahamassailing.org.

'BAH' — but not humbug! More young Bahamians are learning to race, thanks to a national sailing school program



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REGATTA NEWS

Safety First for Young Grenadian Sailors

Thanks to a donation by the Four Seasons Group of a brand-new chase boat, young sailors in Grenada will have a better learning environment when they take part in the Youth Sailing Program run by the Grenada Yacht Club (GYC) and supported by the Grenada Sailing Association (GSA).

GSA Treasurer Jacqui Pascall explains: "This donation is very important to the ongoing Youth Sailing Program. Safety is our first priority with our young sailors, whatever amount of experience they may have. This new boat will enable our instructors — Kevin Banfield, Michael McQueen and Vaughn Bruno — to stay close to the dinghies out on the water, and give much better technical and tactical instruction."

The boat was presented to James Benoit of the GYC, who is also Vice Chairman of the GSA. In thanking Four Seasons, he said: "On behalf of the Grenada Yacht Club and the Grenada Sailing Association, I would like to thank the management of Four Seasons for this important support for the continued development of sailing in Grenada. Captains of big boats and mega-yachts start from here — by learning to sail dinghies and learning to sail well and safely. With the help of Four Seasons I believe we are seeing the start of a very positive way forward for many of our young sailors here today."



From right: Jacqui Pascall, Michael McQueen, James Benoit, Kevin Banfield and, second from left, James Vlasto, Sales Director of Four Seasons/Cinnamon88, with members of the Grenada Youth Sailing Program and the new chase boat

Jacqui Pascall added: "We are keen to see more Grenadian would-be sailors joining us and finding out not only what fun sailing can be, but also how rewarding. We already have young sailors from this program who have now represented Grenada in regattas in the region and our long-term goal is to have Grenada represented in the future in more International events and even the Olympics in London in 2012."

For more information contact Jacqui Pascall at tel (473) 415-2022.

Caribbean 1500 Adds New Class, New Start

This year's Caribbean 1500 rally from the US to the Caribbean will add a competitive class for performance cruisers, thus expanding the racing portion of the event.

"Responding to a request from some of our veteran rally participants," explained Founder and President Steve Black, "we are adding a level of more intense competition for low-handicap performance cruisers. This year, we will have our Rally and Cruising (non-competitive) Classes, as always, but will add a Performance Class. Qualifying boats that have already signed up for this year's Caribbean 1500 include a Swan 56, a Hallberg Rassy 62, a Macgregor 65, a Farr 50, and a Santa Cruz 52 — all veterans of our previous rallies." Between 50 and 60 boats are expected this year.

The Caribbean 1500 this year will schedule simultaneous starts on November 2nd from both Hampton, Virginia, and Charleston, South Carolina. "Over the years, we have discovered that boats from the southern US are hesitant to sail north around Cape Hatteras to join us for the start in Hampton," said Steve Black. "In addition, some boats under 40 feet may have a less stressful passage if they join the Charleston start. The Hampton and Charleston fleets will converge simultaneously on our destination in the Caribbean and join in post-event activities together." The rally ends at Village Cay Marina in Roadtown, Tortola, British Virgin Islands.

Over 10,000 website visitors each day will monitor the progress of the boats in the rally. With wireless transponders on each yacht, positions will be updated via satellite every four hours. Each boat's track will be displayed on the Caribbean 1500 website using software customized to incorporate features from Google Earth. The transponder program is sponsored by Davenport & Company, LLC.

For more information visit www.carib1500.com.

Opti Racing for Grown-Ups in St. Lucia

Ted Bull reports: The "Oldy Goldy" sailing members of the St. Lucia Yacht Club (SLYC) decided to take up the slack in the quiet weeks prior to the beginning of the new junior training season. What started out as a joke came to fruition on September 14th when seven of the grown folks rigged and sailed the club's Optis on a race off Reduit Beach in front of the clubhouse.





A Le Mans start commenced with the intrepid sailors having first to climb in, fall in, or somehow get into their floating boats and head for the first mark, which was a reach of some 400 yards. With legs protruding over the sides and some heads visible, the fleet got away. At the mark, which they had to leave to port, things got serious with endless screams for "water!" and banging into the buoy.

A quick run down to the next buoy just a few yards away, then harden up to the beat back to the beach. The officer of the day, Peter Gibbs, stood up to his waist in the water to take the results as the crews disembarked as elegantly as they could — "man overboard" style, mainly!

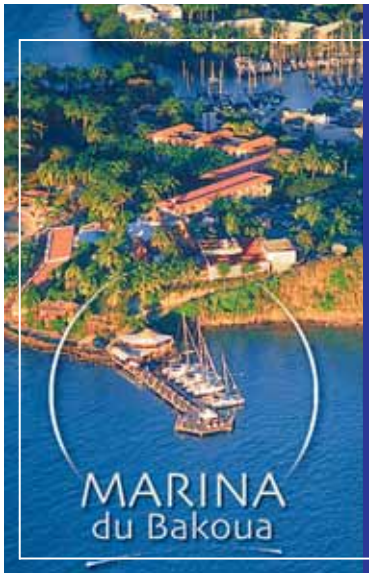
Tired, knees mashed up, wet and exhausted, the sailors came ashore for a lunch break and some bragging! Fed and watered, the O/D turned them around for a second bash. Now with "experienced" Opti sailors, the fleet took on a more serious aspect.

The post-racing "wash-up" and debate went on until late, amply assisted by Mr. Heineken and Mr. Piton, and the St. Lucia Yacht Club hosted more Opti Saturdays for grown-ups. The proceeds of the entrance fees go to the SLYC Junior Sailing Programme.

For more information visit www.stluciayachtclub.com.

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—Continued from previous page

St. Maarten Opti Open Championship Rescheduled

Cary Byerley reports: The 4th Annual St. Maarten Optimist Open Championship scheduled for October 18th has been rescheduled for November 8th, due to delays caused by the passage of Hurricane Omar. The event will showcase the abilities of young sailors who participated in a year-long Youth Sailing Programme run by the Sint Maarten Yacht Club. The junior sailors will be looking forward to trying out several brand-new Optimist dinghies, thanks to generous donations from many of the marinas in St. Maarten. The St. Maarten sailors expect to be joined by competitors from the youth sailing programme in neighboring Anguilla for the regatta. The event is sponsored by SOL.

For more information contact Cary at director@bigboatseries.com or tel (599) 588-2474.



The junior sailors in St. Maarten are looking forward to racing their brand-new Optis on November 8th

Guadeloupe's Triskell Cup Attracts Diverse Crews

The 8th Annual Triskell Cup regatta, to be held in Guadeloupe from Novermber 8th through 10th, has attracted diverse international crews. The winning crew of La Rochelle International Week in France received six air tickets from the tour operator Nouvelles Antilles.com and an eight-day charter aboard an Archambeau 40 offered by Autremer Concept in Martinique, in order to take part. More French crews, from Nancy, Cherbourg and Brittany, are also expected as well as numerous crews from Antigua, Martinique and Dominica. At least four all-woman crews, including those from Martinique and Italy, are also expected.

For more information contact organisation@triskellcup.com.

Here Comes ARC2008!

As the largest trans-ocean sailing event in the world, every year the ARC (Atlantic Rally for Cruisers) brings together more than 200 yachts from all over the world to sail from the Canary Islands across the Atlantic Ocean to St. Lucia. Conceived as a friendly race for cruising yachts to make the Atlantic crossing both safer and more enjoyable, participating yachts must carry a range of safety equipment including a liferaft, EPIRB and VHF radio. Daily radio nets contribute further to the safety of participants.

ARC2008 departs from Las Palmas, Gran Canaria on November 23rd, bound for Rodney Bay, St. Lucia. A full programme of social activities, safety seminars and demonstrations will be organised by World Cruising Club in Las Palmas prior to the start, and after the finish in St. Lucia.

For more information visit www.worldcruising.com/arc.

Coral Bay, St. John, Thanksgiving Regatta

The 27th Annual Coral Bay Thanksgiving Regatta will take place on November 28th and 29th. Serious PHRF racers, plus Gaff Riggers, Cruisers, Multi-Hulls, Single-Handers, and Traditional boats compete. On Saturday, as usual, the PHRF class will start together. But new this year, all other classes will have staggered starts in a Pursuit Race. Skinny Legs Restaurant is the home of the Coral Bay Yacht Club, and the place to meet for Skipper's Meetings, music, food, drink and the Awards Ceremony. Entry fee is US$40. All proceeds go to the Kids And The Sea program.

For more information contact Denise Wright at tel (340) 513-4022.

Golden Rock Regatta Has New Sponsor

Nustar/Statia Terminal, the main employer on the island of Statia, is the newest sponsor of this year's Golden Rock Regatta. Others include the Statia Island Government, De Wilgen Vastgoed, Presidente, The Moorings, Windward-Adventures, Lighthart Communicatie, Bobby's Marina, Captain Oliver's, Sint Rose Arcade, and Nettravel Associates.



Now in its fourth year, this multi-island regatta has already attracted an impressive number of participants, mainly racing on chartered bareboats, and the organizers say entries are up 30 percent. The regatta itinerary takes participants from St. Maarten to St. Barths, St. Kitts, Statia ("The Golden Rock") and back to St. Maarten. This year's edition runs from November 10th through 15th.

For more information visit www.goldenrockregatta.com.

Three-Legged Race: Fifth Alliance Regatta

The fifth edition of Le Course de L'Alliance regatta will run from November 28th through 30th, with legs from St. Maarten to St. Barths, St. Barths to Anguilla and Anguilla back to St. Martin.

For more information visit www.coursedelalliance.com.

Spice Island Billfish Tourney's 40th Anniversary

Gary Clifford reports: January 20th through 23rd 2009 will mark the historic 40th running of Grenada's Annual Spice Island Billfish Tournament — the longest-running and most popular tournament in the Southern Caribbean. For those who do not know the term, "billfish" refers to members of the marlin, sailfish, spearfish and swordfish family, which have in common the extended upper jaw known as a "bill".

—Continued on next page



A shot from the old days of the Spice Island Tournament, when all fish were brought to the scales





—Continued from previous page

It all started with Jim Needham of Grenada's Flamboyant Hotel. He lived to fish and loved to venture along the coastline of Grenada in his 14-foot open boat, *Mambo*, where he caught dozens of billfish. In 1964, he called his friend Louis Rostant from Trinidad and they met in Grenada with Martin Mathias, owner of a beautiful sportsfishing vessel, *Bahari*, to stage the first-ever Grenada Fishing Tournament.

Jim and Louis worked tirelessly to refine the organisation and adapted International Game Fishing Association rules to suit the Grenada event. These men worked hard at attracting visitors and local anglers alike to participate in the annual event.



In present-day tournaments, it's catch-and-release. Fish are tagged, photographed and set free

Almost immediately, boats from all the neighbouring islands — Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, St Lucia and Martinique — joined in, and are to this day the main contingent of support.

Back then, the number and weight of fish brought to the dock determined the winner, and people would crowd around the weighing scales at the end of the day to see the fish displayed. Times have changed and now, in the interest of conservation, most billfish are released alive. Each boat gets a camera to photograph the fish in the water and points are awarded based only on the species of billfish, not the size. Only a few of the biggest fish (usually potential record breakers) are retained and weighed for points.

The 2008 tournament had 36 boats carrying 175 anglers. Why do they come? Grenada's waters are some of the most prolific in the Southern Caribbean and the tournament reliably produces multiple releases of Blue Marlin, White Marlin and Sailfish, and is probably the only tournament where you have a good chance to catch a Grand Slam — a catch of three billfish species in one day.

As a major new change to celebrate the 40th anniversary, for the first time the tournament will allow the use of 80-pound line. This development is sure to attract more competitors, as this will greatly increase an angler's chances of landing a blue marlin bigger than the 669-pound record fish caught in 2006.

As an added attraction for anglers, SIBT is a qualifying tournament in the IGFA Offshore championship — the winner is invited to a tournament of champions held in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. It is also included in the newly formed Southern Caribbean Billfish Circuit (SCBC) which organises the billfish tournaments of Grenada, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, St Lucia and Martinique into a championship with prizes for the overall winner based on their best three scores from the individual tournaments.

The public is encouraged to come and see the boats parade from the Grenada Yacht Club in St. George's Lagoon, through the Carenage and outside the harbour for the Bimini start at 6:45AM on January 20th (the Carenage and Fort George will be good viewing points).

For more information visit www.sibtgrenada.com.

New Circuit Finale — Tobago Carnival Regatta!

The innovative new Tobago Carnival Regatta will take place from February 10th through 14th. This event, following its fellow circuit members the Carriacou Sailing Series (January 14th through 18th) and the Grenada Sailing Festival (see item above), will no doubt end the new Southern Circuit of Regattas with a bang.

For more information see ad on page 12.

CSA Boats Wanted for Caribbean 600 Race

Liz Brookes reports: In an effort to get more Caribbean Sailing Association (CSA) rated yachts involved in the Caribbean 600 race, I would like to bring *Compass* readers' attention to the following website: http://caribbean600.rorc.org/200809294/race-information.

The lowest CSA rating requirement is 0.870, which means that fast (or fast-ish) 40-footers can take part as long as they adhere to Royal Ocean Racing Club's (RORC) safety requirements, which can be found on the website. I am hoping that we will be able to push the CSA entries up to more than ten yachts, which would allow for a separate CSA class and trophy.

The inaugural Caribbean 600, run by the UK-based RORC and Antigua Yacht Club, is scheduled to start on February 23rd outside English Harbour, Antigua. The course first takes the fleet to the north, passing a mark off Barbuda. After taking Nevis and Saba to port and St. Barths to starboard, the fleet will circle St. Martin before heading south to Guadeloupe. After taking Guadeloupe and Desirade to port, they'll sail back up to a mark off Barbuda before returning to finish in Antigua. The non-stop course is a total of 605 nautical miles.

For more information on forming a CSA class for this event, contact Liz at eb@ondeckoceanracing.com.

Grenada Sailing Festival Promises Tons of Fun

The Port Louis Grenada Sailing Festival, running January 30th through February 3rd, will require stamina. Beyond the racing, there will be fireworks, a fashion show, live entertainment, parties and more parties galore. Be there to get your red cap!

For more information see ads on pages 15, 16 and 17.



ONNE VAN DER WAL

Afloat or ashore, the fun never stops at the Grenada Sailing Festival

—Continued on next page





—Continued from previous page

St. Maarten Heineken Offers Match Racing

On March 3rd, the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta will, for the first time, run a match racing event just before the actual 2009 St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, March 5th through 8th, and offer prize money to the winners.



Match this! Handicap-free action will warm racers up for the 2009 St. Maarten Heineken

This event will be sponsored by Budget Marine, which has been supporting the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta since its inception in a host of different forms, including pioneering the Commodores' Cup. According to Budget Marine founder, Robbie Ferron, "Sponsoring match racing is a great opportunity for Budget Marine to promote new and exciting forms of racing to the Caribbean."

The Budget Marine Match Racing Cup will take advantage of the presence of the many top-level sailors crewing the big boats that participate in the Heineken Regatta. These sailors will have the opportunity to win the US$5,000 first prize by coming a few days early. The rest of the early arrivals will have the opportunity to see some of the top world sailors in tight action very close to where the majority of the fleet will be anchored.

The race takes place in Jeanneau 20s with three-man crews in the Simpson Bay Lagoon. The match racing will be open to six teams by invitation. Interested persons with match racing experience are asked to request an invitation from the Regatta Organization at director@heinekenregatta.com.

Also on March 3rd will be early registration for participants in the Commodore's Cup, the one-day pre-event for the Heineken Regatta (for spinnaker boats only) that takes place in a windward-leeward format. On March 6th, the three-day St. Maarten Heineken Regatta starts with the traditional around-the-island race.

For more information visit www.heinekenregatta.com.

Le Phare Bleu Adds New Event to Caribbean Calendar

January 10th, 2009, will see the launch party for a brand-new sailing event: the South Grenada Regatta.

Taking place from February 27th through March 1st, the event will be a welcome addition to Grenada's sailing calendar, falling neatly between the Grenada Classic Yacht Regatta (February 19th to 22nd) and the Grenada Round-the-Island Race (March 13th to 15th). The South Grenada Regatta will be centered around the Le Phare Bleu Marina & Holiday Resort on the south coast of Grenada, which provides an excellent location for the starts and finishes of the races.

The event will comprise two main races: a "warm-up" event — the Round Glovers Island Race — and then the more challenging "12 Degrees Cup", so named because the race will follow a course marked as closely as possible to the 12°N line of latitude which passes directly in front of Petit Calivigny Bay, the location of Le Phare Bleu.

After having hosted the Grenada Round-the-Island Easter Race in 2008, the organisers are confident that having two shorter races and boats centralised in one location between races, will create a highly charged atmosphere of excitement and provide much for spectators to see.

Le Phare Bleu lends itself perfectly for such an event, as there will be lots of fun for family and spectators, with a Pirate's Trail for children and workboat race taking place on the Saturday, followed by a Junior Sailing event and Dinghy Race on the Sunday. Free berthing in the marina will be offered for all participating vessels during the event weekend.

The organizers are sure that the event will become a firm favourite among sailors and their families and will also be an attraction for local people who can partake in the fun and excitement while enjoying the facilities of Le Phare Bleu.

For more information visit www.southgrenadaregatta.com.

Historic Yet Fresh: The Grenada Round-the-Island Race

The 7th Annual Grenada Round-the-Island Race presented by the Grenada South Coast Yacht Club (GSCYC) will be more than a single yacht race! The event, scheduled to run from March 13th through 15th, will include, in addition to the main Round-the-Island Race on the 14th, a fun day on the 15th including a youth boating exhibition and a Bath Tub Derby, brought back by popular demand.

The early versions of the Around Grenada Race started in 1969 and ran through the early 1970s. It started up again in 1990 and ran intermittently until 1999.

A group of sailing enthusiasts revived this event in February 2002, when it was held as a single race. The following year saw the same group of young people aim higher, with the revival of Grenada's Easter Regatta and its famous feeder race, the Girl Pat Race from Trinidad, blended with the hardened sailors' favorite — the round-the-island race. The GSCYC was born that same year as the organizing body and host for the new Grenada Round-the-Island Easter Regatta. For the past few years, these old sailing traditions, with a new twist, have challenged and entertained local, regional and some international yachtsmen. This year, the moving of the date forward from Easter eliminates conflict with the 28th Annual Bequia Easter Regatta (April 9th through 13th) and helps create a smoothly flowing calendar of boating events in Grenada.

Races will be held out of Garfield's Beach Bar on Grand Anse Beach, and the gala round-the-island after party will be at Bananas Restaurant at True Blue. This year, the Grenada Round-the-Island Race festivities will also include a tribute to the legacy of internationally known multihull designer and builder Peter Spronk, who built the famous *Blue Crane* in Grenada, to raise funds for the first annual GSCYC youth sailing scholarship.

For more information visit www.aroundgrenada.com.



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Venezuela — The Big Country

by Phil Chapman

After a family visit in Europe, my wife, Yvonne, returned to our boat in Venezuela. While she was away, I was busy servicing the engine, generator and heads, as well as doing some interior varnishing, readying *Chaser II* for an imminent departure. Marina TechMarineOriente is a nice place with agreeable staff, and Bahia Redonda also is pleasant although busy, but by now marina life was beginning to get a little tedious — as usual after a few weeks.

We decided to head off for some nearby exploring, and try and get into some water where one can swim and snorkel. Lo and behold, only a few miles from Puerto La Cruz (PLC) is Isla Chimana Segunda, which fortunately is a safe, ideal place to stop. I say fortunately because our propeller was obviously heavily crudded and we could only manage three knots with the motor. There must be something in the water at PLC — I've never come across such fast growth of worms and barnacles.

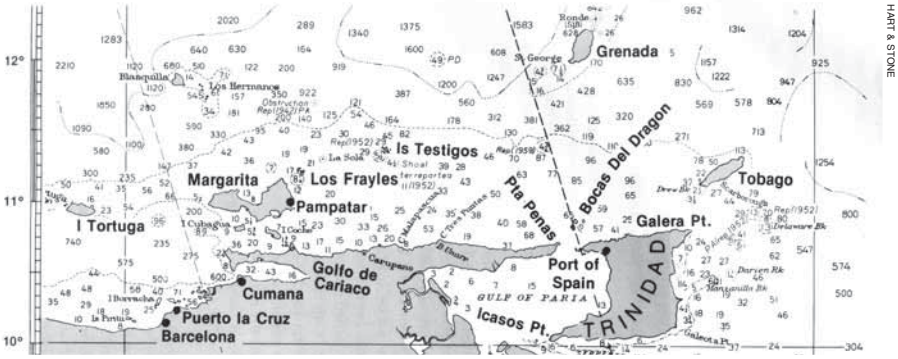
Anchored safely in Chimana Segunda, we entered the water with masks, snorkels and scrapers to remove the offending debris. It took a couple of hours but we got the job done. After lunch we snorkeled around the cliffs in lovely clear water, before going ashore for a coldie later in the afternoon at the bar-restaurant. We had a nice calm night, up at dawn as usual for a leisurely departure to our next anchorage.

Occult Bay, according to our guidebook, is a good overnight stop. Having spent nearly eight weeks in PLC, one gets paranoid with all the talk of pirates in Venezuela, so we too were a little nervous about anchoring in this lonely albeit beautiful bay. There were two other sailboats in the anchorage, so we anchored away from them in order not to intrude on their privacy. After a swim, we dinghied over to ask if they were staying the night. A lovely couple with their young children living aboard *Cavalo Mariño* said they were, so we did too. It is a scenic area, as are so many of the islands and bays surrounding Puerto La Cruz. In the morning the park rangers came past to ask if all was okay.

We moved on early in the morning to Mochima, a bay cut deep inland with a charming village at the bottom. There is so much space to anchor! Near the village the water is a little murky (it is three miles from the sea), but in any of the preceding bays the water was good. Mochima town is a bustling village with restaurants, bars and small shops and many *posadas* (guest houses). It is a tourist village and many local people come here by car to be taxied out by pirogue to one of the gorgeous beaches nearby. It was such a treat to be able to jump into the dinghy after dark, motor ashore to a small dock, then walk the streets and dine in the restaurant Puerto Viejo, overlooking the bay and *Chaser*. Prices were good too. In fact, throughout our travels in Venezuela, the only place we have come across where it is deemed unsafe to walk around after dark are the streets adjacent to the marinas of PLC.

The following day, we explored some of the other bays within the Mochima area. We anchored near the head of the bay, tucked behind a small island where there is room enough for just one boat.

—Continued on next page



HART & STONE



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AT SPANISH WATER

—*Continued from previous page*

The water was clear and the snorkeling was good. We have seen octopus, turtles and many beautiful fishes, right here.

After a few nights in Mochima we decided to move on. We motored out of the bay while being overtaken by many of the water taxis. Once out, we sailed to Cumaná for a couple of nights. The intention was just to get some fuel at the marina, check out a couple of marine stores, and move on…

It's often said that cruising is about fixing boats in exotic places. *Chaser* is only four years old, so there is not too much maintenance to do yet, but we have a Fischer Panda generator that manages to give us hours of "pleasure" trying to keep it running correctly. It is our second one (don't laugh). The first though was replaced under warranty because of a problem that nobody could diagnose, apart from myself (and what do I know?) and a mechanic in Grenada whom Fischer Panda finally listened to. I mention our generator because of the experience we had in Marina Cumanagoto.

We visited Marina Cumanagoto briefly last year; the price was about 18,000 Bolivares per night, but "you gets what you pays for": the slips are falling apart and it's full of apparently abandoned sailing boats. The electric leaves a little to be desired, having to wire directly to an exposed block, with no circuit breakers. Having said that, it's the first 230/240-Volt European supply I've come across in the Caribbean. Normally it's two 110-Volt supplies that give about 215 volts, which can cause all sorts of problems.

However this year the price is 1.31Bfs (Bolivares Fuertes, the new currency) per foot, so with a 300-percent price increase it makes Marina Cumanagoto's berthing more expensive than PLC. Nevertheless, the staff there is very pleasant and helpful. So, back to our Fischer Price — sorry, Fischer Panda — generator. It was throwing out a bit of black smoke, threatening to go the way the first one went, so before it did I thought I would take a look.

A man walked along the dock asking if I knew an American needing some diesel engine repair work. Having just arrived I couldn't help, but his query sparked a conversation between us. The gentleman told me he was a mechanic, so I asked him to take a look at the generator. I didn't want to take it apart myself and then find I needed a gasket or something that I couldn't locate. He turned up on time the following morning, took things apart and damaged a fuel pipe in the process, saying, "Don't worry, I can fix it". He and I went to a couple of parts shops to locate the necessary items. No luck. He was given a phone number of a supplier in PLC. He phoned them, asked for the parts to be delivered and was apparently told they could be delivered to him in a couple of hours. I would, though, have to give him the money for them now, so when he received them he could pay for them.

Okay, I trusted him, and needless to say I didn't see him again. I trusted him because the marina security had his *cedula* number, I knew where he worked and had his car registration.

—*Continued on next page*



ROBINSON

A different world. Just a short sail from the bustling marinas of Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela, the anchorage at Chimana Segunda is calm, clean and (except on weekends) quiet

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It wasn't the money so much, but I was so annoyed with myself for letting him do what he did. Now I had a non-functioning generator that couldn't be fixed without the making of a new fuel pipe and a new or reconditioned injector, which would mean spending more time in the marina.

The Marina staff was very helpful. They sent a new mechanic and he got the new pipe made, but the only place to recondition the injector was in Puerto La Cruz. I didn't want to sail back, so I decided to go by car. My new mechanic gave me the address, and told them I would arrive the following morning.

I decided to phone Andres Hernandez in PLC. Anyone who spends time in any of the marinas in PLC knows Andres, a taxi driver and tour guide who does anything to help the cruising community. Andres said he would arrive in Cumaná to collect me at 0630 hours and take me to the diesel injection specialist outside town.

We arrived and with Andres's help explained the problem. Within an hour all was complete. Andres and I had time for breakfast and returned to the store to collect the injector, and then Andres drove me to the Cumaná *por puesto* (collective taxi) terminal to arrange my transport back to Marina Cumanagoto. I was back aboard *Chaser* by lunchtime and the new mechanic came the following morning to complete the repair.

So thanks to Caesar, the Cumanagoto mechanic, and Andres from PLC, we were able to be underway the following day. But what a nightmare, caused by a coincidental chat with a shady mechanic and my trusting nature. I have, by the way, been to the police, made a *denuncia* and given them all the details. I've also written (in Spanish) to Cumanagoto, advising them not to employ the first mechanic, as he can't be trusted. Maybe this will help prevent some other poor sod from being taken in.

We carefully disconnected the sodden electric supply before sliding out of our slip, then, off to Medregal Village in the Gulf of Cariaco.

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Left: All aboard the cruisers' market-day bus to Cariaco!



CHAPMAN (ALL)

Right: One of our escorts up the Gulf of Cariaco



—*Continued from previous page*

We passed some beautiful landscapes and attractive anchorages, and were escorted by so many dolphins it was unbelievable. We decided to stop only in Laguna Chica, a charming little anchorage with a small fishing village at its head. There is a huge bar and a tiny church, so obviously more beer drinkers than worshipers, thank God. We decided to go for a beer and prayed they had some. They did. We had a good evening watching the sun go down over the anchorage, goats running in and out of the bar and chickens picking up the scraps.



Laguna Grande is a spectacular bay, deeply indented with a desert landscape, but we only looked in. We'll stop here before heading out to Isla Coche and Margarita on our way out of the Gulf.

Medregal Village is a marina/posada complex with haul-out facilities. There is a nice anchorage, and the hotel, run by a Belgian man, Jean Marc, and his wife, Yoleda, welcomes cruisers. There is a bar and restaurant, pool and table tennis tables, and a swimming pool, all available for us to use. The bar is run on an honour system, and Jean Marc will make up your bill when you ask. It's a convenient system and avoids the need of a permanent barman. However this does lead to Jean Marc being taken advantage of. (Some nationalities, I'm told, are worse than others, running up a large bill and disappearing in the early hours without settling.)

The haul-out facility has been running now for just over a year and works well. There is a concrete ramp into the sea and the travel-lift drives into the water until it reaches the necessary depth for your vessel. I can recommend Jean Marc and his staff; they do a good professional job getting the boats in and out of the water. Nothing is too much trouble for him, and he'll also arrange transport to wherever you would like to go, whether it is shopping or sightseeing.

Just along the beach is a small house called CocoBongo. Sven and his partner, Eva, are former cruisers. They have sold their boat and opened a pizzeria in the garden of their house. Sundays and Thursdays are the evenings they open, offering cold beers and good pizza to eat there or take away at a price you can afford. You can walk there from Medregal Village or take your dinghy to Sven's dock.

In between Medregal Village and Sven's house is a small kiosk that sells some basic foodstuffs. It is open seven days a week. Here you can buy eggs, some vegetables, milk, flour, etcetera. Walking along the road or off road is interesting, too. Monkeys and anteaters have been seen here, as well as small deer, *capybaras* (giant rodents), and a vast array of birdlife.



Above: We enjoyed spotting critters such as this puffer fish while snorkeling in clear water at Chimana Segunda and Mochima

Left: The haul-out at Medregal Village in the Gulf of Cariaco

I am surprised how few sailboats there are in the area. Porlamar, Margarita, always has between 60 and 100 boats in the anchorage, whereas here there are only about 20 on a good day. Yes, the shopping is better in Margarita, but this area is beautiful.

—*Continued on next page*

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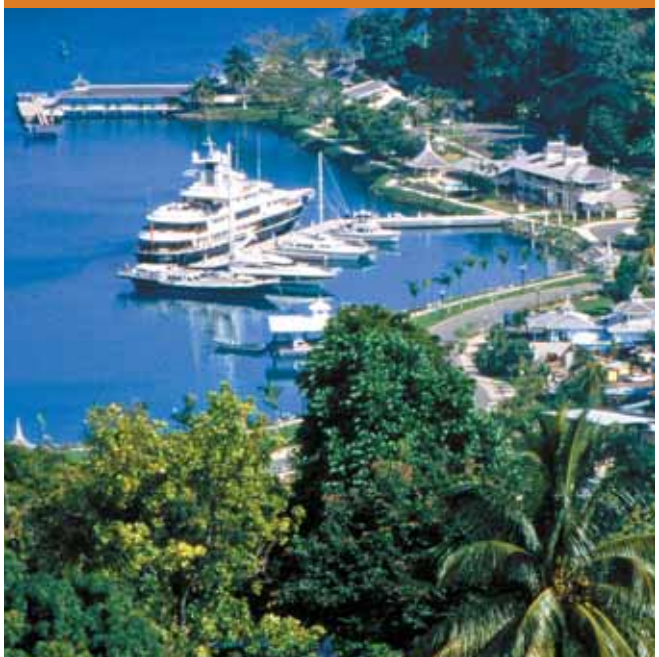


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The Gulf of Cariaco has great sailing where you can travel up and down or tack side to side with lots of safe and attractive anchorages. You can go ashore by dinghy, walk the streets, take a beer at the local bars, and visit the local markets and shops. We anchored for a few days off a pretty village called Guacarapo and then at the far eastern end at Muelle de Cariaco. Here we dinghied up the river to see the hundreds of Scarlet Ibis return to their nests and, as darkness fell, watch the fish-eating bats stream past our heads. I'm glad they had good sonar — they missed us by inches.

No worries here about security, but at one anchorage we were advised by one of the cruisers to lock our dinghy. He told us there had been "two robberies one month ago". How stories spiral! We informed him there had actually been only one robbery two months ago. A couple of thieves stole a dinghy that was tied to the back of a sailboat. The owner heard a noise and saw a pirogue silently drifting away with his dinghy. He shouted and then fired a flare, which landed beautifully in the pirogue. I suppose it ruptured the fuel line because the boat burst into flames. The crew jumped overboard because they themselves were on fire. They swam ashore, leaving the pirogue burning and the dinghy drifting (which was later recovered). The thieves, needing some hospital attention, walked into the village, where they were recognized by local fisherman who knew them for what they were. When the Guardia arrived they were carted off to hospital, where I am told they are making a full recovery, after which they will be sent to jail. So, it would appear the only thieves that operated in the area are now off the scene. Of course, the local people themselves want a theft-free environment; they wouldn't want to allow any bad elements in, which could jeopardize their livelihood and good reputation.

On the subject of security there have, as we know, been one or two serious boardings and thefts around the northeast coast of Venezuela and Margarita, which is far too many and nobody would wish that to happen to anybody. Of course there are places renowned for problems, such as Puerto Santos and much of the north coast of the Peninsula of Paria. Araya, too, is known to be problematic as is Robledal and the Boca del Rio area in Margarita. It's a shame, though, to tarnish a whole country because of a few bad areas that for some reason cannot be controlled. I do still believe that much of Venezuela is a safe place to be, but the reputation of Venezuela as a whole, this huge country, gets tarred with the same brush. If you have a bad meal in New York, you don't say, "I'm not eating out in the States again".



Boat parade parties are part of Venezuela's annual Virgen del Valle fiesta

I know for a fact that some of the reported incidents were, shall we say, an exaggeration of the truth. In fact, a couple of the incidents that were described on Noonsite and in the *Caribbean Compass* were so exaggerated by the writers, they were almost fictitious. One such reported "attempted boarding" was in Margarita. At 3:00AM a call on VHF 72 reported fishermen trying to board a vessel in the anchorage. The nervous owner saw a pirogue close to the stern of his boat, maybe ten metres away. The fishermen were pulling a net, but our paranoid friend considered that was a ploy to avoid detection, so he fired a flare at them and they quickly started their outboard to get farther away, dragging their net with them. They continued to pull their net, by now of course under floodlights from every yacht in the anchorage. These guys had laid their net the previous afternoon between the anchored yachts — that's what they do — and we saw them do it on this occasion. But of course now it's in the record books as "another Venezuelan pirate attack".

Another "armed boarding" was also not quite as reported, but I wouldn't want to report what really happened.

I know dinghies are stolen in Margarita — it's not a good place to leave a dinghy unlocked — but I've also seen dinghies drifting away from the dock when a worn painter had broken or wasn't tied properly. I collected one of these, and on another occasion a French boat found another. They had been reported "stolen". We returned them to the owners in the morning, but the reports had already gone in.

On the other hand, new friend of ours, aboard *Saltberg 7*, told us that once when they were anchored at the eastern end of the Golf of Cariaco, they were approached by a fishing boat with a family aboard. After a brief conversation, they invited the fisherfolk aboard for a beer. The old granny with the fishermen asked if she could use the toilet. The granny remarked how lovely the boat was. Three days later, *Saltberg 7* was approached by a pirogue — no, not pirates, but fishermen, and the same old granny was aboard. She said, "You have a lovely boat, but it is missing something." She handed them a crocheted toilet seat cover and toilet roll holder.

I love to hear these stories, but they rarely get mentioned. Many people come to Venezuela reluctantly, just to escape the hurricane season, and don't go outside Puerto La Cruz. They listen to rumors and wait impatiently for November, when it is safe to leave and return to "civilization". There is so much to see here — Yvonne and I have only scratched the surface. As I've said before, in my experience traveling through Venezuela I have found it a safe place to be and the people some of the friendliest we've encountered.

Carúpano is a town not to be missed. It has beautiful beaches and a lovely, clean town center, with good shops and friendly people. Tourism hasn't really arrived in this part of Venezuela, so we foreigners are just treated as visitors and not wealthy tourists. Jean Marc and Yoleda took us to Carúpano by car through some stunning, lush scenery. They showed us some of the sights, but we have to return again — there is too much to see in one day.

We're back now (September) in the Medregal Village anchorage to witness the fisherman's fiesta of the Virgin Del Valle. Many of the fishing boats from the local village of Cachicatos take part, decorating their boats with flags and balloons and parading up and down the coast. Plenty of rum and loud music is involved.

Chaser will take off again in a few days and explore some of the other delights of the Venezuelan coast, but will return to Medregal for a haul-out and bottom paint in November, then we'll do some more inland exploring.

SMALLER BAYS IN THE GOLFO DE CARIACO

by Roland O'Brien

One recent evening my wife and I were sitting in the cockpit of our *S/V M'Lady Kathleen* while anchored in Porlamar, Isla de Margarita. Lightning storms were scattered across the southern horizon. As we recently spent some time in the Golfo de Cariaco we know that many of these storms come from the mainland, cross the Golfo, then continue northward to the northern edge of Venezuela. Despite that fact, we're soon headed right back into the Golfo.

Don't get me wrong; we don't like lightning storms any better than anyone else. However, we've found too many really good reasons to spend time cruising the Golfo de Cariaco. The Golfo is entirely south of the insurance "box," which means that nearly all the insurance companies provide coverage for a named storm, should one hit the area. In fact, many of the vessels in Margarita would logically run to Laguna Grande, in the Golfo, if a tropical storm or worse should approach Margarita.

The Golfo de Cariaco is very much like a large inland lake, with many of the same positives. It's about 35 miles in length and between five and eight miles wide, which means there are many day sails or even half-day sails available from one shore to the opposite shore, or along either the southern or northern shores. In some respects it's much like cruising the British Virgin Islands, where the islands are visible and the sailing is easy. Fetches being shorter than in the open sea, resulting waves are also reduced. Waves can still build quickly in squalls but are more manageable.

We recently had a blow of 35 knots from the east as we rounded the point into the Golfo. Waves soon became a high chop so we headed for Puerto Real, which is on the northern shore and well protected against all but westerly winds. Puerto Real is a very picturesque small fishing village with only a few homes. We saw no evidence of vehicles except for a lone motorcycle, leaving us to think that everything required is brought in via *piñero* (local name for what is known as a pirogue in islands further north). We anchored in 17 feet of water at 10° 34.17' North, and 64° 06.864' West, spending a peaceful night despite winds howling out in the Golfo.

Much has been written about the haul-out facilities in the Golfo, both Navimca and Medregal Village. However, there is a new pizza place, called CocoBongo, just 250 yards east of the Medregal Village anchorage. Sven and Eva, a Swedish couple, have taken up residence on the shore and have built a large wood-fired pizza oven. They sell excellent pizzas on Thursday and Sunday evenings.

As well, much has been written about Laguna Grande, which is a huge lagoon containing many anchorages, and with bright colored mountains surrounding it. We enjoy visiting Laguna Grande, however, we actually prefer anchoring in the much smaller bays, many of which are isolated or at least very quiet.

One of the small areas we found was behind the wall at the Navimca haul-out facility. There is room for a few vessels but it could get crowded if more than five or six tried to anchor. Despite what some of the cruising guides show, getting into the outer break-wall area is a bit tricky. We first kept the huge round outer buoy to our starboard side, then the same for a couple of small floats with a tiny red flag. The next items that we kept to our starboard side were two 2-liter soda bottles, partially submerged.

—Continued on next page



Above: A salt-water 'lake' with good sailing and plenty of places to drop the hook



Right: Punta Tinajones features an unspoiled landscape, but the anchorage is not as well protected as others

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Left: 'Many of the vessels in Margarita would logically run to Laguna Grande if a tropical storm should approach'

Below: The fishing village at tiny Carenero bay



O'BRIEN

—Continued from previous page

To our port side was a piece of white foam. After that it was possible to anchor or follow some small floats if you were intending to go to the haul-out area. We anchored at 10° 27.2' North, and 63° 56.4' West, in 7.9 feet of water. We stopped here because we needed to visit one of the chandleries in Cumaná for a new float for the bilge pump. We found it quite easy to go through the Navimca facility to the street and catch a taxi.

Moving a bit eastward, Carenero is a tiny bay, well sheltered, except perhaps from northerly winds, although it's noisy due to its proximity to the coastal highway with the many buses, trucks, and trailers. Fortunately, the noise dies down in the late evening. Perhaps six or eight homes surround this bay, mostly fishermen, although we did see a sailboat and a powerboat docked at one home. There's a skeleton of an old steel-framed vessel lying wrecked against the shore, which the pelicans have taken over. Probably not more than three or four vessels should attempt anchoring here at one time and one must be wary of the fishermen's netting procedures so as not to cause them problems. We anchored in 23 feet of water at 10° 26.382' North, 64° 02.272' West. It appeared possible to go to shore here if one desired, although we didn't.

Moving eastward again, along the southerly shore of the Golfo, Sena Larga, which means deeply indented bay, is exactly that. We were the only vessel anchored there the afternoon we stopped in. We had just covered the mainsail and put the sunshade up, when a typical mid-to-late afternoon storm hit. Sitting in the middle of the bay we watched mud run down the hillsides into the bay. Soon, we were floating in a sea of chocolate milk and refuse from the run-off. The bay flushed out within a few hours, but it's worth mentioning that after these heavy rains, chunks of wood and refuse will be floating in the Golfo for the next day or two, so caution is urged. At the head of Sena Larga, there's a public beach and picnic area, including shelters. This is another anchorage where the highway is close enough to be easily heard. We anchored in 18 feet of water at 10° 27.2' North and 63° 56.4' West.

One small anchorage we wish we'd not stopped at was on the northern shore. Tinajones, from our viewpoint, turned out to be not well protected, deeper than we like, and exposed to a constant flow of *piñeros* passing by throughout the night. Given enough time, we'd pass that one up for better-protected anchorages. However, we dropped the anchor in 26 feet, and were soon in more than 50 feet, at 10° 33.191' North, and 63° 53.293' West.

A nice anchorage on the northern shore (eastern end) of the Golfo de Cariaco is located adjacent to the village of Guacarapo. Usually there will be a few cruisers anchored here as it's only a few Bolivars to ride a *por puesto* (typical pickup truck with benches in the rear) over to the village of Cariaco, which is the main shopping town in the east. The view here is not spectacular as the waterfront has a row of typical small tin-roofed houses, and a few small kiosks for staples such as *pan* (bread), *papas* (potatoes), *huevos* (eggs), etcetera. It's a good place to go ashore and stretch your legs with a walk around the point. Again, upon our arrival we had no sooner completed our coverings when we got a very strong blow of a maximum wind speed of 45 knots, and a steady wind of 35 knots for at least an hour, which came primarily from the southwest. It was interesting watching the *piñeros* come racing in off the Golfo with some tying to docks, while others used a bow anchor and a stern line to some mangroves to await the storm's passing. We anchored in 16 feet of water at 10° 29.787' North, 63° 44 .012' West.

A pleasant stop at the far southeastern end of the Golfo is Muelle de Cariaco. This is a wide anchorage, with room for many vessels. Access to the street in this fairly large village is easy after taking the dinghy to the fishermen's dock. Additionally, scarlet ibis, parrots, kingfishers, egrets, and other aquatic birds abound. You can see them from the anchorage but either an early morning or dusk drift with the dinghy is better. This anchorage is also close enough to be able to take the dinghy to the small stream that feeds the bay, and runs into Laguna de Cariaco. We've motored up the stream for a mile or more and then shut off the outboard and drifted back out using just paddles or oars. Beautiful jungle sounds and all the wildlife make this trip extremely worthwhile. There's a gasoline station up the hill and it's only a short *por puesto* ride to Cariaco. We anchored in 17 feet of water at 10° 28.591' North, 63° degrees, 40.077' West. Oh, don't be surprised if youngsters from the village row out in small *piñeros* to ask for candy or cookies. They do it in a non-threatening manner, so we took it in good humor and participated.

There are many more small anchorages in the Golfo, all subject to further exploration. We've found the locals in the Golfo appreciate us as cruisers and on more than one occasion have befriended cruisers against outsiders in *piñeros*. Leisurely sailing, frequently on a broad reach (believe it), between the small bays, anchoring early in the afternoon (watch the horizon for squalls), and relaxing in the evening. What more could we ask while spending the summer in Venezuela?

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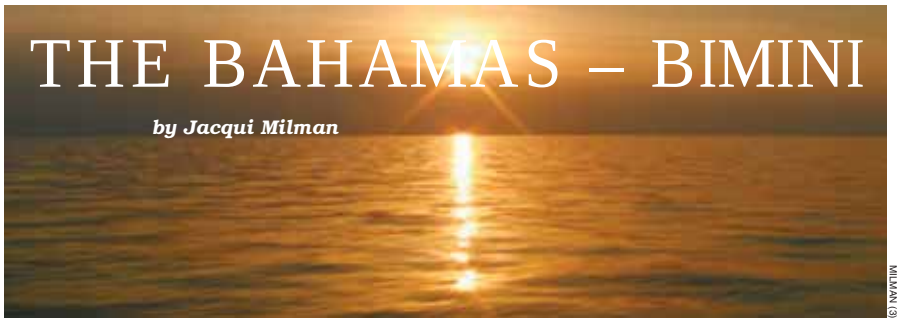
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THE BAHAMAS – BIMINI

by Jacqui Milman



MILMAN (3)

Bimini is a popular deep-sea fishing area immortalized by author Ernest Hemingway. Consisting of two main islands, North Bimini and South Bimini, the Biminis are the westernmost islands of the Bahamas. They are about 60 miles east of Miami, Florida. Bimini is a Native American Taino word meaning Mother of Many Waters (Bibi = mother, mini = waters).

South Bimini has a small airport and a quiet residential community. It is home to the Bimini Biological Field Station (www.miami.edu/sharklab), known locally as the SharkLab, famous for its research on marine ecosystems, especially those supporting various species of sharks.

North Bimini contains the community of Alice Town, a collection of small shops, some restaurants, a museum, and the Customs house. Probably the most famous establishment was The Compleat Angler, a modest three-story hotel made famous by Ernest Hemingway, who often frequented the establishment. It became a major tourist attraction, housing much Hemingway memorabilia. Alas, a fire in January of 2006 destroyed the building.

Aboard *Che'lu*, our ten-year-old, 36-foot Trawlercat (a power catamaran made by Endeavour in Clearwater, Florida), my husband Chris and I traveled to Bimini from Nassau, crossing the Great Bahama Bank. There was NO wind, so it was delightful motoring, the water slick calm — an absolutely perfect day for traveling. The sun wasn't up high enough at first to give the water its greens, blues and aquas yet. It was a continuous gray sheen that ran seamlessly into the gray sky, as though there were no horizon, just an endless sea that goes into forever. The water was so fantastically clear — our depth gauge registered over 90 feet and you could count the starfish on the bottom! The silky surface was stunningly beautiful. The flying fish made zipper trails on the surface when they took off. They would go several yards, sometimes gaining even more distance by touching the water and then launching themselves again, like skipping stones. Something big jumped and flying fish went in every direction, like spokes in a 180-degree arc.

We saw pilot whales off, oddly enough, Whale Point. Their shiny backs bumped out of the water, glistening like onyx. The sun was directly behind us, casting a silver swath that made it look like our wake was gilded and stretching all the way to the horizon.

As the sun rose higher, it danced on the riplets of the wind, like thousands of tiny, twinkling stars splashing in joyous abandon before they have to return to the sky on night duty, then disappear as the surface smoothes to a mirror-like quality again; like hundreds of thousands of tiny tin men, marching across the ocean water, trudging up and down the hilly waves, their armor glinting in the sun as they top each crest. Little salt crystals glinted in the sun where water had splashed on the deck. And the sun was refracted into a million jagged shards on the choppy surfaces of the sea.

We were getting a lift from the current, doing over nine knots at times, with the engine at 3000 rpms. Our wake trailed behind us, leaving a foamy froth bordered by diagonal, white-capped wavelets on either side, cresting, one following the other, decreasing in size until they dissipated altogether.

As we neared Bimini, a seagull followed us for a minute or two, hoping we might have something for him. Funny how sea birds learn that boats are possible sources of food. As we navigated the channel to the dock, a seaplane came charging toward us. The channel was also the "runway" for Chalk's airline (owing to a tragic accident last year, Chalk's no longer flies). We docked at Weech's in Alice Town and easily found the big pink building that houses Customs and Immigration.

At Weech's office there is a parrot outside, near the bathrooms/showers. He whistles and talks. A friend was in the shower and, just as she undressed, she heard this wolf whistle and looked around to see if the door had come ajar and some man was watching. It was the parrot!

We rented a golf cart and drove around the island. There is a gorgeous beach on the Atlantic side. Conch abound in the waters surrounding the Biminis and many fences are decorated with the shells and driveways lined with them.



Top: Sunset on the Great Bahama Bank
Above: 'As we navigated the channel to the dock, a seaplane came charging toward us'
Below: Golf carts are available for rent. Many fences are decorated with conch shells



Bimini is home to several phenomena of nature. The Fountain of Youth for which Ponce de León searched is rumored to exist on South Bimini. Natives told de León of a land called "Beemeenee" where the fountain could be found. Today, on the road leading to the airport, there is a small freshwater well with a plaque to commemorate the Fountain of Youth.

The Bimini Road is another phenomenon that has attracted much attention. In the 1930s, American clairvoyant Edgar Cayce predicted that remnants of the Lost City of Atlantis would be found off the coast of Bimini in 1968 or 1969. In 1969, almost a half-mile stretch of precisely aligned rectangular limestone blocks was discovered in about 20 feet of water off Paradise Point on North Bimini by the Honorary Curator of the Miami Science Musem while diving. Historian Dr. David Zink believes the stones were placed by humans. Author of *1421: The Year China Discovered America* Gavin Menzies believes the "road" was created by shipwrecked Chinese voyagers. Still others claim the limestone blocks, many ten to 15 feet long, are the result of dredging, tidal fluctuations, or sea desposits. Today they are called "The Bimini Road." We snorkeled over it, following what looked like huge stone rectangles laid out as if for vehicles to travel on. It does indeed look like a road.

There is excellent snorkeling and diving all around Bimini. A shipwreck, the *Sapona*, is a landmark as it juts out of the shallow waters. Fish abound, as do corals and other sea life growing on the rusty remains.

In conclusion, even though Bimini is tiny, it has a number of attractions to keep one busy for several days. It is a delightful place to visit.

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Tobago Revisited: New Experiences and Old Year's Night Delight

by J. Wynner



WYNNER

December 31st at Store Bay. 'I had forgotten that Tobago is so pretty'

The scarce sun of the preceding week finally shone for our *TT Spirit* ferry crossing from Port of Spain, Trinidad, to Scarborough, Tobago, one mid-morning in late December. But the blue sky did not reflect in the choppy water, which retained its pewter hue; and my poor, dizzy head was not because of brew!

Sitting in the front row at the bow, we were entertained by the knot-by-knot commentary throughout the voyage via the best of surround sound — our fellow passengers. "Eh, boy he going through... he eh slowing down at all at all... he mashing the X fuh so". When a monster of a swell gave the vessel a severe rock, hurling one of the three or four standing passengers back down on his seat, one commentator let us know that the "cap" had hit a manhole. Yet another asked one of the standing passengers, "Yuh see it?" "Yes, eighteen feet". "Gawd, I would give anything to see a wave like that, is years I traveling up and down and ah never experience anything so."

At last! We cross a dull-looking patch of sea and we're sailing in blue water. We leave the mountainous, wooded coastline of Trinidad behind, and we're looking directly into a luminous light radiating from the Tobago lowlands. There are more buildings than I remembered. I could not believe I had forgotten that Tobago is so pretty. The view from the vessel was breathtaking: the Atlantic shore with the picturesque Scarborough Harbour framed by its brightly painted hilltop buildings pleasurably rekindled memories of my last visit to the sister isle, which was well over a decade ago.

And it felt so incredible driving off the ferry into busy, bubbly Scarborough. What delight! Just jump in your car and drive off the boat. Hallelujah! If only all overseas travel could be the same — without the bothersome necessities of disembarking and then having to get transport to your destination, of going through Immigration, waiting for your luggage and facing Customs.

One of the most notable differences of this trip for me has to include the ferry ride — the first time for me. The other was driving from Scarborough along the bucolic Claude Noel Highway, onto the Milford Road to lively Crown Point where we stayed. Previously the drive was always reversed, starting from the Crown Point Airport end and going towards Scarborough, whether to branch off on the Shirvan Road to get to Mt. Irvine, or to go to Bacolet.

But this time our destination is Crown Point. You spot the tower of the hotel from the Store Bay Road, long before you turn into the hotel's driveway. As you leave the reception area and head poolwards, you blink from the blue glare of sea and sky that meets the eye. The grounds, with their garden layout of cabanas and apartments on lush lawns, complement the startling blue. In front of the apartments bordering the street side of the compound, a half dozen or so common fowls scratch in the sunburnt grass.

Below us, waves pound the facing of the high rocky terrain, from which steps with plantation-style railings take you down to the popular Store Bay. Across the sandy beach, a beautiful view of the Coco Reef Hotel greets you, and, looking out to sea, smiles and smiles of Caribbean blue water. But my head is still woozy from the trip so I take a tablet for the dizziness and try to sleep it off.

Early in the evening I emerge and roam the grounds, enjoying the atmosphere, and finally settling on a bench nearest the pool area where a small garden wedding reception is being held.

I strain my ears to hear a female vocalist singing 'The Christmas Song', so unlike the loud Soca music which suddenly startled us the following night while sitting in our living room, shooting the breeze with a couple from a nearby apartment. A look through the kitchen window from where the airport tower and everything in-between could be viewed shows no sign of activity. Thinking some carnival-size fête is taking place "next door", our curiosity gets the better of us ladies in the group, so we decide to track down the source. Crossing the entire length of the compound, we exit through the Johnson's apartments' back gate near the Store Bay car park.

By this time it is around ten o'clock. One or two limers are around. Strolling on, we notice a couple on the beach. We continue walking towards the sound on the other side of the deserted eating area where, to our surprise, we discover five or six persons sitting around a sound system. This was the great fête we had imagined. My eyes could not believe what my ears heard. That was Saturday night fever?

Next morning, sightseeing Sunday, around midmorning we take a drive along the coastal road in Lowlands through a sleepy Scarborough and then we climb the winding road adorned by stately flamboyant trees to the fort above the Scarborough hospital. The museum at the fort is closed on Sundays, but at the lookout, we look back at the lowlands area from where we had just traveled, still bathed in that shimmering light first noticed from the bow of *TT Spirit*. In the opposite direction an upscale residential area, Bacolet, lies before us, blanketed in a green variegated cloak. It looks inviting, and soon we are exploring the area. I am enthralled rediscovering one of my favourite places in Tobago. Leaving Bacolet, we get to the Claude Noel Highway as far as the turning into Mason Hall and venture into the interior of Tobago — another first for me, all previous visits being confined to coastal roads. Facing west, we drive across to Plymouth, taking in the wide open spaces on either side of us, as well as the impressive secondary school building with its sprawling lawn, everywhere so clean and crisp. But shortly we are on the other side of the island. We check out Plymouth village, sizing up the scene for the April jazz festival. Hmmm... I am sure there must be a less choked-up venue in Tobago!

Leaving Plymouth we pass the Grafton Hotel and turn seawards at the Stone Haven Bay road, thick foliage on either side of the road blocking out a good deal of sunlight, creating an eerie ambience. The many hotels and villas, hidden away from the main thoroughfare, surprised me. Making the loop we find ourselves back out alongside the Grafton.

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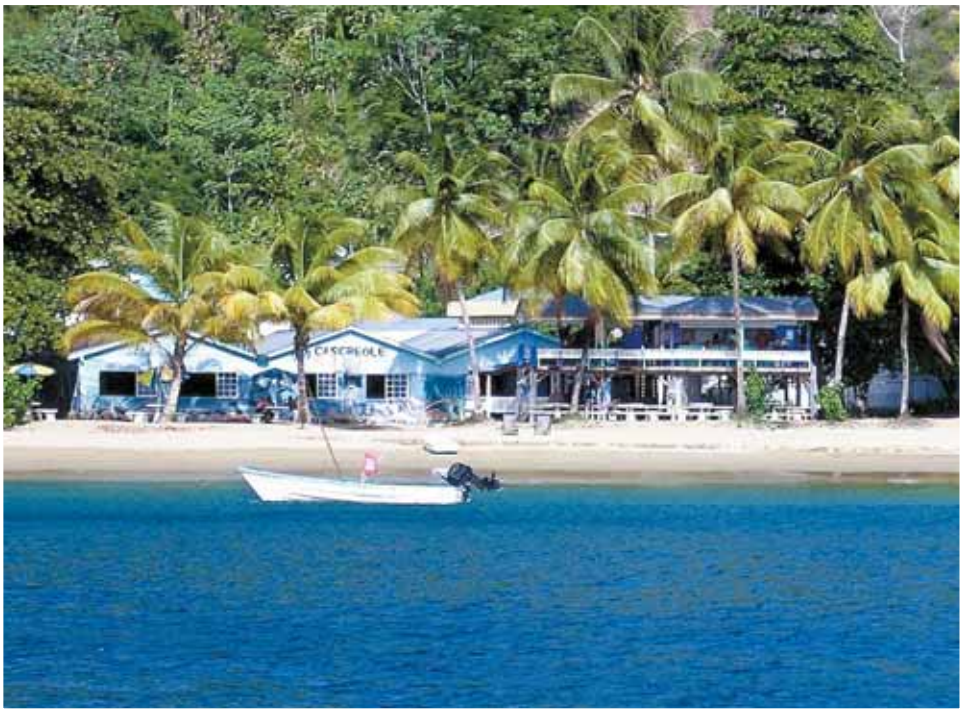


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We head for home, but at the road to Mt. Irvine Hotel we turn in and drive past the hotel's entrance, along the uphill road, surveying future vacation lodging — lovely homes, but a bit on the secluded side security-wise we thought.

December 31st finds us in bliss on Pigeon Point Beach. We enjoy our time in the sea and sun. Later that evening we take our last meal for the year, plate service, out to the patio table in the garden and eat there — by now we don't have the yard fowls to contend with, they are long asleep. We are not the only ones thinking outdoor dining. We see lots of set tables outside. Nearer the hotel, on the lawn at the edge overlooking the sea, some guest is hosting a large dinner party. Lights strung overhead and on the trunks of trees illuminate the formally set dinner places. We four in our quiet little corner are animated with the happenings of the evening and as midnight approaches we pop the cork, fill our glasses and rise in unison to salute the New Year. All around us "Auld Lang Syne" fills the air. Then we hear the ra-ta-ta and see the spectacle over the water. We begin running with the bottle and glasses in hand towards Store Bay. Across the beach, a huge bonfire glistening on the grounds of Coco Reef gives off a golden glow, creating a tropical wonderland, the fireworks above lighting up the sky. We look on in awe. When Coco Reef's display is through it is Crown Point's turn to dazzle, and then for the final curtain call, the yachts in the bay add their presentation to the beauty of the night.

And all too soon it is time to board the ferry again.



CHAPMAN



FIRES

In Tobago, ongoing traditions include net fishing (above) which helps provide fresh fare for the island's many beach bars (such as Cascreole at Castara Bay, top), restaurants, hotels and resorts



IT'S BLOWING IN BEQUIA

by Barbara Gail S. Warden



Coconut trees at the head of the harbor are natural wind indicators: it's blowing!

Last night, the sheet blew right off the berth in the wind sneaking through a half-closed hatch. And the breeze was so cool I actually got up to get the sheet back. Kayaking this morning, I went to snap a picture and blew 40 feet backward by the time I pulled out the camera. The wind strikes a turbulent balance in Bequia, somewhere between pleasantly cooling and deafening. And if you have long hair, you must bring conditioner here.

Admiralty Bay

Apart from wind, the small island of Bequia in the Grenadines is an enchanted spot for walkers, hikers, and cruisers of all kinds. The principal port of Admiralty Bay is a truly delightful cove. With only one dock big enough for a mid-sized car ferry, it nevertheless sports a couple marine repair spots, a sail loft, several mechanics, two grocery stores, fresh produce, shopping, and a bunch of really good restaurants.

And the harbor's welcoming, simple-minded approach is easily accomplished using my favorite methodology: the drink-in-hand. Even in a boat drawing five-plus feet (a modified cruising Ericson 36), it's easy. It's also barely a whole whopping hour's sail from the nearest island to the north (St. Vincent; although checking into the Grenadines there can be time-consuming so you might want to skip it and check in at Bequia, which you can also do at Admiralty Bay, and without waiting).

Inside the Bay, the boats float quietly at anchor even while that wind continues at 20 to 30 knots almost the whole ten days we're here (with startling hiatuses that unbalance you in deafness). The locals all say it's unnaturally windy, but the cruisers who've been here before are split — it's either far stronger or just the same. Somehow, though, it doesn't really rock the boats. It just makes for cool, breezy nights, even with half-closed hatches, and gives the boat that perfect gentle motion and lapping sound that sends you gently to sleep at night... sometimes mid-afternoon.

In the beautifully sheltered inner harbor, there's a nice choice of rickety docks to tie the dinghy to. You can also beach it and clean it right in front of several truly awesome waterfront restaurants.

One day we spend on the harbor walkway, visiting tiny craft shops, bars, and eateries. I buy a cute female-cut tee in the charmingly named Sail Relax Explore charter/travel boutique, and negotiate a horn carved from whalebone at Handy Andy's. This is legal here, because Bequia islanders are allowed to "take" up to four whales per year. Some years they don't get even one, but the week we're here, they capture and begin processing a whale at their low-tech whaling center on tiny Semple's Cay. (We're told it's a messy, smelly business and we should stay far, far away, so we do.)

We lounge for an hour or so over freshly made frozen margaritas in the charmingly iconoclastic Tommy Cantina, admiring the bizarre local crafts: beer-bottle votives and rum-bottle hurricane lamps. They're oddly appealing, both visually and from a reduce/reuse/recycle perspective. We sit in bright hand-painted chairs and watch the harbor from the shady table. The cheerful staff is friendly and the hand-painted bathrooms are fabulous, with homemade sand-and-shell mirrors, reed toilet-paper holder, and a floor patterned with palm fronds. (Literally painted by dipping palm fronds in paint and dropping them on the wooden floor.)

Walking the hundred yards back to midtown, we make a detour to visit the staff of one of our favorite magazines. Yes, the famous *Caribbean Compass* is headquartered right here in Bequia.

Later, we spend an hour on Handy Andy's internet café while they finish folding our laundry. They do everything at Handy Andy's: it's a laundromat-internet-café-fax-realestate-office-giftshop.

—Continued on next page

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Instead of going to see the whale chopped up, we hike an hour or so from Admiralty Bay to lovely Friendship Bay, where we while away another afternoon drinking rum punch in the swinging chairs at the Moskito bar by the beach, which we both find much more soothing.

Another day, we hike two hours across the island to Industry Bay. This is much prettier than it sounds: it's a sweep of pale sand fringed with tall palms. On it, Crescent Beach is a lovely old hotel with a 40-foot ceiling, giant-sized doors and shutters, and peaceful open-air walkways populated only by tiny lizards and white birds. Through sheer sloth we decide we can't walk another ten minutes to see the turtle farm. But we are later told the turtles come right up to you and poke their heads above the water to be stroked, like cats. Maybe next season.

Back at Admiralty Bay, we eat a fantastic dinner at the Frangipani, one of several traditional Caribbean hotels. Juicy prime rib with peppercorn crust and crisp conch fritters. The dark-raftered ceilings, tile floors, and open-air layout of these hotels give the shore an air of old-time elegance. Even these upscale spots welcome cruisers straight off the boat, which we know because we beach the dinghy by their back door and go in with sandy feet and very wet bottoms.

Princess Margaret & Lower Bay Beaches

Along the harbor's southern edge are two palm-lined beaches, Princess Margaret and Lower Bay. In some spots, lounge chairs hold cheerful French families under coconut palms. Others are deserted stretches made for quiet walks at water's edge. The cliffs around Princess Margaret Beach are packed with pools, cracks, and small caves to explore. And yes, Princess Margaret once stayed here, visiting from a near-by private island, Mustique.

On the far side of a rocky cliff is Lower Bay, a longer, local-er beach, perfect for more energetic runs and deserted paddling. Even here you don't have to bring your own drink — stop by one of the low-key open-air beach-bar/restaurants: Dawn's, De Reef, Keegan's and even one called Can't Remember the Name.

Moonhole

One especially windy day, we head out by dinghy along the coast to unearthly, ghostly Moonhole. Founded by an iconoclastic architect, Tom Johnston, this remote community is hard to reach by land. It's also hard to reach by sea, with a rocky lee shore and no beach on the Admiralty Bay side. How the residents get here, I still don't really understand. I hear it involves an off-road Jeep and a lot of walking.



Port Elizabeth's picturesque main street

Already dinghy-splashed, we don't even consider trying to land. We laze away ten minutes washing back and forth in a relatively sheltered cutout between cliffs as high as four-story apartment buildings, which is kind of what they are — eerie Tolkienesque dwellings hewn out of the cliffs as if by underworlders. Many have no right angles. All odd curves and acute angles, they're linked by stairs staggering drunkenly up the erratic cliffs. Most have no glass in the windows — open to breezes, bugs, and salt spray. This gives the whole place a curiously ruinous look. We saw not a sign of life and felt like we had rounded the headland only to encounter the deserted ruins of a previous culture.

More Civilized Fodder

Tomorrow, our last day, we're going to the Devil's Table restaurant, where we'll debark directly from our dinghy to a harborside table, and listen to live music while they combine local cuisine with home cooking. They claim the rights to "the best steak in this whole corner of the Caribbean" and also to excellent calalloo soup, a Caribbean delicacy. It's made from leaves. I can't wait — for the meal, the music, and even for the leaves.

I'm going to miss this quirky place. But we'll be back.



Whiling away an afternoon at Friendship Bay





The History of Yachting in Grenada

Part Two: 1984 to Present

by Don Street

When I first arrived in Grenada, in March of 1962, there was no yachting industry. By the early 1970s, Grenada was on a roll — head and shoulders ahead of Antigua. By the early 1980s, yachtsmen had a choice of marinas and boatyards, and The Moorings made Mt. Hartman Bay the southern terminus of their Caribbean charter bases.

The biggest change that stimulated the yachting industry's next phase of development in Grenada was the local Evans family buying Spice Island boatyard from John Blunt in 1984, installing a travelift and filling in land to the south. Now Spice Island, instead of being limited to hauling one boat at a time on a railway, with their newly installed travelift could haul, and work on or store, a maximum of about 20 boats, a real improvement that substantially increased the amount of money yachtsmen spent in Grenada.

By 1997, the Evans family decided that the Spice Island boatyard was too small and another, larger yard would have to be established. Eventually they received permission to fill land at the head of the northwest arm of Prickly Bay. With the addition of a travelift, chandlery, sail-loft and restaurant, Spice Island Marine was born.

Roger and Myrna Spronk took over the management of the original Spice Island premises (which Peter Spronk had been instrumental in starting), renaming it The Boatyard and adding a popular Tiki Bar and internet lounge.

Then in 1998, local businessman Jason Fletcher took a real gamble, which has proved to be a winner. He wanted to open a new yacht storage facility, as Spice Island was well filled but increasing numbers of yachtsmen wanted to lay their boats up in an area outside of the so-called hurricane box. Most underwriters put the south end of the hurricane box at 12°30' to 12°50' North, so boats stored in Grenada were covered against losses caused by named storms at no extra cost.

Jason found nine acres at the head of St. David's Harbour on Grenada's south coast. The land was filled and graded, a dock and travelift installed, buildings built, and he persuaded the government to rebuild and re-surface the access road. He encouraged various trades to open up shop in his yard, including canvas and woodworking shops. Grenada Marine was a success.

By the summer of 2004, both yards hosted branches of major Caribbean chandleries (Budget Marine and Island Water World) and were booming. The infrastructure to support yachting in Grenada was improving by leaps and bounds.

Unfortunately, Murphy's Law kicked in, in the form of Hurricane Ivan, which hammered the island on September 7th, 2004. Many insurance underwriters' immediate reaction was to move the south end of the hurricane box to 12° North, just at the very southern tip of Grenada, potentially eliminating Grenada as a good place to store boats in hurricane season. However, some yachting writers and insurance brokers pointed out that if boats were properly stored — i.e. with plenty of stands properly tied together, pads to keep the legs from sinking into the soft land, rigs out, boats tied down to dead men and stored with a decent amount of space between them — they should be insurable. Many underwriters have been convinced and will insure boats properly stored ashore in Grenada.

In 2002 Camper & Nicholsons, a company that owns numerous marinas both in the UK and worldwide, signed an agreement to take over and develop the old Grenada Yacht Services in St. George's Lagoon. However nothing happened until Peter de Savary arrived on the scene. He is a man that gets things done. Peter, whose creation of Pendennis shipyard is credited with revitalizing the economy of Falmouth, England, took over GYS and the surrounding area in Grenada, and really got the ball rolling. A modern marina called Port Louis has been built, the squatters moved to new housing on the south coast, and the edges of the lagoon completely cleared of derelict vehicles, wrecked boats and other debris. He undoubtedly stepped on a few toes and got some people mad at him, but he has created a marina that will eventually have hundreds of berths for normal-sized yachts and some 70 berths for mega-yachts.



CHRIS DOYLE

With development of the new Port Louis marina, cruising yachtsmen lost about 20 moorings in a badly polluted lagoon that has been famous for poor holding in very soft muck. But why complain when right outside the harbour mouth in Martin's Bay (also known as Pandy Beach) one finds an anchorage within easy dinghy distance from town and the Yacht Club, with clear water and good holding on a sand bottom.

Yachting is one of the most labor-intensive industries in the world. Even when a marina is only half full, it will still provide considerable local employment — to the extent that many feel that Grenadians working in the yachting field in other islands in the Caribbean and even some of those working in the States will return to Grenada because of the demand for good, skilled yacht labor created by the completion of Port Louis marina and the ongoing success of the other facilities.

A number of marinas, such as Le Phare Bleu, Prickly Bay Marina, Martin's Marina, Clarke's Court and Whisper Cove, have sprung up to cater to the yachts that congregate in the various anchorages on the south coast of Grenada. The Moorings has moved its charter base to Canouan in the Grenadines, but Horizon Yacht Charters has developed a base at True Blue Bay.

Grenada might not replace Trinidad as the number one place to lay up a yacht during hurricane season, but she will certainly give Trinidad a run for the money if all the major players in the island's yachting industry get together and pull together. And as a place for boats to spend the hurricane season with crews on board, Grenada, with its rapidly improving infrastructure, will become the place to be. Grenada, with clear water for swimming and diving, an abundant variety of anchorages, and ready access to cruising the Grenadines, will appeal to many liveaboards as a summer destination.

Hopefully, if a hurricane approaches Grenada, all liveaboard crews will have enough sense to head south to Trinidad, or southwest to Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela, bypassing Margarita. I say this as Margarita could easily become untenable, or even a death trap, if a hurricane aimed at Grenada continued due west. For many yachts, once south of 12° North, they are out of the hurricane box and their insurance comes back in full force.

A very important matter that many yachtsmen do not realize is that most marine insurance policies that do not give coverage *for named storms* in the hurricane box, do give complete normal coverage — for grounding, loss of mast, etcetera — *as long as the loss is not caused by a named storm.* Thus Grenada and the Grenadines are perfectly acceptable cruising grounds during hurricane season; just head south (or better, south and west) if a named storm approaches.

Yachting has in the past put large quantities of money into the economy of Grenada. With the developments in recent years, if the entire yachting community all works together to convince the Government of Grenada that yachting puts massive amounts of money into the economy, the future looks bright — not only for the yachting industry but also for the island of Grenada and for the yachtsmen that support the industry by basing their boats in Grenada or visiting the island frequently.

Dear Compass,



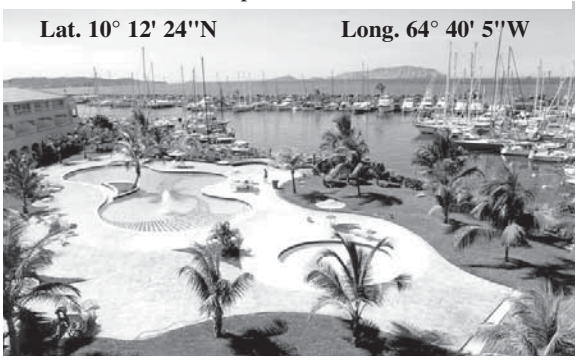
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Early Caribbean Voyages: Earlier Than We Thought?

by Norman Faria

The history books will have to be rewritten about Barbados — at least when it comes to dating the earliest habitation of this Eastern Caribbean island.

Discoveries by British archaeologists in recent years at a former Amerindian village site in the island's northern St. Peter parish show that the first Barbadians ("Bajans") lived there as early as 2000 B.C.

Prior thinking was that the earliest human presence was between 200 B.C. and 400 A.D. To test the new theory, the British scientists took pottery shards and skeletal remains with them to Britain for carbon dating.

Historians say the Eastern Caribbean islands were first settled by Amerindian voyagers from South America. They got here aboard large ocean-going dugout canoes, paddling from island to island. Barbados was probably settled after scouting expeditions came from what are now known as St. Vincent and St. Lucia. Amerindian settlers would have known of land upwind because of the fresh flotsam drifting down towards them.

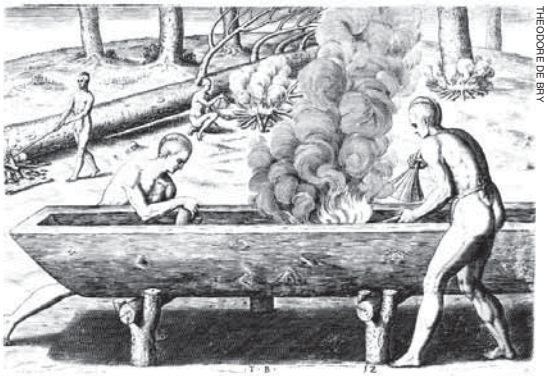
Leader of the University of London team which worked on the St. Peter site and others in the island over the years, Dr. Peter Drewitt, said in a 2003 lecture at the Barbados Museum that the jumping-off point for the Amerindian explorers was in northern South America, specifically around the Orinoco coast. This general area comprises the present-day Venezuelan coastline and its environs, including parts of Guyana.

Of the everyday life of the native peoples in Barbados before the European peoples arrived, Dr. Drewitt said they were farmers and fisherfolk. The first Caribbean peoples gave the name *Ichirouganiam* to Barbados. It means, roughly, "red land and teeth", referring probably to the land's red clay soil and its surrounding reefs.

In 1400 A.D., shortly before Columbus visited the Caribbean, the 166-square-mile island had, he estimates, a total of 50 to 60 villages with approximately 300 to 500 people in each one. They farmed manioc, maize and cassava and fished in both inshore and offshore waters for mollusks, crustaceans and fish.

Because Barbados is of soft coral formation, it did not have any hard stone such as granite. The native peoples therefore had to carve tools out of shell material, mainly conchs. Among the examples of tools found at the sites were some made of harder material brought from the neighbouring islands of St. Vincent and St. Lucia, which were formed from volcanic activity.

Why was that? Surely at that time there was plenty of wildlife on both land and sea, in addition to agricultural produce. Dr. Drewitt disclosed that on some of the skeletons found at the archaeological sites, most of the teeth were gone and the jawbones were abnormally thin. This suggested that there was malnutrition. "It could also mean that the Amerindian settlement became overcrowded, with the population unhealthy and unable to properly sustain themselves, causing the inhabitants to move away from the island," he said.



THEODORE DE BRY



HERMAN MOLL

Above: This engraving from 1590 shows Amerindians making a dugout canoe in the age-old manner, using fire and seashell scrapers. The first inhabitants of Barbados would have used the same methods

Left: The original settlers of the Antilles paddled their log canoes from the coast of today's Venezuela and Guyana northward through the island chain. (Surprisingly, this 18th century map calls the Caribbean the 'North Sea')

Despite the Amerindians' resourcefulness and creativity, life for them wasn't any Garden of Eden. They didn't, for example, live very long by modern day standards. "You would be seriously old at age 30. Most of the burials we found were people in the 35- to 40-year-old age bracket," said Dr. Drewitt.

"If this is correct," he continued, "then it helps to explain how the Amerindians could have been easily wiped out by the introduction of European diseases which arrived about 200 years later."

The population could also have been decimated by slave-gathering sea raiders from neighbouring islands that were settled earlier by Europeans. By the time the first organized European settlers sailed to Barbados in the 1600s, it was uninhabited.

Dog skeletons were found with several of the human remains. Dr. Drewitt explained: "Dogs were probably used, as they are today, as pets and to retrieve downed game such as birds. Perhaps the dogs were also revered for religious purposes to replace the jaguar found in South America. The way the dogs were buried is similar to the way jaguars are ritually buried in South America."

What about cannibalism? The British scholar, who has written a book on Barbados' first settlers, dismissed the theories that the Amerindians were cannibals. "There is no direct historical evidence (of this). There is no archaeological evidence in the Caribbean that human remains were butchered or chopped up for human consumption."

The recovered items from the former village sites on the island include clay pots and axe heads. They will be housed in the Barbados Museum in Bridgetown, reminders of the first Bajans.

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A Glimpse at the Dark Side of Boating



by John Burnie

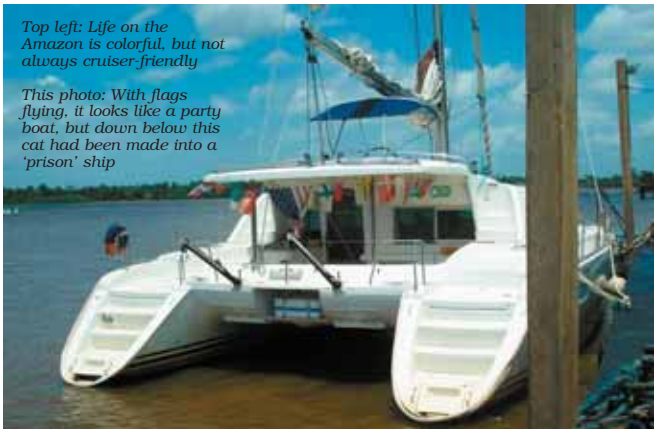
I occasionally assist a German yacht insurance underwriters' company and act as their local contact in the Caribbean. (Readers may remember the account I wrote in the January 2008 issue of *Compass* on the search and recovery of the yacht *Arnolf* on behalf of the underwriters. *Arnolf* was abandoned during the ARC 2006 and later found adrift near Anguilla.)

Cruisers sometimes complain about bureaucracy and red tape, wondering why the authorities want to check up on "innocent yachties". But not all yacht cruises are innocent.

In August 2007, a known and dangerous Polish criminal stole a Lagoon 44 catamaran from a charter company based in Greece. The criminal had done this before and his mission was usually to use the boat for human trafficking (including children) and transporting illegal immigrants to the USA. I had been watching out for this vessel in the Caribbean, and Bill Bailey of Caribbean Marine Underwriters had been assisting in the search. Bill had already helped recover another yacht this same criminal stole some years before and sailed to the Dominican Republic. Bill was therefore clear what we were up against if we were to find the stolen vessel and needed to confront the criminal!

Leisure vessels of this size and nature are stolen worldwide, but statistically 80 percent of them are found and recovered within 12 months, so underwriters will always be determined in their intent to recover where possible.

In late August, the EPIRB (emergency beacon) registered to the yacht that was stolen in Greece suddenly gave a short "ping". This signal was picked up by MRCC (Maritime Communication System for Rescue Coordination Centres) and forwarded to the UK and the vessel's Greek owners.



Top left: Life on the Amazon is colorful, but not always cruiser-friendly

This photo: With flags flying, it looks like a party boat, but down below this cat had been made into a 'prison' ship

Bill and I were informed about the EPIRB "ping" and we traced the signal — not to a Caribbean location, but to Brazil. It was decided that Bill and I would set off on a mission to check out some of the likely places near the area where the signal was located — basically between the mouth of the Amazon River and Fortaleza. I cannot describe adequately how huge the mouth of the Amazon is, so Bill and I were slightly daunted at the prospect of actually finding the stolen yacht. We travelled through Manaus and Belem and made our way down to Fortaleza, with the idea of retracing our steps back up north to the mouth of the Amazon, all the time searching the prospective areas. Bill had already contacted all the relevant authorities in Brazil, all of whom were very keen to help us apprehend the criminal.

It appears this vessel had been already seen near Belem and the Polish individual had already transgressed several local by-laws. He had, in fact, been trying to sell the vessel or parts of the vessel's inventory. While Bill and I searched in the south, the Federal Police suddenly caught the villain in Macapa at the mouth of the Amazon, just north of where we were. This is exactly where the New Zealand yachtsman Sir Peter Blake was killed. The Federal Police arrested the Polish criminal without any trouble (last time, Bill had to get the Dominican Army to help!) and he is now in jail in Brazil awaiting deportation.

Bill and I travelled to Macapa and are, as of this writing, repossessing the yacht for the insured parties. It is not entirely clear why the EPIRB was set off, as we found the unit in its box, switched off and apparently unused. We also found various drugs on the yacht as well as some shocking evidence of human trafficking. The doors on the cabins were all modified with bolts and locks on the outside to make the cabin areas small "prisons".

The yacht is in poor condition and it currently rests in the jurisdiction of the Capitania dos Portos in Samaná, near Macapa, until the paperwork is cleared for its release. Bill and I found all the authorities in Brazil to be highly professional, considerate and helpful. Both the Port Captain and the Federal Police have shown a good intention to release the yacht quickly and with as little bureaucracy as possible.

The Amazon is a fascinating area of the world. However, I would warn the Caribbean cruising fraternity looking for new destinations that this particular part of the Amazon (near the mouth) is very challenging — it is very tidal and not particularly easy for cruising yachts in that moorings, water, etcetera, are not readily available. The river is, in fact, quite a problematic environment for the average cruising yacht, and specialist knowledge and ability are required if you are to remain in the area for a period. Macapa is, however, a fascinating if remote town where a very traditional "river traffic life" still exists and where there are wonderful restaurants that serve delicious freshwater fish that I have never seen before!

Bill and I are now assembling a crew who will collect the yacht and deliver it to the Caribbean for repairs and eventual return to the insured.

John Burnie cruises the Caribbean aboard S/Y Indaba.

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MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2008

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. 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!

November 2008

DATE	TIME
1	1429
2	1520
3	1610
4	1658
5	1744
6	1829
7	1913
8	1958
9	2043
10	2132
11	2224
12	2322
13	0000 (full)
14	0024
15	0130
16	0237
17	0339
18	0437
19	0530
20	0618
21	0703
22	0746
23	0829
24	0913
25	0958
26	1045
27	1133 (new)
28	1224
29	1315
30	1405

December 2008

DATE	TIME
1	1454
2	1540
3	1625
4	1708
5	1751
6	1834
7	1920
8	2008
9	2102
10	2201
11	2306
12	0000 (full)
13	0013
14	0120
15	0223
16	0320
17	0412
18	0459
19	0544
20	0628
21	0711
22	0756
23	0842
24	0930
25	1020
26	1111
27	1201 (new)
28	1250
29	1338
30	1423
31	1506

Second Time Around for Goodwin

by Norman Faria

From the Carlisle Bay shore in Barbados earlier this year, the little double-ender cutter bobbing up and down in the anchorage seemed familiar.

"Yes, the boat was here in the 1990s when you interviewed then owner Olle Landsell. I bought it in 2000," Swedish national Anders Dicander tells me as I row out to have a chat.

Anders made a few changes on board. One, he put in more electrics powered by solar panels. There is also a 15-horsepower Mariner on a special bracket. Oh yes, there is the refrigerator. Anders and his girlfriend Stephanie, who joins him every now and again, wanted comfort even if the cabin of the six-metre-long (20 feet) sloop named *Goodwin II* gets a bit cramped inside.

These little double-ender pocket cruisers continue to be quite popular in Sweden, says Anders. About a thousand of the boats were built. It is called the Havsfidra class (in English, Sea Nymph). The *Goodwin II* is hull number 744 and was built in 1968 for the OSTAR Atlantic race and sailed by Ake Mattsons. It was designed by Lage Ekland.

Anders, 38, said he would have liked another, slightly larger, Swedish boat, the Albin Vega. He settled for the cheaper *Goodwin II*. He took her to the Western Mediterranean and lived aboard for two years while working there before heading west to the Caribbean. He previously had a six-metre racing catamaran but "too much spray was coming aboard".

One of the reasons for "thinking small" is to keep maintenance costs low. Swedish people, however, like "working on and repairing boats" and preserving maritime culture, he says. You only have to look at the many restoration projects of old wooden boats there. Boating clubs and co-operatives are also significant in this regard. Anders belongs to the UVBK (Upplands Vasby Bätklubb) in Stockholm.

Most frequent comments from passersby at the docks and anchorages? He tells you: "Are you crazy?" and "You must be brave".

Unlike Olle, who on his trip headed north through the islands to the Virgin Islands and then back to Europe, Anders said he was thinking at the time of heading west across the Caribbean and on into the Pacific. From Barbados, he was to join Stephanie in Martinique.

You may reach Anders at goodwinll@hotmail.com to see how he is getting along.



NORMAN FARIA

Go small, go now, keep going. Swedish sailor Anders Dicander aboard Goodwin II *in Barbados, on its second visit to the Caribbean. He planned to head west*

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What Goes Around

by David Barton

When their yacht, The Rose, *sinks between Martinique and St. Lucia after striking a submerged object during a squall, our narrator and his girlfriend, Zuma, find themselves adrift in the dinghy.*

'Now and then on the top of a wave I thought I could see the flash of the lighthouse at the entrance of Castries Harbour. We agreed we were more than ten miles out, and we were slowly moving away in the direction of Panama...'

Part Two

In a short while, the heat of the sun made the rain gear we were wearing begin to feel warm. Taking off the jackets was no problem but pulling off the bib-topped pants without dangerously tipping the dinghy wasn't easy. The shorts and light shirts we were both wearing felt good for a while until the sun rose higher and began to bake the back of our necks, arms and legs. We draped the rain gear over our backs, heads, and legs. Our exposed salt-caked skin was soon burning under the roasting rays of the sun.

With one hand and forearm in the water, we continued kneeling and paddling, changing sides now and then. We paddled in silence. When the sun was directly overhead we both seemed to stop at the same time to turn and look at each other. I asked, "How are you doing?"

She said, "Stand up and look. If we're halfway there, I'm doing just fine."

We were lucky in that the tradewinds seemed to be taking a holiday. There was practically no wind at all with only light puffs coming from the north. I crawled up and sat on the seat, letting the heavy rain gear that had been shading me drop to the bottom of the dinghy. It was broiling hot. The sun beat down on my sweating skin, burning through the thin cloth of my short-sleeved shirt. I was parched, hungry, and my arms and shoulders felt like hell from their hours of effort. My knees were raw from kneeling in the salt water that continually got back into the dinghy to slosh around.

I cautiously stood to look toward the island. It was hard to tell if we had closed any distance at all. I said, "We are definitely getting closer," but my positivism slipped as I added, "but not by much."

Zuma groaned with a look of despair as she crawled onto the seat, rubbing her shoulders. As I gingerly sat down beside her she asked, "Judd, are we going to make it?"

"Yes, for sure, because I sure don't like the only other possibility. We *are* going to make it!" I was glad she wasn't looking into my eyes, seeing the doubt.

It was obvious we wouldn't go far in the next ten hours of our paddling effort: we were tiring. At the latitude of St. Lucia, the tradewinds are very dependable. It would probably be only hours before the wind shifted to come again out of the east to push us away from our goal. Regardless of the wind direction, our dehydration would probably put an end to our paddling effort some time the next day. Depression and fatigue bent me forward with my elbows on my knees and my head in my hands.

After a while Zuma nudged me with her hand. When I looked into her face she had a serious expression but her eyes were smiling as she said, "I've been thinking about staying with you. I decided that I would. But considering that in our first trip we went through a hurricane, and in this one the damn boat sank, I don't think I want to sail with you anymore."

As I watched her face she began to smile through her parched dry lips and then we both started laughing. We laughed for too long. We hugged each other and she began to quietly sob. Silence fell on us. There was nothing to say. We lowered ourselves back down to our knees to again begin our puny efforts, each paddling with one arm.

The sea became flat, the air dead. The sun bore down on us like a weight. The haze in the atmosphere made the distant mountains look impossibly far away. We grew lethargic. By mid-afternoon we each had stopped looking to see whether the bow was pointed toward the land; we just kept our heads down and our shadows, cast by the afternoon sun, ahead of us in the bottom of the boat.

And then we gave up and just laid down, trying to cover, to hide from the sun, our areas of bare and blistered skin. We baked. Time hung like a shroud.

A blast of cool air made me think I was hallucinating; and then I heard a loud clap of thunder. Clouds covered the sun and it began to sprinkle. The possibility of catching rainwater to drink revived us. With our shirts we wiped most of the salt out of the boat in the hope of keeping rainwater drinkable. When torrents of large drops turned the sea around us white, we held the rain jackets extended out over the side to direct more rain into the boat. We drank and soaked the water in through our parched skins. It stopped as quickly as it had started. The sun came burning down with what seemed increased force; but we had water.

By dark we convinced ourselves we were a lot closer to the island than we had been that morning. During the night we took turns trying to balance on the seat and sleep because the six inches of sloshing rainwater in the bottom of the dinghy made sleeping there impossible. The one who was awake laid belly down over the bow with hands and arms down into the water paddling, paddling, paddling, paddling.

A very light breeze came up, blowing us in the direction of the scattered lights. Belly down, head over the front of the dinghy, it soon became painful to keep looking ahead, turtle-like, to maintain direction. The breeze blowing on my legs and butt became my compass — for a while. In the middle of the night the wind died momentarily before a fresh breeze started blowing from the island. Soon the oncoming waves grew large enough to splash into my down-turned face hanging over the bow. They became my steering compass. And again the situation looked hopeless.

To escape the misery, my mind wandered. Four times the sea had tried me. If I had stayed on the bow of the troop ship one more wave I would have been washed overboard.

—Continued on next page

—Continued from previous page

If my brother or I had failed, or more realistically if our luck had failed, in just one of the near-disastrous moments of our ill-fated offshore trip we would have been another missing fishing boat. Later, when this same boat had sunk, this time with only me onboard, I had taken a long swim in water too cold. I was in it too long to survive, but I did. And there was the hurricane that Zuma and I, with a lot of luck, had made it through.

Coming back from my reverie, hope balanced reality.

With the return of the easterly wind I knew we would never paddle our way to the island. Zuma also knew.

When the wind had shifted she gave up her effort to sleep on the seat. With a groan of resignation she lay in the water in the bottom of the boat. I stayed bent over the bow the rest of the night, sometimes paddling and sometimes not; but always wondering if this was the time that luck, or the guardian angel I almost believed in, wasn't going to be there to save me.

When my face had taken all of the salt spray I could stand, I turned around and faced the back of the boat, sitting at the very narrowest part at the bow that I could squeeze my butt into. My hands could reach the water on either side and I paddled backwards. The effort to make headway was abandoned; I just tried to keep the bow into the wind to reduce the chance of water splashing into the boat, into our drinking water. Now and then it did anyway.

In the grayness of the first light of day, Zuma cautiously crawled back up on the seat, carefully watching that her new position didn't allow seawater to splash in and ruin our drinking water. I had tried a double handful a little while before that, and found it already tasted pretty salty and rubbery from the raingear. The wind seemed to be freshening, which prompted me to suggest that we drink all the water we could before it got any saltier. Zuma said nothing but went down on her hands and sore knees and drank like an animal from the water in the bottom of the boat.

'Considering that in our first trip
we went through a hurricane,
and in this one the damn boat sank,
I don't think I want to sail
with you anymore'

Afterward, with a sad, tense expression, she watched the sea now and then splash into the boat and farther pollute our drinking water.

She spoke through swollen lips, "You know, people swim the English Channel."

She sat in silence looking as if she was furthering the thought. I asked, "Are you that good of a swimmer?"

"Maybe good enough to do better than this fucking boat is doing!"

"Go ahead. I'll stay in the boat and wave at passing ships. When you get to the beach you will send someone out for me, won't you?"

"Maybe." And after a long silence she mumbled through thick lips, "Do you think it is true that people in the water that get bitten by sharks don't feel any pain? I wonder if it really hurts to drown."

For a long while I listened to the sound of the splash of the waves on the side of the boat, the whisper of the wind, and watched dawn's light turn the grey water to deep blue.

As the sun came over the distant top of the mountains, Zuma closed her eyes and I could just hear a vibrating, humming sound coming from deep within her.

It was like a wordless chant, a prayer, or a strange sobbing.

When the unearthly sound stopped she looked as though fear had left her. She still looked totally weary, but now she was relaxed and at ease.

In silence the sun rose. Time dragged by. And then there was a sound on the wind, a murmur that very slowly grew until it was recognizable as the sound of an outboard engine. We listened intently as it seemed to be getting closer. At first it grew louder and louder as if it were coming directly at us, but we could see nothing. My heart sank as the sound began to move to one side of us as if it were passing us by. Abruptly it stopped. There was again only the sound of the water, the waves on the side of the boat, and the wind.

"Zuma, sit in the bottom of the boat; I'm going to try to stand on the seat."

With great caution I stood with the yellow rain jacket in my right hand. I strained to see something over the top of the waves in the direction the motor had last been heard. There was nothing but waves with here and there a little spindrift of white. I stood there, hope sustained, and finally I thought I saw something as we were lifted by a large wave. I waited an eternity, and then it came up again as if rising out of the top of a wave. Distinctly, I saw a large hat on a black head.

Frantically I began to yell and to wave the yellow rain jacket as high as I could swing it above my head.

The dinghy tipped and I fell to the seat, struggling to not go overboard and risk turning the boat over with me. Zuma yelled as I rolled and tumbled on top of her.

In my hysteria I paid no attention, immediately climbing back up to stand on the seat and straining to see the hat on the black head. I yelled and swung the jacket over my head, but wave after wave lifted me and I saw nothing.

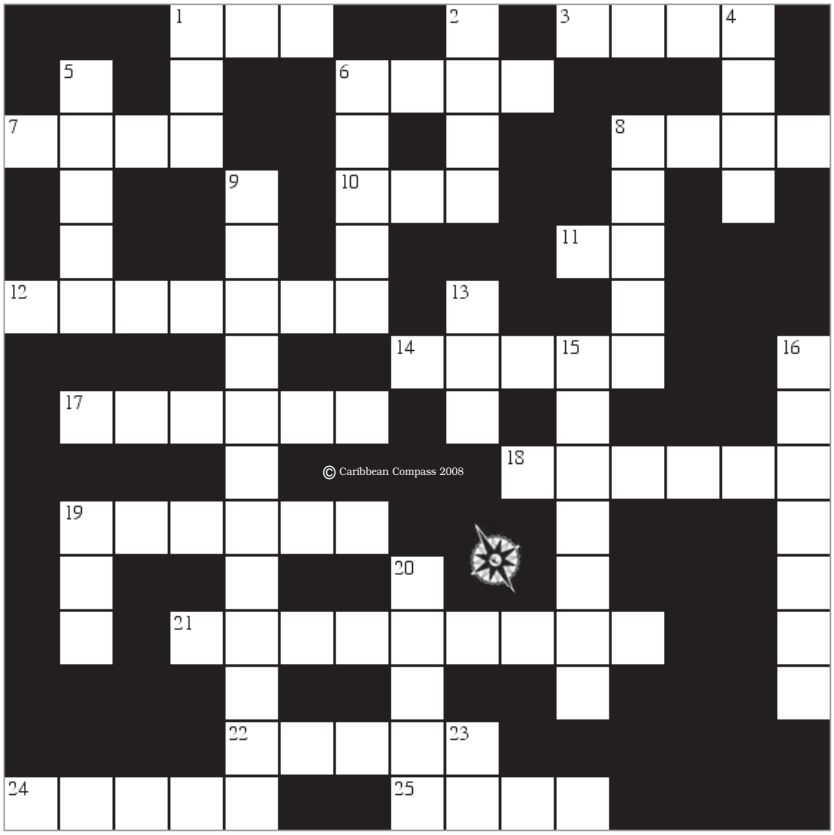
The world seemed to stand still when I heard the outboard engine start, and I thought they were leaving. The sound moved away and I knew we were dead; but no, it grew louder. The hat reappeared and as it moved toward us two more hats joined it. Soon, I saw three standing figures in a boat as it plunged over a large wave. They came straight at us but I continued to wave until finally the man in the bow waved back and I was absolutely sure they had seen us.

THE END





Compass Cruising Crossword



LEE

ACROSS

1) Twisting of a rope's strands
3) When on starboard tack, this is the 1 Down side
6) The greatest breadth of a vessel
7) A wind____ points away from the 1 Down 8 Across
8) This can be windward or lee
10) Fall off to 12 Across
11) "1 Down __": what English yachties say instead of "hard-a-lee"
12) Toward the downwind side
14) A vessel to 12 Across has the 1 Down _____ of another
17) 1 Down _____ keep crew from falling out of the bunks
18) Hook
19) 1 Down _____ act as centerboards but sit outboard
21) Inclined to the 12 Across side
22) You can improve 1 Down 25 Across on this by trimming the mizzen
24) The fleet's landlubbers hung over the 1 Down _____
25) 1 Down ____: when tiller has to be on 12 Across side to keep boat on course

DOWN

1) Area sheltered from wind, such as downwind side of an island
2) A rope rove through the cringle of a sail for hauling in
4) 1 Down ____: sea running same direction as wind
5) 1 Down + board + _____ = a type of Dutch ship
6) 8 Down-_____: not headquartered aboard ship
8) Land next to a body of water
9) The 1 Down sides of these are called "midshipman's parades"
13) 1 Down___: sideways slippage
15) If you're over-canvassed, the 1 Down _____ might go under
16) When hit by a large wave, a boat does this to 12 Across
19) 1 Down ___ effect: current setting against advantageous side of forward part of boat
20) "Take care of the 1 Down ____": slang for "Don't fall off course"
23) "__ began to talk... of the sea and the sea shore." Jane Austen

Crossword Solution on page 37

It's always Fair Weather

Word Search Puzzle by Pauline Dolinski

Well, we all hope the storm season is over now and we can once again start 'broad-reaching through Paradise with the barometer pegged on Fair'! Enjoy an idle hour with this fun Fair Weather word search puzzle.

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

ATMOSPHERE
BREEZE
CALM
CARIBBEAN
CLEAR
CLOUDS
COMPASS
COOL
CUMULUS

DRIFT
FAIR
FAVORABLE
FORECAST
FUN

GOOD
HIGH
HOT
KNOTS

LAP
LAZY
LULL
MILD
MODERATE

PARTY
PLAY
PORT
RIPPLE

SAILING
SKY
SMOOTH
SNORKEL
SPRAY
SUNNY
SWIM

TAN
TROPICAL

VISIBILITY

WARM
WEATHER

Word Search Puzzle solution on page 43



NOVEMBER 2008

♈ ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)
Any little squalls in the sea of romance should blow themselves out after the second week. Creative endeavors may meet contrary currents, so concentrate on routine shipboard tasks.

♉ TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)
Your love life will sail away after the second week, taking your sense of humor with it. Don't let it overwhelm you: there's the promise of new love cruising your way in a couple of months, or the reappearance of an old one over the horizon.

♊ GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)
Any choppy conditions with female crew or cruising pals will clear up after the second week. Business and finance will still be in the doldrums, but keep in mind that the best things in the cruising life are free!

CANCER ♋ (22 Jun - 23 Jul)
Concentrate on creative projects onboard to take your mind off adverse currents in your love life until the tide turns.

♌ LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)
Frustrations in your creative progress will take the wind out of your sails this month, but a little romantic distraction may be just the ticket to help get your spinnaker back up and drawing.

♍ VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)
Romance will sail into your sphere of influence to add another vessel to your growing fleet of positive influences this month.

♎ LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)
A lack of humor may cause rough seas in your love life. You'll be liable to feel sorry for yourself, which will not help smooth the waters. Just ease your mainsheet and power through the bumpy patch.

♏ SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)
Creative energy will be at high tide. Use it to make forward progress in projects on board and to clear the decks for coming action.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)
Romance will be on the wane and you may feel in the doldrums. But the weather will change in the last week and you will feel creative energies freshening.

♑ CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)
Romance may knock you off your business course for a few weeks. It would be a good time for you to relax, spend some time on entertainment and get your mind off boatwork for a while.

♒ AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)
Things are pretty aspect-clear for you. A good month to kick back, go sailing just for fun, and get away from the daily stresses of life.

♓ PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)
You'll have renewed energy in the creative cockpit of your life. Make the most of it!

Crossword Solution

ACROSS
1) LAY
3) PORT
6) BEAM
7) VANE
8) SIDE
10) SAG
11) HO
12) LEEWARD
14) GAUGE
17) CLOTHS
18) ANCHOR
19) BOARDS
21) LEEWARDLY
22) KETCH
24) RAILS
25) HELM

DOWN
1) LEE
2) FANG
4) TIDE
5) BARGE
6) BASED
8) SHORE
9) QUARTERDECKS
13) WAY
15) GUNWALE
16) LURCHES
19) BOW
20) HATCH
23) HE

Cruising Manners Matter

Island Poets

To buy a boat and sail for fun
For winter winds and lots of sun,
Is part of every sailor's dream,
'Specially when the wind's abeam.

Drop anchor in a lovely bay,
But learn the rules you must, I say.
For other people are there too,
And in some places quite a few.

If you're very close at anchor
To other boats, you'll cause much rancour.
Cruisers think this very rude,
And spoils their happy tranquil mood.

The boat which anchors on your bow,
Will very likely cause a row.
Now it may be smooth and calm,
But it can change and cause alarm.

Test your anchor very well,
Expect more wind and perhaps some swell,
You must ensure you do not drag,
Or other folk may lose their rag.

Bigger boats should moor behind.
To smaller boats they should be kind.
Catamarans are another story,
To monohulls they can cause fury.

If you charter, you should know,
That there are many tales of woe,
When charter yachts have hit a cruiser,
Please take care you're not the bruiser.

When mooring dinghies to the dock,
Prudent sailors use a lock,
But keep it on a nice long line,
So other dinks can get in fine.

Some think boat boys are a pain,
But chat to them and ask their name.
It's hard for them to make a living,
So buy some fruit and be forgiving.

And in your dinghy do not race,
And cause much wash by your fast pace.
Your neighbour may be cooking supper,
Or boiling water for a cuppa.

Remember many people swim,
Then you come speeding at a whim.
The danger is you may not see
And then cause death or injury.

Some cruisers seem to love to shout
Whatever task they are about.
When anchoring, just try using signs,
To inform your crew of your designs.

And keep your music volume low,
Wherever you might choose to go.
The joys of other people's din,
In a quiet bay can wear quite thin.

Many yachts use SSB,
To e-mail home or friends for free.
Their HF signal spills right through,
And blocks reception right on cue.

There is a wind machine of fame,
Everybody knows its name.
It howls at us like a screaming banshee,
If you have one, go back out to sea.

At night an anchor light should show,
A fixed white light and not too low,
So all will know when it is dark,
Exactly where their neighbours park.

No flashing light should pierce the gloom,
Or other cruisers will just fume.
For flashing is reserved for buoys
So don't confuse us with those toys.

This rule applies to everyone,
'Cos sailing in is not much fun
At night when yachts are all unlit,
For safety's sake please do your bit.

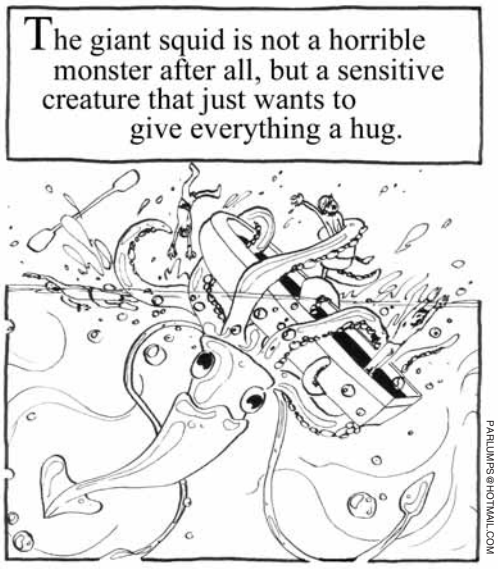
My observations – if I dare:
Just a few seem not to care,
How many folk they do upset.
Those other yachts they just forget.

So please remember, you should not
Annoy those on another yacht.
A little give and take we need,
This golden rule's for all to heed.

So do enjoy your sailing here,
But I will say that most hold dear
Their privacy and peace of mind.
I hope that's what you too will find.

John Lytle

ryan weaver toon



Night Monster, or Master Spy?

by Lee Kessell

"Mr. Worm is just the man for the job." Ed the soldier fish spoke with the authority of his position and all the residents of the bay agreed with him.

"But will he do it?" asked the timid little garden eel who hid at the least disturbance.

You see, Mr. Worm was the local night monster and divers in the bay in the south of the island of St. Lucia had only ever caught a tiny glimpse of Mr. Worm. They called him THE THING. When the divers with their torches peered under ledges and into caves, sometimes they just caught the hint of a huge, long monster retreating into the dark. The legend of THE THING had grown out of all proportion to the reality. Everyone believed that this was a genuine sea serpent, a diabolical creature at least 20 feet long with fangs that could tear a limb from a nosy diver and swallow it in one gulp, waiting to tear off the other leg or arm if it came back. Divers shuddered at the thought but still tried to find it, wanting to be proclaimed a hero and have the monster named after him or her.

To tell the truth, Mr. Worm was no sea monster at all but an inoffensive segmented, elongated worm. Yes indeed, it did grow quite big — six feet, in fact — and certainly Mr. Worm was not a pretty sight. Although his deep reddish colour was okay, his head looked like an evil drilling machine with its five long tentacles surrounding a nasty puckered mouth. He also had long, feathered exterior gills that looked very menacing, as did all of the deep segments of his body that ended in the stubby feet that gave him the speed he was famous for. What's more, Mr. Worm had no sting, claws or teeth so he couldn't hurt anyone but he did like his privacy down there beneath the ledges at a hundred feet needing to come out at night to forage for food and that was when the divers were waiting. But Mr. Worm was quicker than any human and in the mini-second when the light first hit him, he was gone.

'Divers were talking about catching a lot of us reef fish for an aquarium!'

"I know that Mr. Worm will take a lot of convincing," replied Ed, "but once I've told him our trouble, I don't think he'll refuse."

"No", spoke up the sandtile fish, "but you'll have to find him first."

"Do we have any volunteers?" Ed looked hopeful, as he didn't want to be the one to have to convince Mr. Worm, because that ugly head gave him the shudders.

As no one volunteered, Ed had to take the job, like it or not. Well, after calling loud and clear for some hours, Mr. Worm finally emerged and Ed told him that they needed a Master Spy.

"You see, Mr. Worm, I was lucky enough to overhear a couple of divers talking about their plans for catching a lot of us reef fish for an aquarium and all they are waiting for is the license to begin. The trouble is, I can't hang around all the time to find out when this is going to happen, but you are so fast, you can do it easily."

Mr. Worm was silent as he pondered the request. He could hear quite well down in the deeps through the water but he knew he would have to make quick dashes to the surface to pick up news of the time and day that the hunt would begin.

After listening and surfacing in quick dashes for a few days, Mr. Worm was getting tired of the project and was ready to tell Joe he must have been mistaken, when down came the unmistakable voices of happy men. Up he darted and keeping close to the wall heard that the men had their license and would begin siphoning up their specimens the very next morning! They planned to meet at the dock at 8:00AM sharp. Master Spy darted back to the bottom of the cliff and hissed at the first passing fish and sent him to get Joe.

The next morning at 8:30 when the men jumped into the sea in their scuba gear, the reef fish were ready for them — that is, there was not a fish, large or small, in sight and no amount of searching could find any. That was okay for now, but these men had to be discouraged for all time, so flying out of the blue came an army of octopuses who pulled the masks from the divers' faces, sucked the regulators out of their mouths, bit through the air hoses and turned the air on full blast, emptying the tanks in a disorienting stream of bubbles. Sharp beaks slashed at the webbing of their buoyancy vests and some small sting rays rose up out of the sand and gave the men a few painful stings — not enough to do much harm, but enough to send the men kicking frantically to the surface.

The men, after first-aid treatment, swore they would never go near that reef again and they confirmed what everyone thought: "We were attacked by that vicious Sea Monster. It was 20 feet long, had sharp teeth and claws and a sting in its dragon tail. Take it from us, leave THE THING alone."

THE END

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DOLLY'S DEEP SECRETS

by Elaine Ollivierre

This month, we'll take a look at the scientific names of the whale family, particularly those whales found in the Atlantic and the Caribbean.

The **Animalia** kingdom contains a phylum called **Chordata**, which includes all those living things with a spinal cord. This phylum contains the class **Mammalia**. Whales are mammals, not fish, so they belong to this class. The particular family to which whales belong is called **Cetacea**. This family also includes dolphins and porpoises. What do these cetaceans have in common?

Cetaceans are completely aquatic but they have lungs and need to come to the surface for air to breathe. They give birth to live young and nurse them at sea. Some species can grow very large because their weight is supported by sea water. All cetaceans have a layer of blubber (fat) under their skin, which insulates their bodies from the cold water.

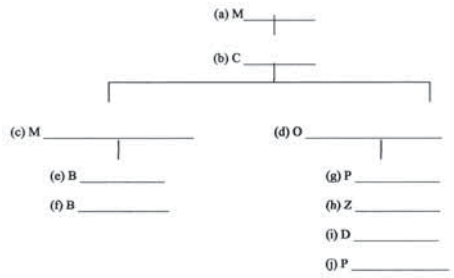
There are many different kinds of cetaceans so, to make their classification a little clearer, the order **Cetacea** is split into two **sub-orders**. These are **Mysticeti**, the baleen whales, and **Odontoceti**, the toothed whales.

The sub-orders are further split into several families. The mysticeti (from a Greek word for 'unknowable') have the **Balaenidae** (right whales) and **Balaenopteridae** (rorquals). The odontoceti (from a Latin word for 'teeth') have more: the **Physeteridae** (sperm whales), the **Ziphiidae** (beaked whales), the **Delphinidae** (dolphins and killer whales) and the **Phocoenidae** (porpoise) families. What fantastic names! Students of Latin and Greek may be able to work out what they mean. We'll look particularly at two whales commonly found in the Caribbean.

The humpback whale is part of the Balaenopteridae family because it is a whale with baleen plates in its mouth. The humpback is a **rorqual**, which is a word of Norwegian origin meaning 'furrows'. It refers to the grooves under the humpback's throat. The humpback's scientific name is *Megaptera novaeangliae*. This actually means 'giant (mega) – wing (ptera) – of New (novae) England (angliae). The name refers to sightings of humpbacks with their long flippers off the New England coast in the eighteenth century.

The sperm whale is part of the Physeteridae family and has two scientific names. The more common one is *Physeter macrocephalus*, which means 'a blower with a big head' but, sometimes, it's called *Physeter catodon*, which means 'a blower with lower teeth'. Both names are very apt. The sperm whale definitely has a big head and it has teeth in its lower jaw only!

Now see if you can fill in the correct names on the following chart to show the relationships between the different types of whales.

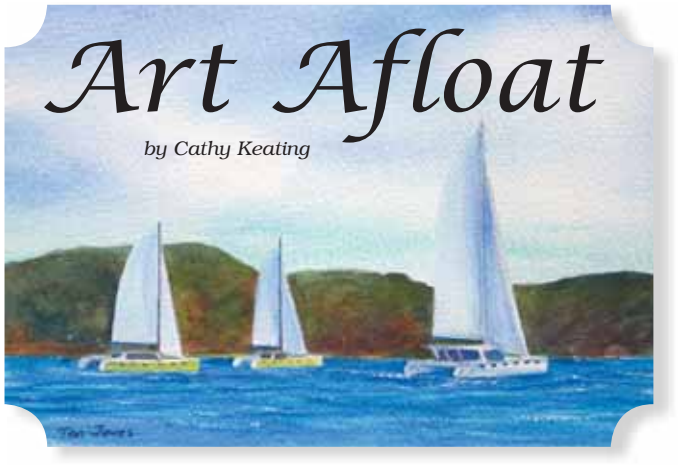


— Answers on page 43

ELAINE OLLIVIERRE 2008 ©

Art Afloat

by Cathy Keating



Did you pack the spare cabin with art and craft material in the hope that your new cruising life would inspire you to become an artist? Or have you secretly wanted to try a creative endeavor but never had the time? Now you have the time and the inspiration but have no place to purchase the materials. Like many of us, are you interested in learning to paint, but afraid you have no talent? These are common complaints among 'wannabe' creative cruisers. Yet we seldom do anything about it. But you can! Consider the advantages of watercolors. They are compact, fit easily on your boat and have a quick drying time. The rewards are immediate.

While cruising the eastern coast of Venezuela, my husband and I discovered watercolor artist Teri Jones. Her inspirational life journey through art gave us the courage to try our hands at painting. Teri grew up sailing, but was not a born artist. She did not pick up a brush until she was age 40, recovering from a debilitating injury and managing a demanding career. Even then she feared she had no skill with painting. She felt she was supposed to have talent from the beginning. At first, expectations of perfection hobbled her attempts to paint. She even took a beginning watercolor class — three times. Gradually, Teri forgot her preconceived expectations and allowed herself to play. Soon she found herself lost in the process of creation.



Teri says, 'There is nothing like seeing the excitement and joy my students gain from discovering their own talent'

Everything else went away: the pain of her injury, the daily stresses, even time seemed to disappear.

Over time Teri realized her creative relaxation had turned into a passion for art. She quit her fulltime career as a drug rehabilitation counselor and left behind sailing the San Juan Islands of Washington State to open galleries in Washington and Hawaii. Like many sailors, Teri missed cruising and sought to combine her love of the sea and art. She crewed her way to the Caribbean where her art found a home at the Gallery St. Thomas and several other venues. Three-and-a-half years ago she agreed to help Britt Solomon sail his vessel, *S/V Sea Otter*, for ten days. Well, the rest is history. Teri found her dream of combining art and sailing. She and Britt are still cruising the islands and Teri paints and teaches watercolor painting wherever they land.

Next to doing her own painting she finds teaching others most rewarding. She says, "I love developing the passion for art in others and there is nothing like seeing the excitement and joy my students gain from discovering their own talent." Teri teaches



TERI JONES

Sailing artist Teri Jones's watercolors and instruction have launched many a cruiser's creative voyage

adults and many cruising home-schoolers. She enjoys instructing families of "school-aboards" so the parents can continue to provide help to their children.

Teri has a unique, simple, and easy approach to teaching watercolor techniques. Her background in counseling helps us novices to get beyond our self-imposed barriers and let ourselves enjoy the flow of creative experimentation. She teaches acceptance of the happy accidents in life and art, and demonstrates how to go with the flow of inventiveness to surprise yourself with a beautiful result.

Whether you have a stash of paints aboard, yet are not pursuing your creative interests, or you can't find supplies or decide where to begin, Artist Jones provides easy kits of materials-to-go and lessons for adults, families and kids as she cruises the islands. She also has a loyal following of return students who come back to learn more. Teri Jones advises cruisers to expand their sailing adventure by using art to connect with the natural world we are so fortunate to be experiencing. "Get over yourself, enjoy and develop a passion for this relaxing form of self-expression. You are what you say you are going to be. So if you want to be an artist, just start learning, doing and saying it and you will become it. You cannot have a dream unless you envision it." Yes, through her growth as an artist, Teri learned how to allow herself to be a beginner and how to help us begin.

Teri Jones can be located via the Coconut Telegraph at 8:00AM on frequency 4060 or via Teriartist@msn.com or www.terijones.com. She frequents the Virgin Islands from November through March and is an artist in residence in Antigua during the Classic Yacht Regatta in April. Her work may be viewed at Gallery St. Thomas, #1 Main Street, St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands.

About the author: Look for Cathy Keating's new novel, "Flamingo Eyes" in 2009.



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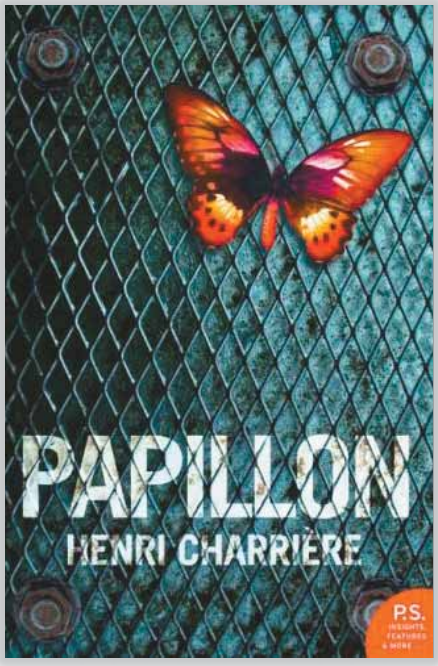
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BOOK REVIEW BY RYAN WEAVER

A DIFFERENT ISLAND MEMOIR

***Papillon**, by Henri Charrière. Harper Perennial Modern Classics ©2005, paperback, 688 pages, ISBN 9780007179961.*



When cruisers sail around the Cape of Good Hope bound for the Caribbean, many stop at Les Iles du Salut off French Guiana. These islands gained a sinister reputation because of the former French penal colony there. The prison was closed in 1947, and has since become an attraction for bluewater sailors. There is a good, sheltered anchorage south of Ile Royale (5°17'N, 52°35'W). Reading *Papillon* while anchored here ranks among cruising's top reading experiences.

Many will remember "Papillon" as a movie starring the tough guy and the short fry: Steve McQueen and Dustin Hoffman. It is considered a classic. Perhaps of lesser fame is the book. In 1969 Henri Charrière, called "Papillon" for the butterfly tattoo on his chest, published an autobiography that makes the movie seem a cheap Cliffs Notes version of the truth.

Charrière wouldn't have thought of writing his story, according to the introduction of *Papillon*, if he hadn't chanced upon a book by Albertine Sarrazin, who was then famous for her true prison escape yarns. Charrière was inspired. He began scribbling in spiral-bound notebooks of the type students have. In two months he'd filled 13 of them. He sent the books to the same publisher Sarrazin used, accompanied by this note: "Here are my adventures: have a professional write them up."

But the great charm of the book proved to be Charrière's colloquial style, so it was left his own. He is a charismatic storyteller with one of those rare minds prone to recalling rich and explicit detail, and it doesn't require a stretch of the imagination to transport oneself to the penal colony, to see oneself perspiring in the shade of an island palm, listening to Charrière begin at the beginning.

"It was a knockout blow…" the book opens, "a punch so overwhelming that I didn't get back on my feet for fourteen years." Charrière was convicted of murder in 1931 (he forever claimed innocence) and sent to the crumbling, disease ridden penal colonies (*bagnes*) in French Guiana, where the purpose of his existence found new definition: ESCAPE. The *bagnes* were already infamous in France thanks to the "Alfred Dreyfus Affair," in which a young Jewish captain in the French Army was wrongly, and famously, convicted of selling military secrets to Germany in 1894. Even after proven innocent, Dreyfus was left to rot for a shameful length of time on Diable (Devil's Island), one of Les Iles du Salut.

The *bagnes* were built under Napoleon III, who, when asked, "Who will guard these bandits?" replied, "Worse bandits." Prisoners were shipped first to the mainland penitentiary of Grande Terre, then siphoned off to more secure islands according to the severity of their crimes. Three penal islands lay just off the Caribbean coastline: Ile Royale, Saint-Joseph, and Diable. Collectively known as the Iles du Salut, or "Safety Islands," they were more difficult to escape from but did not prove a sanctuary from the plentiful plagues of the mainland.

Papillon contends that 80 percent of the population died in the *bagnes* annually. Not so much from assassinations (plentiful) or beatings (plentiful) as from leprosy, yellow fever, dysentery, tuberculosis, malaria, and other tropical delicacies. The odds against living — let alone escaping successfully — are what make Papillon's true trials and tribulations worthy of being classified among other amazing triumphs of human will. "Each time I was tempted to despair," Charrière said, "I would repeat three times: 'As long as there's life, there's hope.'"

It would be a spoiler to go into detail about the escape attempts, except to mention that Charrière was a creative man, never escaping the same way twice. He employed bludgeon, riot, raft, sleeping potion, dynamite, boat, and the good old wall hop. Most of the time he had accomplices in fellow prisoners and guards and even wardens whose palms had been greased. While on the lam, *everyone* seemed to want to help him. Most notably, the rotting lepers on the Ile aux Pigeons, the bishop and nuns of Curaçao, a lawyer and his family in Trinidad, and the Guajira Indians, who not only adopted Charrière but presented him with a pair of youthful wives. Apparently, everybody considered the French justice system an abomination that deserved to be escaped from.

No matter how charming the film is, it becomes clear that Charrière and his memoir *Papillon* are superior — not only for being true but for the very depth of that truth. The movie had the odds stacked against it from the beginning: a film that hoped to be completely faithful to the book would run about 26 hours long.

What did the film omit? Escapes, mostly. "Papillon" the movie presents only a third of the escapes that actually took place, and even those aren't accurate: the first is made up, the second ends prematurely and the final one did not, in fact, end with Charrière floating on a sack of coconuts in the Caribbean Sea shouting in a cracked and tattered voice, "I'm still here, you bastards!"

The tropical Iles du Salut permanently closed their gates to prisoners not long after Charrière's final escape. These days the rotting ruins are tourist attractions, Caribbean versions of Alcatraz that, for all their barbarity, failed to castrate the part of the human spirit that clings to hope — and never more poignantly than in Henri Charrière.

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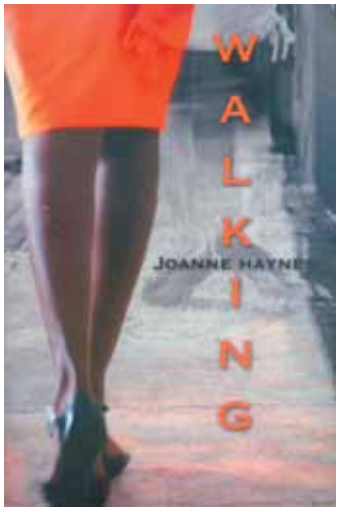
BOOK REVIEW BY ELAINE OLLIVIERRE

Growing Up Bi-Racial in Trinidad

Walking *by Joanne Haynes, Macmillan Caribbean, ©2007. Paperback, 186 pages. ISBN 978-1-4050678-12.*

I did not really enjoy this book, chiefly because I did not like the main character. *Walking* tells the story of Josephine Chin, a Trinidadian of mixed Chinese and African ancestry, from her entry to primary school to her life choices as an adult.

As a teacher myself, I can honestly say that Josephine is the kind of student who would drive me nuts: smart, intelligent, academically very able, but obsessed with boyfriends and sex to the detriment of a lot of her schoolwork. Despite her erratic performance in school, Josephine manages (with only a year's gap after the death of her father) to follow a very traditional educational road through school exams to university to a teaching career where she sees a side of Trinidad she never realized existed. Marriage and babies follow and, eventually, a career more in keeping with her personality and character.



Josephine's sheltered upbringing and dysfunctional family didn't help to make her a happier person. Her father abandoned his wife and seven children when Josephine was small. He visited on occasion and supported them financially but there wasn't much of an emotional connection between them until she realizes that he is dying. Her mother taught at the same primary school where Josephine experienced some very miserable moments but the mother failed to come to her aid at those times. With such a poor start in their relationship, no wonder then that Josephine and her mother argued constantly.

Underlying the whole tale is a consciousness of race that I found a little uncomfortable. Josephine herself describes both her Chinese father and her black mother as racists. Her parents are distressed that she cuts her hair into an Afro style and becomes more "African"-looking and her sisters are described as "more Chinese-looking", with the implication that this is "better". The Trinidadian white girls at her school are treated as oddities although Josephine actually ends up with a light-skinned husband, first described when she meets him as a "sexy red man".

Josephine's self-absorption, evident low self-esteem and her unrelenting questioning of her purpose in life did get on my nerves after a few chapters. If she felt at all rebellious, it didn't show except in her relationships with the opposite sex. She still finished school and did well at college. I never found her to be a sympathetic character; in fact, I kept thinking that regular therapy sessions or some counselling might help to sort her out!

A glossary helped to explain some Trinidadian colloquialisms but, in any case, the book is a quick and easy read. But I got bored too quickly with such a miserable girl.

Available at bookstores or from www.macmillan-caribbean.com.

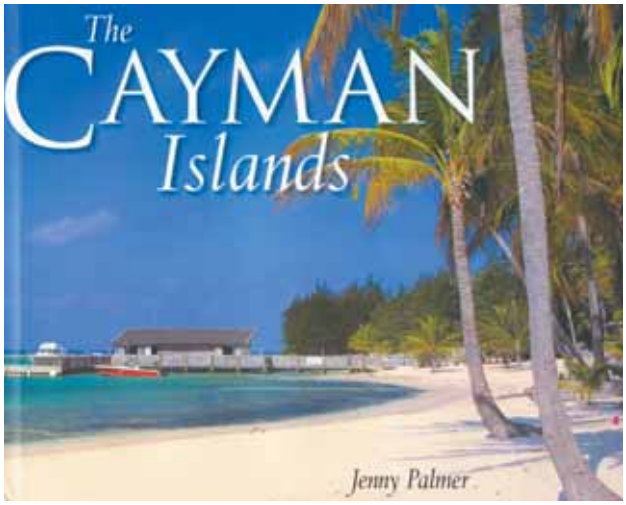
THE BUSTLING MIDDLE OF NOWHERE

The Cayman Islands*, by Jenny Palmer. Macmillan Caribbean, ©2008. Hardback, color photos throughout, 272 pages. ISBN 978-1-4050-7724-8. £25.*

The Cayman Islands remain a mystery to most yachtsmen. Although physically they are almost in the dead center of the Western Caribbean (about 190 miles northwest of Jamaica), they are off the usual sailing routes to anywhere. Partly because of their isolation, pirates in the early 18th century made good use of them.

Most sailors know about the damage Hurricane Ivan inflicted in 2004 on Grenada, their awareness because of the numbers of yachts stored or summering there, but many are not aware that Ivan also smashed into the Cayman Islands as a Category 5 hurricane with a 12-foot storm surge. Like Grenada, the Caymans have worked hard to recover.

Jerrems Hart and William Stone's out-of-print classic *A Cruising Guide to the Caribbean and the Bahamas* says, "Though Grand Cayman can hardly be classed as a cruising ground in itself, it has enough amenities and facilities to attract yachts for a safe and restful stay of several days or weeks along the gorgeous beach on its generally sheltered western end, or within the expansive North Sound, protected by a formidable barrier reef." And being immensely popular with beach-vacationing tourists, cruise ships, and scuba divers from around the world — as well as being home to numerous artists and craftsmen — the Caymans offer just about every kind of goods and services a sybaritic sailor could want. Oh, and during Pirate Week every November, the "pirates" come ashore and take the Governor hostage.



Sounds like the off-the-milk-run type of place many cruisers are looking for these days, and if you are one of them, Jenny Palmer's island portrait, with 140 specially commissioned color photographs (mostly giving an authentic sense of place, but perhaps a few too many proudly featuring her son), will wet your whistle. Maybe you'll be enticed to make a stop here next time you're on your way to nowhere.

Available at bookstores or from www.Macmillan-caribbean.com.

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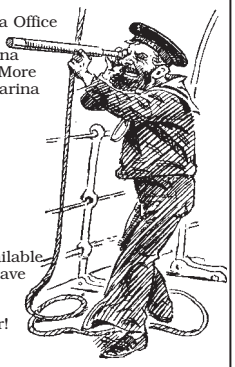
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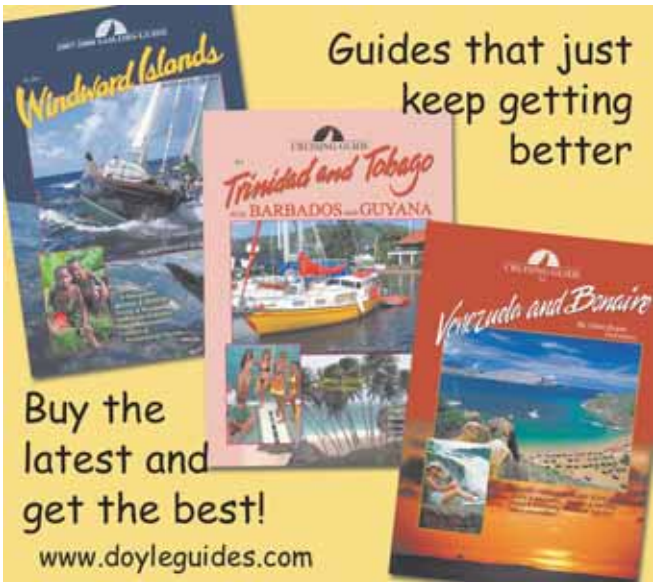
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—*Continued from page 9*

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USVI's Peter Holmberg Launches Pro-Sailing Business

Carol Bareuther reports: Any rumors that St. Thomas' Peter Holmberg might be ready to embark on another America's Cup campaign were laid to rest in September with the launch of his new web-based pro-sailing business.

DEAN BARNES



Peter Holmberg, at the helm, has launched his own Caribbean pro-sailing business

The decision to operate his pro-sailing business from his home in the US Virgin Islands is based, in part, says Holmberg, on the growth of the Caribbean's signature yacht-racing circuit that now features several high-profile events of sufficient caliber to compete effectively with the US East Coast and Europe for seasonal slots on the racing calendar of top IRC-rated yachts making world tours.

"Everywhere I raced this summer — from Newport to Sardinia — people were talking about heading south right after January's Key West Race Week to do the Caribbean's premier events: St. Maarten (Heineken Regatta), St. Thomas (International Rolex Regatta), the BVI (Spring Regatta), and (Stanford) Antigua Sailing Week," says Holmberg.

Holmberg will also campaign a new boat in the superyacht racing circuit, which includes the Superyacht Cup Antigua and St. Barths Bucket Regattas, designed to accommodate yachts in the 100- to 175-foot range.

"Twenty years ago, when I made the move to pro-sailing, there were few, if any, opportunities within the Caribbean for sailors like me to earn a living doing what we love," says Holmberg, who has since shaped his talent for sailing into a full-time career that allows him to compete as a professional helmsman, tactician and strategist at the highest levels of the sport that has defined his life and carried him around the globe.

Yachting enthusiasts will also enjoy the site's photo gallery and extensive list of links — to Caribbean regattas organized by season/month, yacht racing news media worldwide, weather, yacht clubs, marinas, and US Virgin Islands tourism — provided as a resource for planning annual race programs.

For more information visit www.peterholmberg.com.

Cabrits Dive Centre and Café, Lagoon Branch, Dominica

Cabrits Dive Centre in Dominica is pleased to announce the opening of Cabrits Dive Centre and Café in Lagoon, Portsmouth on November 1st. Situated at the north end of Prince Rupert Bay, right next to Big Papa's Sports Bar & Restaurant, Cabrits Dive Centre Lagoon Branch will offer dive and snorkel trip reservations; snorkel equipment retail and rentals; and a European coffee shop right in front of the main moorage area.

Pop in and book your dive or snorkel trip while sipping on a latte or enjoying a nice cold Kubuli or Chardonnay! Feeling too relaxed to move? Don't worry — Cabrits Dive Centre will be monitoring VHF Channel 16 all season and working closely with the dedicated yacht service providers in Prince Rupert Bay, so you have a multiplicity of options for booking your underwater adventure.

Cabrits Dive Centre is a 5 Star PADI dive centre located in Portsmouth and offering rendezvous diving to the yachting community. Cabrits Dive Centre is also a proud member of the Portsmouth Association of Yacht Security and the Dominica Marine Association.

For more information contact cabritsdive@cwdom.dm.

Grenadines-Based Audio Novel Available

Jonathan Lowe writes: Palm Island in the Grenadines is the setting for my novel *Fame Island*, partly based on the true story of John Caldwell, ("Coconut Johnny"), a man who sailed the world only to settle there and turn the mosquito-infested swamp into a resort paradise after 20 years of hard work. He planted 8,000 coconut palm trees by hand throughout the Grenadines, and let the US Marines stage their helicopters on Palm Island during the Grenada intervention. His talk of resisting invaders, by firing over their heads as they attempted to land on the island, inspired my "what if" offbeat adventure story. Caldwell is gone now, but he was a one-of-a-kind character, about whom I wrote articles for *Adventure Travel, Real People*, and *Cruising World*. So it is fitting that the tabloid protagonist of my novel is a former travel writer who shares John's lust for adventure.

Fame Island *is available as an audio download or CD from amazon.com.*

Horizon Yacht Charters' BVI Racing Masterclass Package

Horizon Yacht Charters (BVI) has announced a unique package for racing enthusiasts. Horizon and Racing in Paradise have teamed up with former world number-one ranked match racer, America's Cup *Alinghi* team helmsman, Maxi World champion and Olympic silver medalist, Peter Holmberg, to offer a Racing Masterclass, May 10th through 17th, 2009. Identical IC24s from Racing in Paradise will be used for the Masterclass sessions and Horizon yachts will be used as mother ships as participants race and cruise to different overnight stops in the British Virgin Islands. IC24s are modified J/24s with spacious, open cockpits. They are the fastest growing one-design fleet in the Caribbean.

For more information visit www.horizonyachtcharters.com.

Racing Yacht Trips from Antigua to Montserrat

From December 1st, the Antigua-based company OnDeck will offer sailing trips to Montserrat on an ocean racing yacht. Guests will be encouraged to take an active part in all aspects of sailing the yacht, with full instruction given for novices.



A new way to visit Montserrat!

The yacht, a Farr 65, departs Falmouth Harbour in Antigua at about 8:00AM on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, with the trip to Little Bay in Montserrat taking up to four hours. The return journey to Antigua will depart at approximately 1:00PM on those same days, taking up to five hours.

The trips have been designed to be flexible, so yacht passengers can choose to return to Antigua the same day or spend more time in Montserrat. Stay-over visitors will be offered sight-seeing options including island tours, rainforest trekking, scuba diving or snorkeling, horseback riding, a visit to the Montserrat Volcano Observatory, a boat tour around the island to see the buried remains of the capital Plymouth.

OnDeck's yacht trips can accommodate a maximum of 15 guests in addition to its professional crew. The trips are open to guests of all sailing abilities.

For more information on OnDeck sailing trips visit www.ondeckoceanracing.com. For more information on Montserrat visit www.visitmontserrat.com.

St. Maarten Charter Yacht Show

The fifth annual St. Maarten Charter Show will take place December 6th through 9th, 2008, to introduce a range of luxury charter yachts and their crews to yacht brokers. Special events will include "yacht hops", A Taste of St. Maarten, and a Concours du Chef.

For more information visit www.mybacaribbeanshow.com.

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During my travels, when I compare cultures with the people I meet, most of them comment that we Trinidadians take Christmas to the extreme. From August, advertisements go in the newspapers about sales on various types of merchandise, and if you close your eyes you may be able to smell "black cake" baking. But I am getting a bit ahead of myself.

Christmas celebrations in Trinidad really begin in September or October with the start of the parang season, which continues until 6th of January. Especially popular in Trinidad and Tobago, parang is a genre of Caribbean folk music with origins in South America. Traditionally the songs contain religious (Christian) lyrics, but now they include a variety of topics and customs surrounding the Christmas celebrations in the country. Singing parang from house to house was our version of caroling. At each house, the *parranderos* would get a piece of ham — if the ham was not ready they would just get a drink. Nowadays, parang is more often done on a national competition level rather than at a community level except in some rural communities.

To others the first sign of Christmas is the "Christmas Breeze", which to me has a hint of a chill.

I do agree with the observation that we have the habit that everything in a Trinidadian household must be perfect for Christmas Day. This includes new curtains, furniture and appliances. It is not uncommon to see furniture trucks parked outside of houses, delivering new sofa sets or refrigerators and washing machines. (Of course, when the holiday season is over it is another common sight to see "repo" trucks outside these same homes if the new owners failed to make the payments. The furniture ends up in "scratch and dent" sales that follow the holidays.)

Most of us like brand-new curtains, and it is not uncommon to see people with packs of ready-made panel curtains piled up in their arms, or in the process of deciding which colour will go best with a piece of furniture or wall colour, or sometimes just trying to remember what colour combination they hung up last year so as not to buy the same thing again. These brand-new treasures get hung up a few weeks before the big day or on Christmas Eve.

Having fresh floral arrangements was not a common practice in the past, so flowers made from crepe paper and secured to a strand of *cocyea* (coconut frond spine) with string were used as decorations. Artificial flowers are still popular.

TRINI CHRISTMAS — PAST AND PRESENT

by Jo-Anne Nina Sewlal

Also, when Trinidadians paint for Christmas they paint everything — inside and outside. The entire house is turned inside out and in each room the furniture is piled in the middle while the walls are being painted.

In the past there was a lot of pride taken in the furniture owned, particularly since it was very expensive to obtain. So every year around Christmas time all the furniture would get a coat of varnish while the wooden floors got a coat of lacquer. Many a time guests have become stuck, because amidst the celebrations the homeowners forgot to notify them that the furniture had just been varnished! Last-minute painting has always seemed to be a tradition of a Trini Christmas.

When do we get the time to do all of this? Well, the answer is "when we can", be it after work or school. And when the school vacation rolls around, well, then there is even more activity with the children pitching in with the preparations.

Sometimes it seemed as though everyone was in the yard doing something. The women were boiling the Christmas ham in a biscuit tin (salted crackers used to come in large square metal tins) on an outdoor fire. The children played outdoors, the reason being that the house steps and floors had been painted, as well as the walls, so that you could not go inside even if you wanted to. And who would want to with all the hustle, bustle and excitement going on in the yard?

When it came to food, like most cultures at special times you would partake of those that were quite expensive as well as not present all year round. Common examples included fruits such as apples, grapes and pears. These were a luxury, as they were rarely imported except around Christmas time. Other items on a typical Christmas menu included a variety of desserts such as sponge cake, sweet bread, and black cake, the latter being the Caribbean version of a fruitcake. This is filled with fruits soaked in rum, and after baking preserved by pouring some rum on it every few days.

Christmas breakfast consisted of black pudding and hops bread

Even the way the cakes were baked was interesting. If you were lucky back then, you possessed a tin oven. These large square ovens were placed on top of the burners of kerosene stoves, the object being that the hot tin would bake the contents inside. If you didn't have a kerosene stove, you would place it on an outdoor fire or use a clay oven.

Using a clay oven was quite a process, in that first a fire had to be lit inside in order to heat up the clay. When this had been reduced to ashes the oven was swept out and the breads and pastries placed inside. A wooden door was put in place and the space around the door was sealed with wet cloth bags. Not everyone in the village would own a clay oven and you would have to use your neighbours', which meant paying a user fee (usually 25 cents, or one of the breads or pastries). So it was not unusual to see a line of people with their ingredients and baking tins, waiting their turn to use the oven.

Another method, usually reserved for small households, was to place the baking tin in a pot on an outdoor fire. The pot was covered with a small sheet of "galvanise" (metal) and a fire built on top of this to simulate the action of an oven.

Some other types of food eaten at Christmas are from a variety of cultures that have occupied the islands at some point in history. These include black pudding (blood sausage) from our British ancestors. A traditional "ole time" Christmas breakfast consisted of black pudding and hops bread (you can think of it as a tough hamburger bun). At Christmas time, we make pastelles, an indigenous Amerindian food that the Mexicans call *tamales*. The soft cornmeal dough is rolled to form a thin circle and vegetables or meats such as beef or pork are placed in the middle, and then wrapped in the dough. The parcel is then wrapped in pieces of banana leaves that have been boiled to sterilize them and to make them pliable. The wrapped parcels are tied with string and boiled for 45 minutes to an hour. We also make paimees. Here the cornmeal mixture used to make the pastelles is formed into a ball, wrapped the same way and boiled.

When it comes to drinks, we usually make pretty, red sorrel, which is made from boiling the sepals of the sorrel fruit (roselle, or *Hibiscus sabdariffa*) with spices such as cinnamon and cloves and straining the mixture. For ginger beer, the ginger roots are either grated or smashed using a mortar and pestle, and placed in a jug with cloves and water and left overnight. In the old days the ginger mixture would be placed in the sun for a few days. What has always been a staple is Peardrax (a pear-flavoured soft drink), which was and still is treated as non-alcoholic champagne.

The most exciting part of all the weeks and months of Christmas preparations in Trinidad is that most of these activities — the painting, cooking, baking and decorating — ends up getting done on Christmas Eve.

What you have to remember is that times were very hard during the early part of the 20th century and some of the holiday practices we retain from those days may seem primitive by our current standards. But that does nothing to take away from the Christmas spirit. But whether these traditional activities have remained the same or have just been modified, when it comes to Christmas in Trinidad, "we don't make joke"!

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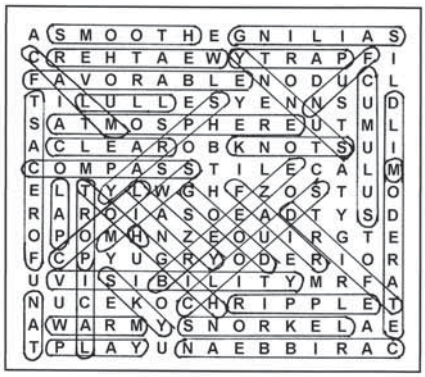
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White Sea Urchin Omelet

by Judy Simmons

Often called the "sea egg", the white sea urchin (*Tripneustes ventricosus*) can grow to about five inches in diameter and has half-inch-long white spines. (Don't confuse it with the hazardous long-spined black sea urchin [*Diadema antillarum*], whose sharp, brittle spines can break off in your skin and leave a painful, irritating wound.) The eggs or roe of the white sea urchin can be eaten raw or cooked.

Look for them on shallow reefs during the day. Gently crack around the sea urchin with a knife and lift the top to expose the insides. The edible parts are the orangey bits that look like tongues.







Scoop these gently from the inside of the shell and wash thoroughly to remove bits of shell and seaweed. Refrigerate if not using right away as the roe is delicate and needs to be handled with care. Depending on their size, the roe from 12 to 18 urchins would be enough for one big omelet.

Prepare an omelet mixture of four whisked hen's eggs, milk, salt and pepper and set to one side along with three chopped spring onions (or chives).

Melt 2 Tablespoons butter (or oil) in a frying pan. Sauté the roe with spring onion until it firms up, then add whisked egg mixture on top and turn the heat down, scraping the sides as with normal omelets to allow even cooking.

Grated Swiss cheese melted on top is nice, also some chopped parsley; these should be added right after the egg mixture has been poured over the sea urchin mixture.

This omelet is difficult to fold, so simply cut it in quarters to serve.

This is "fun food" as it involves snorkeling and a good bit of giggling! Be sure to wear gloves when handling the urchins, and bon appetit!

PS Some say that you should only eat sea urchins during the months that have the letter R in them. There are restrictions on taking sea urchins in many Caribbean countries. Before you harvest any, check the current regulations with the local Ministry of Fisheries.

Tide's Table

SPROUTS: A Healthy Shipboard Treat

by Ross Mavis

I remember the first sprouts of my hippie days. Shoulder-length hair and mung-bean sprout sandwiches with sunflower seeds and honey-tofu dressing were the order of the day in the Sixties. Since then, sprouts have come a long way and are now making a popular comeback, both on shore and off.

Years ago, sprouted grains and seeds of many kinds helped storm-stayed settlers weather long periods of isolation. Sea voyages by explorers and sailors were facilitated by consuming beer brewed from sprouted grain rich in vitamin C. Recent tests indicate that one half cup of soybean sprouts contains as much vitamin C as six glasses of citrus juice. Grains containing vitamin B complex, when sprouted, can double or even triple their initial potency. Whole oats increase their vitamin C content by up to six times when sprouted.

Another major benefit of sprouting is that a garden plot is not required to grow a continuous supply of leafy green vegetables. A large Mason jar with a screen or cheesecloth covering the jar's mouth is a perfect greenhouse for a family's sprouts. Several jars can be used for a supply of different greens. A cool, dark shelf or cupboard in the galley is the perfect place for incubation. Use organically grown raw seed for the best germination results. Almost everything from alfalfa to zucchini seed can be sprouted for nutritious eating. However, don't sprout tomatoes or potatoes, as they're toxic in that form.

Popular sprouts include clover, radish, onion, alfalfa, wheat, oats, corn, lentils, millet, barley, rice and shelled sunflower or pumpkin seeds, plus beans and peas of several varieties. Sprouting tends to turn carbohydrate content into sugars and resulting sprouts are fairly sweet when harvested early on. The spicy flavor of sprouted mustard, onion and radish seeds is a wonderful addition to sandwiches and salads.



Fresh produce is always on hand when you make your own sprouts

Our guests on board for the weekend marveled at how these newly harvested sprouts tasted so delicious. Don't worry about looking slightly like a sheep chewing a mouthful of field greens. The taste results are worth any embarrassment or inconvenience.

Follow these four easy steps for great sprouts:

1) In a clean Mason jar, rinse about 1/4 Cup of untreated grain or one Tablespoon of seed with lukewarm, fresh water.

2) Cover the rinsed seeds or grain with double their volume in tepid water. Place the open jar in a dark pantry cupboard away from cold or excessive heat — between 20°C and 26°C (68°F to 79°F) is best — and allow them to soak overnight or for at least four hours.

3) Carefully rinse the sprouts again the next day, using slightly warm fresh water. Rinse again if necessary to remove any foam or froth formed as the seeds swell.

4) Rinse seeds or grain at least twice daily until ready to harvest. It's important that they be drained properly as rot will occur if they are left submerged.

Your greens will be ready in two to six days, depending on what is being grown. I prefer the tender, sweet, young sprouts to the older, nuttier flavour of sprouts aged for three or more days. If you like your sprouts leafy green, then expose the glass jar to sunlight for the last few hours of their growth before harvesting them.

Don't try to grow too much in a jar at once, as crowding will curtail growth and sometimes promote rotting through poor air circulation. Sprouts keep well in the refrigerator or icebox for a few days. Try sprouts in omelets or salads for great taste and visual results. A wispy nest of onion or radish sprouts is delicious when cradling a scoop of chicken or shrimp salad as a light luncheon ent[redacted]

Turn the kids on to healthy sprouts, too. Add them to pe[redacted]es. They provide a delicious, moist crunch to the nuttiness of creamy peanuts.

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Hot Stuff: A Passion for Peppers

Many people have a bad, mouth-burning first taste of hot peppers, but if you get past it you can have a life-long affair with this fiery spice. My first experience with hot pepper was when Mama put it on my fingers to stop me from sucking them. I guess that's how I got such a "hot mouth", as Trinidadians call a love for spicy food. If prepared correctly, peppers can add a spicy flavor without searing your tongue. However there are persons who love the burn of pepper and seek out the hottest.

HALL



The hot chili pepper is the spicy side of the Capsicum family, which also produces the sweet, green bell pepper. Black pepper has nothing in common with hot peppers. Black pepper, one of the world's most common tabletop condiments, is ground from the seeds of a vine grown in Asia.

The hot pepper originated in tropical Americas about 3,000 years before Christ. The Incas and Aztecs cultivated the hot pepper, using it mainly for medicines.

The Caribbean's passion for peppers can be traced directly to Christopher Columbus. The explorer was searching for spices of the East, especially black pepper, when he stumbled upon the potent hot pepper. Five centuries later, hot peppers are grown everywhere the climate permits and are the biggest hit of the modern spice market. By the mid-1500s, England was growing peppers. A century later the pepper had won over Europe and the spice paprika was born. By 1600, Portuguese sailors planted hot peppers in Asia and India. All peppers in India are called "chilis" (from the South American country Chile), even though their American origin is forgotten.

Due to various climates and soils, nature has produced an assortment of hot pepper types. Trinidad, for example, grows the Scotch Bonnet (also called the Congo), the bird pepper (penguin), the fiery seven pot (habanero), the long red Cayenne chili (from Guyana), and the jalapeño. These pepper types vary in size, shape and color. The hottest peppers usually mature to a fiery red color. Dried peppers are even hotter than fresh. The seeds and membrane are the hottest part of the pepper. All types of hot peppers emit oil that can burn eyes or skin when handled. Many people wear kitchen gloves when handling hot peppers.

Why does the world have a hot mouth? It seems *capsiacin*, the active ingredient of hot peppers, fools the body into experiencing pain. Capsiacin causes the brain to produce natural pleasure chemicals called endorphins. These pleasure chemicals remain after the pain of the pepper. The brain remembers the pleasure and forgets the spicy pain.

Hot peppers contain high levels of Vitamins A, C and E, and also some Bs. They can be eaten fresh, dried, pickled or in pepper sauce and even pepper jelly. The first popular commercial hot pepper sauce was made from the Tabasco pepper and took its name. Today, you can find pepper sauce — in an almost infinite variety of colors, flavors and temperatures — in every Caribbean grocery store, market and gift shop. Ask market vendors to explain to you the range of fresh peppers available — you don't want to use a "bird pepper" when a "flavor pepper" is called for!

Mango Heat
1 hot pepper
2 starch or rose mangos
1 small green-but-about-to-ripen papaya
1 Tablespoon grated ginger root
1 Tablespoon honey
salt to taste

Remove seeds from hot pepper. Slice mangos from the seed and spoon mango flesh into a blender, discarding the skin. Peel and seed papaya, then slice and add to blender with pepper, ginger, honey and salt. Pour blended mixture into a small pot and cook over low heat for ten minutes. Serve with chicken, beef or fish dishes.

Smoking Pepper Soup
1 Tablespoon olive oil
6 Congo peppers
1 brown paper bag
1 medium onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 Cups chicken broth
1 Cup cubed cooked chicken (boneless)
salt and spices to taste
2 Cups milk
3 Tablespoons butter
2 Tablespoons flour

Heat oil in a frying pan. Put in whole peppers, turning until all sides are blistered and browned. Place them in a clean brown paper bag and seal until they cool. (This is done so none of the taste evaporates as they cool.) Then remove stems and seeds.

Sauté onion and garlic in the olive oil. Put peppers in a blender with onions, garlic, chicken broth and spices and blend until smooth. In a pot heat the milk with the butter and flour. Mix in the pepper blend. Cook on low heat stirring constantly for 30 minutes. Add chicken, heat through and serve.

This could be too hot!

3 Pot Pepper Soup
1 1/2 pounds boneless beef, cubed
1 pound spinach, chopped
1 hot pepper, seeded
2 medium onions, chopped
4 cloves of garlic, minced
salt and spice to taste
1/4 pound ochro (okra), sliced
2 Tablespoons butter

In the first pot, cover beef cubes with water and bring to the boil. Then simmer for 1 hour.

In the second pot, boil the spinach for ten minutes. Drain and blend. To the beef and its broth, add pepper, onions, garlic, spices, and spinach. Bring to a boil and simmer for 15 minutes.

In the third pot, fry ochro in butter until browned. Add to beef mix. Let sit for ten minutes so the flavors can combine before serving.

Chili Pepper Poppers
Two dozen jalapeño peppers
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1/4 Cup breadcrumbs
1/4 Cup grated Cheddar cheese

Remove tops and seeds from peppers. Mix remaining ingredients and use this mixture to stuff the peppers. Place in a covered oven dish and bake at 350°F for 20 minutes. Make sure there is plenty to quench your thirst!

Simple Pepper Sauce
4 Congo peppers
2 Cayenne peppers
2 jalapeño peppers
3 cloves of garlic, minced
2 Tablespoons olive oil
2 Tablespoons ketchup
1 1/2 Cups white vinegar
1/2 small unripe papaya, peeled, seeded and cubed
1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice

If you can't get all three types of peppers, use any one or two of the three. Lightly fry peppers and garlic in olive oil. Add ketchup and half the vinegar. Boil while adding remaining ingredients. Simmer five minutes. This can be puréed or bottled just as it is.

For the Gardener

Peppers are easy to grow. I suggest starting them in trays, using seeds from peppers you like. When four to six inches tall, transplant the seedlings to a well-forked bed. Plant about a foot apart and water regularly. Peppers thrive on light doses of 20–20–20 fertilizer mix every three weeks. If you are light on the fertilizer, a good pepper tree can produce for almost a year. Once the plants start to flower, use 12–12–17–2 mix. Water is the biggest enemy to pepper cultivation — the soil must be well drained. Harvest when the green fruit changes to yellow or red. Be careful, as if the peppers are pungent; your hands and eyes may suffer.



Dear *Compass*,

I refer to the article by Betty Fries about *S/Y Forever Young's* experience in Nevis, in the October 2008 *Caribbean Compass*. It appears that those that did not follow proper procedure want to blame Nevis for their fine.

To state that, "Although we have enjoyed previous visits to St. Kitts and Nevis, our experience this time has ruined these islands for us," is pathetic. To paraphrase the song, they flouted the law, and the law won.

"Given the southeast winds, we arrived at Nevis' Oaulie Bay around 5:30PM." This is not a Port of Entry and is only a few miles from Charlestown on the west side of the island.

As for southeast winds, that is a red herring: Charlestown is on the west side of the island. They could have motored if they needed to do so.

They admit they have visited Nevis before and are aware of:

1. Correct procedures of Customs and Immigration.
2. As experienced yachties they know that it is illegal to go ashore without clearing with the authorities.
3. As previous visitors they knew the opening hours of the Customs and Immigration, plus they had a copy of "the cruisers' handy reference, Chris Doyle's *Cruising Guide to the Leeward Islands* (2007 edition) [which] told us, 'Charlestown Customs open week-days 0800-1600 and weekends 0900-1300. Go in plenty of time as they may leave early... If you arrive in the afternoon, plan to check in the next morning'."
4. They know where the Police Station is located, but chose not to go there. The Officers may have been able to help them (or maybe have informed them to go back aboard and wait until morning).

"After waiting outside the office for 45 minutes, Glen gave up. After all, normal operating procedure in the BVI, Dominica and the French islands, for example, is for vessels arriving after business hours to check in the next morning." Okay, maybe, but surely not to go ashore (and take stuff, e.g. fish, ashore) before checking in.

"Our local pulled out his cell phone and offered to call his friend in Immigration to come down to Oualie and make everything 'all right'. He also suggested, twice, that we take down the Q flag. Now why would we want to pull an official out of his home after working hours when we can clear in tomorrow morning? We declined his offer."

Idiots, they are solely responsible for their predicament.

By their own admission, "We had the Q flag up; we'd go check in first thing in the morning. Unfortunately, over the seven years we've been cruising these islands, we've become lax in our attention to the proper messages symbols like the Q flag convey. This is a lesson we were soon to relearn."

It was their flouting of the normal procedure and acting illegally that got them into trouble. If they did this in the USA or other large country they would be in jail. Bet they would not try it in Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, or Europe, so why try in Nevis?

Best regards,
Doug Gillanders
Basseterre, St. Kitts

Dear* Compass *Readers,
We passed Doug's letter on to Betty for comment, which follows.
CC

Dear *Compass*,

The letter writer is right — it was our fault, based on previous experience. We "yachties" are used to the climate of benign neglect that the islands have allowed over the years. The attitude encourages cruisers to visit. I believe most of the islands have come to the conclusion that we mean no harm and are a general benefit to the places we stop.

However, I feel this writer really comes over as very self-righteous, and not very in touch with our day-to-day reality — quite rigid, in fact. But more to the point, the islands vary in their exact requirements, and we do not carry a publication with us that lists them all — if such exists. Where do you find these publications, and who spends the time hunting for them? You have to come ashore to find them and then you're illegal already!

Given the experience, I do not view St. Kitts/Nevis as an inviting place for happy-go-lucky cruisers, and I am entitled to my opinion — as well as much poorer.

Betty Fries
S/V Forever Young

Dear *Compass*,

Thanks for publishing my letter about the Tobago Cays in the October issue. I think Chris Doyle is a wise man, waiting to see the new moorings before making comments, and relying more on his anchor than on the moorings!

However, as a clarification, please read what Chris wrote in a 2004 *Compass* edition:

"A lot of the New Agreement is about moorings, which is strange considering that the most knowledgeable report on the Tobago Cays National Park — Tom van't Hof's 'Evaluation of the Tobago Cays Marine Park', an ECLAC study done at the request of the government of St. Vincent & the Grenadines and published in 2002 — states clearly that, for the most part, yacht moorings are COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY for the park. (It mentions that a few moorings may be necessary to the west of the islands for larger yachts, but that where most yachts currently anchor, they are unnecessary.) This is a fact that is obvious to all of us who sail there. Furthermore, in the New Agreement, the moorings have spread from the Tobago Cays to Mayreau and Union. Now, the idea of placing moorings in various Grenadine anchorages, whether done by PIRL or others, may have merit. But it should have nothing to do with a plan for the Tobago Cays National Park."

Despite TCMP's Education Officer's reply to my letter last month, I am still unclear about what, exactly, the moorings in the Tobago Cays are protecting. If moorings are required to protect the marine environment, why is their use optional and why is anchoring still allowed?

The moorings couldn't have been installed to protect the turtle's seagrass feeding area because this has already been protected for a year, thanks to a line of floating boys.

To protect the reef? Yachts never anchor on the reef; it's too shallow, and bad holding, and of course, most of them know this causes severe damage to the coral.

So I still don't know, specifically, what the moorings are protecting.

I do feel bad about my comments regarding the fact I have never actually seen the Park Rangers engaged in their law enforcement role, checking on dinghies, etcetera. I regret this and apologize to the TCMP's hard workers. Moreover, I have tried to help by personally stopping two boats from illegal fishing in Marine Park waters.

Again, the need of money to protect the park should not be denied. Rangers, educational programs, scientific surveys, etcetera, all cost money. The park needs, and deserves, adequate funding. Why not simply make the users, and especially charter companies that earn money thanks to the park, participate by raising the park entry fee? But please do not desecrate a pristine marine environment park with mooring buoys!

Best regards,
Frédéric Dalle, Manager
Nemovoile
Martinique

Dear Frederic,

A continuing dialogue about these things is good — it underlines the importance of open communication between the TCMP and its users.

My understanding is that Tom van t'Hof's ECLAC study was primarily economic, rather than environmental — ECLAC is the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

I also was once adamantly opposed to moorings in the Tobago Cays Marine Park, mainly for aesthetic reasons, and also because moorings can be problematic if not properly installed and maintained. But some of the TCMP rangers have since told me that occasionally some yachts (notably bareboat catamarans) really did anchor on coral (and on the turtlegrass beds before the buoyed line was installed). Also, environmentalists including the original TCMP manager, who is a marine biologist, told me that silt stirred up by anchors being dropped and pulled up repeatedly has done some damage to some reefs downcurrent. Hopefully the moorings have been installed where they will ameliorate that situation.

Additionally, there were requests for moorings from some of the charter companies themselves, to benefit anchoring-challenged bareboaters who might otherwise drag and endanger other boats as well as the environment.

I believe that these are among the reasons behind putting a limited number of moorings down, but fortunately not the huge number called for under the since discredited "for profit" park management plan that Chris was objecting to in his 2004 Compass *article. In other words, the placing of a limited number of moorings in the TCMP is a compromise.*

Sally

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page

Hi *Compass*,

First thing to say is that I think *Compass* is a great publication and continue the good work.

Would it be possible to mention the website www.cubahurricanerelieffund.com to raise donations for those who have been stricken by the hurricane damage in Cuba?

Sean Fuller

Hi Sean,

Sure, there you are! And to donate to other hurricane-stricken islands, see www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/response/hurricane_season.

CC

Dear *Compass*,

I am still trying to get an extension on my visa here in Curaçao. Whew, what a bureaucracy! I have been to more than eight offices, back and forth for over three weeks, to get a two-month extension. And of course it represents an hour or two each trip just waiting for, or in, a bus from the anchorage to get into the main town of Willemstad.

One must continually carry a pile of documents that would choke a horse when visiting these "bureau" folks; you never know when they might want to do some checking on the validity of your mother's maiden name. And none of these government employees seem to know exactly what is going on, either! It is not in the best interests of any government system to promote efficiency, it seems, and here where one in five people works for either the Dutch, or the Antillean, or the Curaçao government they seem to take a certain pride in watching long lines of people in hot crowded offices, while the employees do their nails or read romance fictions! They wax ecstatic in contemplation of the fact that when we (the public) are not waiting in line, we are all on an enforced walking tour of the city, trying to find another small office to wait in for a while, only to be told to go somewhere else or to come back next week.

A friend of mine applied for a two-week extension so he might wait for his wife to arrive and when he finally received it the two weeks had already expired so he started the whole process over again and had to spend another two weeks to get permission to stay in order to be legal to get permission to leave!

Is this any way to run a country?

Sign me,
Crazy in Curaçao

Dear *Compass*,

I am the former cook on a yacht chartering in the Caribbean. I am Colombian-born and internationally educated, and speak fluent Spanish, English and German. I have also lived aboard a cruising yacht, where I learned painting and varnishing very well. I have sailed approximately 100,000 miles all over the world.

I have recently experienced something that could be a lesson for the many other South Americans, especially women, who take jobs on yachts.

The owner of the charter boat and I were a couple for the first two years of my job. I had a signed contract stating that I was hired to cook and do basic maintenance including small repair jobs. On that boat, I received a base salary of US$400 per month and got an allowance per guest that I cooked for. The relationship had its ups and downs, but the boat was like my home and I worked very hard to make her beautiful. I did major painting and varnish jobs without extra pay and I cooked well enough that we had return guests for the first time in the history of the boat's ten-year charter business. I was often told that I was the reason for the boat's very successful business. But the downside of the relationship got to me. We decided I would stay aboard only as crew. I was asked to bring other Colombian women to the boat to work with me but they all left unhappy about the treatment they received from the owner.

In June 2008, the owner decided that he would return to Europe and would send a hired captain to work with me, but in Panama he had a near heart attack. I stood by him in the hospital and took care of the guests we had at the same time.

In July, the new captain took over and the owner left. We did the scheduled charters and then were to sail from Panama back to Trinidad. It was a fiasco. The captain was completely incompetent but he refused to acknowledge that I might know anything about the boat after three years being first mate and this would be my fourth time to make this same passage. He often told me to stay in the galley and leave captaining to him.

Contrary to my advice, he killed the generator with air in the system and had to hire a mechanic. He did not understand the watermaker and we had to carry water to the boat — never enough. For three of us he loaded ten litres of drinking water for the trip from Cartagena to Trinidad. When it was finished in three days we had only briny water that he managed to get from the small watermaker, or pipe water from ports that gave us diarrhea. He ignored the owner's orders for bunkering and we had to refuel five times on the trip, which took 23 days! Each time he borrowed my private money to buy it. He anchored in a known dangerous bay in Estado Sucre, Venezuela, against my protests. We could have been in real danger, had it not been for the Guardia Costa who kindly kept an eye on us until we left.

I called the owner and told him what was happening. He did nothing to save his boat or protect me even though I had been his most trusted partner and crew for three years.

When we hauled the boat out in Trinidad, the owner had promised me extra pay for doing extra work on the boat in the yard. I worked extremely hard, even when I had an eye infection, while the captain and his newly arrived wife lounged in the sun and played high and mighty. Nothing I said to the owner brought any improvement or even appreciation for my warnings about the danger to the boat and the captain's dishonest dealing. He just told me I should "take a long vacation" and "see you next year".

It finally reached that point where the owner had to do something about the captain or I would leave. He did nothing, so I left — in front of witnesses to verify what I took. Now I am being told the captain is badmouthing me. The owner forced me to leave through his inaction so he can say that I broke my contract. I did not. I needed this year of charters, especially the bonuses he promised me for return guests and the pay for the extra jobs I did which I have not received.

Now I am without a job, out of season. When I had good offers, I refused because of my contract and out of loyalty. Surely a European would never have been treated this way. Frequent opinion is that South American women are easy, cheap and not worthy of respect. I know several decent South American women who have been horribly degraded by men on boats. That we work for less pay is one thing, but to be treated as if we have no rights as human beings is quite another. This letter barely skims the surface of absurdities I have been through on this job. I just wonder at myself for staying so long and ever believing that it might get better.

I want to bring this to the attention of crew hopefuls. Clear contracts need to include crew pay, duties, rights and terms of termination, but also the obligations of the owner/captain including treatment of crew. No verbal agreements for extras. Get it in writing. I did more than my contract required and instead of thanks or compensation, I am pushed aside with attempts to damage my reputation so the owner and captain can protect their own. The owner refuses to acknowledge my letters or communicate with me.

So, fellow South Americans, be forewarned!
Angela Jaramillo
Colombia

The following letter is reprinted with permission from the October 8, 2008 edition of the Antigua Sun *newspaper:*

Dear Editor,

Given the fact that we can expect the tourism industry to take a hammering from the world economic downturn and, to a lesser degree, because of local criminal events during the past summer, Antigua & Barbuda should be looking into diversifying, expanding and encouraging their local industries.

Unfortunately, the contrary is currently happening. One of the most ignored, neglected and yet overregulated industries with the most local potential, remains the marine industry. We need to think further than just the Boat Show or Race Week. The money is actually spent by yachts sitting here, having maintenance work performed, provisioning, having parts flown in and prepared for their charter work. On average, a medium-sized yacht will spend ten percent of its estimated value every year on servicing and running the vessel. You can judge what that would mean here in Antigua & Barbuda considering the number of yachts that come here during the course of the winter.

Over the past year, we have had many meetings with and have sent letters to the Antigua & Barbuda Marine Association (ABMA), National Parks, the comptroller of Customs and Minister Harold Lovell. On too many occasions, we have not even had the courtesy of a reply or they have neglected to get back to us at the date promised. Why is this? Are we small fish non-voters? Let me point out that many residents of English Harbour, Falmouth Harbour and the areas around Jolly Harbour directly or indirectly depend upon the yachting and marine industries for their income.

We are not advocating the same regulations here as in St. Maarten. However, some sort of deregulation and opening up of the marine industry are needed to encourage yachts to stay here for their time in the Caribbean.

—Continued on next page



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37'	1977 Gin Fizz *(Reduced for quick sale!!)*	EU30,800	53'	1995 Super Maramu *(Reduced!!)*	US$329,000
39'	1968 Cheoy Lee Off Shore 40	US$95,000	53'	1984 Amel Custom Mango	US$269,000
40'	1986 Tashing Tashiba *(Excellent condition!!)*	US$199,000	55'	1994 Oyster 55	£376,000
42'	1986 Endeavour *(Price reduced!!)*	US$98,000	55'	1998 Zerft Motor Sailer *(Reduced for quick sale!!)*	US$53,900
43'	1999 Wauquiez Pilot Saloon	EU247,500	56'	1973 Visch Motor Yacht	US$175,000
43'	1985 Gitana	US$115,000	**MULTI-HULLS**		
44'	1999 Finngulf *(Reduced!!)*	US$169,000	35'	2002 Wildcat 350	US$157,000
45'	1992 Fortuna	US$150,000	36.5'	1993 Dean Catamaran *(Reduced for quick sale!!)*	US$99,500
45'	1988 Peterson 46 Cutter	US$220,000	37'	2002 Fountaine Pajot	US$325,000
46'	2001 Tayana *(Vancouver pilot house)*	US$329,000	43'	2001 Lagoon Catamaran *(Reduced for quick sale!!)*	US$334,000
50'	1991 Celestial Pilothouse	US$268,000	44'	2007 Lagoon 440 Catamaran *(Excellent condition!!)*	EU438,700
50'	1974 Motor Yacht *(Local built)*	US$150,000	54'	1980 Norman Cross Trimaran	US$350,000
			55'	1995 Custom Built Trimaran	US$350,000

—Continued from previous page

With rumours of the application of ABST (sales tax) to yachts that stay over 90 days in transit, it would be another blow to the industry that already sees considerable competition from neighbouring islands like St. Maarten, and expanding and new major marinas in St. Lucia and Grenada.

The authorities in Antigua & Barbuda need to take cognisance of the importance of the yachting industry. Several years ago, Ivor Jackson gave a very illuminating presentation on the impact of the yachting industry on Antigua's economy. He showed that the yachting industry generates revenues by far in excess of that brought in by the cruise ships.

Why then would the authorities do everything they can to sabotage the marine industry with excessive bureaucracy, antiquated Customs procedures, and now the threat of ABST on yachts that are deemed "resident" if they spend 90 days in Antigua?

Legislation pertaining to the marine industry has not kept up with the times. We should be striving to make it easier and more affordable for visiting yachts to come here. Instead, it seems to us that the yachts are being seen more and more as cash cows that will always be here. Wrong. They can, will, and have moved away. There are already more mega-yachts in St. Maarten than were there four years ago. These used to be here in Antigua. One well-known yacht will never return to Antigua because of the lawlessness apparent in Falmouth/English Harbours over the last 18 months.

It is time to open our eyes because we want yachts to stay here and not only see Antigua & Barbuda as a holiday destination. We do not want them to pass us by with their guests and do all their maintenance work and get their supplies in the other islands. Although the hurricane season is starting to wind down, it looks as if there are dark clouds packing over the marine industry in Antigua.

S.I. in Falmouth Harbour
Antigua

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WHAT'S ON MY MIND

Do You Know Where You Are?

A Salutary Lesson for the New Season

by Richard Roxburgh

When the skipper of the brand new 54-foot, Jeanneau-built sloop *Dan Marco IV* set sail from Union Island on Wednesday March 26th 2008, he didn't think he was about to have a bad day. In fact, he thought it was going to be wonderful. The sun was shining; the winds were normal northeasterly around 18 knots. The boat that he had rented a few days before from a Martinique-based cruising company was a happy one.

Alain Laou, a 46-year-old skipper and fisherman from Martinique with well over 20 years sailing experience, much of it in Caribbean waters, had spent the evening in Union Island together with four clients and had decided to sail on a round trip to the Tobago Cays via the scenic sand spit of Mopion, then Petit St. Vincent, and from there past the windward (eastern) side of Palm Island.

On that same morning we, in our 45-foot Prout catamaran *Mirounga*, set sail from Saltwhistle Bay, Mayreau, for a morning at the Tobago Cays. We caught ham radio enthusiast and weather forecaster Eric on the SSB at 0630 hours. I cannot remember exactly what he said. He may have mentioned the possibility of occasional and scattered squalls but nothing to warn one off a normal day's sailing in the Grenadines.

How wrong one can be.

Once at the Cays we dropped anchor, the newly installed Park Rangers came round and collected their fee and we got ready to enjoy the fish and corals nearby. There was some cloud around but also still lots of sunny breaks to light up the corals. Around midday we decided to up anchor and pick our way through the reef, heading south for the short hop to Palm Island, but while we were preparing to leave we saw the skies darken. It was the sort of squall one has from time to time when anchored in the Tobago Cays, and rather exhilarating to weather at anchor. But definitely not one to be out in when sailing close to reefs. So we decided to wait until it passed.

Forty-five minutes later we were back in sunshine emerging from the Cays when my wife Suzanna said, "There's a boat stuck on the reef. It's still got its sails up but definitely looks strange."

This was the unfortunate *Dan Marco*. The squall had hit Alain Laou when he was running parallel to the windward-side reef with what he considered a safe gap of 200 metres between himself and the reef. A bit close for some, perhaps, but probably fine in good visibility, although it does represent a classic lee shore. But when all visibility suddenly disappears, the game changes. Taking up the story, Alain Laou said, "I have never seen a sudden storm like this. No visibility at all. I reduced sail and kept on the same compass heading I had planned on, but the wind and current and piling-up seas pushed me onto the reef. I couldn't believe it. Suddenly we stopped and there was this awful grinding sound and I knew we had a problem."

When talking to him on the phone the question that struck me forcibly was, why didn't he have a waypoint set at a safe distance from the northern edge of the reef which he could sail towards with confidence when the visibility dropped? But he said that as an experienced skipper he sailed on a compass heading, and "Anyway, the *Dan Marco* had no repeater for the outside so one couldn't keep diving back inside to check on preset waypoints".

A few hours later we were high up on Palm Island, looking down on the stricken vessel. At this stage there were high hopes of being able to pull her through the reef into the slightly deeper lagoon on the other side. The crew had been safely evacuated and were enjoying the hospitality of well-known doctor, artist and Palm Island resident, Patrick Chevalier and his wife Virgine.

—Continued on page 55

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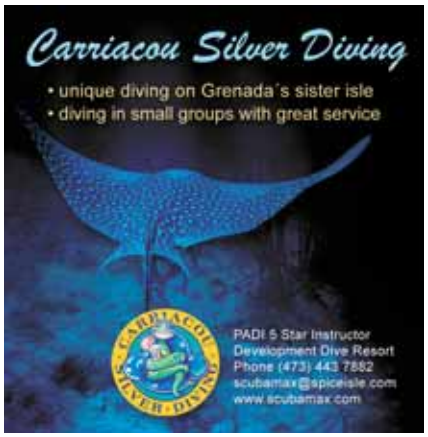
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B & C Fuel Dock	Petite Martinique	42	Dopco Travel	Grenada	6	Jones Maritime	St. Croix	40	Soreidom	Martinique	5
Bahia Redonda Marina	Venezuela	30	Doyle Offshore Sails	Tortola	3	KP Marine	St. Vincent	40	Spice Island Marine	Grenada	7
Barefoot Yacht Charters	St. Vincent	11	Doyle's Guides	USA	41	Le Phare Bleu	Grenada	25	St. Maarten Sails	St. Maarten	34
Basil's Bar	Mustique	44	Echo Marine - Jotun Special	Trinidad	35	LIAT	Caribbean	49	St. Thomas Yacht Sales	St. Thomas	50
Bequia Marina	Bequia	29	Errol Flynn Marina	Jamaica	22	Lulley's Tackle	Bequia	28	Superwind	Germany	45
Boat Shed Brokers	Tortola	55	Food Fair	Grenada	46	McIntyre Bros. Ltd	Grenada	40	SVG Air	St. Vincent	27
Bogles Round House	Carriacou	46	Fortress Marine	St. Kitts	10	Navimca	Venezuela	26	Tikal Arts & Crafts	Grenada	47
Budget Marine	Sint Maarten	2	Frangipani	Bequia	28	Northern Lights Generators	Tortola	33	Tobago Carnival Regatta	Tobago	12
BVI Yacht Sales	Tortola	50	Fred Marine	Guadeloupe	8	Peake Yacht Brokerage	Trinidad	48	Trade Winds Cruising	Bequia	50
Camper & Nicholsons	Grenada	21	Gourmet Foods	St. Vincent	44	Perkins Engines	Tortola	23	Turbulence Sails	Grenada	7
Caraibe Greement	Martinique	13	Grenada Marine	Grenada	6	Petit St. Vincent	PSV	38	Tyrrel Bay Yacht Haulout	Carriacou	17
Caraibe Yachts	FWI	50	Grenada Sailing Festival	Grenada	15	Ponton du Bakoua	Martinique	14	Vemasca	Venezuela	31
Carene Shop	Martinique	15	Grenada Sailing Festival	Grenada	16	Prickly Bay Marina	Grenada	16	Virgin Gorda Yacht Harbour	Virgin Gorda	34
Cooper Marine	USA	55	Grenada Sailing Festival	Grenada	17	Renaissance Marina	Aruba	20	Wallace & Co	Bequia	29
Corea's Food Store Mustique	Mustique	45	Grenadines Sails	Bequia	42	Santa Barbara Resorts	Curaçao	18	Wallilabou Anchorage	St. Vincent	32
Curaçao Marine	Curaçao	19	Iolaire Enterprises	UK	43/47	Sea Services	Martinique	9	Xanadu Marine	Venezuela	31
Diesel Outfitters	St. Maarten	14	Island Water World	Sint Maarten	56	Simpson Bay Marina	St. Maarten	35			

—Continued from page 50

As another string to his bow, Doc, as he is known, has a big powerful motorboat and at that point he was leading the attempted rescue. As he said, "*Dan Marco* had already been bumped about 40 meters into the reef by the waves so it was too far to do the obvious thing and pull her off eastwards out to sea... hence the plan to pull her into the lagoon." This was gruelling and heroic work. During the time we watched the attempted rescue we saw three towlines break. By now two other boats were involved belonging to the brothers Bertrand and Jean Marc Sailly of nearby Union Island who own the Bougainvillea Restaurant and operate the charter boat *Wind and Sea*.

By the second day of pulling, a large hole had opened up in the port side but *Dan Marco* was tipped over to starboard in less than two metres of water so the hole was exposed and repairable. Plywood, fibreglass and epoxy were brought in and under difficult conditions a very workmanlike repair was made. The pumps seemed to be holding and by dusk on the third day the rescuers thought they had a good chance of saving her intact.

But for Alain Laou, the skipper preparing for his third lonely night on board, things were not so rosy. "I was tired. I was hungry. I was demoralised. It was my first accident. This was a big shock." So at about midnight, when the pumps seemed to be losing ground, he decided to wade ashore and get some sleep.



RICHARD ROXBURGH (2)

Above: The brand new 54-foot Dan Marco IV, *only hours after striking the reef at Palm Island. At this point there were high hopes of salvaging her*
Below: Five weeks later she is a stricken hulk, stripped of everything salvageable and about to be disposed of. 'It's a question of principle. We cannot abandon this wreck here. We have to keep the Grenadines clean'



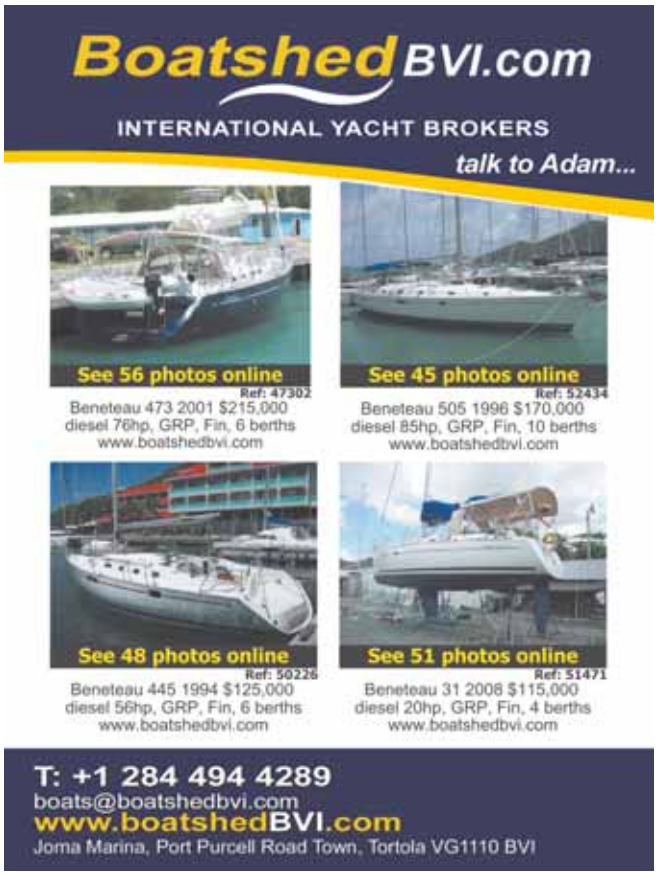
Talking with Doc and Jean Marc, I sensed surprise and disappointment when they returned at dawn on the fourth day to find the fight aboard *Dan Marco* was lost. Water was pouring in through the broken keel and saving the boat became an exercise in salvaging as much of the brand new equipment as possible. So, during the next few weeks, there were daily trips out to her to remove mast, rigging, engine and electronics, which were transported to Union Island and became the insurance company's property (and problem).

All that was left when we next passed by five weeks later in early May was a lonely hulk. I asked Jean Marc if she would be left to break up but he was indignant at the suggestion. "It's a question of principle. We can't abandon a wreck here. We have to keep the Grenadines clean."

So when you next pass by Palm Island you won't see the *Dan Marco*. She has gone. But losing any vessel leaves a whole raft of problems which have to be sorted out and questions to be answered. What it also leaves is a sense of sadness at the loss of a beautiful vessel and all the hopes she carries. And maybe because of this sadness, respect for people's feelings and a desire to move on and not ask too many embarrassing questions.

Apart from all the obvious lessons from the story, the thing that surprises me is why anybody would sail close to reefs using dead reckoning only without first presetting waypoints for safety. In fact, I am sure that most of today's cruisers, including myself, feel much safer with waypoints set at regular intervals so you are always heading towards a known point (carefully checked for reasonableness, of course). This may not appeal to 'Real Sailors' but surely it is much safer. And yes, I know all the argument about "What happens if your GPS breaks down or the Americans turn off the satellites". So if it is safer to have preset waypoints, surely all boats — particularly charter boats — should have repeaters so the information is readily available in the cockpit. Then sailors will have no excuse not to know where they are in all circumstances.





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