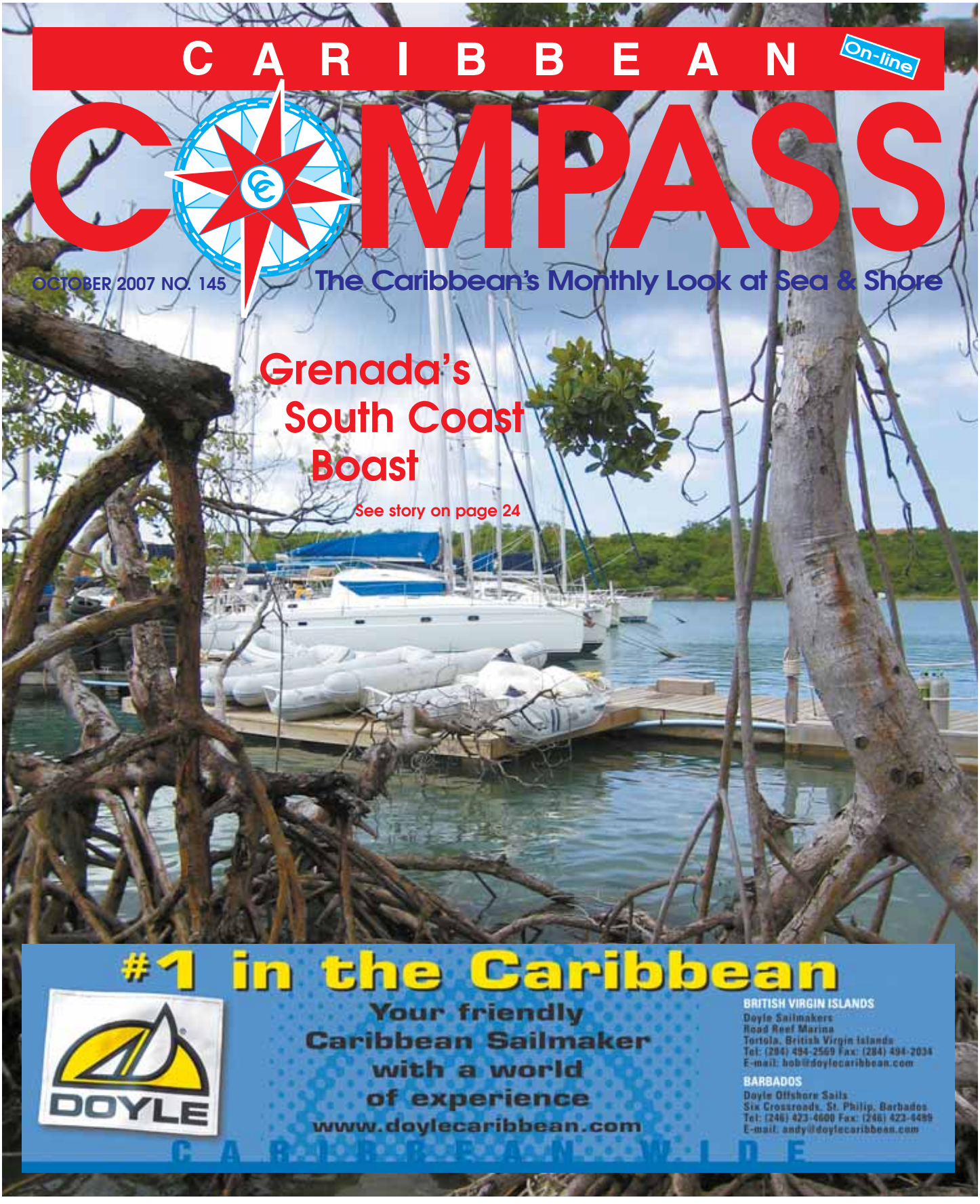
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Grenada's South Coast Boast

See story on page 24

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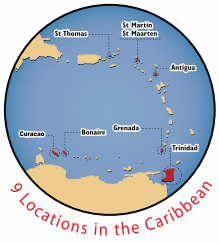


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Info & Updates

Breaking News!
We reported in last month's *Compass* that legislation had been passed requiring "all" air and sea carriers — including yachts — to submit passenger information in advance when arriving at, and departing from, each of ten Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM) member states. Participating countries are Jamaica, Antigua & Barbuda, St. Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, Barbados, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Grenada, Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana.
As this issue of *Compass* is ready to go to press, with articles on pages 6 and 19 about the electronic Advance Passenger Information System (APIS), the difficulties it presents for individual yachts, and its enforcement's possible negative impact on the Eastern Caribbean's yachting industry as a whole, we have just received news from Sharon McIntosh, Manager of the Caribbean Marine Association.
Sharon reports that the Director and the Compliance Manager of CARICOM's Implementation Agency for Crime and Security will be meeting soon with officers and members of the Caribbean Marine Association to discuss the needs of the yachting community regarding APIS.
We will have a report on the outcome of that meeting in the November issue of *Compass*.

New Extension Fee for Grenada
Yachting visitors to Grenada are currently being granted an initial stay of one month by Immigration, after which an extension of stay in the country must be applied for. On August 1st, 2007, Grenada's Minister Responsible for Immigration signed a new regulation requiring applicants for an extension to pay EC$25 (approximately US$9.35) for each month for which the extension of stay is granted. Cruising permit costs (ranging from EC$50 to EC$150, based on boat length) have not changed, and are still valid for the duration of the yacht's visit.
For more information visit www.grenadagrenadines.com.

Latest Wreck Dive for Carriacou
Max Nagel, President of the Grenada Scuba Diving Association, reports: On



September 10th a tugboat named *Boris* was sunk with the permission of the Grenada Ports Authority in the waters off Carriacou, the largest island in the Grenadines, to become a new dive site. Leading the project was the Grenada Scuba Diving Association in conjunction with Jerry Stewart of Tyrrel Bay Yacht Haulout, who generously donated this tugboat.

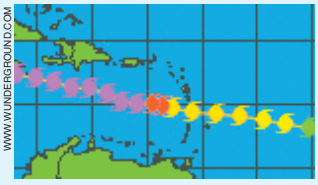
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Cover Photo: CHRIS DOYLE
Horizon Yacht Charters docks at True Blue Bay Marina, Grenada

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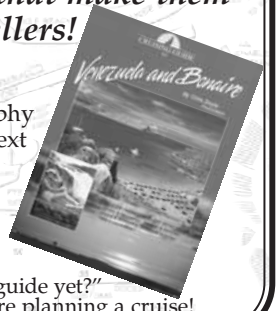
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See Writers' Guidelines at www.caribbeancompass.com. Send submissions to sally@caribbeancompass.com.

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—*Continued from previous page*
The *Boris* was sunk near a previously sunk ocean-going tug, the *Westsider*, creating a unique "Twin Tugs" dive site. It will be interesting for divers to compare the rates of marine growth and evolving fish habitat on the two vessels. These wreck dives add variety to Carriacou's existing natural reef and wall dive sites.
For more information contact scubamax@caribsurf.com.

Hurricane Season So Far…
As this issue of *Compass* goes to press, Hurricane Season 2007 is more than half over. The two named storms having the greatest effect in the Caribbean so far, Dean and Felix, both made their initial landfall in the Windward Islands and both eventually became Category 5 hurricanes (the first time two Category 5 storms have made landfall in a single season).
Hurricane Dean was a Category 2 hurricane when it swept through the channel


ROY HOPPER

Carriacou's mangroves provide a storm hide-away for yachts and local vessels. This photo was taken as boats were sheltering from Hurricane Dean, whose eye passed through the island chain well over a hundred miles to the north

between the islands of St. Lucia and Martinique in the northern Windwards on August 17th. Although crops, other vegetation, and some buildings and utilities on those islands suffered, damage was minimized by the fact that the storm was moving relatively fast — approximately 25 miles per hour — so high winds did not last too long. Dean then managed to avoid hitting any more landmasses until it reached the other side of the Caribbean Sea, striking the coast of Mexico near the border with Belize.
Tropical Depression Six was developing into Tropical Storm Felix, with winds of approximately 50 knots, as it passed over Grenada in the southern Windwards in the early hours of September 1st. Yachtsman John Burnie, manager of the Nautor's Swan charter base in Guadeloupe, tells *Compass*: "I was in True Blue Bay in the southeast corner of Grenada. Between 4:00 and 5:00AM we had 45- to 55-knot winds for a short period, indicating we were in the strong southern field of the storm. I took some photos at that time, including ones of me getting very wet in my RIB tender rescuing a yacht that broke free and ended up on the pontoon. So much water and lightning I thought I was at a rave in a car wash!"
From Tyrrel Bay, Carriacou, where many yachts were sheltering in the mangrove lagoon, Jerry Stewart of Tyrrel Bay Yacht Haulout reports: "The winds we got — north through east to south — kept the seas down. Tyrrel Bay is fairly sheltered in these conditions even with 40- to 45-knot winds."
The US National Hurricane Center estimated that Felix attained hurricane status early on September 2nd while located about 155 miles east-northeast of Bonaire. The ABC islands received gusty winds and heavy rain. Hurricane Felix made landfall just south of the border between Nicaragua and Honduras in a region known as the Mosquito Coast.
See cruisers' stories of Hurricanes Dean and Felix on pages 14 and 15.

Eight Bells
• SIR JOHN COMPTON
St. Lucia's Prime Minister John Compton died at age 82 on September 7th. Sir John, who had the distinction of being St. Lucia's first, fifth and eighth prime minister, was born on the Grenadine island of Canouan on April 29th, 1925.
—*Continued on next page*


WILFRED DEDERER

The late Sir John Compton, at center, enjoying the Bequia Easter Regatta in April of this year

—Continued from previous page
He attended Castries Intermediate School in St. Lucia and worked in oil refineries in Curaçao for two years before studying law and economics at the University College of Wales and then earning a Bachelor's degree in Economics at the London School of Economics.
As well as being a lawyer, one-time labor leader and farmer, John Compton was an enthusiastic yachtsman, often attending area regattas and cruising in the Windward Islands aboard the 36-foot Dickerson ketch *Sapphire* with former St. Vincent & the Grenadines Prime Minister Sir James Mitchell. A yacht race from St. Lucia to Martinique and back was named in Compton's honor.
He was buried in St. Lucia on September 18th.

• GUY DEAN

Sailor, artist and long-time *Compass* contributor Guy Dean drowned in Benner Bay, St. Thomas, USVI on August 30th. Guy cruised aboard *Cocoa*, a wooden Bequia-built sloop, until it ended up on the beach at Windward, Carriacou. He then lived ashore in Carriacou, later moving to Bequia and, most recently, St. Thomas. Guy was well-known as a signpainter, and his work can be seen in establishments throughout the Grenadines. He is survived by his mother in the USA, a daughter working in Iraq, and other relatives and friends. His ashes will be spread at sea at a date to be announced.



Cruisers' Site-ings

Webmaster Denny Schlesinger reports: We at Bahia Redonda Marina in Venezuela have added a translating dictionary to our website, ***http://bahiaredonda.com/dictionary/dictionary.php***, for our English-speaking visitors heading south and for our Spanish-speaking visitors heading north. The dictionary currently has 250 entries, mostly words that cruisers use on a daily basis. Should a visitor search for a word that is not in the dictionary, I am notified of the missing word on a weekly basis and this allows me to keep the dictionary up-to-date with the words people are using. For more information contact webmaster@bahiaredonda.com.
Check out the on-line market for boats, autos and apartment rentals at ***www.caribbean-market.com***.
A new website, AudioSeaStories.com, brings the enjoyment of books on tape into the electronic age with ten newly released seafaring tales. Available for download or on CD in two formats (MP3 or standard audio CD), these books can be played on iPod or similar players or on standard CD players.
AudioSeaStories.com has been created by *Good Old Boat* magazine as a way to preserve classic tales of the sea for a specialized niche of audiobook fans: boaters and those who dream of the sea.

Charitable Writers

Who says cruisers are cheap? The following *Compass* writers have donated the proceeds from recent articles to worthy local causes: Katrina Kelshall, to the Trinidad & Tobago Youth Sailing Programme; Sid Olshefski, to Fundación La Tortuga in Venezuela; Bill and Bev Bate to the Schools Without Borders Foundation; Peter Ashby and Karen Bradbeer, to St. Benedict's Infant Hospital in St. Vincent; John Rowland to the Bequia Community High School Library; and Melodye Pompa to the Carriacou Children's Educational Fund. Your generosity is appreciated!

Professional Yacht Crew Courses

Although experience remains an important part of a professional yacht crew's overall career development, "sea time" is no longer enough.
The International Maritime Organization (IMO) convention provides the minimum standards of qualifications required by crewmembers at various levels depending upon vessel size. The 1995 STCW Convention (Standard of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers) establishes a baseline standard for the training and education of seafarers throughout the world. In 2002, the International STCW 95 convention went into full effect. Since then, mariners on most seagoing commercial vessels,



Students enter engine room during shipboard fire-fighting training

including crew on large yachts, must be trained in compliance with its provisions and carry certificates to that effect.
The first STCW'95 course for the upcoming yachting season, offered by the Maritime School of the West Indies in St. Maarten, will start on October 8th.
Crew working on vessels with paying passengers will need to complete the official five-day STCW 95 basic safety course comprising:

- Personal Safety & Social Responsibility
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Advance Passenger Information for Yachts... or Not?

On August 11th, Penny Tyas wrote to yachtbuddy.com: "This morning a cruising yachtsman who arrived in [Antigua] waters some two weeks ago for repairs and relaxation, went to clear out prior to his departure tomorrow for islands south. Customs clearance went according to plan, but he was informed that he would have to come back in the afternoon to clear Immigration, and he was given a form to complete.

"This afternoon he presented himself with all his documentation and the completed form, but then learned that the form was no longer sufficient, and since July 31st it has become a requirement to complete an Advance Passenger Information System form on-line.

"The frustrated Captain was left no choice but to arrange to go back a third time to Immigration in order to get the required clearance to leave the country...."

Other visiting yacht skippers reported similar experiences in Antigua. One of them mentioned the website address he'd been given — www.caricomeapis.org — where the Advance Passenger Information System (APIS) filing requirements can be found.

Via the website, *Compass* contacted the Joint Regional Communications Centre (JRCC) of the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM) in Barbados. We were told: "Legislation has been passed which provides for an obligation for Advance Passenger Information to be transmitted to the ten participating Member States... for ALL air and sea carriers arriving at, and departing from each Member State." Participating CARICOM member states are Jamaica, Antigua & Barbuda, St. Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, Barbados, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Grenada, Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana. These countries became collectively known as a "Single Domestic Space" during the Cricket World Cup matches held in the Caribbean earlier this year.

By registering on the website, the masters of said air and sea carriers find and fill out a detailed form which asks for information such as passengers' names, nationalities and passport numbers, and the vessel or aircraft's dates and times (in hours and minutes) of departure and arrival.

The JRCC tells us that the form can be submitted by filling it in on-line using the XLS format available on the website, by creating an XML file (using their XML schema) and sending it as an e-mail attachment (to maritime@impacsjrcc.org), or by filling in the on-line form and faxing it (to 246 228-4040). The fax option is to be used in the event of failure or unavailability of electronic equipment.

Submissions must be made according to a strict timetable relevant to times of departure and/or arrival, with different advance times depending on whether you are arriving in, departing from, or traveling within the CARICOM Single Domestic Space.

Or first thoughts were, "Yachtspeople are tourists — are they really going to made to jump through such complicated bureaucratic hoops when visiting the Caribbean?" And, if so, "This is bad news for the yacht tourism industry."

The Problems With Yachts

It's a challenge to facilitate yacht tourism in a single cruising area with a dozen national borders, but the introduction of single-page Customs and Immigration clearance forms in many CARICOM countries, such as Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines, have made yacht clearance a breeze. But filing Advance Passenger Information (API) is not going to be plain sailing for yachts. Unlike commercial aircraft and cruiseships, it's virtually impossible for the average yacht — especially a sailing yacht — to state with any accuracy the time in hours, much less minutes, when it will arrive in port.

Sailing between the islands, depending on wind, currents and sea states encountered once underway, the prudent small boat skipper will often elect to tuck into an intermediate harbor and wait for better conditions before proceeding to his destination, sometimes waiting days for a suitable "weather window". Sailing northward in the Grenadines, for example, we've waited a couple of days in the Tobago Cays for near gale-force reinforced northerly tradewinds to abate. If, like the Cays, one's intermediate "harbor of refuge" does not have the facilities required to submit a revised API form, what to do?

Unlike mega-yachts which might have high-speed internet connection gear aboard, the average private yachtsman is dependent on seeking out shoreside internet cafés or finding good anchorage WiFi. The majority of private yacht owners are going to look at the required on-line time as onerous — even when the internet is up and running well, never mind when it's got the hiccups. [For example, in Bequia, a major port of entry and departure for yachts, on the morning of September 21st, 2007, the internet service was completely down for some three hours.]

Bareboats, of course, do not come with laptops aboard and vacationers aren't going to take precious hours out of a ten-day, three-country cruise through the Windwards or Leewards to pay to sit at an internet café every couple of days and transmit forms. (Think, there are over 700 bareboats in Martinique, all wanting to cross two of the affected national borders just to visit the Grenadines.) These boaters would no doubt phone or radio the charter company's base to say, for example "We're leaving Soufriere sometime tomorrow bound for Bequia, but if the wind is light we might stop in Wallilabou overnight...." and ask the base personnel to attempt to file accurate API forms for them.

> *'Intelligence sources report that no specific, credible terrorist threats to maritime security exist in the Caribbean'*

Pondering the logistical nightmare that API for yachts would represent, we had another look at the on-line form. It has room for 1,000 passenger names. Do non-professionals know the "5 Letter Port Code" for their vessel's last port of call? Surely, we thought, this is meant for cruise ships and airlines!

We phoned back to the JRCC to ask whether yachts were, in fact, included in the requirement to file API. We hoped to hear that recreational vessels, at least, were exempt, but were told that "ALL sea carriers" (emphasis theirs) should indeed include yachts. We were also told that JRCC believes that all ten CARICOM countries involved should currently be requiring yachts to transmit Advance Passenger Information.

This was puzzling. The Advance Passenger Information System supposedly went into effect in CARICOM countries from February 1, 2007. But so far, we'd only heard of yachts being asked to supply API when leaving Antigua, nowhere else. We phoned the head Immigration office in one of the other CARICOM countries listed, and were told that although they were aware of the APIS, they were not requiring yachts to comply, at least not for the time being, because "the system is not yet fully operational". Immigration personnel at another office told us they were unaware of such legislation. Yachting concerns in another CARICOM country reported that "There has been no announcement here about these measures." And from yet another country, a yacht-businessman reported: "Immigration here is actually very good at understanding the potential problems and needs of the yachting sector. What we're definitely trying to avoid is the confusion currently being experienced in Antigua."

A Little History

APIS was developed by the former US Customs Service in 1988, in cooperation with the former US Immigration and Naturalization Service and the airline industry. At that time, participation was voluntary.

In October, 2001, the United Nations Security Council, "reaffirming its unequivocal condemnation of the terrorist acts that took place in New York, Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania on 11 September", adopted Resolution 1373: "a wide-ranging, comprehensive resolution with steps and strategies to combat international terrorism".

—Continued on next page

—Continued from previous page

(According to www.un.org, the Resolution was passed in a night meeting which began at 10:50PM and adjourned at 10:53PM!) The Resolution states: "States should... prevent the movement of terrorists or their groups by effective border controls" and "take the necessary steps to prevent the commission of terrorist acts, including by provision of early warning to other States by exchange of information". Resolution 1373 urged, but did not require, UN member states to take measures to counter terrorism. Even those countries with a negligible threat of attacks adopted new anti-terrorism legislation.

Beginning in October, 2005, all *commercial* vessels regardless of size or flag were required to file advance notices of arrival electronically when arriving in the United States. A rule posted in the Federal Register made the electronic forms (e-NOA/D, or Electronic Notice Of Arrival/Departure) mandatory for commercial passenger vessels, including charter yachts.

The "Revised Notice of Arrival/Departure" requirements came into force in the CARICOM states on January 1st, 2007, with an interim period until February 1st. The intention was to provide a secure Single Domestic Space for the duration of the Cricket World Cup 2007, when matches were held in several different islands from February to May, and to facilitate the resultant travel of exceptionally large numbers of people between the islands. Although Cricket World Cup 2007 is long gone, Diane Hazzard of CARICOM's JRCC, writes, "Please be advised that [although the] obligation for submission of Advance Passenger Information... was introduced during Cricket World Cup [it] remains in effect as this is not a sunset legislation."

Implementation Caribbean Style?

Concerned about the possible effect of this massive new coil of red tape on the Eastern Caribbean's yacht-tourism industry, we spoke with the President of the Caribbean Marine Association, Keats Compton. The Caribbean Marine Association brings together representatives of national recreational marine trade associations throughout the region.

After speaking with Keats, it is our understanding that although these ten CARICOM states have agreed to require API from "ALL air and sea carriers", it is now up to the Parliament of each of these individual sovereign countries to pass the relevant legislation to make it their national law. Could this be the reason that requiring API from yachts has only raised its head in Antigua? And could the other countries still have time to fine-tune their own legislation to protect the yachting sector of their economies?

One option would be to exempt non-commercial vessels. If the US — the main terrorist target, but not a country that relies heavily on yacht tourism — exempted yachts that are not carrying passengers for hire in its 2005 legislation, could CARICOM countries not at least do the same?

But the commercial charter trade is also a vital part of the yacht tourism sector. When, starting in October, 2005, it was required that all passenger-carrying commercial vessels traveling between US and foreign waters transmit information about passengers and crew to Homeland Security before departure and return, the US Virgin Islands' yacht charter industry was thrown into turmoil. Their usual destinations were in the British Virgins. Representatives of the marine recreation industry in the USVI met with members of the US Department of Homeland Security, US Customs and Border Protection and island government officials to discuss the burden that e-NOA/D placed on charter yachts and other businesses, such as dive shops, that travel between the USVI and BVI. Some yacht charter clearing houses responded by offering "e-NOA/D service" to their clients. USVI Delegate to Congress Donna Christensen told the media, "...we continue to press for relief from the regulations impacting our charter boats and charter yacht operators...."

Due to Congresswoman Christensen's efforts, in 2006 an amendment was passed which required the Secretary of Homeland Security to study and report back to Congress on the impact of the Advance Passenger Information System on charter boat operators in the territory. Although the Department of Homeland Security ultimately rejected the granting of a waiver for the USVI, advance notice requirements there were eased in consideration of the territory's yachting industry. For example, the 24-hour notice was reduced to one hour to allow charter boats to accept last-minute bookings.

Even better for CARICOM than exempting non-commercial vessels from API, as the US has done, would be to exempt all vessels with less than a certain tonnage, providing relief to the sub-region's important charter yacht trade.

Currently, API is required for vessels when moving within the CARICOM Single Domestic Space, as well as when arriving at and departing from the CARICOM Single Domestic Space. Wouldn't the concept of a Single Domestic Space, as well as the tourism sector, be better served if visiting yachts only had to file electronic API to their first port of entry in CARICOM and from their final port of departure? The beauty of electronic submission is that the information is computerized and therefore easily exchangeable between authorities in all CARICOM countries: the information would be at hand when yachts did their normal national clearances.

In any case, now that CARICOM citizens are increasingly required to have machine-readable passports, the time must be at hand when all CARICOM ports of entry will have passport-reading machines. This should enable Immigration officers to easily forward passenger data to the JRCC electronically when a yacht clears out, potentially eliminating the need for the visitors themselves to do so.

Interestingly, the ferries shuttling large numbers of passengers back and forth daily between the USVI and BVI were granted exemption from API filing, although commercial yachts were not. According to USVI Port Authority Chief Director William Westman, as quoted in *Caribbean Net News*, "The ferry boat operators in the northeast US carried thousands of commuters each day back and forth to work in Canada.... That group had a strong lobby support system in place to advocate for their interests." In the end, is getting an exemption merely a case of having a sufficiently strong lobby system?

Risk Assessment: War on Terrorism or War on Tourism?

According to US Customs and Border Protection, information obtained via the APIS "will be used to perform counterterrorism, law enforcement, and public security queries to identify risks to the aircraft or vessel, to its occupants, or to the United States...." The APIS is being applied in the Caribbean largely for the benefit of the United States, as a good neighbor policy, as unarguably there could be anti-US terrorists found anywhere.

On the other hand, anti-Caribbean terrorism is practically unheard of. According to the US Government Accountability Office, although security at Caribbean commercial port facilities (through which goods bound for US ports and cruise ships carrying US citizens travel) may be a concern, "intelligence sources report that no specific, credible terrorist threats to maritime security exist in the Caribbean Basin". How great, then, are the potential terrorism and public security threats presented by yachts to either the countries of CARICOM or to the US? In contrast, what is the economic value to CARICOM of yachts' ease of movement between its member states?

Will anyone check to see that the names given on the API form are really the people, and only those people, aboard a departing or arriving yacht? Even assuming a terrorist participates in API and uses his real identity, if a name raises a red flag at JRCC, who is responsible for preventing the yacht from leaving port with that person aboard or detaining the suspect at the next port? If a yacht skipper hasn't been able to file an API for some reason, will he be tempted to not clear in at the next island? Odds are, nobody will check; most CARICOM countries' law enforcement services are already stretched too thin by the war on drugs to make sure that all yachties have done their paperwork. There are thousands of yachts sailing from country to country in the Eastern Caribbean. What would the direct (not to mention indirect) cost of enforcing their API compliance be to small island nations?

In summary, demanding API from yachts in the Eastern Caribbean is unlikely to help the war on terror, strict enforcement and thorough follow-up would be an additional burden on law-enforcement agencies in the countries involved, and it is quite likely to harm the sub-region's valuable yacht-tourism industry.

As Penny Tyas wrote from Antigua, "How is it that in a country relying so heavily on tourism, a large part of which is wrapped up in the yachting industry, there is so little effort put in by government bodies to relieve the pressures of bureaucracy...? How can we continue to promote Antigua as a superior yachting destination when Captains are confronted by bureaucratic procedures that cannot be anticipated or investigated and cannot be practically upheld? If a person cannot even leave the country without bureaucratic headaches, how can we possibly persuade him to return?"

See related commentary by Chris Doyle on page 19.

[*Editor's note: As mentioned in this month's Info & Updates (see page 5), as this issue of* Compass *was ready to go to press, we received news that CARICOM officials will be meeting shortly with members of the Caribbean Marine Association to discuss the needs of the yachting community regarding APIS.*]

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Business Briefs

Pre-Season Charter Yacht Shows

• VIRGIN ISLANDS ANNUAL CHARTERYACHT LEAGUE SHOW: NOVEMBER 7 TO 10, 2007

The 33rd Annual Virgin Islands Charteryacht League Show is inviting all term-charter yachts, charter yacht brokers and marine-related exhibitors to attend the first yacht show held at the new Yacht Haven Grande Marina, St. Thomas, USVI. The grand opening Black & White Signature Gala is scheduled for the evening of November 8th with USVI Governor John deJongh officiating. Yacht check-in is on November 7th. Yacht Haven Grande is offering specially discounted dockage rates to charter yacht show participants, effective November 7th through 11th.

For more information visit www.VICL.org, or e-mail viclboatshow@gmail.com.

• MYBA ST. MAARTEN CHARTER YACHT SHOW: DECEMBER 3 TO 7, 2007

Still managed by the St. Maarten Marine Trades Association, but now on behalf of new owners MYBA, the St. Maarten show will once again be held at the Yacht Club Port de Plaisance. Both the MYBA and the SMMTA have declared their commitment to bringing the standards and quality which have become synonymous with the MYBA Charter Show in Genoa, while at the same time preserving the Caribbean flair and excitement of St. Maarten.

The Hospitality and Exhibition centre, reorganized to maximize attendee convenience, will contain a business centre, bar and food court and complimentary wireless internet.

Registration is now open at www.mybacaribbeanshow.com.

• ANTIGUA CHARTER YACHT MEETING: DECEMBER 5 TO 10, 2007

The Antigua Charter Yacht Meeting invites all charter yachts, management representatives, charter agents, press and non-exhibiting marine vendors to register for the 46th Annual Antigua Charter Yacht Show. Yachts will be on show at three marinas in Antigua: Nelson's Dockyard Marina, The Antigua Yacht Club Marina and the Falmouth Harbour Marina. A complimentary shuttle service will take participants between the three marinas. Security personnel will be on hand at each marina to carefully screen visitors.

Also, 24-hour complimentary airport taxi transfers to hotels will be available December 4th, 5th and 6th, but must be booked in advance through the show's website.

For more information visit www.antiguayachtshow.com or e-mail info@antiguayachtsnow.com.

Port Louis Grenada Welcomes its First Yacht

When North Carolina yachtsman Fred Mittermeir sailed into Grenada last month on his 58-foot yacht



Rhapsody, he became the first to officially moor a yacht at the new Port Louis Marina. Fred and his wife had sailed from St. Maarten to Grenada and are planning to spend the next four months at the new Port Louis Marina. "I feel at home already!" said Fred as he disembarked to have a drink at the new Victory Bar.

Marina and Village Manager Danny Donelan commented, "The yachting sector is one of the fastest-growing tourism markets. We at Port Louis Grenada intend to capitalize on that niche by providing the best service to our visiting yachter. The Port Louis marina development will preserve the natural beauty of the area while providing some of the best facilities for all types of yachts, their owners and the residents of the village. I am excited that we have just welcomed our first customer!"

The Port Louis Marina is expected to be opening Phase One of the Marina by December 1st. All other vessels that anchor in the lagoon waters can continue to do so at their own risk until Port Louis deems the area safe by completing a full dredging of the seabed.

For more information visit www.portlouisgrenada.com.

New Website for Yacht Charterers

Newly launched site TheCharterList.com gives access to comprehensive listings and ratings for yacht charters and boating courses around the world.

TheCharterList.com allows consumers to subscribe to a feed for the particular charter they want. You subscribe your feed into an online homepage, e-mail client or save it into your web browser, then just wait for details on available charters to be sent to you. Charter offers are presented in a complete, concise and strictly formatted way so consumers can compare them quickly and easily, then contact the charter company or agency directly for more details.

TheCharterList.com is a totally novel internet concept, not just for yacht charter but in the way it uses feeds to broadcast offers to consumers.

Ben Eliott, Director, said, "TheCharterList.com's feeds are an innovative new way for holiday-makers to connect with yacht charters around the world.

Consumers can now find those hard-to-reach charter companies and have a hotline to grab the latest and best charter offers as soon as they hit the market. The quality scores also provide a first objective standard for the industry to which everyone can contribute."

An important feature of TheCharterList.com is the "quality score" assigned to every offer, which reflects user feedback and will ultimately amount to a service history for the company who posts the offer. All charter companies will start with "5" rating: reliable companies will increase their score, unreliable ones will not, so over time with user feedback, the quality scores will become an increasingly useful gauge for consumers.

For more information visit www.thecharterlist.com.

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REGATTA NEWS

St. Lucia Yacht Club Goes Hairless!
Ted Bull reports: In a unique sacrifice, a St. Lucia Yacht Club member, a sailing coach, one of the club's bar staff and the club manager recently were the subjects



SLYC staff member Randy went from a ponytail to a close shave to help raise funds for young sailors

of a "shear off" at the clubhouse to raise funds to enable underprivileged kids to join SLYC's junior sailing programme. MC for the afternoon event, Michael Bryant, took the floor with a set of clippers and invited the audience to bid for the privilege of hair-cutting. Sailing school youngsters took great delight in the opportunity of styling an adult's hair. To make sure that the benevolent "models" were fit to be seen on the streets again, a professional barber was on hand to clean up the butchery of the excited amateurs. Finally the manager's wife, Michelle, stepped in and gave her husband the "wet shave look" to the amusement of all. SLYC members, parents of youth sailors, and club staff all chipped in for this worthy cause and EC$6,000 was raised. As a result, three youngsters from the area are signed into the programme and already enthusiastically learning to sail.
For more information visit www.stluciayacht.com.

British Virgin Islands Youth Sailing Camp
Emma Paul reports: Fifty children from Tortola and



Some of the 50 kids that took part in the Royal BVI Yacht Club's 2007 Summer Camp program

Virgin Gorda took part in the Royal BVI Yacht Club's seven-week 2007 Summer Camp program, having fun on the water while learning basic skills and safety. When the children weren't sailing they kayaked, swam and learned about the surrounding mangroves and lagoons. The highlight of each week was the Friday fun day, sailing IC24s to Peter Island and Norman Island. Many of the children were new to sailing but all have caught the bug with at least one young lady saying she wants a boat for her birthday! The sailing camps are open to all children and this year Island Shipping and Trading as well as RBVIYC members sponsored children from low-income homes to make sure as many as possible had a fun time. All participants of the summer camp were invited to the Back to School Disco on September 8th.
The Royal BVI Yacht Club is a Not for Profit Organisation and the National Federation for Sailing in the British Virgin Islands. The RBVIYC runs sailing events for everyone from beginners to potential Olympic hopefuls in all sizes of boats from Optimist dinghies to mega-yachts. The RBVIYC is located on Road Reef, Tortola with a year-round watersports programme, social programme and restaurant.
For more information contact emma@rbviyc.com.

7th Edition of Guadeloupe's Triskell Cup
On the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of November, the 7th edition of the now famous Triskell Cup will take place in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe.
In 2006, 83 teams representing almost 600 sailors aboard boats ranging from a Sun Fast 37 to a Swan 63, competed on the waters of the Cul de Sac Marin in front of Gosier Island. Organizers hope for a fleet of up to 90 boats this year.

—Continued on next page



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—Continued from previous page
Thanks to the La Rochelle (France) Regatta Society, the winning crew of La Rochelle International Week received six round-trip flights from the tour operator Nouvelles Antilles.com and an eight-day charter aboard an Archambeau 40 offered by Autremer Concept in Martinique, which will enable them to participate in Triskell Cup 2007.
Crews from Nancy, Cherbourg and Brittany are also expected as well as crews from Antigua, Martinique and Dominica. Italians have also expressed interest.
Day One will feature two races and a cocktail party. Day Two's two races will be followed by dinner and a show with zouk music. On Sunday, two more races will be run before the prizegiving ceremony at the Marina Bas-du-Fort. All this is included in the single fee of around 45 Euro per crewmember.
For more information see ad on next page.

New 'Triangle Emeraude' Rally
Organized by Saint François Yacht Club of Guadeloupe and organization committees from



Dominica, Les Saintes and Marie Galante, the Triangle Emeraude rally is supported by Saint François "Station Nautique" and Guadeloupe Regional Council.
The first edition will take place from November 5th to 11th, sailing from Saint François on the south coast of Guadeloupe to Les Saintes, Dominica, Marie Galante and back to Saint François. At stopovers, games are organized to compete physically and intellectually on local themes.
Sailors from all Caribbean islands are more than welcome.
For more information visit triangle-emeraude.com.

Third Annual Golden Rock Regatta
Bea Hootsmans reports: This year's multi-island Golden Rock Regatta will take place from the 12th to the 16th of November.
The Regatta was started by Juul Hermsen of the Netherlands to promote the small Island of St. Eustatius (Statia), Netherlands Antilles. Juul has been a familiar figure at sailing events held in St. Maarten and other Caribbean islands. He started the Golden Rock Regatta in 2005 with six entries.
We have changed this year's regatta route. On the first day the fleet leaves Great Bay, St. Maarten with a short race to St. Barths (13 nm). The next day on to Statia (33 nm), with the third race to St. Kitts along the leeward side (40 nm). On Day Four the fleet returns to Statia via the windward side of St. Kitts (34 nm). Finally on the fifth day, the reverse feeder race takes the fleet back to Oyster Pond, St. Martin (38 nm).
For armchair sailors, we have contracted Star Tracking to equip all participating yachts with a tracker which will transmit each yacht's position every 30 minutes, enabling sponsors, friends and relatives to follow events as they unfold on the Golden Rock Regatta website. We believe this to be a first in the Caribbean! With three of the races being pursuit races, it will be interesting to see the boats start bunching up as they approach the finish.
Seven Sun Fast 37s of the Guadeloupe Sailing Team are being moved to St. Martin to be available for charter in the regatta. So far, three US teams have signed up. For single persons wanting to take part, Windward Adventures has chartered the gaff-rigged schooner *Passaat*. This will give Klaas van Duuren's team on *Kate*, the newly-built 1906 design, a boat to race against!
For more information visit www.goldenrockregatta.com.

St. Maarten-St. Martin Classic On-Line Video
A regatta for old boats has a modern twist in promotion. A video promotion trailer for the St. Maarten-St. Martin Classic Yacht Regatta 2008 can now be viewed on line at www.RegattaSailing.tv, www.YouTube.com and several other websites.

Gardel Trophy Regatta
The Yacht Club of St. François, Guadeloupe, with the support of Sucrerie Gardel, the government of Guadeloupe, the Station Nautique and the Tourism Office of Saint François will sponsor a regatta on the 17th and 18th of March, 2008. One leg will take competitors to the nature reserve island of Petite Terre, followed by two coastal courses around the buoys. All are welcome.
For more information contact ycsf.gpe@orange.fr

Fishing Lines
• CONSERVATION WORKS FOR MARLIN AND SPORTSMEN
Carol Bareuther reports: The San Juan, Puerto Rico-based Cabo 40, *Peje*, owned by Carlos Garcia, swept the Top Boat and Top Angler awards at the 35th Annual USVI Open/Atlantic Blue Marlin Tournament held August 25th through 29th. With 11 blue marlin releases to their credit, *Peje* won Top Boat, while *Peje* angler, Luis Nevarez, released six of these to take the Top Angler prize and pocket $10,000 in cash.
Garcia said, "In all, we saw 27 fish in four days of fishing and released 11. That's pretty amazing. I mean, we've fished this tournament for seven or eight years now and the bite is always good, but this year it was incredible. I think the conservation effort, releasing blue marlin, is paying off. We're glad to be a part of that."
This year set an all-time tournament record with 207 blue marlin released by anglers aboard the 37-boat fleet. This also marks the 20th year since a blue marlin was boated or killed in the tournament. Anglers earn points for releasing a fish, and it is the number of fish released and who releases that number first that wins the tournament.
Proceeds from the tournament benefit the Virgin Islands Council of the Boy Scouts of America.


DEAN BARNES

Left to right: 2nd mate William Oquendo, Captain Victor Gonzalez, angler Carlos Chapel, angler Christina Romero, owner/angler Carlos Garcia, angler Luís Nevarez, observer Rick Alvarez; seated, 1st mate Juan Garcia

• GUADELOUPE FISHING TOURNAMENT
The second fishing tournament organized by the Guadeloupe Fishing Club will take place between October 31st and November 3rd, at Marina Bas du Fort in Pointe-à-Pitre. This international tournament welcomes all participants from neighbouring islands. Twenty boats have registered already, including anglers from Antigua, Barbados, Saint Martin, Sint Maarten, Saint Barthelemy, Saint Lucia, Grenada and Martinique.
For more information phone (590 690) 554 662, e-mail gm-rosemond@wanadoo.fr or visit www.guadeloupe-fishingclub.com.

Happy Halloween!
'Optimistic' holiday pumpkins carved by boating photographer Dean Barnes of St. Thomas, USVI, and his dinghy-racing daughter Nikki.



Got Regatta News? Send it to sally@caribbeancompass.com.



—Continued from previous page

Puerto Rican Racer's European Debut

Puerto Rican businessman Tom Hill finished third in racing division at this year's Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup held September 2nd through 8th at the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda on the Italian island of Sardinia. Hosted in its 18th year on the waters off Porto Cervo, the event featured 38 of the world's fastest megayachts. Eleven countries were represented.

Hill's 76-foot Reichel/Pugh-designed *Titan XII* finished



ROLEX/KURT ARRIGO

The Puerto Rico-based Titan XII *translated well i n Europe*

top-three in four races and dropped a fourth from her score line to finish on 11 points, just two points out of second and third-place overall, which tied on point scores and had to be determined by tie-breaker rules. More usually witnessed dominating the racing stage in the Caribbean and eastern seaboard of the USA, this was *Titan's* first venture into European waters.

Jamaica Tourist Board in Global Yacht Race

The Jamaica Tourist Board fielded an entry in the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race for the first time as one of the yachts competing in the 2007-2008 edition of the race bears the name of the Caribbean nation. *Jamaica* was officially named in Albert Dock, Liverpool, England, on September 15th in a ceremony attended by sailing legend Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, Chairman of Clipper Ventures Plc. *Jamaica* will compete alongside yachts representing cities including New York, Glasgow, Singapore, Durban and Qingdao, and the state of Western Australia.

The racing fleet, which started in Liverpool on September 16th, will call into Port Antonio, Jamaica, during the 35,000-mile circumnavigation. The Clipper fleet has enjoyed the country's hospitality before. The ten 68-foot ocean racing yachts berthed at Errol Flynn Marina in Port Antonio during a port visit on the Clipper '05-'06 Race. The fleet is due to arrive in Port Antonio, Jamaica on May 19th, 2008 and will leave on the start of leg seven on 25 May, heading north towards New York.

The Jamaica Tourist Board's Regional Director, UK/Northern Europe, Elizabeth Fox said, "We're delighted to be a part of this exciting yacht race which will bring both the island of Jamaica and the charming harbour of Port Antonio under the international spotlight." Each of the ten crews competing in the race chooses a boat song to help them on their way and, not surprisingly, the music of Bob Marley will accompany *Jamaica's* arrival and departure from ports around the world.

New Sponsor for Grenada Workboats

Digicel are the new title sponsors of the WorkBoat Regatta that will be held over the weekend of January 26th and 27th, 2008, in conjunction with the Port Louis Grenada Sailing Festival.

Every year, sailors from the tri-island state of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique come to Grand Anse Beach on Grenada for two days of racing in various classes of locally built wooden boats. The weekend culminates with class winners match-racing for the title of Skipper of the Year in identical GSF 16s. All



Competitive workboat races are a highlight at Grenada's annual Sailing Festival

weekend long, music, competitions, drink and food, keep both locals and visitors entertained.

Digicel arrived in Grenada in 2003 and quickly established themselves as a force to be reckoned with in mobile telecommunications, involving the company in many aspects of Grenadian life, Carnival and cricket to name just two. Port Louis Grenada Sailing Festival are delighted to have them join the team.

For more information on the Port Louis Grenada Sailing Festival visit www.grenadasailingfestival.com.

Heineken Continues with St. Maarten Regatta

Frank Hoedemaker, commodore of the Sint Maarten Yacht Club, and John Leone, Managing Director of Heineken NV recently finalized the sponsorship agreement for the 2008, 2009 and 2010 Sint Maarten Heineken regattas. Commodore Hoedemaker stated that "negotiations were intense, and in the end both parties' goals and needs for the upcoming event were met. It is a pleasure to work with Heineken once again and we look forward to a long and fruitful relationship." Heineken NV has been a long-time sponsor of the regatta with 28 years of cooperation. "We are extremely happy to continue our partnership with the St. Maarten Yacht Club. We feel the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta continues to grow in quality and importance to both the sailing world and the island of St. Maarten/St. Martin. This is really a world class event and we should all be very proud of what we have created together," said Leone.

The regatta is scheduled to take place March 6th to 9th 2008, with the additional day of sailing for 2008, the Budget Marine Commodore's Cup, to take place on the 6th. With over 250 entries in 2007, the regatta organization is expecting about the same turnout for 2008.

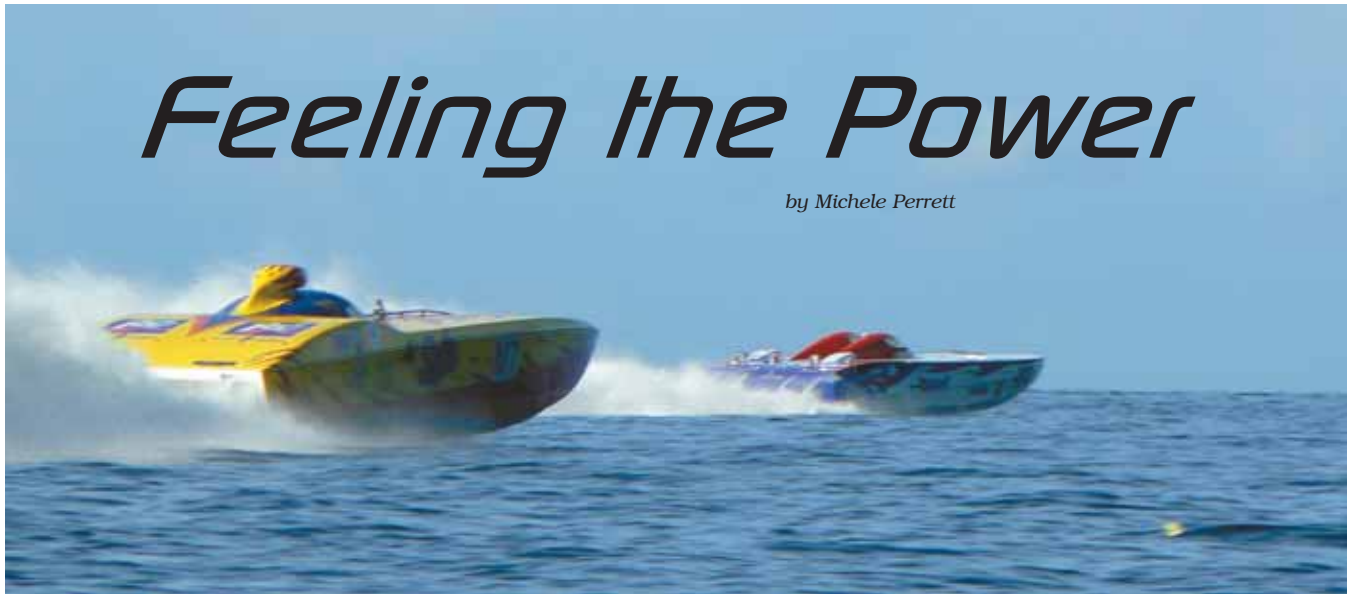
For more information on the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta visit www.heinekenregatta.com.





Feeling the Power

by Michele Perrett



Racing powerboats roared close by our dinghy — the eventual winner is the one at left

I'd heard about The Race from a friend back in England, this mad powerboat race from Trinidad to Tobago. At the beginning of July my husband and I sailed from Tobago to Trinidad in our Oceanis 411, *Alhambra*. As we were surfing along the waves at about eight knots along the northern coast of Trinidad, I remember thinking what it must be like travelling at 100kph back toward Tobago in a three-man "rocket-boat", in a race!

Having spent nearly six weeks in Chaguaramas Bay we moved around to the TTSA (Trinidad & Tobago Sailing Association) anchorage. It is much calmer here in a south-westerly, plus there's a pool to take a dip in on a hot afternoon. We checked with Trinidad & Tobago Powerboat Association website (www.ttpba.com) to see when The Great Race was to be held and confirmed the route and start times: 7:30AM Saturday 25th August for the first start, followed by two other races, with the BIG powerful boats last.

During the past few weeks in Chaguaramas Bay, we had seen (they were a bit hard to miss) a couple of the racing powerboats coming into refuel at the dock. They would drive slowly out of the anchorage before putting on the power to test their machines one more time. A colossal roar of engines and they were gone, leaving only their burst of spray to settle on the sea.

On the Saturday morning we watched the start of the first race from the bow of *Alhambra*, which left from Pier 1, a beach area just around the bay, before the racers headed east to Port of Spain. There they turned and headed west for Chaguaramas Bay. Once through the Bay they went out through The Bocas before turning east out into the ocean and along the north coast of Trinidad heading for the finish line at Store Bay, Tobago.

We could hardly see the boats in the distance but the noise was quite definitely that of powerboats. The numerous helicopters above, following the race, confirmed that the race had begun. Soon they turned at Port of Spain and headed our way and we watched as they whizzed by, speeding toward Chaguaramas Bay.

We got into the dinghy quickly and aimed for a headland between TTSA and Five Islands (a group of five [!] islands southeast of Chaguaramas) where the smaller powerboats had just raced past. We found what we thought would be a good spot to watch the faster boats, especially when the really big boats came by. We saw them start in the distance and watched the helicopters hovering only feet above their heads as they followed their course down to Port of Spain, turned and headed our way.

So there we are, bobbing around in our little dinghy, camera in one hand, hanging on with the other, trying to focus and track as these massively powerful speed boats start to head our way….

I can't repeat the language that was used as the three huge powerboats sped past at (apparently) an average of 100kph, only 50 yards in front of us, all up on the plane, so not much wake — luckily. My reaction was, "What if one of them had lost it right there, that close to us?" My husband's reply was, "Think of the great photo you would have got!"

We sat and watched as the other boats came past us, just as close — nowhere near as powerful but still as impressive. I got my photos, just.

For those of us who come from more of a "nanny" state, this was a real treat. To be able to get right up close to such an extreme sport without officials interfering and "protecting us" from ourselves. We knew the boats would be coming through there, we knew how fast, we also knew what a great 30-second experience it would be, with maybe just one good photo.

I understand that *Mr. Solo* won the race for the 15th time out of 39 in a time of 1 hour and 7 minutes, a new fastest time in the Super Modified Class. I can't imagine that I had anywhere near the experience *Mr. Solo*'s team had, but I had an experience I know I wouldn't be able to get back home in the UK, and for that I am grateful.

For full results visit www.ttpba.com.

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PERFECT FOR RACIN'

by William Pringle



PHOTOS (2): TINA NASH

Ain't it grand when yo' can prove dem wrong? Prove *you* right, not dem other fellas? All dem say de stern too broad, de run not high enough (or too high), she too heavy, an' so. Mauve in de rebuilt *Glacier* go' be too fast fo' dem on de draw. *Marie Stella* too quick in stays fo' dem to win so fast after ah July launch.

But *Mageto-O II* was ah easy winner upwind an' down in de two days ah racin' (August 18th an' 19th) in Large Decked Vessel class at de Windward Cup regatta in Carriacou, to go wid she impressive win in de 2007 Carriacou Regatta, an' she is clearly de boat to beat in de comin' year.

An' she may have new competition. Alwin Enoe buildin' ah new vessel in Windward on Carriacou, an' John ha' another one in Petite Martinique an' Sprat (*Pipe Dream*, now in Antigua) say he may lay ah keel in de new year.

But back to de racin'. Some kinda disturbance dey call Dean took ah little zeal outta de Saturday mornin' Decked Vessel race as it was blowin' a trifle from de south-southwest an' some good rain. All dem vessels snugged down fo' ah blow, so no sails bent on, sea rough outside. All agree; no racin' today.

But by 3:00PM dey were over de start line, goin' fo' de buoy off Gun Point, balloon jibs an' water sails breezin', wind east-northeast, den bound 'round Grand Cay reef off Petit St. Vincent an' back to Windward Harbour. All agree: only half points towards de Cup since only half-day race.

But from early on, it was all Uncle 'C' (Cecil Compton), an' de 40-foot *Mageto-O II*, (built/rebuilt from de old 33-foot *Mageto-O* by he brother Bernard Compton), showed why she won in de Carriacou Regatta, after she sail change problems fix. Dere was none ah dat in de Windward Cup: crew work was flawless (almost) an' after de first buoy, it was all about second place.

An' dat was settled early too, *Marie Stella* getting' de best ah *Glacier* on any draw, an' stayin' even on de runs.

Sunday wind perfect for racin'. We was to go under Palm Island den over de top ah Sail Rock, an' come back. But de wind north-northeast an' *Glacier* want de foot ah de main alterin', so Mauve sewin' an' Power stewin' until noon, so no time fo' dat! So de course change an' go from Windward Harbour round Jack-A-Dan, up around Mopion an' PSV, 'round Petite Martinique an' Petite Dominique, back to ah buoy off Grand Cay in Windward, up around Grand Cay in PSV an' back to Windward Harbour.

Dis was ah little more complicated but not much. *Glacier* won de run to Jack-A-Dan at de start but de new main, now short in de foot, had no drive on de wind an' she fell well back. In de end, she retired from de race. *Mageto-O* den took command, or so it seemed. But *Marie Stella*, de 2002 Windward Cup winner in ah photo-finish match race, now skippered by Hope McLawrence for dis race (instead ah he cousin Neg) almost caught *Mageto-O* at de upwind corner above PSV: when dey didn't mek it, race done, as *Mageto* is ah reachin' machine an' has an awesome kite when it workin' good. One last, desperate tack to de left off PSV, hopin' fo' ah shift, was a header and Hope's hopes were done.



Above: Cecil 'Uncle C' Compton of Mageta-O *with the Windward Cup*

Left: Sunday morning start of the Windward Cup regatta. From left: Glacier, Marie Stella *and* Mageta-O

In de Small Decked Vessel class, *Little Pin* was de winner in both races, de first skippered by Hope, de Sunday race by Neg. De Sunday race was shortened from de large class as de Saturday race finish after dark fall, delayin' de process ah de t'ree Ds: dinin', drinkin' an' dancin'!

Sunday also had plenty two-bows an' small stern boats, dem last from Petite Martinique where ah large class ah dese getting' started, wicked little t'ings and fun too much! Clinton DeRoche's *Now For Now* tie fo' first in de stern boat class. An' it was Andy Deroche's *Tintey* from Petite Martinique in de two-bows,.

An' de prizes, Oh God, an' de good food an' music an' de dancin' an' celebratin' was another great Windward Cup regatta, as usual, "de bes' yet!"

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Hurricane Dean, Martinique

Leaving *Tixi Lixi* in Lamentin

by Lorna Rudkin

We began to take the hurricane warnings seriously following a weather check on www.caribwx.com on the 10th of August 2007. All the signs were perfect for a large hurricane to form off the coast of Africa. Martinique was likely to be in its path.

Andy Pell and I live aboard our 43-foot ketch, *Tixi Lixi*, and were anchored at Pointe du Bout in Fort de France Bay.

On August 12th we decided to tie onto a buoy in the bay at Lamentin which was offered to us by a fellow yachty, Richard. Our motor stopped working on the way so we dragged 14 tonnes of *Tix* the last mile by dinghy and moored on a temporary buoy for the night.

Monday, August 13th, was spent tying onto a hurricane-proof buoy chained to a three-ton concrete block. Richard's boat was secured to a nearby buoy.

Tuesday, August 14th saw us listening very carefully to Chris Parker, who broadcasts regularly on SSB channel 8137 in addition to the caribwx website and other channels suited to different radios. Chris was now stating that Tropical Storm Dean would almost certainly hit Martinique on Friday August 17th.

We spent three days clearing everything from the topsides of *Tixi Lixi* except the standing rigging and the dinghy which we tied onto the deck.

By Thursday many yachties were taking the storm, now upgraded to Hurricane Dean, seriously and many boatowners started stripping their topsides. More yachts arrived in the bay and tucked into the mangroves.

We left *Tixi* and Richard's boat to their fates and went, with Richard, to stay in Gros Morne which is in the middle of Martinique.



'Martinique was likely to be in Dean's path...'

The evening of the 16th was calm and restful and Andy and I stayed with friends next door to Richard in a beautiful, old, wooden Martiniquaise house.

Just after midnight on the 17th the wind and rain started and Hurricane Dean had arrived.

During the night the wind reached speeds in excess of 220 kilometers an hour (120 knots). The house never even creaked during the six-hour battering but we heard trees crashing to the ground over the terrible noise of the wind. The dogs were very alarmed and barked, constantly, at the continuing noise of trees and branches being tossed around.

By 6:00AM silence returned and we looked out onto a changed scene. Every tree seemed to have been chopped off at about 20 feet, and many had uprooted. It was impossible to reach the road without first hacking a path with a machete.

Power lines were down and the electricity was off. Initial reports on our battery radio stated that no one had been killed in Martinique but the devastation was widespread.

Roads were blocked and the rain was torrential all day and there was an edict against people leaving their homes.

The next day the roads had been opened and we drove to Lamentin Bay to check on the boats.

Everything had changed. Almost every buoy had moved including our three-ton lump which had shifted about a boat length.

Most genoas, not taken down, were flapping in shreds and 16 yachts lay at varying angles on the sand and rocks around the bay.

Tixi Lixi was floating but very scratched and, the buoy having moved, was now rubbing against the still-standing rigging of an old wreck. Other boats had been tied onto *Tixi Lixi* by a diver who was swimming around during Dean. Many had hit her as they'd moved westwards.

The stripped-down Duogen generator had broken off at the mounting bracket and was hanging by its securing lines. Now we had no engine and no other means of generating power, but we did have a yacht which had suffered no significant damage.

Richard's yacht had blown onto the opposite bank — complete with his mooring which weighed a ton — where her keel had wedged between rocks.

Fifty-eight boats were aground in the Fort de France Bay and, island-wide, 250 boats required salvaging.

The insurance assessors had arrived, from Guadeloupe, by the Sunday and within four days Richard's boat had been refloated by a salvaging company using lifting bags, driven to Marin, hauled and checked for damage. An initial check by Richard and Andy suggested that all stanchions, pulpit and pushpit needed replacing as did the bent keel, rudder and rudder-post. Additionally the rocks had caused much surface damage, but Richard's boat was dry inside.

Within a week of Dean, ten of the grounded yachts in Lamentin Bay had been recovered. The Sea Rescue boat of the French Emergency Services arrived to pull a 40-foot yacht off the sand. Straps were put around the keel and she was dragged off with a quick tilt to port, a spin of about 160 degrees and some terrible groans, but she floated and was last seen rafted onto the lifeboat making its way to Fort de France.

It's now one week after Dean. We moved back onto *Tix* four days after the storm and the engine is now working as is the Duogen, which was welded in Fort de France within a day of being taken in.

We've moved back to Pointe du Bout and the island is slowly returning to normal.

HURRICANE DIARIES

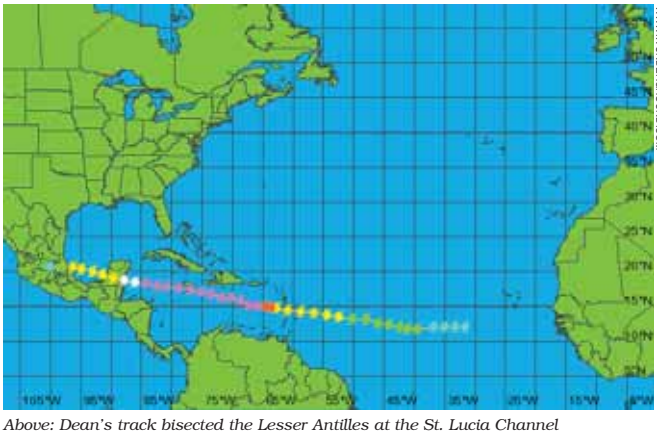
by John Rowland

August 13th, 2007: We've begun to watch Dean and realize we have delayed in St. Lucia too long. The reasons we are still here are many. We could run but we have no sails. The new sails are due into Customs today, about a week late.

Everyone in Rodney Bay Marina is talking about Dean but the atmosphere is strangely relaxed. St. Lucia has not been hit by a hurricane since Allen in 1980. Looking at the various weather forecast models, you can make an argument for Dean hitting any island from Grenada to Antigua, but St. Lucia is obviously at risk. There seem to be only a few who are taking that risk seriously and my wife Nancy and I are definitely among that minority.

August 14th: Most people still seem to believe that the storm will miss us. But, when talking to some of the "old hands", there is concern over Dean's tendency to stay down close to 12 degrees. You can see the concern in their eyes.

When I check Chris Parker's website, I read a phrase which makes my blood run cold: "...but I'm betting on a direct hit in St. Lucia". Dean is still a Tropical Storm but there is little doubt it will achieve hurricane status by the time it reaches the islands.



WWW.WUNDERGROUND.COM

Above: Dean's track bisected the Lesser Antilles at the St. Lucia Channel

Below: After the storm: Silver Seas, *snugly spider-webbed into a double berth at Rodney Bay. Not visible is a stern anchor*



JOHN ROWLAND

Late in the afternoon, our sails are released from the broker. The guys in the Sail Loft are working hard to sew the cars in place so they will be ready to put up. No matter, it's way too late to run.

August 15th: The mood in the marina has changed significantly. The professionals charged with looking after other people's boats are busily preparing those boats for heavy weather.

We begin our own preparation. We make arrangements to move to a double slip tomorrow. We buy four new 30-foot dock lines. We use the lines from our single-line reefing system to secure the aft end of the boom to the rails on the coach roof. These lines, coupled with the boom brake, will hold the boom firm in all but the most extreme conditions. We remove the jib spar from the forestay and secure it to the deck. We start to strip the deck: anything which may come loose is removed or secured. We watch and mimic the professionals. As busy as they are, they take the time to answer our questions and offer advice.

Dean is now a Category 1 hurricane and strengthening. At his current size, whatever track Dean takes, it will be too close to us.

August 16th: Early in the morning, several large power boats leave, apparently confident they still have time to run. The mood in the marina is all business. Crews are at work securing every boat. The normally light-hearted guys are focused and serious.

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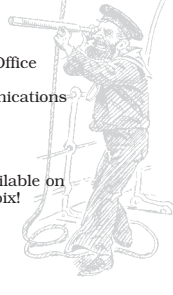
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—*Continued from previous page*

We strip the cockpit canvas and tuck it away. The bimini frame is secured to the aft arch. The dodger frame is removed and lashed to the deck. We move below deck and secure everything in plastic bags which might be damaged if water comes into the boat. Some critical equipment, like the laptop and logbook, are identified to be taken off the boat. Decisions on what is "critical" are arrived at through a process which is far more emotional than analytical.

The weather has begun to deteriorate but gusts and squalls don't slow anyone's effort. To the contrary, every drop of rain seems to fuel the effort being made to secure each vessel.

Rodney Bay Marina is known as a "hurricane hole" but our inexperience is feeding a great deal of concern. Sometime in the mid-afternoon, four dive boats from the Sandal's resorts move into the marina. They take four slips on our dock and the crews spider-web them in. I guess if you are going to be here for Dean, this is the place to be.

We move the boat into the double slip and, with the help of the dock hands, spider-web her into the slip. We deploy a stern anchor. We stow and lash down and secure until we are going over the same things for the fifth time. As darkness approaches, fatigue and anxiety combine to make our legs feel like they are filled with lead.

We had made the decision to go to a hotel. The sun has set and it's time to leave. Two backpacks and a duffel filled with our critical gear and a couple of days' clothing in our hands, we walk down the dock like the condemned headed for the gallows. We are the last crew leaving the marina. Gusting wind and spitting rain blend to create a gloomy feeling as we trudge away.

August 16th: The Palm Haven Hotel at Gros Islet is only a few months old. It's clean, bright and moderately priced. Only a five-minute walk from Rodney Bay Marina, it seems a natural choice for cruisers looking for a place to stay while the boat is on the hard or any other time they would look for land accommodations, like during a hurricane.



Our hurricane haven ashore, which we shared with other cruisers, tourists and 20 Italian charter guests

The guests at the hotel that night are a handful of cruisers, a few tourists and 20 Italian nationals who were on two captained charter boats which diverted into Rodney Bay Marina on their way back to Martinique.

The small bar and restaurant area of the hotel is crowded with all of us waiting for the storm. The TV is tuned to the Weather Channel, providing frequent updates on Dean's progress. The mood of the group is anxious but not panicked. I feel like a character in a Hemingway novel: in a room full of people thrown together by circumstances, waiting for a significant event the likes of which none of them had experienced before.

We are exhausted. After dinner, we go to our room and try to sleep. The rain and wind steadily increase. Next door, some sheets of corrugated steel bang against the fence. We take turns falling asleep and waking up to the sounds of the storm raging. Through the window we see torrents of rain slashing horizontally against the building.

The power goes out on the island and with it the radio and TV, except the St. Lucia national radio station, SLR. Through the night SLR gives us updates on the position of Dean. At one point, I consult our log book and realize that Dean passed within three miles of our boat. Not a comforting thought! Dean screams and moans, feeding my anxiety.

August 17th: Dawn comes slowly, pushing its way through the wind and rain. Steadily, the sky lightens and the rain and gusty wind slackens. Finally, we feel confident enough to go out to the balcony of the hotel and look across the road to see how the marina fared. Surprisingly, little seems to have changed. All the boats seem to be in their slips, bobbing in the wind and waves, masts standing tall and intact, including ours.

Finally, I can't stand it anymore. In a lull I walk to the marina and out onto the dock. There our boat sits, safe and proud, just as we left her. I can't remember a more beautiful sight. Other than debris in the lagoon, there is little damage. A cleat pulled out of the dock next to us. I help our neighbor reset his line to another cleat.

We decide to stay in the hotel one more night before taking on the task of undoing the preparations we made for the storm. Most of the folks who were here through the storm are still here. The mood in the hotel tonight is upbeat. Live pan music, laughing folks, celebrating survivors all.

August 21st: The sails are installed and the storm preparations are undone. Time to head south in the next weather window.

A few days later, in Bequia, we listen to Chris Parker describe a "potential developing surface low" associated with an approaching tropical wave: "If you are anywhere between Antigua and Grenada, you should take this threat seriously." Next, an overnight sail to Grenada, no question.

August 30th: At 0630 hours we begin the entry to St. George's, Grenada. All night we had winds too gusty (12 gusting to 20, or 16 gusting to 25) for the autopilot, forcing us to hand-steer in shifts. This is our first time entering this harbor. Tired, we find locating the channel into the lagoon difficult with the morning sun in our eyes and the mist in the bay. But the channel is well-marked and we find a place in the lagoon. Anchor down and set at 0730 hours.

We put the boat to bed and take a nap. At 1600 we take the dinghy over to the Yacht Club complex which houses the Customs and Immigration office and offers showers, "do it yourself" laundry facilities and a lovely bar and restaurant. We complete check-in formalities and enjoy an excellent lunch. There are lots of folks, locals and cruisers alike, in the bar and restaurant area. The conversation regarding the developing tropical disturbance, which is approaching the Windwards, is casual.

—*Continued on next page*

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August 31st: Grenada has a great cruiser's VHF net, with a good weather forecast. This morning, however, our reception is poor. When we listen to Chris Parker, however, we find the "developing low", although still a bit disorganized, is strengthening and predicted to continue to do so as it follows a peculiarly southern track. Tropical Storm Warnings are now issued for every island from St. Vincent to Tobago. More unusual yet, a Tropical Storm Watch has been issued for Trinidad and coastal Venezuela. We should have stayed in St. Lucia!

St. George's Lagoon provides easy shopping: Island Water World and Foodland have their own dinghy docks, and there is a good ACE hardware next to Island Water World. While we are in Island Water World, one of the staff has the satellite image of the approaching disturbance up on his computer screen. It appears to be coming right at us. The words from an old song play in the back of my mind: "Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide…".

We complete our shopping and provisioning tasks, return to the boat and stow the material. Since today is my day to cook, we head back to the Yacht Club for lunch. A lovely lunch is overshadowed by the images on the Weather Channel, showing Tropical Depression 6 (I guess it got organized while we were shopping!) bearing down on southern Grenada.

Back to the boat. We begin battening down for another blow. We set out a second anchor and attach the second chain-rode combination to it, ready to deploy if needed. We tie down and stow things 'til we're satisfied. The winds are expected to reach 35 mph. We've sailed in winds of that strength in the open ocean but, at anchor?

Others in the lagoon are doing the same, to varying degrees. The delivery captain on a boat called *Don't Panic* is absorbed in details: retying lines, checking hatches for leaks, etcetera. On the other end of the spectrum, a boat on the other side of the lagoon still has towels hanging on a line to dry. The guy on the boat to our port side is uncomfortable with the distance between us. He pulls up both anchors, which must have been well set based upon the effort required to pull them up, and begins a search for a new spot in the somewhat crowded anchorage. After driving around the lagoon like a Christmas shopper looking for a parking space at the mall, our neighbor resets his anchor about 20 feet from where he started, now on only one anchor. But soon, all the preparations are made and there is nothing to do but wait.

Information on the local radio stations is sketchy. Only the bulletins from the National Hurricane Center in Miami are clear and concise. Tropical Depression 6 is maintaining course and building strength. The surface of the lagoon is like glass and the wind is barely a whisper. I listen to the radio station from Carriacou on the hour. At 2300 the update says Tropical Depression 6 will arrive in Grenada in the hours just before dawn.

September 1st: Around 0400 the wind and rain begin in earnest. Our instruments show the wind at 20 to 25 knots. Torrents of rain blow horizontally across the churned-up surface of the bay until they blend.

The radio update at 0500 hours states that Tropical Storm Felix (a battlefield promotion, no doubt) has passed Grenada. We later learn the eye went slightly south of our position. About then, Felix decides to flex his muscles. The wind goes to a steady 25 knots with gusts in excess of 35, changing direction with a disorienting frequency.

A boat on the north side of the bay breaks loose. Narrowly avoiding being driven into two others, it begins to circle the anchorage, its captain struggling against the storm. Our neighbor, the boat which re-anchored to our port earlier, also breaks loose. Now two sets of nav lights wander through the driving, sideways rain. The captain on the boat directly behind us starts his engine and begins to drive the boat into the wind to take pressure off a dragging anchor. Off to our starboard, one of the smaller boats appears out of the rain, its position significantly different than when last observed. The first daylight begins to penetrate the clouds and rain, revealing a boat on the south side of the anchorage with the top half of his mast-furled main pulled out and flapping madly, other crews nervously watching from the cockpits of their boats.

As dawn overcomes the gloom, Felix hears the call of distant shores and as the sun climbs, the rain and wind, little by little, subside. By 1400, the lagoon is back to normal, with the exception of the floating debris. You can feel the general sense of relief in the air.

We've had a couple hours sleep, a good meal, bailed the calf-deep water out of the dinghy and determined that again we've come through a storm unscathed. We knew Dean when he was only a little boy and we were there for Felix's birth. We need to quit being so cozy with all this power of Nature!

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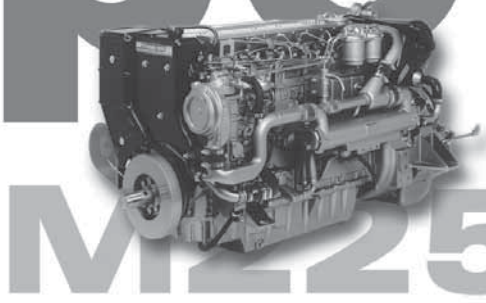
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Changing Times and Seamen's R&R

The Mariner's Club in Port of Spain

by Norman Faria

And the ship sets the sail
They've lived the tale
To carry them to the shore
Straining at the oars
Or staring from the rail
And the sea bids them farewell
She waves in swells
And sends them on their way
Time has been her pay
And time will have to tell
Soon your sailing days will be over
Come and take the pleasures of the harbour.

(From the song "Pleasures of the Harbour"
by US composer/singer Phil Ochs)

I first visited the Mariner's Club recreation centre in downtown Port of Spain some time in the 1980s when I took a round trip from Barbados to the Trinidadian capital on the inter-island freighter *Avontuur*. One night, Captain Paul Wahlen and I walked over from the docks to the nearby Club on Wrightson Road for a pleasant beer and to make a few phone calls home.

While vacationing in Trinidad last month, I decided to see if it was still there.

It was. But as manager James Mathura explained, operations have been scaled down. The 100-room dormitory and restaurant are long closed, with some of the space rented out as commercial offices, while the swimming pool at the back has only a six-inch, algae-filled puddle.

The Club, which is part of the world-wide Missions to Seafarers network run by the Anglican Church, still however provides traditional hospitality basics such as a lounge, bar, chapel and facilities for overseas calls.

We discussed the reasons for the changes. There is now a quicker turn-around time for the ships, mainly carrying containers, in port. This means the crew has less time to go ashore. From the 1940s to 1960s, freighters from such lines as Harrison's, Booth, Geest and the Canadian Saguenay may have spent several days offloading and loading cargo in Port of Spain and other nearby ports such as Georgetown and Linden on Guyana's Demerara River. Now, sometimes a container ship comes in for a day, unloads a few containers and steams off. Speed is money to ship owners.

Secondly, replacement crews are now flown in under a better arrangement to join a ship which leaves the same day. Previously, crews would have to wait around, maybe for days, until their ship arrived or was ready.

There are also fewer arrivals now at the Port of Spain docks. Because of congestion there in the 1980s, the facilities at Point Lisas to the south in the Gulf of Paria were opened.

There was a time in the 1950s when the Mariner's Club would be buzzing with activity, seven days a week. Sure, a few of the fellows would, in those carefree days before AIDS, head over to the red light districts to have a good time. In the process, some of them got drunk, and were rolled by unsavoury characters and robbed. The Club had a reputation for being a safe hospitality centre where seafarers, including at a later date fishermen on deep sea-fishing vessels and crews on mega-yachts, could enjoy some good Rest and Recreation.

Actually, when it came to doing a little business with the local girls, the dividing lines could sometimes be blurred. The story is told to me by Captain David Waight, a retired British-born merchant marine skipper in Barbados, that women in some Indian and African ports he visited had an uncanny knack of infiltrating dances being held by some of the Missions to Seafarers. "They (the women) knew the missions were where the sailors with money hung out. They would mix with the genuine, church-going, invited girls. Of course, they would be loudest and most enthusiastic singers of the mandatory hymns."

Clearly, that type of misrepresentation, which the lads didn't seem to mind, was the exception among the apparently well-administered missions worldwide. They were established by several church denominations; the Catholics and the Lutherans also have their own. Some seamen's trade unions ran hostels in ports frequently visited by their members. I remember when I was doing public relations work for the Barbados branch of the (British) National Union of Seamen, they had a hospitality centre on the south coast of the island, in addition to the office in downtown Bridgetown, for the lads who crewed, for example, on the Cunard cruise liners.

There is an umbrella body called the International Christian Maritime Association comprising 27 groups. Presently, they operate 526 seafarer centres in 126 countries.

The one in Trinidad, the only centre in the circum-Caribbean area, has its origins in the Merchant Navy Club set up in March 1942 by the then Trinidad Governor, Sir Hubert Young. It was a time when hundreds of merchant seamen and Navy personnel were landing on the west coast of the island in lifeboats after their ships were sunk by German submarines. Some of them had appalling injuries. A year later, a Flying Angel Hostel was opened under the auspices of the British-based Missions to Seamen (the name was later changed to Seafarers), explained Mr. Mathura, who has been with the Club for over 30 years. The present facility was built in 1956. The Club is run by a Board of Management under the patronage of the Trinidadian president.



NORMAN FARIA

James Mathura (right) goes over Club accounts with employee Wayne Forbes

Among the services offered at the Club is counseling on justice-related issues. The Club has close ties with the local Seamen and Waterfront Workers Trade Union. The union has had to deal with several industrial-relations matters in recent years involving visiting seafarers. One involved representing a group of Filipino seamen who had to flee the unsafe and unsanitary conditions on board their vessel.

The Trinidad union is affiliated with the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) which represents 600,000 seafarers worldwide. Among the causes seamen's unions are dealing with is ships owners' continued use of "flags of convenience". That is, the owners register their vessels in a port outside of their home jurisdiction. This allows them to, among other things, hire cheaper labour and have less stringent safety measures and equipment on board.

Since the 1970s and 1980s, the nationalities of seafarers visiting the Club have changed. There is a preponderance of crews from Far East Asian countries. Today, two thirds of seafarers come from developing countries such as India, Malaysia and the Philippines. The ITF has affiliates in those countries and the Club represents their interests as judiciously as they did the predominately British, Canadian, Scandinavian and American crews in the early days.

Merchant seamen have always played a sterling role in the transporting of goods, especially during war years. During World War II, they crewed vessels bringing much-needed food to the populations of Eastern Caribbean islands, for example. They were crew on tankers carrying oil and bauxite ore from British Guiana and Trinidad for the war effort in England. Today, their contribution is rightly recognized. There is, for example, a monument to those Barbadian seamen, including the father of Barbadian cricketer Sir Garfield Sobers and a Guyanese named de Weever, who perished at sea during the War.

There was also their valuable assistance on a socio-political level to the anti-colonial and working class struggles. From the 1930s to the 1960s they contributed progressive ideas which they, along with dock workers, picked up during their travels and association with comrades from other lands.

It was a truly memorable moment for me to re-visit the Mariner's Club and have a chat with the helpful Mr. Mathura.

Norman Faria, Compass's *man in Barbados, recently vacationed in Trinidad.*

Here Comes 'Hurricane Red-Tape'

Multiple murders? Piracy? Killer hurricanes? It is hard to think of anything that will disrupt yachting tourism in the Eastern Caribbean more than the new API regulations.

The first I heard about it was through a customer's e-mail (italics mine):

"We have been given the impression that if we choose to cruise the islands this coming season, then we will have to comply with new legislation that obliges us to send API (Advance Passenger Information) to JRCC (Joint Regional Communications Centre), whoever they are. No later than 15 minutes after departure from every national stop. This apparently is done via the Net or Fax (neither of which we have on board.)

"We think we may be the victims of a hoax, as we cannot imagine it working to anyone's advantage.

"We do however want to make an early decision whether to cruise or not and such cumbersome nonsense will be the decider."

These new regulations, which are now supposed to be in effect for all yachts, require you to fill out a long form with lots of details about your boat, the registration, last ports, next ports and more; then for everyone on board you have to give many passport details including full names, document type, country of origin, expiry date, number, issue, date of birth, etcetera. You then have to fax, e-mail or submit it on-line to the JRCC within the following time period:

Arrival/Departure from/to outside CARICOM (say from Martinique) "No later than 24 hours before arrival". Departure "no more than 15 minutes after departure".

Arrival/Departure from/to inside CARICOM: Arrival and Departure: "No later than 1 hour before departure from the last port".

What on earth is all this about? As far as I can tell it is some anti-terrorism move connected to the USA — and all that data is going to be sent through USA security.

Complicated Customs procedures are a barrier to generating more yachting revenue, so the requirement that pleasure craft file API comes as a devastating setback

If this legislation is allowed to stand without modification (and I have some suggestions about that later in this article) it will be immensely damaging to the entire Caribbean yachting industry. Hampering the free movement of yachts with a mass of red tape will make the Caribbean way less attractive to visitors, both those cruising on their own boats and those who fly in to charter a boat here. In the long term, as the news gets out, it will mean fewer yachts and fewer yachting visitors, and the bareboat charter industry, always struggling, will find it very hard to manage.

Something similar was put in place in the USVI about 2005, and their beleaguered charter industry has been trying to get redress from it ever since, so they can get back to work.

In the short term the need for yacht skippers to file API will particularly hit "intermediate" islands more than "destination islands" as people are just not going to be bothered with the formalities and will skip a country rather than bother with the extra paperwork. Thus in terms of the charter industry, I predict St. Lucia, Dominica and Carriacou will lose many of the charter boats that previously visited.

It has been clear that complicated Customs procedures are a barrier to generating more yachting revenue, and I am just one of the many people and organizations who have spent considerable time trying to cut down on such red tape and make yacht clearance procedures easier. So the requirement that pleasure craft file API comes as a devastating setback.

I also wonder about our state of governance. In general, many governments have been very good at communicating with their local yachting sector. How can ALL the CARICOM countries in the Eastern Caribbean have signed onto this bureaucratic nightmare with ZERO consultation with anyone in the yachting industry? I do realize that there may have been pressure to sign this thing, but there has to be have been some wiggle room in ways and means — and we could have produced something more reasonable. To throw this at us, *fait accompli*, is a dreadful and very inefficient way to govern. How could it happen? My guess is everyone who read and signed onto this legislation assumed that "sea carriers" referred to cargo vessels and cruise ships and it never occurred to them that yachts were included.

At this point Antigua seems to be the only island requiring any kind of compliance for yachts, and many other countries' officials are somewhat confused as to how this can work. Even the Antigua system is not working well. They are not enforcing the advanced notice for small yachts, but when you clear you are asked to go and do the API bit on your own at a local internet station. Many find this difficult and confusing, and there have been complaints. This is in summer, when there are practically no boats visiting; it is hard to see how it could work during the season. Antigua has put a law in place regarding API, but at his point it only applies to yachts of over 100 tons.

Having said this, I will now try to offer some logical suggestions about how we could make this better.

This legislation is apparently intended to make sure yachts are not carrying possible terrorists on board. The procedures have been designed as if yachts could arrive from anywhere, anytime, with a bunch of new passengers on board. The reality is most yachts, after initial arrival in the Caribbean, sail with the same people aboard for considerable periods of time. A typical cruising yacht will have the same couple or family aboard all the time. A bareboat will have the same charter party aboard for a week or two. A crewed charter boat will usually have the same crew all season. Even when they change crew or passengers, new crewmembers or guests usually arrive by plane so they will have already been checked by Immigration on arrival.

—*Continued on next page*

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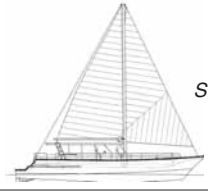
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—Continued from previous page

So, about 95 percent of what the API filing is going to do (apart from driving us all nuts) is to send the same old data round and round the computers as these yachts — with generally the same people aboard — move every day or two from island country to island country.

There are many ways to improve on this. I will offer several solutions here, any of which would help.

1) Apply the API requirement only to vessels carrying passengers for hire. This is how API is applied in the USVI. The large charter yachts tend to have communications systems that would allow them to file their own API, and the charter companies can help those who don't have the necessary equipment on board.

2) Make the system for yachts yacht-based, not movement based. So once you are on the API system with your vessel and crew, you undertake to record with API any crew changes you make and where you make them. Otherwise they leave you alone. Even when you go outside the CARICOM region, as long as you come back in with the same crew you are okay. This makes sense, because there is no benefit to sending the same names round and round the computer countless times. It will also be very important for Dominica and Antigua, and St. Kitts & Nevis if these countries are to benefit from the French charter industry. This way the charter companies could feed the guests' information into the computer as they arrived and they would be good to visit those countries as before.

3) For yachts that are not changing crew, make the CARICOM region a single space as far as API is concerned. This alone would make things much easier.

For example, the skipper of a yacht has cleared into Grenada with Jane, Harry and Joe aboard, and their names have all spun round the computer. Then that information is made available to all the CARICOM countries. Unless there is a crew change, the yacht skipper should not need to do anything else until the yacht leaves the CARICOM Single Space.

For another example, a bareboat charterer coming from Martinique could feed his passenger information into the JRCC and then be free from further API as he visits St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Grenada.

4) And this is where we should be headed: make these ten CARICOM countries a Single Space with regards to yachting – you clear into the CARICOM area, you are free to go move around till you leave the CARICOM area. Yes, there are details to be worked out, such as how entry fees are charged and distributed, and how long people may stay, but if we put our minds to it we can sort this out and end up with a better and more profitable industry, which will help create small business and employment along our shores.

I hope all readers who are as outraged at this absurd legislation as I am will immediately contact their local representative, or for visitors, the tourist offices of the countries concerned and let them know what you think (we give a list of the tourist offices on www.doyleguides.com). All those ashore who consider yachts a significant part of their business, will be affected and need to help us get this changed now.

[Editor's note: As mentioned in this month's Info & Updates (see page 5), as this issue of Compass *was ready to go to press, we received news that CARICOM officials will be meeting shortly with members of the Caribbean Marine Association to discuss the needs of the yachting community regarding APIS.]*



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!

October 2007

DATE	TIME		DATE	TIME		DATE	TIME	
1	0343		22	2057		11	1251	
2	0446		23	2141		12	1342	
3	0547		24	2232		13	1434	
4	0645		25	2326		14	1527	
5	0738		26	0000	(full)	15	1618	
6	0826		27	0024		16	1708	
7	0911		28	0126		17	1756	
8	0953		29	0231		18	1843	
9	1033		30	0335		19	1929	
10	1113		31	0436		20	2017	
11	1153	(new)				21	2108	
12	1235		**November 2007**			22	2203	
13	1319		DATE	TIME		23	2303	
14	1405		1	0533		24	0000	(full)
15	1455		2	0623		25	0007	
16	1546		3	0709		26	0000	
17	1639		4	0752		27	0114	
18	1732		5	0833		28	0219	
19	1823		6	0912		29	0320	
20	1914		7	0952		30	0415	
21	2002		8	1033		31	0504	
			9	1117				
			10	1202	(new)			

70th Anniversary Cruise on the 'Lady of the Essequibo River'

by Norman Faria

There is a 70-year-old iron steamer still operating on Guyana's Essequibo River. Recently, while in the English-speaking South American country, I decided to once again make the trip on this icon of Guyanese water transport, or "The Lady of the Essequibo River" as I describe her.

It was a Saturday morning. The *Lady Northcote* was due to leave Parika at nine, if I remember correctly, get to Bartica, a mining town 50-odd kilometers upriver sometime in the afternoon and then return the next day. There was a lot of cargo still on the wharf (called "stelling" in Guyana) to be loaded and I knew we couldn't leave as advertised. The stevedore fellows worked fast, spurred on by shouts from the bridge on the top deck (the vessel's control area) — "Get a move on! We pulling out!" — to heave the cargo on board and secure it, but we were still a little late casting off.

It's all routine for the regulars. As the greenheart gangplanks plummet down with a bang, they rush on, some trying to get the best locations to string their hammocks and get their bowls of rice and other delicacies ready for a pre-lunch snack.

But for the tourist like me, and the occasional traveller, who cares about the hour delay? Just being around the hub of Parika stelling on a bustling Saturday morning, on one of South America's mightiest rivers, is itself memorable. Soon, we cast off.

It is amazing how close the vessel can go to the river banks. But the Essequibo is deep. Sometimes you lean over and feel you can touch the dense purple foliage as the ship chugs past, although it is actually about 50 to 100 metres away.

Sometimes the course meanders. The captain knows the menacing shallows and rocks and from time to time weaves in between and around them. We pass the communities on shore, sometimes an individual house. The wrecks of a few ships and boats lay on shore, their days of service gone. I was looking for the toucan birds, like those I saw on the Pomeroon River further to the west near the Venezuela border, but didn't see any this trip. We heard the occasional screeching parrot.

We steam steadily south and in the afternoon after lunch, the throbbing of the two Davey Paxman diesel engines, 450 horsepower each, putting you into a doze. The river is smooth and nobody is seasick.

It is slow going. The passage time to Bartica is about six hours. The cruising speed of the *Lady Northcote* is five knots, a leisurely pace made even more laid back by the periodic swooshing-by of packed-down water taxis (called "speedboats" in Guyana).

I take a walk around the ship (those seats can get hard after a few hours). The 126-metre (132-foot) long *Lady Northcote* was launched in June 1937 by the British shipbuilders Ferguson's on the River Clyde in Scotland. From their website (the firm is still in existence), you are reminded it was ordered by the colonial government in British Guiana as a passenger/cargo vessel to service riverine communities. Actually, three identical vessels were delivered. Aside from the *Lady Northcote*, the *Pomeroon* (sunk I believe) was delivered in 1936 and the *Barima* in 1939.



PHOTOS (2): NORMAN FARIA

Above: The venerable but still active Lady Northcote *pulls into Parika Stelling*

Lower right: Loading green bananas while on the move

Remarkably, there are brass plates over doorways with traditional seaman's descriptions: "Staterooms" (for cabins), "Wheelhouse" (bridge) and "Galley". At some stage, as I was told on a previous trip with my wife, the Davey Paxmans replaced the original Lister Blackstone engines, fine propulsion units from another great British engineering firm. Most of the original riveted steel decks, probably once covered in oak but now with Guyanese greenheart, have been replaced with welded ones but apparently the riveted hull and superstructure are basically the same.

Up on the bridge, where Captain Arthur Bond kindly showed me around, the original brass "telegraph " is still there. That's a device that looks like a water fountain with two levers sticking out the top. When the officer on the bridge moves one of the levers , this sends a message to the engine room below indicating what is needed.

Captain Bond, who has been with the government's Transport and Harbours Department (T&HD) service for 30 years, says he can nudge the speed up to seven knots if necessary. He knows the route well and says we should be in Bartica on time in mid-afternoon.

From past reports, the arrival of the ferry was an exciting thing. People, aside from those coming to meet relatives and friends and help with luggage, would throng to the stelling to see who's who coming off. People have more important things to do these days than coming to gawk at strangers.

On shore, I stay once again at the HI LO guest house run by the hospitable Mrs. May Rodrigues and her daughter. Lot of changes there. It is steady business, including from Brazilian miners, and some rooms have been added on since my last visit.

Before sunrise the next morning, I am walking back to the stelling to rejoin the *Lady Northcote* for the return leg to Parika. This time, there are numerous stops along the way. One is at Fort Island. where you can see the ruins of an historic 18th-century Dutch fort. We also slow so that farmers can load on their green bananas. They bring them out in skiffs and toss them up onto the deck.

The vessel's movement seems more lively now. It is faster and the scenery flits by. Perhaps the tide is falling, going out towards the sea, and we get the benefit of being carried along. Maybe too, it is because we are carrying less deadweight, the cargo, including reinforcing steel bars and goods-laden trucks having been offloaded.

It is time for breakfast. Down on the lower deck near the stern, the galley is open. You have plenty of choices: fried egg, boiled egg, or scrambled egg on a bun. Keep your "easy on the sugar, no milk" for the restaurants on shore: it's the traditional one mix-up of coffee and condensed milk, though you may order a tea. You gaff with passengers such as schoolteacher Valentine Stoll, returning to his Suddie home. You are thankful to be alive and to experience the wonderful Sunday morning.

While visiting Guyana over the years, I have traveled on most of the T&HD vessels but the *Lady Northcote* brings back special memories for me. As Guyana's economy continues to improve, there will be introduction of a different type of ferry system, perhaps the roll-on/roll-off type, together with fast catamaran passenger ferries. The Guyanese Government, Transport Minister Robeson Benn and his staff, are undoubtedly trying their best and are looking ahead to further improving the system.



To their credit, the *Lady Northcote*, the *Barima* and others have been maintained over the years, perhaps not with exacting standards of other countries with more budgetary allotments, but certainly with amazing resourcefulness and local know-how.

When the two vessels are phased out, it is hoped that an enterprising businessperson would take them over and renovate them for coastal sightseeing tours, dances, business luncheons and the like. If you visit harbours such as Toronto and London, there are several of these historic vessels. Their age and classic nature add an interesting dimension to their attractiveness. We must preserve at least part of our maritime culture for present and future generations.

So this year, let us salute an important part of it: the *Lady Northcote* which this year is a remarkable 70 years old !

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A Powerboat 'Pirate's' Caribbean Cruise

by Scott Boswell



Many people dream of life on a Caribbean island. Exotic names like the West Indies, the Spanish Main and the Grenadines conjure images of swashbuckling adventures and high-seas drama. I've always been a bit of a pirate at heart so, several years ago, I decided to try the island lifestyle on Isla Margarita, located in the southern Caribbean off the Venezuelan coast.

Living on an island, pretty much like living anywhere else, has good and bad points. Thus far I've found the good far outweighs the "not so good". But even "paradise" can get a little boring at times. Since I am surrounded by water here and really love to fish — hey, why not buy a boat?

All I really need is a small, comfortable fishing boat. I considered an outboard boat with a center console, but the tropical sun can be brutal and there's no way to avoid the sun on that type of boat. Maybe a walk-through? More room than a center console and with a bimini top that would work, but few are available in this part of the world.

During one of our business meetings/happy hours I mentioned my boat quest to my business partner, Roy. Since this was well into happy hour he thought it was a swell idea! Let's buy an even bigger boat and share the cost!

Long story short, my little 18- or 19-foot boat suddenly grew into a cabin cruiser. Roy said "we" really need a boat with a comfortable cabin containing a head, galley, and bed so he can take his girlfriend(s) for "romantic cruises".

So the search began. We wanted a fast boat with twin engines (gas okay) and the basic comforts. Thanks to the low fuel costs in Venezuela, we can afford to run the boat as often as we wish. Gas is cheaper than bottled water here. High fuel prices in the US prevent the average boat owner from using his boat more than a few times a season, so there are LOTS of "gas guzzlers" on the market there.

Several months, internet searches, e-mails, and phone calls beyond counting later we had narrowed our search to just a few boats in Florida. There were several Bertrams in the 30-foot range we thought would suit us. So it was time to go to Miami and take a closer look at some of the "possibles".

I hadn't been back to the States for four years, and I was overwhelmed by sticker shock: $3.20 a gallon for gas, $10 hamburger lunch, $5 beer — I couldn't believe the price increases! I guess Margarita Island living has spoiled me.

We looked at quite a few boats, but finally settled on a beautiful older, completely rebuilt Bertram Flybridge Cruiser.

—Continued on next page





After being shipped from Florida to a marina in Martinique (right), the Bertram's new owners island-hopped to Isla Margarita. Stops were made in St. Lucia, Bequia, Petite Martinique, Grenada and the Venezuelan mainland

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We briefly enjoyed ONE of the happiest days in a boat-owner's life... until we went to fill up at the gas dock. The tanks weren't even empty but it took $498 to fill up. Gas was $3.89 per gallon at the marine dock. In Venezuela it would cost about $35 to fill the tanks.

Miami to Martinique

Next we arranged to ship the boat with Dockwise Transport out of Port Everglades, Florida. This is a float-on, float-off transport ship where they actually sink the cargo area of the ship about ten feet. You drive your boat on, divers block and secure it, the water is pumped out, the cargo area is raised, and there you are — ready to sail. On our ship there were about 15 boats ranging in size from 20 to 90 feet. Our plan was to fly to Martinique in five days to meet the ship and take possession of our boat. Five days later we arrived in Martinique, but unfortunately, due to some "technical difficulties", the ship arrived almost a week late.

Meanwhile we were stuck in Martinique. Now at this point I'll bet you're all thinking, "How sad, stuck on a Caribbean island." Well, although Martinique is very green and tropical, it is also very expensive. They use the Euro, so everything costs over 35 percent more compared with the US dollar. Breakfast — a piece of French bread with butter and marmalade, and a cup of coffee — was 5 Euros. Finding a hotel was a challenge because just about everything was closed for the off season. We finally found rooms at 45 Euros per night. Each room had just a bed — nothing else. No other furniture at all. The shower was something else. Push a button and you get about 30 seconds of water. I felt pretty stupid standing there pushing the damn button with one hand and soaping and rinsing with the other. Water is a precious commodity on Martinique and this seems to be their solution to conserve it. By the time our boat finally arrived, we were eager to clear Customs, fill up with gas at over US$4 a gallon, and head south.

St. Lucia

On the passage from Martinique to St. Lucia we encountered nine-foot seas and 20-plus-knot winds, so our maximum speed was only about 15 knots and we didn't arrive at St. Lucia until late afternoon.

As we cruised into the entrance to Rodney Bay we encountered the dreaded *Black Pearl* pirate ship. Suddenly we felt as though we'd stepped back in time to the days of Long John Silver, Blackbeard and Henry Morgan. The *Black Pearl* appeared to be loaded to the gunwales with prisoners, but at second glance, it turned out that the "prisoners" were just a boatload of tourists. Thankful for our narrow escape, we entered Rodney Bay. Had we had too much sun or was that the *HMS Interceptor* at the gas dock? Yes, but it turns out that these two ships were actually used in the movie "Pirates of the Caribbean", and are now being used to take tourists on cruises of the bay.

We found dock space in a nice marina, where there were hot showers and no push buttons! Hallelujah! The food was good, the people were friendly, and the women attractive. While we were docked at the marina, several local vendors came by selling local souvenirs, fruit and junk. One very enterprising, well-spoken and courteous young man offered to do some varnish work on the boat. We declined with thanks. Then he asked if we needed a guide. We declined that offer as well. Then he asked if we wanted some marijuana. We declined. Then his last offer was to find us some pretty girls. We regretfully declined, because we still had many nautical miles to cover, but we admired his sales approach.

St. Lucia is on the East-Caribbean-dollar monetary system, and prices were better than Martinique, but were still over double what we pay for similar goods and services on Margarita Island.

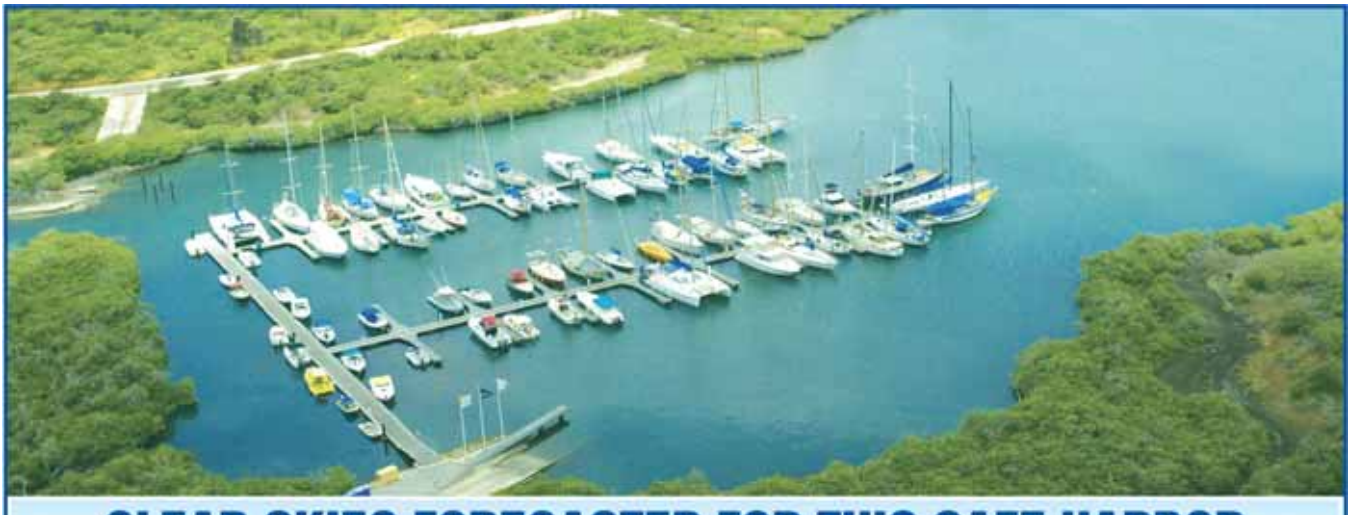


'I've always been a bit of a pirate at heart... and cruising into Rodney Bay we encountered a pirate ship'

The Grenadines

We left St. Lucia after a three-day stay; next stop the Grenadines. We bypassed larger St. Vincent and spent the next night on Bequia. Located just nine miles south of St. Vincent, Bequia is small — only seven square miles. We happened to arrive on their Carnival weekend so most businesses were closed and some people were drunk. Sounds like our kind of island! We found the local "supermarket" (the lower floor of a private house) abundantly stocked with beer and little else but Fritos, which was just fine. In Texas that would be two major food groups. Prices were high here, too, and there weren't any docks available, just moorings. We traveled to and from town via water taxi, and couldn't buy gas because the fuel station owner was at Carnival.

—*Continued on page 47*



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ALL PHOTOS: SALLY ERDLE

The south coast of the Spice Isle of the Caribbean is indented with bays and coves which have long made the area a gunk-holer's heaven. Stimulated by the "gold platers" heyday of the 1960s, when Grenada's capital, St. George's, was the southern turn-around point for the big crewed charter yachts plying up and down the Windwards, yacht facilities spread to the island's southern shores in the late 1960s and early '70s, starting with the Lance Boatyard and Spice Island Charters at Prickly Bay.

These was a brief downturn in yachting activity while the People's Revolutionary Government was briefly in power (1979 to '83), as yachts were subject to search by soldiers looking for "counter-revolutionaries" and Grenada's best hurricane hole, Port Egmont, was officially off limits and rumored to be a secret Russian submarine base. But the boating business in the Spice Isle soon regained buoyancy with the south coast in a starring role, as evidenced by The Moorings charter company's placement of a new Caribbean charter base marina at Mount Hartman Bay (a.k.a. Secret Harbour) in the late '80s.

By early 1998, demand for haulout facilities had grown at such a rate that Grenada Marine, with services and hand-stand space for some 200 boats, was established in St. David's Harbour and quickly filled. Horizon Yacht Charters was established in 1996 in Tortola, BVI, and in 2000 opened a Grenada charter base marina at True Blue Bay. Meanwhile, Spice Island Charters had become Spice Island Marine Services, which soon outgrew the original site and in 2003 completed a move across Prickly Bay to become a spacious, full-service boatyard. For dockage, Clarke's Court Bay Marina was developed in the bay of the same name with 56 slips. The various marinas and boatyards attracted ancillary services (such as chandleries, sail lofts, laundries, guardianage, etcetera) like iron filings to a magnet, and The Moorings' Rum Squall Bar helped make Mount Hartman Bay a popular cruisers' anchorage. When The Moorings moved its Southern Caribbean base to Canouan in 2003, the Mount Hartman Bay premises were taken over by Martin's Marina which continues to provide slips and services to both charter and private yachts.

—Continued on next page

Above: Looking west across the perennially popular Prickly Bay anchorage from Prickly Bay Marina's dock



Above: At Spice Island Marine Services, yachts are propped up and strapped down for the off season — and a boatowner's 'dirt dinghy' finds a cool carport!



Left: At Grenada Marine, this handsome wooden schooner — among a wide variety of others — was getting plenty of summer love

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Nobody would wish a hurricane on any island, but as Jol Byerly wrote in Hart and Stone's 1976 *A Cruising Guide to the Caribbean and the Bahamas* about 1974's independence-related civil unrest temporarily driving yachts away from Grenada, "As my Auntie Mabel used to say, 'Nothing beats a nice good cleanout,' and now, with everyone a little wiser, things are looking up once more."

Well, things are again looking up in Grenada since Hurricane Ivan's mean sweep in 2004, or as Grenadians themselves say, "We've built back better." And more.

On a visit in August 2007, just shy of three years after Ivan, we found, in addition to new developments elsewhere on the island, that Grenada's south coast yacht facilities continue to expand. Long-established businesses offer more services and locations, new facilities are springing up, and amenities undreamed of in the old days — such as free WiFi — are widely available.

Join us on our recent week's tour along Grenada's south coast, from east to west.

We arrived at True Blue Bay just in time for sundowners at the open-air Dodgy Dock bar and restaurant, standing out over the water. The location formerly sported a friendly but slightly scruffy little joint where you fetched your own drinks from the bar and sat on those generic plastic chairs under a seagrape tree. But on this afternoon, we were reminded of the old Monty Python "torture" routine ("Not the comfy chair!") as we sank into overstuffed rattan furniture under a rather majestic sail-like awning and were brought drinks by attentive bar staff as lights blinked on aboard the yachts in the anchorage. At the foot of the dock, pretty True Blue Bay Resort and Marina appeared to be putting on its final polish for the coming high season. Horizon Yacht Charters, located here (see cover photo), is run by active sailors James and Jacqui Pascall and launched a new private yacht management program in May of this year.

Yes, we thought, there have been changes. And yes, it felt good to be back.

Around the headland in the western arm of Prickly Bay the next day, the boatyard at Spice Island Marine Services (SIMS) was comfortably full of yachts hauled out for the summer. Manager Justin Evans welcomed us into his office and outlined the yard's state-of-the-art storage methods, range of available services and plans (stay tuned!) for future developments. After lunch at the on-site, waterside restaurant, De Big Fish, sailmaker Richard Szyjan showed us around his large Turbulence loft which is capable of making and repairing the biggest sails and tackling all sorts of rigging jobs. Richard admits that although the house he'd been living in was totaled in Ivan, the storm brought a silver lining: lots of sail repair and rigging work for his team.

Out in Prickly Bay, dozens of yachts were anchored, enjoying life on the hook within easy dinghy reach of SIMS, the pretty beach at the head of the bay, a handful of hotels and restaurants including the immortal Red Crab (a short stroll), and the fuel dock and Essentials mini-market at Prickly Bay Marina on the east shore. Customs and Immigration is here, too. The area where boats used to haul out on the east side of the bay is now sprouting some oddly Dubai-esque condos, but the wide boardwalk in front of them is a big improvement over (literally) what was at one time a slimy concrete seawall.

Time constraints prevented visits to Mount Hartman Bay and Hog Island this trip, but in our search for the latest developments for yachts we forged eastward to the new Whisper Cove Marina in Clarke's Court Bay. Unfortunately, it was closed when we arrived unannounced, the manager being away on vacation, but this looks like a little gem of a place with a tiny restaurant and well-sheltered dockage for a small handful of boats in a location that's within easy dinghy distance of the village of Lower Woburn (via the Island View dock), Clarke's Court Bay Marina, the Hog Island anchorage, a proposed new marina in the next cove to the east (Petit Calivigny), and the new Le Phare Bleu Marina around the next point.



Below left: From little Whisper Cove you can see Clarke's Court Marina on the far shore of Clarke's Court Bay

Speaking of which, Le Phare Bleu Marina, situated about mid-way between Grenada's two main haulout yards, is currently the most ambitious new yachting facility on Grenada's south coast. Although the floating docks were still being completed, many of the eventual complement of 60 slips were already occupied, and yacht owners, crews and service personnel were in busy evidence. And although construction was still in progress on the buildings ashore, well-established ancillary businesses such as The Canvas Shop and Island Dreams Yacht Services had already relocated here. Dieter and Jana from Switzerland are the masterminds behind the project, and we couldn't help but think of well-oiled clockwork as Dieter spoke precisely and knowledgeably about the overall project and proudly showed us around the century-old lightship that is the marina's centerpiece. The lightship's bridge is now a cozy restaurant, and on the main deck are immaculate toilet and shower facilities (plumbed to a sewage system to protect the bay) for the marina's clients. Although this bay is protected from nearly all directions, we wondered what conditions might be like in the event of heavy weather from the southeast. Dieter noted that during the most of the year the prevailing tradewinds are from the northeast, and the occasional southerly breeze in the heat of summer is actually welcome. Nevertheless, some moorings have already been placed and space is also available to anchor off in case conditions at the floating docks should ever become uncomfortable. And if worse comes to worst, the hurricane hole of Port Egmont is just around the next headland.

Proceeding ever eastward, Port Egmont and Calivigny Harbours provided peaceful and as yet undeveloped anchorages for a few self-sufficient liveaboards, although we heard — and at this point, were not surprised — that a new marina is being planned for Egmont. At the nearby picturesque cove of Petit Bacaye, only a couple of small open fishingboats graced the water off a little thatched-hut resort and restaurant, although Doyle's guide says it's a possible anchorage in settled weather.

Around Little Bacolet Point, we arrived at Grenada Marine in St. David's Harbour and took the opportunity for a good look at the wide variety of vessels hauled out and well strapped down for the off season, before tucking into a generous West Indian Saturday lunch of barbecued ribs with rice and peas, macaroni pie, ground provisions and salad at the boatyard's beach-side bar/restaurant. It felt indulgent to linger, swigging an icy Carib or two, while a boatowner worked on his hull nearby in the noonday sun, apparently unaware, or uncaring, that this was the Emancipation holiday weekend. Several cruising boats were anchored out, and another sailed in (yes, sailed, not motored) as we watched. Dinghies and fishingboats came and went from the dock; children played in the sand; a puppy wobbled up the restaurant steps. In addition to the other on-site workshops, Turbulence has just opened a new sail loft and rigging shop here, which should generate additional activity — when the long weekend is over, of course.



Above: A work in progress, Le Phare Bleu Marina is already popular

The next day, Grenada Marine's owner/operators Jason and Laura Fletcher popped over to the next bay, La Sagesse, to join us for lunch and show us that their business is not the only thing in their lives that's been growing since the last time we were in Grenada: they've got 18-month-old twins! Although the bay itself is a bit shallow and sometimes rolly as an anchorage, La Sagesse Resort, like Bel Air Plantation at St. David's Harbour, provides a serene escape for those in search of an antidote to drudgery in the boatyard. From Grenada Marine, you can take a footpath over the hill and walk to the far end of the unspoiled La Sagesse beach for drinks, lunch and a swim at the small resort, and dinner and a few nights ashore if the boatwork is all too much. (Or you can request free transportation from the boatyard when making your meal or room reservation.) La Sagesse Resort, with the only buildings on the entire shoreline and proudly free of motorized watersports, was originally the estate of the sixth Lord Brownlow. Since our last visit, just a few simple, new rooms have been added and the lobby and excellent restaurant are now in a beautifully designed, airy wood-and-stone structure right on the sand.

And here we ended our tour of Grenada's south coast. If we went any farther east, we'd be in one of Don Street's secret anchorages. But that's another story.



Right: And when you need a break from boatyard, marina or anchorage life, Grenada's south coast abounds in easily accessible alternative realities such as romantic La Sagesse resort

Exploring Jamaica from Turtle Bay

by Bev Bate

My husband Bill and I spent a couple of weeks with our boat secured to the one and only mooring ball in Turtle Bay, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, on the north coast approximately halfway between Port Antonio and Montego Bay. One or two cruise ships arrive daily in Ocho Rios with the resulting tour buses and boats loaded to overflowing. Jet-skis raced around us churning up the water. Ocho Rios is much more modern than Port Antonio, catering to holiday resort vacationers and cruise ship passengers. One day as a tour boat passed by I overheard a crewmember announce that in the hills above Ocho Rios there were homes owned by Barbara Streisand, Eddie Murphy and Mick Jagger. I scanned the hillside with binoculars hoping to catch a glimpse of these famous people.

Dunn's River Falls

While in Ocho Rios we decided to visit and climb Dunn's River Falls, claimed to be one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the world as well as the highest-grossing tourist attraction in Jamaica. This time we traveled with a couple we'd met who were vacationing from Cincinnati. By now we figured out a route taxi would get us there fast, efficiently and cheaper than a regular taxi.

Dunn's River Falls, located in a breathtaking rainforest, was full of tourists of all ages, brought in by tour buses and boats from surrounding areas, even as far away as Montego Bay. At the bottom of the falls, groups of about 20 tourists (from small children to seniors) are assigned a guide who briefly explains the fun and exhilarating experience ahead and challenge climbing up the limestone formations (about 180 meters). He was interested in everyone having fun and climbing in safety. He would assist climbers and ensure no one got injured. Another individual was assigned to take photos of the group (available for purchase after the climb). Protecting your camera from getting dunked could be quite a challenge so the guides would also carry cameras. The way the guides control the crowds and keep them together is to have tourists hold hands, forming a human chain. This turned out to be both a help and a hindrance. There were times when it was easier (and probably safer) to climb on all fours. Surprisingly we found the footing quite secure and surmise that the rocks are scrubbed, keeping them free from tropical, slimy, algae growth. The air was filled with laughter and squeals of glee from young and old. Human chains were frequently broken and reattached. Photo opportunities were snatched and even orchestrated with tourists sliding down a rock and submerging themselves while the assigned photographer "captured the moment".

At the end of the climb the guides stood at the exit ramp reminding you of their assistance and expecting a tip. Often guides from other groups helped when needed and also looked for a piece of the action. You could hear guides reminding certain tourists of the help they gave them. We enjoyed the climb but were somewhat relieved when it was over. We congratulated ourselves on taking the challenge considering our 58+ years. The challenge of the climb itself consumed our attention and energy so afterwards we walked to the bottom and captured it all in photos of the lush, beautiful jungle and cascading waterfall from various lookouts.

One of the unfortunate aspects of this highest-grossing tourist attraction is that tourists are guided back to their buses without passing through the local craft market which displays an exceptional array of wood carvings, shirts, hats, dresses and souvenirs of all varieties. The merchants were obviously hurting because of lack of business and expressed disappointment that the government did not address their interests.

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Dunn's River Falls: a tourist mill, but nonetheless splendid



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Walkerswood

Traveling by route taxi through the scenic Fern Gully and tucked away in the hills, we emerged upon Walkerswood, home of Jamaica's world famous Walkerswood Jerk Seasoning. It began as a small rural community initiative and the employees, who are also members of the cooperative, share in the manufacture and production of Walkerswood products. Their products include jerk seasoning, chutney, jellies, Scotch Bonnet pepper sauce and many more. They grow all the ingredients and produce numerous products for export. Allspice is used extensively in Jamaican cooking and is also exported from Walkerswood. Some of the production is mechanized





Above: In Montego Bay, statues honoring abolitionist hero Sam Sharpe

Left: Jerk lessons, anyone? The right combination of these locally grown herbs and spices is delectable

but the packaging and labeling is still done by hand. It was fascinating.

Our traveling companion, from Cincinnati, worked as a chemist in food flavoring and had a particular interest in seeing how the produce was grown and chatting with the farmers. This was not part of the tour but they were pleased to accommodate his request, and the four of us hiked into the fields with a guide who pointed out the various fields and crops. She summoned one of the farmers who showed us the irrigation and weed control methods. They used chicken manure mixed with rice husks for weed control and fertilizing.

Following our trek in the fields we were offered a refreshing punch (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) and given a brief explanation of how Walkerswood was started and developed over the years. Our cheerful and informed guide then took us through the grounds where spices are grown and identified for the benefit of the tourists. We stopped along the way at an open-air rest spot where all the ingredients for jerk seasoning were spread out along the counter (with the exception of one 'secret' ingredient).

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Our friend volunteered to combine the spices she would use to make jerk seasoning. The guide encouraged her to use a little more or less of a particular ingredient. After the spices were mixed together they were used on pre-cooked chicken and pork for sampling. It was most delectable.

We then met Mother Thyme, dressed in period costume, who gave us a tour of an early slave-built home with the cooking tools and utensils of the time. From there we proceeded to the factory where we could view the products being processed. At the end of the tour we sampled the various delicious products served with crackers.

The kitchen craft shop was the last stop where we could purchase any of Walkerswood products at very reasonable prices. Having sampled them all we had difficulty limiting our purchases. We loaded up with gifts for our return visit to Canada and only wished we had bought double the amount as everything was a unique treat. We will keep our eyes peeled for these exceptional products in our travels.

Montego Bay

We discovered that Montego Bay (nicknamed MoBay) is a tourist haven for all-inclusive hotels and resorts but offers little to the cruising boater. On the opposite shore of the bay from the townsite there is a yacht club with mooring and docks. At the city marina there is a small chandlery with very helpful owners who went out of their way to help. The owner accompanied us in a taxi to locate a business where we could purchase a piece of stainless steel sheet and have it bent. The business was tucked away on a side street and we would have never located it on our own.

The old section of town with its historic buildings and cobblestone streets was fascinating to explore. Montego Bay was a center for sugarcane production and slavery. It was also the location where slave activist and national hero, Sam Sharpe, a slave of a Montego Bay solicitor, helped attain the eventual abolishment of slavery through the Christmas Slave Rebellion of 1831. More than a thousand slaves were killed, including Sam Sharpe, who was hanged in the square that now bears his name. Standing in the square brought mixed feelings of sorrow and awe at the historical events that occurred there.

The narrow streets gave us the sense that this area of town hasn't changed much from the 1700s. We wandered through the streets and later learned we had wandered right through "the ghetto" at mid-day. We were told that people just don't walk through there. However, at no time did we feel threatened and found nothing but happy, friendly people.

We had a delightful, authentic Jamaican lunch at a small, inconspicuous restaurant frequented by locals, consisting of curried goat, peas-and-rice and salad. Our favorite drink that we discovered in Jamaica is Ting, a carbonated grapefruit drink, produced in Kingston. To our delight other Caribbean islands have discovered it as well and we continue to enjoy it as we travel.

Firefly

We spent a couple of nights anchored next to James Bond Bay in Oracabessa (nicknamed Bessa), 21 kilometres east of Ocho Rios. At his home on the shore at Oracabessa, we learned Ian Fleming wrote all 14 of the "007" spy novels. The beach was well maintained, although empty when we were there, and is used primarily for concerts and special events. There was a cordoned-off section of the beach called Stingray Beach where tourists can swim with the stingrays. It appeared the stingrays had escaped as there was no evidence of any as we paddled our dinghy along the water fence barrier.

Our Lonely Planet guidebook indicated that a visit to English actor, playwright and composer Noel Coward's estate at Firefly was one of the most interesting excursions in Jamaica. How could we resist? From the beach we climbed a steep hill into the little town of Oracabessa. The townspeople looked at us inquiringly, as they probably see few tourists. The town was old and run down but alive with people going about their daily routines. We flagged down a route taxi that took us five kilometres east of Oracabessa to Firefly. Our driver speculated that it was closed that day and we might only get to view the grounds. Fortunately a group of about ten people from the German cruiseship, *Aida*, docked in Ocho Rios, arrived at exactly the same time. A tour had been pre-arranged for them and we joined in.



Historic cottage built by privateer Henry Morgan later housed playwright Noel Coward

Sir Noel Coward was multi-talented. He was also a songwriter and artist. The latter talent he learned from Winston Churchill. The grounds around his home boast lawns adorned with numerous varieties of flowering trees and shrubs. There was a spectacular view of the coastline and Little Bay. The home has been preserved as Coward left it at the time of his death in 1973, including the china used when Queen Elizabeth visited in 1965. The table was set up as if waiting for lunch to be served. Coward's original paintings are displayed throughout the home along with numerous photographs of himself and famous Hollywood actors/actresses whom he entertained. He is buried under a plain marble slab on a hill that overlooks the bay. A life-sized statue of Noel Coward sitting in a chair, smoking a cigarette, is perched on the lawn overlooking the view he loved.

Another structure on the property, a stone cottage, served as Noel Coward's temporary residence until his three-storey home was completed. This cottage had previously been built and occupied by pirate and privateer, Henry Morgan. He launched attacks on Spanish galleons passing by the island returning to Spain with their bounty. The stone house has block walls nearly two feet thick with small ports to fit a gun's muzzle through. The interior was cool, shading the occupants from the hot Jamaican sun. In contrast, there was a very large stone fireplace that would have been used to prepare meals in hanging pots over the flames. Across the lawn on the verge of the steep cliff is a rock platform where we were told Morgan posted a sentry who scoured the seas for the bountiful Spanish galleons. When sighting one, he signaled to waiting crews sheltered in the bay below. The hut is now used as a restaurant and bar.

We spent about four months enjoying Jamaica, its interesting sights, wonders and incredible people. We felt sad to leave and would encourage boaters to put it on their itinerary of places to visit. It is currently on the top of our list of places we'd like to return to one day.



BOATS AND BEES



by Lee Kessell

When my husband John and I lived as wild country folk deep in the lost valley of Trinidad, John had decided one day to keep bees. I knew no better back then, and as we had braved the wilds of the Northern Range, built a bridge across the river to get to our steep acreage and installed a generator to supply electricity to the house, I had only shrugged off a sense of impending pain. Enough said that John installed his beehives and we extracted delectable honey from the combs.

Years later, a move to St. Lucia gave us a different lifestyle entirely. St. Lucia offered life lived on the water, an old yacht or two to restore and children, Sean and Christopher, who now resented the unpampered life of rowing to and from their home and being laughed at in school as those crazy boat kids. "We're not the crazy ones, it's our parents!" was their constant wail.

Well, John missed his bees. Oh, those little critters are a rare learning experience. Imagine being a bee scout (our boys had been Scouters in Trinidad so they should have been in sympathy with their wild brothers — ha!). The scouts fly off in the morning — weather permitting and bad weather makes them cross as hell — and their task is to find a source of nectar, the basic raw material for honey production. After satisfying itself that a source has been found — and scouts are finicky about this, passing by perfectly good orange blossom and going on for miles to find the strong-smelling logwood out of sight behind the far hill — the busy bee scout now flies directly home, crawls through the narrow space on the landing platform and the hive boxes and into the pitch black recesses of the vertical comb frames. You must understand that no light enters here, so the scout begins a twirly dance amongst the nectar collectors touching them suggestively and thereby telling them exactly in what direction to fly and how far to fly to reach the logwood tree. Off fly the bees, happy to get out of the house, wing past the seductive orange blossoms just dying to be fertilized (imagine how they feel being ignored for the common logwood!) and land panting on the frothy over-sexed logwood.

With such a fascinating brood to look after, can you wonder that John started to look about for some way to keep bees again, regardless of the fact that we were living on a boat. I will say this however: we were moored reasonably close to shore in a cove of Castries Harbour, and we did spend school terms more or less in one place (our mooring had a tendency to break loose every so often), sailing off only for weekends, be they long or short. Holiday cruises? Well, John would think about this when the time came.

One good thing about bees is that there is no need to feed or water them. What is the problem then? Bees multiply. If you don't watch your hives carefully, one day a new Queen Bee will emerge and fly off with most of the hive workers and the oncoming generation, the brood. Of course, most will follow this energetic new birth machine, leaving behind poor, tired old Mum Queen and a few loyal helpers. So you see, John would have a problem if we took off and went cruising for a while.

Let me just tell you, right here, how a beekeeper feels about losing a hive of bees. Back in Trinidad one morning after John had left for work and taken the boys with him to their school, I suddenly became aware of a strong buzzing sound. "Good God, it's the bees!" I dashed outside to see what was up and there, flying fast over the house, was a swarm of bees. I raced after them and fortunately they settled high in a tree on the edge of our property. Mmm, what to do now? John had told me often enough that if ever I saw a swarm take off not to let it out of my sight. So far so good. But I couldn't stand around in the sand fly and mosquito, not to mention coral snake, infested bush all day, so reluctantly I went back home, hoping the bees were satisfied with their new home and stayed put. Around six o'clock John came home. I told him about the swarm. He hurried off to see how he could get them back and after a short while an angry face glared at me. "Where are my bees? Why didn't you keep your eye on them?" Useless to explain to a man who loves his bees more than his wife.

The next day he gave instructions to our yardman, Rafael, to go and find the bees — take all day if necessary. I watched Rafael take his cutlass and stride off in the direction he was told to follow and that was all I saw of him for the day. By the sneaky smile on his face I knew that he would circle back to his own house on the other side of our property and spend the day drinking strong rum. Bleary-eyed the next day, Rafael looked hard done by as he mumbled when questioned, "I does walk all about until me foot sore and I does neva see bee, not not'in'. I tired now too much." And he turned his back and went home. The bees were never seen again.

Okay, back to bees and boats, or I should say, bees ON boats. John had but one hive box on the woody hill overlooking our bit of the bay. He tended it well and that dreaded day came when he said: "The frames are full and ready for uncapping. Get the bottles ready." Grrrr. I took the empty rum bottles I had been keeping in the back of a cupboard and carefully washed and drained them; John took his bee hat with its protective veil, his hive tool and his smoker and dinghied back to shore, taking the boys with him. No, the boys were not going to help, they sensibly had decided to spend the night with a friend. Sooo, John smoked the bees into a stupor, brushed the bees off the full frames and back into the box with the half-filled frames and carried the loot down to the dinghy. He came back to the boat and we took the frames down below. Ah, but a scout or two had recovered just in time to see their honey being stolen, so they flew after the thief and stealthily came down the companionway and said, "You think you can get away with this? Not bloody likely." Back they went to a now stirring hive and in almost no time at all, angry bees were assaulting the boat. Yikes! We closed all the hatches in record time, swatted the bees we could get at but not before a goodly number had found our tender skin. Oh, there is nothing so, so painful as a bee sting. It is a jagged zip of lightning that punctures a nerve cell and makes you rigid with shock.

We set about uncapping the frames and spinning them, three at a time, in the drum we had brought up from Trinidad, the centrifugal force flinging out the honey into the bottom of the drum. Finally I carefully poured the thick, dark syrup through a funnel into the bottles. It was a long and tedious job as the bottlenecks get an air bubble in them and the honey flows down the outsides of the bottles instead of the inside. By then it had grown dark and the bees had gone home to rally forces for the morning. We opened the hatches with thankful relief as we had been dying of heat down below with our perspiration mingling with the honey.

And so it went until one afternoon when the boys had gone ashore to meet up with a particularly obnoxious friend, Joseph by name. I was sitting on deck relaxing after a couple of hours of derusting the scuppers when I heard shouts from shore. I jumped to my feet in time to see Sean, followed by Joseph, then Christopher leaping with impossible speed and agility over the sharp, slimy rocks of the breakwater below the hill sheltering the beehive and straight into the water. I saw all three break the surface, take a quick look around, take a deep breath and disappear again. What had caused such panic? Then I heard it, before I saw it — a deep, angry roar — a thousand bee throats calling for blood, yes and it was coming from that long black cloud following the rising bubbles of the fast underwater swimmers. I watched helplessly as heads broke the surface, took big breaths and then, getting the aim right disappeared again. The boys were making an Olympic record, underwater sprint for the boat and safety. Safety? I stood well back from the boarding ladder as desperate hands reached up and grabbed for the rungs. But there was no way that any man, boy or beast could get on board. The bees flew in furious circles around the boat and the boarding ladder and all that the kids could do was hang on for a second or two, take a breath and submerge. The bees, thank goodness, weren't at all interested in me, so I grabbed up a coil of rope and tied the ends to the base of the stanchions and threw the rest, as a loop, into the water. When a head appeared I shrieked out to grab the line so that they couldn't drift too far from the boat.

Fortunately the afternoon was almost at an end and when darkness began to set in, the bees gave up the vigil and went home in a sulk. After an hour in the water, the three boys were exhausted and climbed aboard to fall to the deck thankful they were still alive.

"What on earth did you do?" I asked, not unkindly, when the three had recovered enough to speak. Slowly, between gulps and pants, the truth came out. Joseph had found a dead rat and picking it up with a stick, had tossed it onto the landing platform of the beehive. Dead rat aroma filled the hive in a twinkling and the boys' curiosity about what the bees would do with this unwelcome visitor was answered long before they had expected it. The bees took offense "with prejudice" and attacked. The boys ran like Mercury with the wings attached to his feet, straight down the scrubby incline, across the breakwater and into the sea.

"I told Joseph not to do it," Christopher said between gritted teeth.

The problem of what to do about the bees when we prepared to sail the boat down to St. Vincent for a haulout, solved itself. Much as I disliked the bees I was very sorry for them and John when the lord and master of boat and bees came back to the boat one afternoon and sank forlornly into the cockpit.

"They've been fogging all along the shoreline for mosquitoes," John told me, his voice low. "The pesticide drifted up the hill and all the bees are dead or dying. My entire hive has been wiped out."

I offered comfort and a good, strong rum and we drank to the departed souls of these honest labourers as the sun sank down into the indigo waters of the harbour. John would never keep bees again — I prayed.



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OCTOBER 2007

♈ **ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)**
Your sense of humor will be your mainstay this month, especially during the first two weeks when every tack you try meets with head seas.

♉ **TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)**
Set your course for business prospects in the first week. After the 8th, romance will have favorable currents.

♊ **GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)**
Finish any boat projects left over from last month and don't let any business squalls or choppy seas in your love life distract you.

♋ **CANCER (22 Jun - 23 Jul)**
You'll have a high tide of work energy during the first two weeks. Use it to finish boat projects left undone so you'll be ready for more creative pursuits next month.

♌ **LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)**
Take some time off the boat and spend it ashore with friends, taking it easy. This will give you a fresh outlook for the future.

♍ **VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)**
Keep your hand on the helm of your business or financial dealings during the first week, so you can concentrate on romance after the 8th.

♎ **LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)**
You may find yourself low on drive this month. Spend this time finishing the creative boat projects and communications you began last month.

♏ **SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)**
Aspects are encouraging for on-board repairs. This will be true for November also. Pick the most important ones in order to be ready for charters or cruises in the coming season.

♐ **SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)**
Keep it light as a spinnaker and use that famous sense of humor to keep you on an even keel as your love life as well as your finances will be ebbing.

♑ **CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)**
Business or finance will continue to pick up like a fresh breeze, and romance will sail in to brighten the month for you.

♒ **AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)**
Your creativity will be Force 10, so use this energy to be as productive as possible before the 24th.

♓ **PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)**
Love and business matters may be on the rocks, but you'll feel full of energy on board. So, hide out on the boat and concentrate on making improvements there!

Crossword Solution

ACROSS
2) TEMPEST
7) TREAT
9) TREES
10) TROLL
11) TRIANGLE
13) TRENCH
14) TRUCKS
15) TRIATIC
17) TOTE
20) TRUE
21) TROUNCE
22) TRIP
24) TREBLE
25) TRIPLE
26) TEAR
27) TROUGH
28) TRIMMED

DOWN
1) TEA
2) THERE
3) TROPIC
4) TALL
5) TRY
6) TRIGGER
8) TRICK
11) TRUNK
12) TRICING
14) TROUL
15) TRENNEL
16) TROUBLE
17) TRESSEL
18) TRUNDLE
19) TRIPPING
21) TROW
23) TEST
24) TRIM
25) TROD
26) TITI

Island Poets

ODE TO A WATER PUMP

West Marine Water Pressure Pump version 2.4
I hope you're better than the one before
which Jerry put on
but it didn't last long

It made up its mind to suddenly stop
It wouldn't pump water, not even a drop
The winch handle gave it a mighty thump
water flowed, again it did pump

But the efforts were soon for naught
A better solution must be sought
So Jerry took the pump apart
and once again it did start

I forgot its idiosyncratic ways
when it worked again for days and days
But the silly pump seemed to know
when to stop and when to flow

Did the Captain really care
I was in the cockpit bare
with shampoo still in my hair?
So once again he removed the stair
and repeated steps one and two —
It worked again, but stopped on cue
when I was in the cockpit nude
It really spoiled the evening mood
Must I wait to rinse in rain?
I moaned on, it seemed in vain

With its evil, vindictive habits
I had well and truly had it.
Take it out and put it away,
I cannot take it one more day!

Who'd have thought it
When he bought it
The teeny, tiny pressure switch
Would end up being such a bitch?

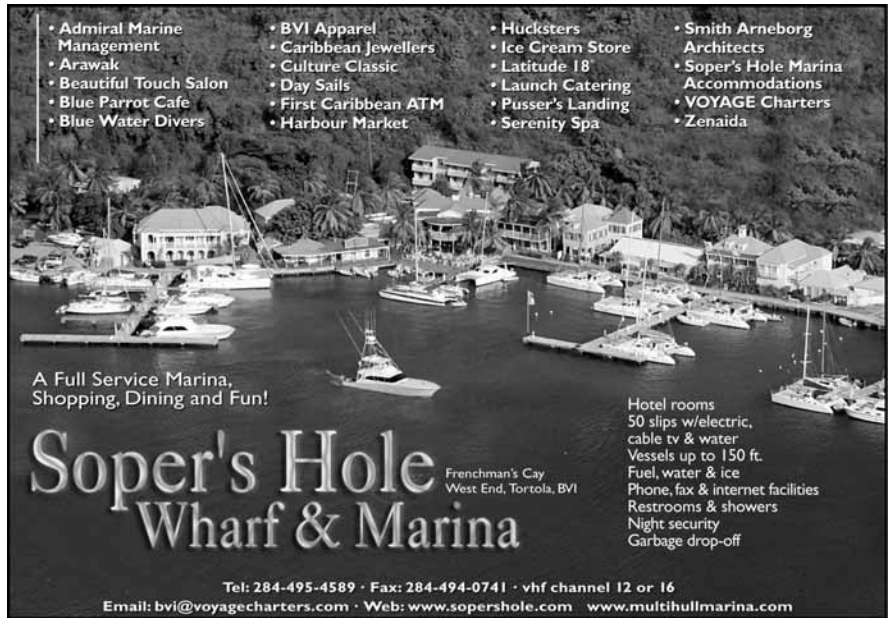
But by next morning
Jerry's plan had been forming:
He finally installed the new pump
The old one should go to the dump
But it's in the locker as a spare
Use it again, if you dare.

So dear West Marine Water Pressure Pump version 2.4
I pray you'll behave better than the one before.

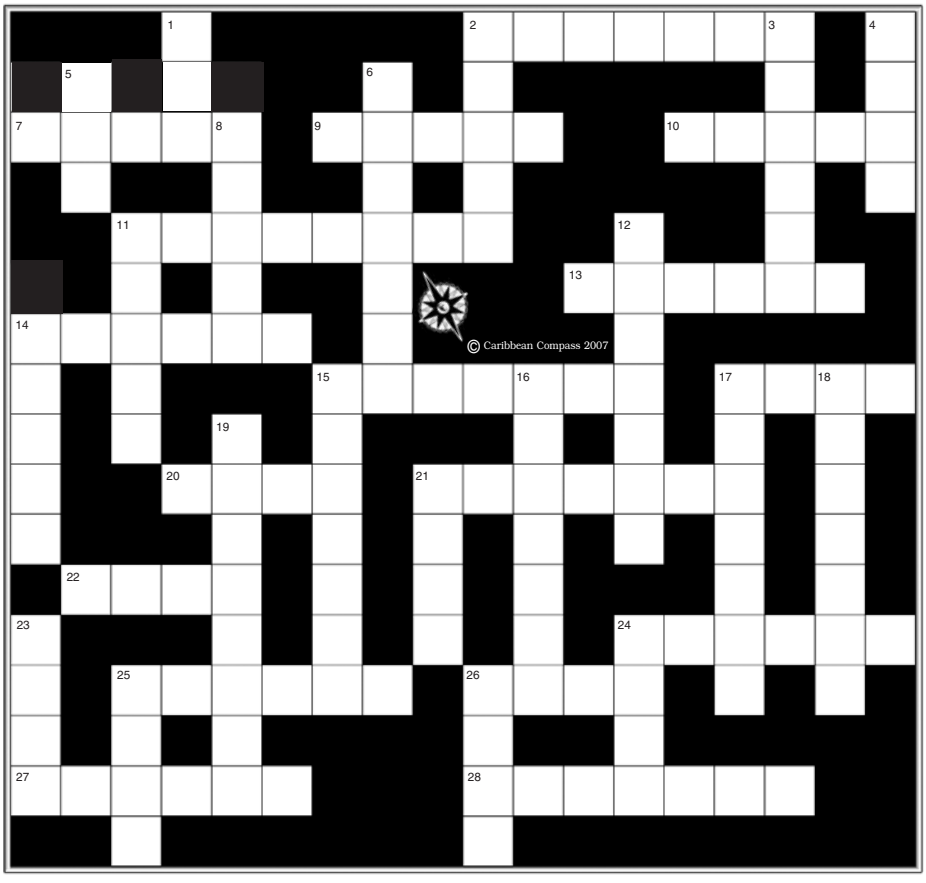
— *Cay Hickson*

Written for Jerry Blakeslee sailing on Islomania, *now in Bocas del Toro, Panama. August 2007.*





Compass Cruising Crossword



Nautical Alphabet: 'T' at Sea

ACROSS

2) Storm
7) Use Cuprinol to _____ wood rot
9) See 17 Down
10) Fish with line from a moving boat
11) Bermuda _____
13) _____ foot: sailors were formerly susceptible to this
14) Circular caps on the mastheads
15) Stay connecting two masts
17) "____ that barge, lift that bale..."
20) In navigation, not magnetic
21) Beat or pummel
22) Voyage
24) _____ block: one with three sheaves
25) _____ Jack: well-known Virgin Islands racing multihull
26) What old sails do
27) Hollow between crests of two seas
28) Adjusted sail

DOWN

1) Boston ___ Party
2) Not here
3) Latitude reached by sun at maximum declination
4) ____ ship: lofty vessel
5) ___sail: boomless fore-and-aft sail
6) Let fall the pall of a cradle to allow ship to slide down the ways
8) Turn at the helm
11) Seaman's storage container
12) _____ line: small cord passing through a block or thimble
14) Action of silt being rolled along by the tide
15) Tree nail (also spelled trunnel)
16) Famous old Bequia double-ender
17) Timber mast supports, with 9 Across (also spelled trestle)
18) Lower drum head of a capstan
19) Upsetting, as an anchor
21) Clinker built, flat-floored barge
23) Pass this to get Coast Guard license
24) Move ballast to do this to a ship
25) Walked the boards
26) ___vate: freshen paint, spruce up

— Solution on page 30

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parlumps marooned



CHILLING OUT

Surfer babes on ice? It's not a new drink — it's women having fun, right on Main Street, Bocas Del Toro, Panama. Snuggling up to the hunk of ice are, from left to right, Jane from Australia, Alexandra from Sweden, Sorcha from Ireland and Abby from Canada.


JULIA BARTLETT

WATCH OUT FOR THE GARZE!

by Lee Kessell

Karly had been told to watch out for the *garze* ever since she could remember. In the village where she lived with her mother and three brothers in the south of the island of St. Lucia, no one ever mentioned the *garze*'s real name because if you did you were asking for trouble. No, everyone knew who the *garze* was and everyone was very careful not to offend her. *Garzes* are women — well, usually they are because evil men tend to stick to being *mage noirs*, but I'll tell you about them another time.

Why all this fear of *garzes*? Perhaps I'm asking for trouble just by telling you this story, but here goes anyway. According to local folklore, *garzes*, with the help of the devil, can change themselves into any creature or thing they like and they do horrible things to people they don't like while disguised as some harmless creature. Most people stay away from white animals, particularly horses and dogs, because nine times out of ten that animal is really a *garze* in disguise. Sometimes the *garze* turns into a coffin and that is the worst thing of all because you'd better not try to pass it or else you're sure to DIE! No wonder Karly trembled every time she had to pass the *garze*'s front door and when she met Mistress Garze in the street she had to get out of the way by stepping into the road, saying a polite good day and keeping her eyes on the ground.

No one suspected that the little stream had swollen into a raging torrent from all the rain high up in the mountains

One day when Karly was 12 years old she took the local transport to go to the next village to visit her grandmother, a very old lady who hardly ever left her cottage. It was in the middle of the rainy season and although the sun had shone when Karly left home, it started to pour down the moment she got to Grandma's cottage. This didn't worry Karly because she was used to heavy rain and besides, Grandma hadn't planned on going anywhere. In fact, Karly and her grandma spent the morning in the kitchen, baking coconut bread and frying up a pan full of jackfish and bakes for lunch. Then, after they had eaten as much as they could, Grandma settled down in her old rocking chair with Karly at her knee and told her all about Papa Bois and how he kept the forest creatures safe. The time sped away, it stopped raining and Karly set out for home. But Karly hadn't realized how late it was and by the time the transport had dropped her off, it was dark, black dark. Karly was scared, and when she had to pass the front door of the *garze*, she gave a little whimper. A few steps down the road and poor Karly couldn't see a thing!

Now, between the village and Karly's home was a small ravine with a little wooden bridge across it and although it had rained during the day, it was nothing unusual. So no one suspected that the little stream had swollen into a raging torrent from all the rain high up in the mountains and that the little steam had washed the banks and the footbridge away. But the *garze* knew. Karly's mother and brothers were safe and sound at home and they weren't at all worried about Karly because Karly knew her way home even in the dark.

But this was far worse than just dark, it was death dark and Karly ran on in a blind panic. To her, the night was full of *garzes* and *mage noirs*, all out to get her. Mistress Garze sat up when she heard Karly pass her door and she knew the little girl would run right over the edge of the ravine and be swept away and drowned in the flood. You probably think this is what the *garze* wanted, but no, it was not. No, Mistress Garze had never hurt a child in her whole life and she knew she had to do something to save Karly. It was no use calling out to the child to stop; this would only make her run faster, so Mistress Garze did the only thing she could. She turned herself into a coffin and whamp! Just as Karly was about to rush headlong over the edge, she found a big white coffin blocking her way. The coffin actually glowed in the dark, so that Karly could SEE it very plainly! Karly screamed loud and long and turning about ran all the way back to the village where she flung herself through the open door of Pa Wilson's bakery.

"Pa Wilson!" Karly panted, almost choking with fear. "A white coffin won't let me get home! It's the *garze*!"

Pa Wilson tutted, got Karly to sit quietly until she got her breath back and gave her a penny bread to eat, hot from the oven. He then got his torch light, called to his son Bob to come with them and off he led the way back towards Karly's home. Karly trembled all the way, holding tight to Pa Wilson's hand. When they were almost at the ravine Karly began shrieking, "De coffin here! De coffin here!"

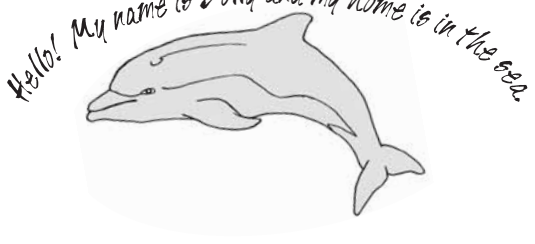
But Pa Wilson saw nothing at all! There certainly was no white coffin or any other sort of coffin, but there was no bridge either! Pa Wilson saw the terrible deep ravine and the raging water below. He marveled at the lucky escape of young Karly. He turned away and took Karly and his son back home to the bakery.

"Why girl, yo' lucky so! *Garze* save yo' life; not all *garze* bad yo' know. Tomorrow yo' must knock on she door and thank her proper."

Pa Wilson put Karly to bed on the sofa and then he collected some neighbours to help set up a barrier with a light to stop anyone from falling into the ravine. Early the next morning Karly knocked on Mistress Garze's door and when the old lady opened it, Karly looked up at her and smiled. "Thank you for saving my life, Mistress."

The old lady patted Karly on her soft, brown cheek and the smile she returned was not the evil smile of a wicked *garze*, but the gentle smile of an old lady who had done her best to right a bad situation.

THE END



DOLLY'S DEEP SECRETS

by Elaine Ollivierre

Do you know what NOAA stands for? It's the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration which is a division of the US Department of Commerce. NOAA is responsible for research on the weather, the oceans, and the environment in general. In the first week of September this year, scientists working out of NOAA laboratories in Seattle published some quite disturbing research results about the Arctic region.

Do you know the difference between the Arctic and the Antarctic? Well, I expect you already know that the Arctic is at the North Pole and the Antarctic is at the South Pole, but there's also a big physical difference between the two areas. Antarctica is a mountainous continent, surrounded by water. It is covered by ice which moves slowly towards the shoreline, forming glaciers and ice shelves. The Arctic is an ocean surrounded by land. The ocean is covered with floating ice which drifts slowly around. Each summer, some of the sea ice at the edge of the region melts then freezes back as winter comes on.

So, what's the bad news? Scientists use computers to look at information collected about a particular area and try to work out what's going to happen in the future. A recent study of temperatures and conditions in the Arctic has led the researchers to believe that 40 percent of the Arctic ice cap will have melted by 2050. Already, more sea ice melted this year than ever before and the North-West Passage across northern Canada opened up completely for the first time.

Why is this so worrying? Conditions in the Arctic have a great effect on the rest of the world. Sea ice is bright and white and reflects most of the sunlight which hits it. It keeps the region cool and this helps to keep the rest of the world a little cooler too. If the sea ice melts, then more dark sea water is exposed. Dark colours absorb more sunlight, so the seas (and the world) get warmer.

It is also worrying that, unfortunately, there is little that can be done to prevent the huge melt. The greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming stay in the atmosphere for many years, so, even if production of those gases is cut drastically now, the gases already in the atmosphere will not disappear straight away.

Will all that melting of sea ice mean that sea levels will rise? No, it won't. Here's an experiment that will show you why.

Put a few ice cubes in a container. Fill the container to the brim with water so that the ice is floating on the top. Leave it until the ice melts. What do you think will happen? Here are your choices: the water level in the container will (a) drop (b) rise (c) stay the same. Try it and see.

ELAINE OLLIVIERRE 2007 ©

CANINE BABE-CATCHER

by Tina Dreffin

Bikini-clad ladies dotted the sugary white beach that filled the panorama stretching across the bow of *Scud*, our 44-foot catamaran. Warren, our 20-year-old son, was in overdrive — his normal operating speed. "See ya, Mom! I'm going in to find some hot babes," he shouted, sliding sunglasses into his pocket.

"Dad's got the dinghy," I shouted up from the galley towards the cockpit where he was standing.

"No worries; I'll swim in!" he said with a muffled cry.

I scrambled into the open cockpit just in time to see him pulling out of a smooth swan dive from the deck stanchion (good thing his dad missed that launch platform!).

Oops, there goes the dog, too. Wherever Warren goes (or anyone in our family), Bella — our little Belgian barge dog — goes too. She's performed Herculean acts of bravery to prove her loyalty and devotion: many times to near loss of life! She's on life number 12 now, way past the eight that we told she was allowed.

To lengthen her lifetime with us, we installed a doggie boarding ladder from the port sugar-scoop. She can come and go at will. (We stow it when underway, to ensure against wandering walkabouts.) In port, she hangs in our shadows when we scrub the bottom, dive the anchor, or cool off on a hot day. She paddles in like a little kid!

So, today she strutted down the sugar-scoop with toes just over her rubber ladder, launched into a makeshift swan dive, paddled after Warren, and then promptly boarded his back. His stern instructions rode the hot still air: "Look, Bella — jump on ALL the girls this time when I throw the Frisbee!" She's his guaranteed "babe-catcher"! (Even when an old mom like me walks her, pretty girls approach, curious about her breed.)

Bella is our third Schipperke raised onboard our various sailboats while rearing our two sons in the Caribbean. Better known as the Belgian barge dog, these little dogs are perfectly suited for boats and children. With their protective, gentle nature, a child can dress up a Schipperke, cuddle next to it, and whisper angelic secrets into pointed little ears, all while the dog is maintaining a sharp look-out for possible hidden dangers to the child or boat. And being a guard dog is their second nature: they were once used to guard the cargo holds of the great barge-canal boats of Belgium. That's where their title of "little skipper" originated. So, I love it when overly eager boat boys want to haggle for a bunch of bruised bananas I don't want. Bella won't let them hang onto the lifelines long enough for negotiations to ensue! When new friends arrive, however, she'll settle down, once having been "introduced" and sensing our comfortable arrangement.

She's rescued us from potentially serious trouble many times, when we've been delayed below decks, making tea or analyzing charts. Being exceptionally alert and curious, a Schipperke will bark at anything "new": a garbage bag that wasn't there before she took a nap, a large cargo ship advancing out of the haze on the high seas, or a boat dragging by during a gnarly squall in some tiny anchorage. "Good girl!" we tell her.

Such alertness keeps the dog entertained during long passages too. Dolphins drive her mad. They whistle and chortle to each other, while she dashes from port to starboard chasing their disappearing fins. Relishing her antics, the dolphins linger at our bow wake, and perform butter-slides across our rooster-tails.

Our minds were made up to get this clever dog when we were boarded one night in Jamaica, several years ago. A crafty thief swam out to *Antilles*, our 46-foot wooden boat, crept around six people, and stole cash in three currencies, along with a sack of canned food! It had been a long passage from Florida, and naturally we'd celebrated. (Rum was 25 cents a shot at the Chinese dive back in those days.) Today, I know I am safe when my husband Peter disappears into town to hunt down spare parts. If anyone cruises through the anchorage with suspicious curiosity, my canine protector is standing sentinel on the bow giving tongue. Schipperkes are not yappy though; she won't bark without reason, so my neighbors aren't annoyed. Just on notice.

Like any good pet, Schipperkes must be cherished and loved, as they are very affectionate. Bella relies on and looks forward to her walk every day: Me too! (They can also be trained to "use" Astroturf, strung onto a line for rinsing, which is useful at sea or when anchored at islands where boat pets are not allowed ashore.) It gets me off the boat and into the world. Often, it's a little too easy to languish like a tourist, but the "list" beckons, and a beach stroll invigorates me to tackle my morning chores. Dinner get-togethers have often been planned when walking her on long afternoons: I run into friends, meet new people.

Bella's size makes it easy to smuggle her into any island restaurant, café, or indoor market. She fits comfortably in an open duffle that slips over my shoulder. She watches the show go by, quiet as a mouse.

From the bow, a familiar percussion of frivolity brings me out of my sweet reverie. I put down my cloth and tin of stainless polish to walk astern. Warren is back with Bella — along with a girl so stunning looking, she could be a Vogue model. "Hi, Mom! Meet Laura, my new friend on vacation from California." He winks at me, and my heart swells from his charm. I reach down to pat Bella, saying, "Good girl!", then I say to Laura, "I see you caught the Frisbee!"

Who could resist that adorable face? (Which one?)





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Los Roques:

LAS ISLAS BONITAS

by Arlene Walrond

Los Roques, beautiful Los Roques. I'm still bereft of words to fully describe this place that is considered Paradise by many.

As hired crew on a private sailing yacht, my husband and I have spent at least a month a year for the last four years in this beautiful Venezuelan archipelago. Being a landlubber, the long passages back and forth between Puerto La Cruz and these sandy islands I can do without. It's not all bad though. When the sea is reasonably calm and we're sailing on a beam reach and I can make it to the cockpit, sometimes I'm rewarded by the sight of dolphins skipping across the water — that really makes my day. But for the most part I'm confined below, lying on a bunk, praying for the sweet oblivion of sleep, but sleep doesn't come. (Once someone recommended a pill that's supposed to relieve seasickness as well as help to induce sleep. Well, I took two of those babies and was awake for four days.) In the really rough parts I lie there in trepidation, bracing for the next crash when the bow makes contact with the wall of water.

Miraculously all of this is forgotten — sorry, not forgotten but rather pushed to the back of the mind until the return trip — when we enter the blue-green and tranquil waters of the island water park known as Los Roques.

During the four years that I've been visiting Los Roques, I've explored a lot of the islands and without doubt I would say that Francisqui is my favourite one, even though I was almost sucked down into the salt pond on the lee side of this mini-archipelago within an archipelago. My husband had sauntered ahead while I was engrossed in my surroundings. It was my first time there and I had no idea where he was headed and didn't want to lose sight of him, so I decided to take a short cut across the pond. I'd crossed one on another part of the Franscisqui chain and thought this one was just as firm, but midway across my feet got stuck. The more I tried to extricate my feet the deeper in I got. Thoughts of quicksand flashed through my mind as I struggled to free myself. I was choked with fear as I looked at his disappearing figure, almost out of earshot by this time. Eventually I was able to croak out his name. He came running when he realized my predicament and threw me something solid, I forget what. I managed to pull my feet out of my flip-flops and backtracked a step or two. Then went to work on freeing my flip-flops. Luckily they were sturdy with two-inch-thick soles or I might have had to say goodbye to them. It took me about ten minutes to get them out and when I did I could not believe the stench. It took several scrubbings with all kinds of cleaning agents to get rid of the foul odor.

Francisqui also seems to be the favourite with tourists and well-off Venezuelans alike, judging from the amount of people we see there at any given time of the year. It's especially populous at Eastertime and midyear when school is out. It's the ideal place for kite-surfing and other watersports. On the windward side of Middle Francisqui there's a great spot for scuba diving and snorkeling.

Whether it's sportfishing (spearfishing is against the law!), swimming with the turtles in Noronqui or just relaxing on the beach and ogling topless women (for those who might enjoy that sort of thing) there's something for everyone in Los Roques. For me it's the beautiful sunsets and a starry sky on a dark night, especially if we're the only boat in an anchorage with no bright lights around. This is also a special time for the owner of the boat who sometimes sits for hours contemplating the stars. I also enjoy feeding the gulls that hover around the boat. It's a thrill when they take the bread right out of my fingers.

The only downside is when there's a constant stream of pirogues speeding by packed with day trippers. They literally rock your world. Another sore point is the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables on the main island, Gran Roque. Sometimes we're lucky to go in on the same day the cargo boat brings fresh supplies but often it's a "no hay" situation. The growing local population on Gran Roque also accounts for the lack or shortage of certain items on the shelves at times. Filling up water is another hardship one has to endure on Gran Roque, but I suppose the good things in Los Roques far outweigh the few inconveniences one has to put up with.

No visit to Los Roques is complete without a pilgrimage to the shrine at the top of the hill overlooking the airport. We usually have a free day or two between charter groups. When the water tanks have been refilled, our laundry done and the boat cleaned up and ready for the next arrivals, if we have time, we take a walk-about on Gran Roque then head for the hill. If we're pressed for time then we just head straight for the hill, usually early afternoon in boiling hot sun. Attempting to climb the last segment on the steep path to the shrine in late afternoon can be scary. The wind is often strong then and it whips you about. I'm on the lighter side of the scale and I'm hard pressed to keep myself from being blown off the hill, but then again I'm a born coward and I'm not ashamed to admit it. Afraid of the sea (except when it's calm, then I love it), afraid of heights. That's enough to make me want to stay on the ground, but the thrill I get from that small accomplishment is so profound that I feel I must do it again and again. The small hill on Gran Roque today, Kilimanjaro tomorrow. Who knows?



CONNELLY-LYNN / INSET: WALROND

A climb to the lighthouse on Gran Roque (main photo) provides dramatic coastal views (inset)

Skybird's Final Caribbean Season

BLANQUILLA, OUR FAVOURITE ISLAND OF ALL

by Mary Robinson



We left Porlamar anchorage on Isla Margarita before dawn. As we crossed Pampatar Bay, Isla Blanco gave us a few moments concern. There was no light to be seen, despite the "Fl 4sec 5M" shown on the chart. I could see a dark lump of land ashore that obscured the town lights behind it — and so misidentified this dark lump as the island. I had only just expressed my opinion when the real Isla Blanco loomed up a couple of hundred yards ahead, right on the bow. Plenty of time to alter course, but a good reason for my husband, Alan, to pour scorn on my ability as navigator.

Right: Skybird *at anchor in Playa Yaque, where there's good holding off a white sand beach*

Below: Splendid isolation: Americano Bay's distinctive rock arch and remains of the eponymous 'Americano's' holiday home



Local fishing boats were also unlit. Over the throb of our own engine we would hear the faint roar of an outboard motor travelling at speed. The sound would swell until the shadow of a fast moving pirogue appeared out of the gloom. The boat might pass close enough for the crew to give us a friendly wave in the loom of our own nav-lights before they disappeared into the dark. I was not at all sorry to see daylight.

It was something of a miserable passage to Isla Blanquilla, another of Venezuela's offshore islands. Unwisely we had selected the day that, by forecast, had the lightest wind of the whole week. In the event, it started with no wind at all and stayed that way until nearly midday. Even then there was scarcely enough to fill the sails and we had to motor-sail nearly the whole way. To make matters worse a most uncomfortable cross sea was running. At least the autopilot was working perfectly.

The only highlight of the passage was when we caught a tuna. The fridge was already filled to bursting with produce from Porlamar and was far too full to take the whole fish. But I didn't want to leave it out under the full force of the sun. So I cleaned it, beheaded it and cut it into steaks, despite the ever-present lumpy and irregular seas. Much blood, mess and guts were involved.

By late afternoon some low-level cloud rolled in to reduce visibility just as we approached land. The wind increased to a respectable 18 knots or so, just as it was time to lower the mainsail.

We anchored in Playa Caranton, Blanquilla and stayed there for over a week. What splendid isolation! What brilliant turquoise waters! What a contrast to the overcrowded and noisy anchorages farther east! Once or twice a day we would jump into the quiet waters for a swim or a snorkel. No need to launch the dinghy; abundant coral reefs were within easy swimming distance as *Skybird* lay at anchor. Some of the coral seemed to be in better condition than any we had yet seen this year, though much was also brown. Tiny fish were plentiful but there were very few large ones.

On our first full day there, the Guarda Costa called round and tied up alongside. Five of them all came on board, leaving their very powerful looking rifle on their own boat. They were polite and friendly and we conversed with our minimal Spanish and their minimal English. They checked our ship's papers and produced a long list of safety equipment: EPIRB, GPS, fire extinguishers, etcetera; enquiring after each item and ticking it off on their list. Their presence on Blanquilla gives an added sense of security since every visiting fishing boat will also be checked over in the same way, and would never be allowed a return fishing permit should any problem arise.

Sometimes we had the anchorage to ourselves; another yacht came in for a couple of nights. Some nights, fishermen with their pirogues would anchor nearby. They would give us a friendly wave and would chatter and shout from boat to boat, while they ate their evening meal at dusk or when they departed before dawn.

After a week or so we moved on to Playa Yaque where the holding is better, though it can roll in a northerly swell. This is a white sand beach featuring two palm trees. For us the place held happy memories: last year a host of parrots had assembled over the two palm trees on Christmas morning, screaming their very unconventional Christmas carol as they feasted on some delicacy that they had discovered amongst the fronds. We had also been delighted by our collection of shells and edible "reef salad" ashore and the festive season was crowned by an invitation by the Guarda Costa to their New Year party back at their base.

From Playa Yaque we could also visit Americano Bay. This is an idyllic spot with a tiny circular bay and a picture-perfect sandy beach. There are giant fossils of shells and a rock arch. Above stands the ruin of an isolated holiday home built by an early flying enthusiast. (An American, of course, hence the name of the bay.) It might be possible to anchor a small yacht in the bay, but for us the chance of a wind shift in such an enclosed spot wouldn't justify the risk. Instead, we took a picnic and a bottle of wine up by dinghy. Swarms of tiny black flies threatened to spoil our perfect lunch, but we picked a breezy spot to sit down and made the best of it. A gigantic bird (I think he was a Crested Cara-Cara) came to inspect any crumbs that we might have left, while we went for a swim in the clear waters.

We stayed in Blanquilla for a few more "green-flash" sunsets, a few more dawns breaking over the palm trees and an excellent view of the total eclipse of the moon. Eventually we tore ourselves away from what has always been our favourite island of all.

Next month: A last cruise in Venezuela before heading back to the UK.

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Cruising the Northeast Coast of Venezuela: Is It Safe?

by Elaine Conklin

When my husband Chuck and I left Porlamar, Isla Margarita, we were planning on sailing directly to Trinidad, but....

We checked out on Monday, July 16th, but hey, this is Venezuela and, surprise, neither the diesel man nor the water man came on Monday as promised. On Tuesday they did come and we prepared to leave the next morning.

July 18th: We departed Isla de Margarita at 6:30AM in calm seas and light winds. The plan was to head toward the Venezuelan mainland, run eastward along the coast overnight and head offshore when daylight came. We hoped to skirt any *banditos* who may be lurking in the shadows. In addition, Trinidad was supposed to get a weather system late Thursday evening and we wanted to get there before it hit. Note: This is the accepted route to take according to other cruisers who have recently made this trip. There had not been any problems reported in the last couple of years that we were aware of, but that could be because very few boats run close to the coast anymore.

We left feeling confident that we would make our destination as planned. But again someone else had a different idea. We had checked the autopilot out before we left Porlamar and it worked fine, but two hours out it would work for five minutes then quit, which meant we would have to hand-steer the 130 miles to Trinidad.

We were also going against the current which was only allowing us to make two and a half to three knots. We were only making two miles per hour! We realized we would be unable to get to Trinidad before Christmas at that rate, so we decided our only option was to head for the coast, get out of the current and anchor in the closest port, Carúpano, for the night. Once we were out of the current at 7:00PM our speed picked up to five knots. We knew we would not be able to anchor before the sun set, but with the help of radar, GPS, and the Captain Voyager computer program we were able to anchor safely at 8:00PM. So our motto is never to leave home without these items!

July 19th: This was the day we expected to be in Trinidad but we were a long way away and it would be tiring to hand-steer that far in one leg. We decided to hop along the coast and moved east five miles to Puerto Santos. We had been in this harbor years ago and were happy to see the water was no longer a red color from the fish factory that is there. A couple of local boys came by to see if we needed anything and they were able to obtain ice for us. The name of their boat was *La Buena Fe*.

July 20th: We decided to stay here an additional day to rest up for the next leg of our trip, which would be an overnight. The sardines were running so many fishing boats came and went during the day and night.



The Península de Paria's north coast is a spectacular cruising ground and a useful harbor-hopping route for boats heading east against wind and current. But a spate of crimes against yachts were reported here from 2001 until last year. Is it safe to go back?



The crew of La Buena Fe *('Good Faith'), who greeted us at Puerto Santo*

July 21st: This morning we moved ten miles east up the coast to Ensenada Medina, a beautiful bay with a gorgeous beach covered with grass-thatched huts. Many locals were taking advantage of the sun and surf. A couple of guys tried to get us some ice but were unsuccessful. We gave them enough money to buy a lunch anyway for their effort as they looked like they had not eaten in a while. At 5:00PM we pulled the anchor and headed east. By staying within a mile of the coastline we could make five to six knots and so we moved slowly, taking 30-minute turns hand-steering.

July 22nd: Around midnight we rounded Cabo Tres Puntas, which was a little disconcerting because a group of fishermen was fishing off the point and from a distance it looked like a village on shore but our GPS and radar were telling us differently. When we got close enough we could tell they were fishing boats with very bright lights. We were very happy to see daylight come and at 8:30AM we put down the anchor in Punta Pargo, which is a dramatically beautiful bay surrounded by mountains with lush green forest. It has a lovely beach with a fishing village that can only be reached by the water. The water is clear and clean and we anchored in about 20 feet.

Immediately we were approached by two local fishermen, Luís and Carlos, who wanted to be helpful. They obtained some ice for us from one of the big fishing boats and some fresh fish for dinner. We gave them most of the Bolivars we had and they were supposed to bring some change. Of course we never saw the change, and in addition we had given them a bottle of rum and a bottle of Coke. They also offered to escort us around the next point and into Trinidad, in case of bandits, for a modest sum of US$5,000! We declined and they left. Other local boats came by, with guys asking for various things such as Coke, food, caps, T-shirts or something for a sore throat. Others wanted us to buy more fish. We gave out many candy bars, smiles, milk, cough medicine, etcetera. We had not planned to stop in these places, otherwise we would have come better prepared.

—Continued on next page

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—*Continued from previous page*

July 23rd: Chuck wanted to stay in Punta Pargo one more day to get rested up for the next leg of our journey. He also did not want to arrive in Trinidad on a Monday, thinking Customs and Immigration would be very busy after the weekend. So we rested and rested and read and rested and read. We had not seen our friend, Luis, again but late in the afternoon he came roaring into the harbor and had decided we needed to pay him more money for "protection". We told him we had no more *dinero* (money), which was basically true: we had about three dollars worth of Bolivars left. Chuck gave him another bottle of rum and he seemed happy with that. But around midnight, in the rain, he decided he needed another bottle of rum in payment for his "protection" services and came to our boat. We declined to give him anything else and Chuck had to get very stern with him. He finally left and we spent a bit of an uneasy night but without further incident. We nicknamed Luis "The Shyster".

July 24th: At 6:30AM we pulled the anchor to start our last leg to Trinidad. We both were a bit anxious about this part of the trip but by 9:00AM we had rounded Punta Mejillones and turned toward Trinidad without incident. With each mile we covered, we relaxed more and realized that all those prayers that we had sent up the last few days had been answered.

We arrived in Trinidad under our own power and with good memories of the northern coast of Venezuela's Península de Paria. It helps if you can speak a little Spanish. You do not have to be fluent, but a few words make everyone more relaxed. If you just try a few words, the Venezuelans will go out of their way to help you.

In each of the anchorages many of the local boats stopped by to welcome us and to see if we needed a mechanic, water, gasoline or diesel. A couple of times we were able to buy ice. Many of the people we met said that they do not understand why we cruisers are not coming anymore. We explained about the attacks on the yachties. They told us that the police and Guarda Costa have jailed many of the perpetrators and the coast is safe now.



Above: Beautiful Ensenada Medina is popular with local holiday-makers

Below: The fishing village at Punta Pargo (Snapper Point) is set in a forest-encircled bay. Parrots and monkeys are often seen in the trees, and on the point there are small sea-caves to explore



Some may say we were crazy to stop in these places but sometimes circumstances dictate your agenda. Maybe we were just lucky that nothing adverse happened, but we encountered only friendly people and saw probably for our last time the beautiful northeastern coast of Venezuela. Our adventure turned out to be a positive one. It is unfortunate that a few people make it unsafe, or perceived unsafe, to travel to certain areas in our world.

So, should you now travel the northern coast of the Península de Paria? Our research of reported documented incidents in the area we traveled revealed the following as obtained from www.noonsite.com.

- January 2001: a boat called *Dutch Concrete* was attacked off the north coast of Venezuela. (*A report received by* Compass *gives the date as December 27th, 2000, anchored at Puerto Santos.*)
- March 31, 2001 S/V *Lorna* was attacked off the north coast of Venezuela. (*A report received by* Compass *gives the date as March 20th, 2001, at sea near Cabo San Francisco.)*
- January 10, 2003 a Spanish sailboat was attacked off of Cabo Tres Puntas. (*A report received by* Compass *gives the date as January 8th, 2003.)*
- In 2004, S/V *Chouans* was attacked in or near Ensenada Medina.
- February 28, 2004, S/V *Myriad* was boarded in Punta Pargo.
- The www.safetyandsecuritynet.com reported a demand for money from a boat four miles off the Península de Paria near Carúpano in July of 2006.

So should you travel the northeastern coast of Venezuela? Only you can make that decision.

Chuck and Elaine Conklin have cruised the Eastern Caribbean for 13 years aboard S/V Mañana.

Editor's note: Although no incident reports have been recently received from the Península de Paria, according to Melodye Pompa of the Caribbean Safety & Security Net after five months with no reports of violent criminal activity against yachts in Venezuela, two were recorded earlier this year, one at Isla Coche (just a few miles south of Isla Margarita) and one at Mochima on the mainland (82 miles west of Carúpano).

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The Beast had to come out. It had shorted out three months ago, and the Captain was in a foul mood from all those cold showers ever since. Now we were in the boatyard, and a new water heater was THE big project — there always seems to be at least one BIG project.

Being a practical type of person, I measured the space over the engine where the old Beast sat and checked the Port Supply catalogue for possible candidates for its replacement. Yes, a nice white six-gallon model would just slide over the engine and plop right into the space with room to spare.

But the Captain was not having a midget. Nothing would do but the original 11-gallon model. As you can see in the photo, there is no room to spare there. So with no small amount of trepidation, we called our boat's manufacturer, Catalina, for advice on how to get the new water heater in.



REMOVING THE BEAST

by Betty Fries



Victory! At last the beast is extracted — without destroying the yacht after all — and relegated to the trash can

We were greatly encouraged when the technician asked us for the boat's hull number! He assured us that the water heater was a retrofit item and could be replaced through the rear access door in the starboard stern cabin if you took the door's surrounding frame off. What a relief, even though there were at least 27 hoses and 75 wires going through that particular space behind the water heater. But on a closer look, it became obvious that there was no way that the heater could be brought out toward the stern. The Tech must have overlooked the fact that, unlike the new Catalinas whose hulls stay straight from the beam to the stern, the 1989 Catalina 42 narrows toward the stern. Even with all the hoses and wires removed, the side-to-side space was less then the 16 inches required.

So now we're in the boatyard, and Desi the diesel mechanic is gazing mournfully at our problem. In his opinion, the engine will have to come out to get the new water heater in in one piece — unless we want to cut another access panel in the cabin wall. Two unhappy options, but, since we have a rule about making new holes in the boat, the engine would have to come out.

Without much enthusiasm, we started the process of disconnecting the engine. Deja vu: the same process we'd gone through the year before when the BIG project was installing new motor mounts. We hadn't gotten very far before we took a break. As I sat there staring absently at the water heater, my eyes wandered toward the access panel in the port stern cabin — the one right in front of the heater — the one opening into the space between the engine and the heater — the big one. Not daring to hope, I grabbed a tape measure. The access was enough for the heater, the surround did not have to be removed, and only a few boat parts had to come out to make enough room for the heater to go through and back into the space!

With some blood, a good deal of sweat, and some extra help, the Beast was out and in the trash can with its various rusty pieces hanging off and the Captain grinning.

A little too soon.

Of course the floor and stringers supporting the water heater were rotten and had to be replaced. New tapered stringers and floor were cut and epoxied to retard water damage. The original floor was about an inch lower than the floor in back of it where the fresh water pump sat, so the new floor was brought up to match that height, and everything was screwed into place. Very nice.

With some blood, a good deal of sweat, and a couple of good whacks, the new heater was nudged into the space, but it refused to slide back into its hole. With the new floor raised ONE INCH, the heater was now too high to fit under the hips formed by the two back cabins! Protesting, the heater comes out, the floor and stringers come up and are whittled down. Everything goes back in — although not quite as pristinely as the first time. After all, it's hot in Trinidad and patience does run short after awhile.

The really good news is that the Captain's temper has improved with the return of hot showers.

We were in one of our favorite anchorages, you know the picture: lee side of one of the smaller islands, clear water, good holding, almost total swell protection, nice sandy beach, nearly deserted of course, and not a building in sight. That's why I'm not telling you lot where it is, because next time we go there we will have to share it with more than the one other yacht that was anchored 150 meters away.

This was the setting for an outbreak of serial stupidity, but the story also has a message which should be taken seriously by many of you.

After several days on the boat a shopping expedition was necessary, so we launched the dinghy and, suffering as I do from congenital idleness, it was decided not to go through the rigmarole of fitting the outboard. Instead, my wife, Jeanette, who likes rowing, did the honours. Thus, duly equipped with our backpack we arrived on the beach, hauled up the dinghy and set off for the village about a mile and a half away.

DUMB AND GETTING DUMBER

by Christopher Price

The shopping facilities had improved since our last visit and inevitably we ended up with more provisions than originally intended. As always, the heavier, larger items went into the backpack which was soon full, but we still had four well-laden carrier bags. Clearly, ice-cold refreshment was needed and, after the beer disappeared rapidly, we decided to stay for lunch at a new restaurant overlooking the fishing harbour. A glorious day, beautiful scenery, nice food — it's what cruising is all about, isn't it? Obviously, it could only go downhill from here — and it did.

First, we had to hump all the shopping a mile and a half back to the beach (taxis don't exist on this island). Initially, I wore the backpack and carried a bag or two, but the handles were cutting Jeanette's hands more than mine, so she took over the pack and I carried the rest. On arrival at the beach we found that the tradewind had increased significantly, but as our yacht, *Hummingbird*, was anchored directly downwind from the beach, it could only help.

We stowed some of the bags, the dinghy was launched, Jeanette climbed into the bow, the rest of the shopping was loaded and I pushed off, jumped in and grabbed the oars. Halfway to the *Hummingbird* we got out of the lee of the beach and I stopped rowing as the wind carried us along at a surprising speed. All that was needed to keep us on course was the odd touch of the oars. I then turned the dinghy round so that we would come up to the ship with our bow into the wind. As we approached the port quarter I shipped the oars and stood up to grab a stanchion.

Think about fumbling with a wet squeeze-buckle as the panic sets in

Unfortunately. I completely underestimated our speed through the water and was pulled out of the dinghy, which then carried on downwind at a speed undiminished by my involuntary disembarkation. *Hummingbird's* freeboard is at least five feet and there was no way in which I could easily haul myself up onto the deck. Therefore, shouting to Jeanette to throw the dinghy anchor over the side, I subsided gently into the water and swam round to *Hummingbird's* stern steps.

Unfortunately, as Jeanette deployed the brand-new dinghy anchor she failed to notice that I had failed to make the bitter end of its line fast to the dinghy. The anchor and rode went over the side and Jeanette carried on towards the horizon.

At this point we learned the wisdom of our original decision to buy an Avon dinghy. Furnished as they are with large solid rubber rowlocks they are the only inflatable dinghies that can take long wooden oars. Therefore, they can be rowed hard against a strong wind or current, and this Jeanette proceeded to do. Ten minutes of very strenuous effort and she and the shopping were aboard.

So why have I gone public about my ineptitude and stupidity? It is because, at sometime during the night I lay awake thinking about the afternoon's brief and farcical performance. What if I had been wearing the heavy backpack instead of Jeanette? Worse still, what if I had — as intended — managed to stop the speeding dinghy and Jeanette had lost her balance and gone over the side? Getting rid of a 15- to 20-pound backpack when thrown unexpectedly into a choppy sea may not be quite as easy as you imagine.

And yet, many of us seem incapable of setting off ashore without having a backpack strapped on. Larger ones often have additional chest or waist straps; just think about fumbling with a wet squeeze-buckle as the panic sets in!

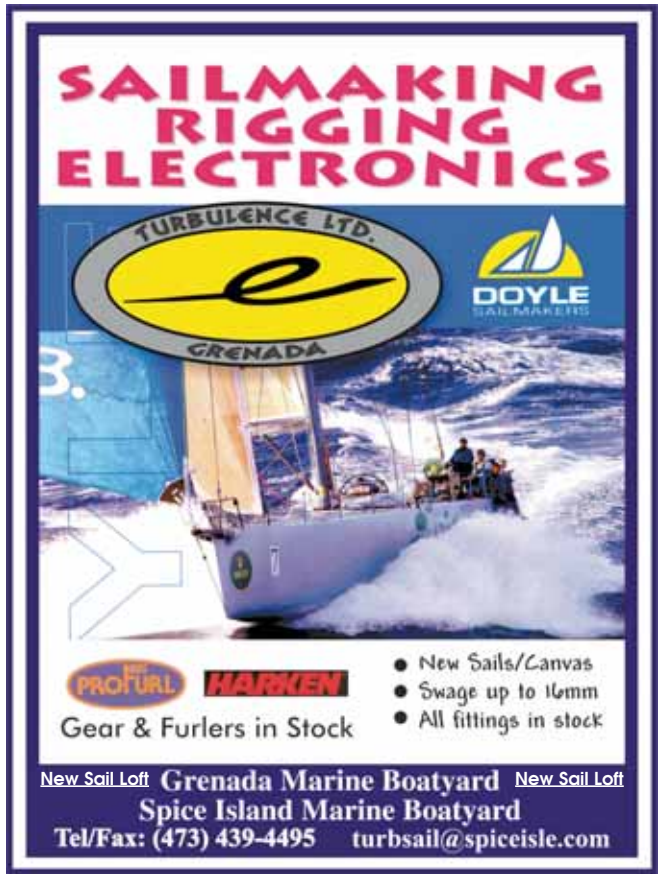
"Ah!" you say, "My backpack is usually either empty, as we go ashore, or only half full as we come back. It holds a lot of air and will help to keep me afloat." Sure, face down as you struggle to get it off.

Backpacks are a convenient and comfortable way of carrying heavy shopping. But if you fall in while carrying one it could, quite simply, kill you. Common sense and logic dictate that when climbing into or out of your dinghy, or riding in it, you should never, ever wear a backpack.

Some boring (?) people go further and say that in all such circumstances, we should all wear life-jackets, or vests. Come on, we're beyond that sort of nonsense — we're cruisers, aren't we?

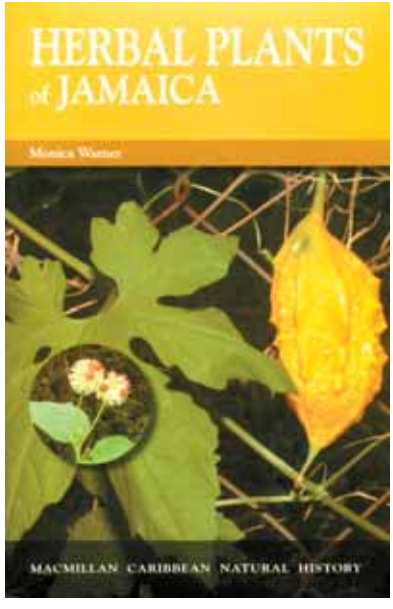
Christopher and Jeanette Price spend nine months a year living on their 50-foot catamaran, Hummingbird. *They cruise the Caribbean between the Virgin Islands and Grenada but occasionally break out of their rut to make side trips to places such as Jamaica and Cuba.*





I MAN A DE BUSH DOCTOR

Herbal Plants of Jamaica (Bush Teas, Bush Baths, Flavourings and Spices) *by Monica Warner. Macmillan Caribbean. ©2007. Paperback, 184 pages, color photos throughout. ISBN 978-1-4050-6566-5. £8.25.*



Okay, let's get that over with first — of course Cannabis sativa is included. It's described on pages 42 and 43 in the section on "major herbs". But in addition to a rational description of ganja and its various uses, legal and illegal, this book is an excellent introduction to approximately 70 species of useful plants that grow wild and cultivated in Jamaica. Many of the species described also grow throughout the Antilles.

Jamaican society has retained a particularly vibrant tradition of folk herbal medicine. The cache of native plants and practices used by the island's original Amerindian population was, over the centuries, successively enriched by contributions from the peoples of Africa, Europe and Asia. Today the custom of "bush medicine" not only endures, it is gaining scientific recognition. Many natural remedies, tonics, cosmetics and flavorings that were for generations the only available choices for most rural Jamaicans are now becoming sought-after alternatives to their commercial chemical kin.

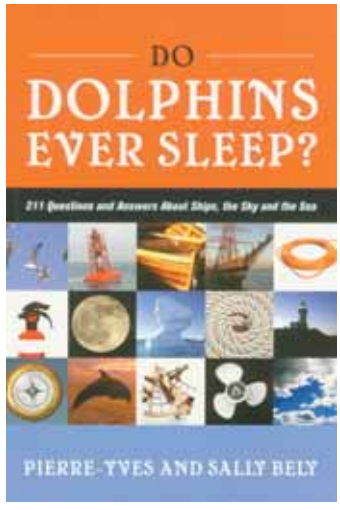
Author Monica Warner was born and educated in Jamaica where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Zoology at the University of the West Indies. Her thorough and clear descriptions, accompanied by two or three high-quality color photographs of each plant, allow easy identification of species which are known by different names on other islands.

Herbal Plants of Jamaica is a welcome addition to the array of field guides already on your Caribbean bookshelf.

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

Well, What Do You Know?

Do Dolphins Ever Sleep? 211 Questions and Answers About Ships, the Sky and the Sea*, by Pierre-Yves and Sally Bely. Sheridan House © 2007. Paperback, 312 pages, color illustrations throughout. ISBN 1-57409-240-0. US$19.95.*



Here's just the book to pick up when you've finally put away the repair manuals and want to flick through something a little more mentally engaging than the latest "beach novel". Or when you want to settle an argument. It will also make you the source of all knowledge — or at least provide a conversation starter or two — at the next happy hour or potluck.

Why does a dinghy slide backward as we try to climb out? Why are cold seas green and warm seas blue? Why do barnacles attach themselves to boat hulls? Why don't the strands of a rope untwist? Whether these are things you've been pondering for years or have never thought about before, *Do Dolphins Ever Sleep?* has the answers to these questions and more.

French engineer and sailor Pierre-Yves Bely writes in the book's preface that the idea for this book came to him while sailing across the Atlantic: "…on a long passage, our curiosity has all the time in the world to develop. In my case, curiosity prompted questions about the sea, the sky, the subtleties of marine meteorology, the voyages of ancient navigators, the huge freighters passing by, the hydro- and aerodynamics of sailing ships, all that and so many other things I wanted to know more about.

"But after consulting my small, onboard library and talking with crewmembers and others in port, the answers I was able to come up with were vague and unsatisfying…."

Bely embarked on a voyage of discovery, consulting with scientists, engineers, historians and sailing professionals, a research project that resulted in this readable reference book. It was first published in French, by Editions Gerfaut, and the Sheridan House edition has been fluently translated by Pierre-Yves' wife, Sally, an American.

So the next time you wonder why soap works poorly in sea water, or why thunderstorms rarely occur over the open sea, the answer will be at your fingertips if you have a copy of this book on your shelf.

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I'm Luke, Chef de Cuisine and new manager of Whisper Cove Marina (www.whispercovemarina.com) in Clarke's Court Bay on the south coast of Grenada.

It's with a great pleasure that I offer you this recipe from my French/English cookbook written especially for people living on boats.

I hope you enjoy — and come to visit me.

Octopus Cassolette

1.5 kg octopus (3 pounds)
3 Tablespoons olive oil
4 onions, peeled and finely chopped
3 carrots, peeled and sliced
2 Tablespoons flour
3 tomatoes, chopped
black peppercorns or cayenne to taste
1 Tablespoon coriander seeds
1/2 litre white wine (2 Cups)
1/2 litre water (2 Cups)
300g potatoes, cubed (2/3 pound)
3 garlic cloves
parsley
Preparation time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 1 hour

Octopus is a muscular mass without bone (except for its beak). At its first cooking, use no water or fat, and do not boil it — it would become irremediably rubbery. It's improved by freezing for 24 hours.

Cut octopus in 2cm (3/4 inch) cubes, put in colander to drain. Brown the well-drained cubes in a heavy frying pan without any water or fat, until a dark red color, but do not burn. Remove cubes from pan and reserve.

Add olive oil and onions to the pan and let simmer on slow heat until onions are translucent.

Add carrots and tomatoes, dust with the flour, and let simmer 3 minutes.

Add pepper, coriander, white wine and water. Bring to boil, stirring with a whisk to mix any possible lumps. Reduce heat, add cubes of octopus and potatoes and let simmer 25 minutes.

Sprinkle with finely chopped garlic and parsley, then serve.

Serves four.

"Bon appétit!"

SERVING AT SEA WITH SHIRLEY HALL

Breadfruit 'Oil Dong'

Breadfruit and coconut milk are the essential ingredients in Grenada's national dish, Oil Down, but here in Trini-land, where we omit the Spice Islanders' callaloo and salt meat from the recipe, we call it "oil dong".

Breadfruit is usually cooked before it gets very ripe. It will be firm, not soft, but not green either. When a breadfruit is ready for cooking — or as West Indians say, "full" — when you knock it with your knuckles it should sound hollow, like testing a melon. To keep a breadfruit from ripening, it can be covered in a bowl or bucket of water, but this will only save it for a few days. If you have the space in your freezer, just peel and freeze. When it is very ripe (soft), you can wrap it in foil and bake it in the oven.

To make coconut milk, grate the white flesh of a brown coconut using a cheese grater (the fine side will produce better results). Add one cup of warm water to the grated coconut, put in a bowl and squeeze with your hands. Put results in a fine muslin cloth, twist into a ball and squeeze as hard as you can. The first results are the thickest, called coconut cream. The second and third cup of water you add and squeeze results in coconut milk which is thinner.



Here's how to make Trinidad 'oil dong'.

1 Tablespoon soya oil
1 medium onion, chopped
3 cloves of garlic, minced
1 good-sized breadfruit, peeled and chunked
1 coconut, grated and milked
Salt and spice to taste
Sliced fish (optional)
Parsley and chadon bene to garnish

Heat oil in large pot; sauté onion and garlic until clear. Add breadfruit, coconut, salt and spice. Sliced fish could be steamed on top as it cooks. Cover and simmer over low heat until breadfruit is cooked. When breadfruit breaks with a spoon, it is done. Sprinkle with some chopped parsley and chardon bene and let stand five minutes before serving.

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Dear *Compass*,
In the July and August issues of *Compass* there were articles by Brad Glidden advising cruisers against running from hurricanes. He keeps spouting what was the conventional wisdom back before Hurricane Luis trashed, beached, or sank some 1,200 boats in St. Maarten. Which amounts to putting out your anchors, removing your sails, and retiring to the nearest shelter with insurance policy in hand until the storm passes.

A certain Norseman 40 catamaran was a case in point, having been capsized, dismasted, bows ripped off, a transom removed, and a walk-through hole opened in the port side by Hurricane Luis. The insurance payout was US$240,000 and it was sold for the US$5,000 salvage fee. The insurance companies responded with named storm exclusions, higher fees and deductibles, hurricane zone exclusions, and a lot of fine print.

Besides insurance, catamaran owners have several compelling reasons to run from hurricanes. For example, catamarans have been known to flip and even fly during hurricanes, with only a forestay and two sidestays they can easily be dismasted, their molded cabin windows are incredibly expensive, many have bimini tops that can't be removed, and most have too much windage to hold at anchor.

While you may intend to move your boat out of the hurricane zone every season, you may get caught short sometime and have to gut it out. I've been through four hurricanes: Luis (ran), Marilyn (held), Bertha (on the hard), and Lenny (ran). Depending on the winds expected, the aerodynamic properties of your boat, and whether or not you're feeling lucky, consider:

- Wrapping the jib sheets around the jib to prevent it from unfurling
- Raising the storm trysail to keep the bow downwind
- Securing the mainsail to the boom with dock lines
- Cutting the canvas off the bimini top if it can't otherwise be removed
- If you have a hardtop, angling it down, or cutting it off and lashing it to the foredeck net
- Deflating the dinghy, dropping it, and towing it well aft as a drogue
- Stuffing a small sailbag with whatever you would rather not have to search for if the boat is upside-down and half full of water

Currently there are a considerable number of boats inside "the zone" from Bequia to Grenada. It seems that there are a lot of cruisers who would rather avoid the overcrowding, rain and oil slicks that plague Chaguaramas, Trinidad, and don't want to face the piracy and dinghy theft in Venezuela. I plan on staying in Grenada for the season, unless a Tropical Storm or hurricane threatens. Then I intend to sail south of Grenada and drift downwind. The storm track, intensity and sea-state will determine if I move through the Boca into the Gulf of Paria. It's not as risky as one might think, considering the storm tracking information at hand and the nearness of Trinidad. It's a situation in which one can manage risk, rather than doing your best to secure your boat in a hurricane hole and then waiting helplessly as a storm bears down on you.

I was in Bequia when Hurricane Dean passed through and, as it kept on track for Martinique, I stayed and rode it out on the north side of Admiralty Bay. Had I been in Grenada as Ivan approached, I would have been working my way up the Orinoco River in Venezuela by the time it hit. I expect to get chased out of Grenada at least a couple of times before the season is over. To avoid being accused of dithering, diddling, or dawdling about, I'll hang a couple of hooks over the side. Maybe I'll catch a fish.

Karl on *Cochi*

Dear *Compass*,
As with many of the past "Destinations" articles in *Caribbean Compass*, I enjoyed reading Ralph Trout's article "Carriacou: The Back-In-Time Island" in the August 2007 issue. It is very comforting to know there are still a few places left in the Caribbean that have not catered to (i.e. succumbed to) the "improvements" that tourism often brings with it. I wish that more of the other islands I remember from the early '70s had gone the same route as Carriacou.

I first lived and taught school in Carriacou in 1974-75. My most recent visit back there was in 2002, when I also stayed in one of the cottages at Carriacou Dave's Bayaleau Resort mentioned in the article. Based on the author's experiences in Carriacou it appears that all the best of what I remember of that "old time" island is still there and thriving.

Other Caribbean islands could learn a lot from Carriacou's unique niche in the tourism market. It really is like visiting family instead of just "going on vacation" there. The islanders are continuing to prosper, as they see fit, while sharing what they have with the rest of the world. So many other islands have fouled their own nests, AND their cultures, as a result of that great lure of more tourists and their money. It's nice to know that the pursuit of happiness in Carriacou is not directly linked to the pursuit of money, AND that the people there are happy to share all that with the rest of us.

Thank you again *Caribbean Compass* for reminding me that some of "de island dem" continue to be such wonderful places. Keep up the good work; I look forward to more "Destinations".

Henry E. Tonnemacher
St. Croix, USVI

Dear *Compass*,
Congratulations to Keith Smith for his letter in the August *Compass* in defense of his former VHF radio "Funky Net". If that was half as hilarious as his letter, I am glad that I could not pick it up in Puerto La Cruz — I would have needed to wear a large, extra-absorbent Pamper.

Keith, you have to understand that there are people out there who do not appreciate what appears to be our and many others' mutual sense of humor. They consider the content of your net to be inappropriate and, heaven forbid, illegal, simply because you're rocking the boat, mate. These people are founding members of the GOCC who sit around for a couple of years mumbling to each other. Then, if they are still *compos mentis*, publish a thesis on their thoughts in the *Compass*. Should they graduate with top honors they are admitted into the inner sanctum of the BOFs Club. These same people use the VHF channels as they would a mobile (well, it's free!), talking about all the latest gossip and spreading malicious rumors for hours, day after day.

So, matey, get your programme back on the air having first purchased a submersible hand-held radio — you never know when these BOFs will board and keel-haul you, but at least you will be able to send a distress call. A final advisory: perhaps you should consider changing the name of your boat. I had a name plate made for my former property back home; it read Llamedos Cottage. The neighbours were puzzled and asked what it meant. I explained that it was Welsh and to translate into English read the first word backwards!

The Caribbean is supposed to be a fun place, so let's have it in the face: idle banter, rock and roll, "Good morning, Porlamar!" — nothing wrong with that for 15 minutes a week. If certain cruisers do not like that, let them switch channels and churn out irresponsible gossip, which according to them is totally illegal, but they persist in doing so seven days a week. So, matey, in an effort to re-activate you into doing what you enjoy I suggest you blast out "Start Me Up" or "My Generation" and remember the magic word Llamedos. Keep fighting.

Peter Phillips
Venezuela

Dear *Compass*,
In August, as we were preparing to leave St. Thomas, USVI, for our annual trip to Trinidad's boatyards, we were approached by two individuals who wanted to hitchhike down island. This was our initial experience with boating hitchhikers. The first was a young lady from South Africa who fit Nigel Harrison's description of the majority of hitchhikers to a T (August *Compass*). She wanted to go to Dominica to experience the island for several weeks. She had her passport, an airline ticket out of Dominica and had taken sailing lessons. Over a two-week period prior to departure, we met to talk several times. We asked her to bring anything special she wanted to eat and drink and set a time for her to board with her belongings on August 20th. She was a delightful young lady, eager to help and willing to follow the boat's rules. My husband, Larry, and I were glad to have her aboard and share a slice of our boating life.

The second hitchhiker was a man who approached us on Sunday, August 19. He wanted to go to the Dutch island of St. Maarten. We were not going to St. Maarten, but he was willing to make his way there from St. Kitts which would be our first stop.

—Continued on next page

—Continued from previous page

He called himself a "citizen of the world" and did not have a passport or any other common type of identification. He did have a letter from the Swedish government verifying his citizenship, but lacked the other types of ID which would allow him to use commercial transportation, so he was looking for a private boat to hitchhike on. Naturally, a hundred important questions leaped to mind. Having been boarded by various Coast Guard vessels over the last six years, we could not imagine how we would be able to explain his presence onboard. Also, would St. Kitts allow him in, since he could not show evidence of his intention/ability to leave that country? If not, we would be stuck with him on the boat!

He said he would phone St. Kitts and talk with Immigration there and give us a call. On Monday, he called to say he had spoken to officials in St. Kitts who assured him that, as a Swedish citizen, he did not need a visa, and they thought there would not be any problem in the instance of a Coast Guard boarding. Not being willing to take his word for something this important, I suggested he have the official in St. Kitts fax a letter on their letterhead attesting to what they had told him. We would meet him that afternoon and make a decision then. He did not come to the meeting, nor did we hear from him again. We sailed the next morning.

Boaters, like every other special-interest group, are made up of all types of people in all types of circumstances. It's obviously important that everyone involved make their expectations clear from the beginning to avoid the type of situation described by Angelika Gruener in June's *Compass*. After all, we are inviting strangers into our home. We will have responsibility for them and their well-being on the open seas — which can be a dangerous place. We need to be careful, but it doesn't mean we can't be generous if the circumstances are right.

Betty Fries
S/V Forever Young

Dear *Compass*,

Does John Smith's strobe light lecture (September *CC* Forum) mean that the strobe should be discarded as an emergency signal and that all life rafts and lifejackets that have them should switch to something else? That if you see a strobe low to the water you should assume it is a long line or John Smith catching some sleep and stand clear, not a person in the water needing rescue? That the various anchor lights I have used for over two decades at anchor, during which my yacht has never been hit at night by a vessel underway, are not good enough? That a singlehander has special rights while violating Rule 5? That the nautical world should standardize to what Venezuelan fishermen do?

But what I have against strobe lights in the anchorage is this: they significantly decrease the quality of the night.

Hutch
S/Y Ambia

Dear *Compass*,

Some things I read in *Caribbean Compass* beggar belief and the September issue took the biscuit.

First, Aubrey Millard (in an article) tells us that he set off on a 1,200-mile passage from Antigua to Cuba, with two crew, and with no plans for harbours of refuge on the way; no compass light; a 20-year-old pilot book and computerized charts only for St. Croix. He then does a first-time night entry into Christiansted Harbor when the pilot book says "it is imperative that the entrance be made in daylight". Unsurprisingly he gets no further than Jamaica which he enters with no charts or pilot book. The Canadian Navy, whom he says trained him, must be an awesome fleet.

Next up was John Smith in the letters page. He singlehands and admits he can't keep a proper watch, which is illegal. He compounds that, using flowery and appealing language, by saying he uses a low-level strobe light at night to make people think he is a local fishing boat. Also illegal. If anybody knows engineless John, please tell him the other ways to charge batteries.

It would be easy to think that these two sailors are stupid but the quality of their writing suggests they are rather intelligent, they just don't give a damn about others. I don't have a problem with people killing themselves, I used to BASE jump. I do have a serious problem with people who put other people's lives at risk, whether crew or other seafarers. May I politely suggest that they, and others like them, stop sailing and take up something else. Knitting perhaps.

Mike Cobbe
S/Y Kelly's Eye

Dear Mike,

While we appreciate your concern for the safety of everyone at sea, it's only fair to point out for readers who did not see Aubrey's article that the reason he made the night entry into Christiansted was to get a crewmember who'd been badly burned in a galley accident to medical attention as quickly as possible.

CC

Dear *Compass*,

Over the years, we have read of — and ourselves experienced — dozens of instances of theft of dinghies and outboard motors in this region. It is an unfortunate fact of life that, even in our slice of paradise, theft does occur, and this is an inescapable reality.

Very often, we, and other victims of such incidents, have had the stolen items returned to us by individuals who allegedly came across them, either "drifting out at sea", or elsewhere, and, in order to secure return of the equipment, we have had to pay exorbitant sums of so-called "salvage money". Most recently, we were charged EC$800 for the return of an 11-foot dinghy, hours after its steel security cable was cut from our dock. Those unfortunate enough to have grounded their vessels have paid considerably more, often running into the many thousands of dollars.

Equally, over the years, we have on many instances come across local mariners and fishermen in distress — on one occasion, reported in your newspaper, a sinking fishing boat whose crew had been drifting in appalling conditions for nearly 36 hours. One of our yachts recovered them, altered its itinerary and towed them safely to Bequia — but did not demand one cent of "salvage". The act was conducted in the spirit of good seamanship and in observation of that time-honoured practice of mariners assisting other mariners in distress. This is a code of conduct to which one would hope any decent human being would adhere, not just at sea but ashore as well — to help those in difficulties. After all, if you passed someone dying in the street, would you ignore them until they had paid you money?

The truth is that these so-called salvage payments are little more than ransom money that encourage theft — because it pays, and pays damned well. No-one minds paying for reasonable actual expenses incurred in recovering stolen property, but the sad truth is that it now makes one wonder whether, the next time that a local boat is seen in distress, we should be advising our crews to ignore them until salvage money has been paid.

Would someone therefore kindly advise how much should we be charging?

Narendra Sethia, Director
Barefoot Yacht Charters & Marine Centre
St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Dear Compass Readers,

Do you want to make the Caribbean an even better cruising destination?

If you do, please read on.

We are Koen Altena and Erwin Herbert, and as fourth year marketing students from Holland we are doing research on the (lower) Caribbean yachting industry. Our main focus point is the yachting service sector, meaning yacht storage and maintenance/repair.

Our goal is to find out what people seek in a good yachting service area. We are for example trying to find out if people who are live-aboards have different demands than short-term cruisers. With the results we can help the local governments, marinas and boatyards to improve their different services. In order to get a clear image of the demands of today's yachters we are holding a survey and we would like you to participate in it.

Helping us, and with that the entire yachting sector, is very easy and there might be something in it for you, too — we are going to give away a cruising guide to Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao offered to us by Budget Marine. So if you want to have a chance to win an ABC cruising guide and are willing to make the Caribbean an even better cruising destination, go to www.caribbeanyachting.info and follow the instructions.

Koen Altena and Erwin Herbert
Holland

Dear* Compass *Readers,

We want to hear from YOU!

Please include your name, boat name or address, and a way we can contact you if clarification is required.

We do not publish individual consumer complaints or individual regatta results complaints. (Kudos are okay!) We do not publish anonymous letters; however, your name may be withheld in print at your request.

Letters may be edited for length, clarity and fair play.

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SAIL	
47 Stevens, 1981	$ 210,000
44 Beneteau Oceanis , 1994	$ 185,000
44 CSY walkover, 1978	$ 79,000
42 Hunter Passage, 1995	$ 159,000
42 Catalina MKII, 1996	$ 121,900
40 Passport Sloop, 1981	$ 75,000
38 Morgan/Catalina, 1996	$ 119,000
37 C&C, 1985	$ 48,600
36 Frers, 1985	$ 48,500
36 Cabo Rico Ketch, 1976	$ 28,000
34 Tartan, 1988	$ 49,000
POWER	
55 Cheoy Lee LRC, 1980	$ 329,000
50 Marine Trader, 1980	$ 149,000
45 Silverton MY, 2003	$ 415,000
42 Hershine Trawler	$ 40,000
42 Cruisers Express, 1999	$ 249,000
41 Sea Ray Express, 2001	$ 245,000
37 Fountaine Pajot Power Cat	$ 445,000
27 Grady White, 1997	$ 40,000

YACHT BROKERAGE

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YEAR	TYPE	PRICE
1992	29' Dix Caribbea Sloop ***(REDUCED!!!)***	US$ 18,000
1999	30' Henderson 30 (Racing Yacht)	US$ 60,000
1988	30' Jeanneau Sunlight 30	US$ 40,000
1989	35' Hallberg - Rassy	US$ 124,000
1986	36' Lavranos Tosca	US$ 53,000
1989	36' Reinke Super 10 Steel Sloop	US$ 45,000
1977	37' Gin Fizz	EU$ 42,500
1968	39' Cheoy Lee Off Shore 40	US$ 95,000
1978	40' Atlantic 40	US$ 70,000
1985	40' Offshore 40 ***(REDUCED!!!)***	US$ 149,000
1987	42' Ta Chiao Mermaid 42	US$ 80,000
1999	43' Wauquiez Pilot Saloon	EU$ 247,500
1999	44' Finngulf	US$ 240,000
1992	45' Fortuna	US$ 150,000
1991	50' Celestial Pilothouse	US$ 268,000
1987	51' Beneteau Idylle 15.5	US$ 160,000
1995	53' Super Maramu ***(REDUCED!!!)***	US$ 329,000
1982	53' Hatteras Luxury Cruiser	US$ 254,000
1994	55' Oyster 55	US$ 776,000
1973	56' Visch Motor Yacht	US$ 150,000
MULTIHULLS		
1993	36.5' Dean Catamaran ***(REDUCED!!!)***	US$ 99,500
2002	37' Fountaine Pajot	US$ 325,000
1998	47' Gancel Catamaran	US$ 168,000
1980	54' Norman Cross Trimaran	US$ 295,000
1995	55' Custom Built Trimaran	US$ 350,000
1991	55' Lagoon Catamaran	US$ 559,000
1990	72' Alumarine (Lougebin) Catamaran	US$ 1,190,000

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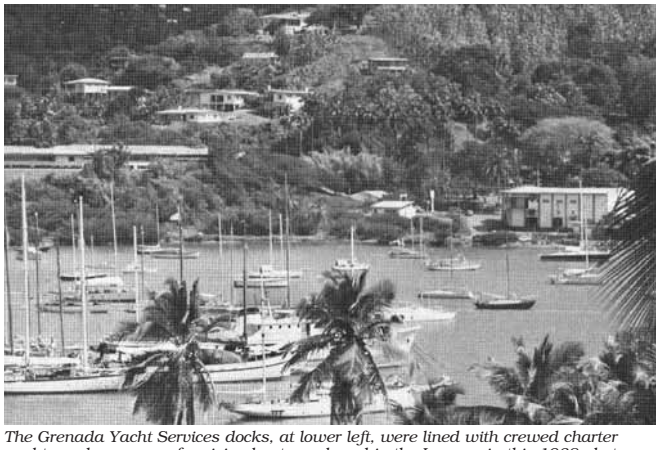
St. George's Lagoon, 1971... and 2007

by William Pringle

The first time I saw my "perfect boat", *Clover* — a 60-foot English cutter launched in 1937 — she was at the end of the long dock at Grenada Yacht Services (GYS) in St. George's Lagoon, Grenada. It was 1971. GYS in the early 1970s, before Grenada's independence from Great Britain, was the yachting hub of the southern Caribbean, the South Pole in the Windwards to Antigua's North Pole in English Harbour in the Leewards.

At GYS, the rich and the not-so-rich alike found space at its 1,000-foot dock, drank strong rum at the Patio Bar, hauled out on either the 200-ton Synchro Lift or the smaller screw lift, and had repairs done at the competent wood, metal and electronics departments that were in-house. It was there that such luminaries as Michael Forshaw, a harbor pilot for over 40 years, oversaw all haulouts and performed many surveys; Bernard Byer, who later became Commander of Grenada's Coast Guard, performed electronic magic; and Emil, a German ex-pat with a Beaver mechanical fabricator, could turn a new piston for your diesel.

It was at the Patio Bar that one could hear author/sailor Tristan Jones, who'd just bought *Bingo*, arguing with author/sailor Squeaky Street (of *Iolaire*, of course) about the merits/demerits of the yawl rig; Ken McKenzie of the legendary ocean-racing



YACHTING MAGAZINE

The Grenada Yacht Services docks, at lower left, were lined with crewed charter yachts and an array of cruising boats anchored in the Lagoon, in this 1968 photo (courtesy The Fletcher Collection)

Herreshoff ketch *Ticonderoga* challenging Malcolm Horsley of the 1961-built racing phenomenon *Stormvogel* and Bob Carson of *Gitana IV*, which held the Fastnet Race record for 19 years, to a round-the-island race the next day (*Stormvogel* won); and "Professor" Jim Shearston, captain of the 1920's-vintage schooner *Shearwater* chatting with Dave Dana, the yacht designer/builder/guru.

Or on a certain occasion, one could see a well-known yachtsman/psychologist/writer, living ashore in those days, a kindly host to one and all, sporting a "beaut" — a lovely black eye. We had taken an old chart of the Grenadines and drawn a grid on it. Any land or reef was marked in red. It had a wind rose, "wind-change" and "spinnaker" cards, and little toy boats as markers. You moved in turn, and the yacht race game we invented was as competitive as smash-face martial arts (you could blanket someone's wind, causing them to lose their turn), as "Doctor Demento" could attest after the skipper of the schooner *Aafje*, standing six-foot-seven, took strenuous exception to one of his all-too-clever moves.

All members of the boating world could be found. The Baltic Trader boys and girls from the *Jens Juhl*, *Familien* and *Topaz*; the crew of ill-fated *Santa Cruz*, an Amazon River schooner, which later sank with only one survivor; the men on the beautiful local schooners such as the Carriacou-built *Yankee Girl*. You might meet a certain John Smith, a preppie young American, or Frenchman Bernard Moitessier on *Joshua*, or British-born Paul Johnson on *Venus*, and get differing opinions from each on the weather, the sea-keeping virtues of the double-ender, and, indeed, virtues of other natures as well.

—Continued on next page

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50' Beneteau 50, Cutter, 4 cab/4 hd	'02	$219K	36' Beneteau M362, 2 Cab/1hd, Lowest on Market	'00	$69K
46' Morgan 461 CC, 3 cab/2 hd	'82	$87K	35' Beneteau Moorings 351, 2 cab/1 hd	'94	$50K
46'Formosa Peterson Cutter, 2 cab/2 hd	'79	$119K	35' Beneteau 351 Oceanis, 2 cab/1 hd	'95	$59K
46' Hunter 460, 3 cab/2 hd 2 avail.from	'00	$139K	35' O'Day, 2 cab/1 hd, Great Condition	'87	$42K
45'Jeanneau Sun Ody. 3 cab/3 hd	'99	$149K	33' Beneteau 331, Sloop, 2 cab/1 hd	'01	$59K
45'Jeanneau Sun Ody. 2-3 cab/2 hd	'01	$158K	32' Northshore Vancouver 32, Sloop/Cutter, 1 cab/1 hd	'87	$125K
45' Bombay Explorer, 2 cab/2 hd World Cruiser	'78	$59K	**MULTIHULLS**		
45' Hunter Marine Passage CC, 2 cab/2 hd	'98	$149K	82' Dufour Nautitech 8cab/8hd, Major refit	'95	$895K
44' Beneteau 44CC, 2 cab/2 hd, In Great Shape	'94	$189K	46' Fountaine Pajot Bahia 4 cab/4 hd, 2 avail from...	'01	$370K
44' CSY 44CC, Cutter 2 cab/2 hd, Reduced - Motivated	'77	$ 85K	42' Privilege 42, 4 cab/4 hd	'00	$276K
44' CSY Walkover CC, 2 cab/2 hd, Great Condition	'79	$165K	40'Fountaine Pajot Lavezzi, Owner's Version	'03	$295K
43' Jeanneau Sun Od. 3-4 cab/2 hd, 2 avail. from	'01	$175K	38' Lagoon 4 cab/2 hd, Meticulous owners	'01	$239K
42' Dufour Gibsea, 3 cab/2 hd, Well Maintained	'01	$125K	38' Lagoon 4 cab/2 hd, Meticulous owners	'01	$229K
42' Hunter Deck Salon, 2 cab/2 hd, New Listing	'03	$199K			
42' Tayana V42 CC, 2 cab/2 hd, Loaded	'85	$130K	**POWER**		
41' Morgan 416, Ketch, CC, 2 cab/2 hd	'83	$78K	58' Hatteras Yachtfish, 3 cab/3 hd, AC, Genset, 450HP	'77	$367K
40' Dufour, Sloop, 3cab/1hd Performance racer/cruiser	'05	$249K	56' Horizon Motor yacht, Immaculate Condition!	'01	$690K
40' Island Packet, Cutter, 2 cab/2 hd, Well Maintained	'98	$205K	42' Hi-Star Trawler, 2 cab/2 hd	'88	$199K
40' Beneteau M405, 3 cab/2 hd, Loaded	'95	$119K	42' Nova Marine Trawler, Sundeck trawler	'98	$249K
40' Bayfield, 2 cab/1 hd, Ketch, Motivated Sellers	'84	$99K	42' Hershine 42, Motor yacht 4 cab/4 head	'89	$99K
40' Catalina 400, 2cab/2hd, Great Condition	'95	$109K	36' Heritage East 36 2 cab/2 hd, 2 avail from	'01	$187K
40' Jeanneau Sun Ody. 3cab/2hd, Well Priced	'00	$112K	35' Maxum SCR 3500, 2 cab/1 head	'01	$129K
40' Jeanneau Sun Ody. 3 cab/2 hd	'99	$109K	27' Eastern 27 Down East, 1 cab	'06	$99K

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CALENDAR

OCTOBER

3	Thanksgiving Day. Public holiday in St. Lucia
6 - 7	Pete Sheals Match Racing, BVI. Royal British Virgin Islands Yacht Club (RBVIYC), tel (284) 494-3286, fax (284) 494-6117, www.rbviyc.net
7 - 13	40th Bonaire International Sailing Regatta. www.infobonaire.com
8	Columbus Day. Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI
10	War of 1868 Anniversary. Public holiday in Cuba
13	Willy T Virgins Cup Race, BVI. RBVIYC
13	5th YSATT Marine Trades Show, Chaguaramas, Trinidad. (868) 634-4938, *ysatt@tstt.net.tt*
14	Chinese Arrival Dragon Boat Festival – Kayak Centre, Chaguaramas, Trinidad. maggi1902@wow.net
15	USVI Hurricane Thanksgiving Day (Public holiday in USVI if no hurricanes occurred)
20 - 22	Trafalgar Race, BVI. RBVIYC
21	Antillean Day. Public holiday in Netherlands Antilles
21	St. Ursula's Day. Public holiday in BVI
21	Blue Food Festival (local cuisine), Bloody Bay, Tobago
25	Thanksgiving Day. Public holiday in Grenada; boat races
26	FULL MOON
26 - 28	11th Foxy's Cat Fight multihull regatta, Jost Van Dyke. West End Yacht Club (WEYC), Tortola, tel (284) 495 1002, fax (284) 495-4184, mvh@surfbvi.com, www.weyc.net
27	Independence Day. Public holiday in St. Vincent & the Grenadines
28	Independence Day Race double-enders, Bequia Sailing Club
30	Independence Day. Public holiday in Antigua
31 - Nov. 3	Guadeloupe Fishing Club Tournament. www.guadeloupefishingclub.com

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
2 - 4	7th Triskell Cup, Guadeloupe. www.triskellcup.com
3	Independence Day. Public holiday in Dominica
3 - 4	Women's Caribbean One-Design Keelboat Championship, St. Maarten. St. Maarten Yacht Club/Lagoon Sailboat Rentals, (599)-543-6469, director@bigboatseries.com
3 - 4	IC24 Nations Cup , Tortola. RBVIYC
4	Community Service Day. Public holiday in Dominica
4	18th West Marine Caribbean 1500 sets sail from Hampton, VA to Tortola. www.carib1500.com
5 - 11	Triangle Emeraude Rally, Guadeloupe/Dominica. triangle-emeraude
6	Constitution Day. Public holiday in Dominican Republic
8 - 11	Carriacou Sailing Series. Trinidad & Tobago Sailing Assn. (TTSA), tel (868) 634-4210/4519, fax (868) 634-4376, info@ttsailing.org, www.ttsailing.org
8 - 16	Heineken Aruba Catamaran Regatta. www.arubaregatta.com
9 - 11	St. Thomas Radiology Women's Regatta & Tennis Tournament, St. Thomas, USVI. St. Thomas Yacht Club, (340) 775-6320, styc@vipowernet.net, www.styc.net
10 - 12	North Sound and Back Race, BVI. RBVIYC
11	Armistice Day. Public holiday in French West Indies and BVI
11	St. Maarten Day. Public holiday in St. Maarten
12	Veterans' Day. Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI
12 - 16	Golden Rock Regatta, St. Maarten/Statia. www.goldenrockregatta.com
16	Statia Day. Public holiday in Statia
17	BVI Schools Regatta, RBVIYC
19	Discovery Day. Public holiday in Puerto Rico
22	US Thanksgiving Day. Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI
23 - 25	Course de L'Alliance Regatta, St. Maarten/St. Barths/Anguilla. www.coursedelalliance.com
24	FULL MOON
24	Round Tortola Race. RBVIYC
25	ARC 2007 sets sail from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria to St. Lucia. www.worldcruising.com
30	Independence Day. Public holiday in Barbados
TBA	One Man, One Woman, One Boat Race, Martinique. figueres.jm@wanadoo.fr
TBA	9th Annual Wahoo Tournament, Havana, Cuba. CNIH

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

Read in Next Month's *Compass*:

Boatbuilding on Guyana's Pomeroon River
Martinique: Ile des Fleurs
Is it Healthier to be a Grotty Yachtie?
... and more!

—Continued from previous page

You could find, anchored in a quiet spot, Frank and Elsie on *Elsie*; they had just completed a circumnavigation. So what? They were in their late seventies, having only learned to sail after Frank retired, and he sailed *Elsie* around twice again, after Elsie passed away.

Or you could see Grenada's Premier, Sir Eric Gairy, whispering quietly in the ear of the convicted American gangster known as Clancy; a well-known drug smuggler conversing with an LSD-manufacturer-on-the-lam; an assignation made between two supposedly-committed-to-someone-elses for activities later that night when clandestine footsteps might patter down the dock or the subtle creak of muffled oars be heard.

The community of Belmont, where the Lagoon is located, a traditionally tough neighborhood, blossomed with employment. The best were among the best in the world, and worked on yachts from Malta to New Zealand: great names such as Baby Face, Mix-Up, Small Change, Speedy, Stumpy, Panabread and Mousie. Music sprang from the hillside night and day, reggae, extemporaneous drumming, the night air seeming to throb by itself, a mysterious, jungly place, sticky with insects and frogs and who-knew-what. A time when the Mongoose Gang, Gairy's henchmen, were on the prowl and people disappeared. Down the road was the Bamboo Bar, run by the inscrutable Daddy Bull — a sometime Mongoose Gang member by reputation, and purveyor of "tomatoes", the local bush rum — and the site of many a jump-up.

Grenada Yacht Services was the unlikely stepchild of the Sunflower Corporation of southern California, and its managing director, Bill Dunn, had had success in marina management at Marina Del Rey. Suffice it to say, Grenada, with its climatic challenges — teredo worm damage, dry rot, wet or windy conditions — and political volatility were as unlike Los Angeles as could be imagined. Yet his mission, naturally, was to make as much money for the parent corporation as possible, and he must have succeeded. In this he was aided by the natural landscape. The lagoon is in an old volcanic crater, well tucked in on the lee side of the island, and adjacent to the main town of St. George's. Reefs protect its exposed west side, making the lagoon waters always tranquil, even in storm conditions (although not in hurricanes). And the docks were crowded with the finest crewed charter yachts, sometimes rafted two and three deep on the inner sides, and sardined together stern-to on the outer sides — the money must have poured in. The chandlery, Bristol Fashion, was packed with customers, and the Patio Bar was jammed on Friday and Saturday nights, when they had live music. It almost drowned out the sound of the argument between Jones and Street!

The whole complex was on dubious land reclaimed from the Lagoon and even the somewhat run-down aspect of the premises contributed to the charm; without too much squeezing of the eyes, you were in Herman Wouk's *Don't Stop The Carnival*. There seemed to be a party on some boat every night, or a barbecue on the dock, or a band at the Patio Bar. But make no mistake: it was all business during the day. Caulking irons rang from the Syncro Lift, sanders buzzed, and at any given time at least a dozen guys were aloft in their rigs all over the harbour. Lots of shouting, music or cricket blaring from scores of radios, while dinghies raced around for the sheer exuberance of being able to race around, it seemed. But one thing you soon learned: be sure to wear shoes on the dock.

August 1, 2007

I am awakened at 5:00AM by the sound of a pile-driver not more than a hundred feet away, doing what pile-drivers do. Looking out the window of St. John's Guest House on the Lagoon, I can see the dredges, the floating crane and the spoils barge. There is another crane lifting steel sections of the new harbour wall into place, to be driven down into the mucky bottom and then back-filled by one of four busy front-loaders. Lincoln Ross's scrap heap is history. So is the Bamboo Bar. There is no longer any trace of the old Grenada Yacht Services. Peter de Savary Ltd. have dredged the area around the old docks, filled along the western shoreline, and will be developing the old GYS site and a vast expanse around it as Port Louis Grenada — a mega-yacht destination and high-end residential complex.

Is this type of development right for Grenada? Let's hope that this is not just another get-rich-quick scheme that makes huge money for foreign developers and local politicians, and then leaves Grenada and Grenadians holding the bag up the road. Will the super-rich who presumably will be occupying the villas and mega-yachts have a big disconnect with the local people, culture and institutions? Or will this turn out to be the 21st-century reincarnation of "the good ole days" of the late 1960s and early 1970s, with high employment, good humour and great, memorable times for all? Only time will tell.

And what has happened to all those celebrated yachts of yore? Where have they gone? Soon, hopefully, they will have a place to go that again will be called "the Jewel of the Caribbean".

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—*Continued from page 23*

The following morning we headed to Petite Martinique for fuel, then on to Grenada, the southernmost of the Windward Islands and the last port before the long run to the Venezuelan mainland (the Spanish Main of pirate fame).

About six nautical miles from the northern coast of Grenada we passed Kick 'em Jenny, listed on our charts as an underwater volcano. There have been reports of boats losing buoyancy and even sinking while traveling over this three-mile stretch of ocean, and since we were fresh out of virgins to sacrifice, we took the cartographer's advice and skirted Jenny, all the while envisioning hellfire and brimstone engulfing us in a sea of boiling water. We didn't see any smoke or bubbles in the area, but the waves and wind did feel a little peculiar.

Grenada

The run south in the lee of Grenada was very smooth and we cruised at 3200 RPM (about 20 knots). We found overnight dockage in St. George's Lagoon at the Grenada Yacht Club. While talking with some people at the club we heard various tales of the pirates that we were likely to encounter on our trip to Venezuela. We decided to take our chances. After all, we were armed! I had my trusty pocket knife and Roy had his Leatherman multi-tool, which has a bottle opener and a corkscrew (just in case we needed to out-drink the pirates). And of course we had our flare gun, the weapon of choice in all the "cruisers beset by pirates" literature. We were ready to take on Johnny Depp and his scurvy band of brigands!

We crossed the lagoon to Port Louis Marina where we spent a couple of nights waiting for optimum weather conditions. After some minor boatkeeping and topping our tanks we began the long voyage home.

Grenada to Venezuela

The voyage from Grenada to Venezuela, about 130 nautical miles of open ocean with four- to six- foot seas, was uneventful. We didn't want to rely on our fuel gauge for the long trek back to Margarita, so we headed for the nearest reputed "pirate" port, Puerto Santos. We arrived in the early afternoon. As we motored into the bay, we saw a lot of fishing boats (undoubtedly these were disguised "pirate" boats).

We finally found the fuel dock. I'm using the term loosely here; it was actually a large rock with a gas pump on it with a beat-up old tire for a fender. Boats wanting fuel drop anchor about 50 yards out and float back to the rock where the fuel person hands them a pump handle and the boat owner fills his tank. Not knowing about the "anchor and float" procedure, I proceeded to make a complete fool of myself by motoring majestically across several anchor lines while waiting for my turn at the gas pump. A *piñero* (large open boat with an outboard) with about eight young "pirates" came to our aid. Two guys dove under our boat and un-fouled the lines.

After all this fun, we were informed that there was no more gas. "When will there be more?" we inquired. "*Mañana*" was the predictable answer. Meanwhile, the teen "pirates" were asking all sorts of questions about our boat — what horsepower on the engines, how fast it would go, etcetera. They were fascinated by our fish finder and GPS chart plotter, the latest model that looks a lot like a flat-screen TV. We invited several of



St. George's Lagoon, Grenada, where we prepared for the Spanish Main

the kids to come aboard for a closer look. Their uncle, who remained on the *piñero*, asked how much fuel we needed. When we told him we were headed for Margarita he offered to share his fuel with us and siphoned about 40 gallons into our tanks. We paid him 40,000 Bolivars, about US$10. We hope to meet these very nice "pirate" friends again in the future, as they come to Margarita often to buy avocados by the boatload to take back to the mainland.

All fueled up and ready to go, we headed west along the coast searching for a suitable overnight anchorage, not wanting to arrive at Margarita after dark. We motored up the coast about an hour. We managed to outrun a squall and finally dropped anchor in a cove that had some more "disguised pirate boats" and not much else. Our plans were to make do with a cold supper, take turns standing watch, and resume our journey at first light.

Shortly after we anchored we saw a disreputable-looking old man in a tiny dinghy rowing toward us, using only a board for a paddle. He introduced himself and offered any help we might need. We said we would like some cold beer. He said "No problem! How about some roasted chicken and vegetables to go with that?"

"Sí, por favor!" Roy and I said in unison. We gave him some money and he insisted on leaving his identification as security until he returned with the beer and dinner. The beer was ice cold, the chicken huge and delicious and there were vegetables and other goodies on the side. We enjoyed what was possibly the best meal of our trip while we watched a spectacular sunset. Our new friend even offered to watch our boat so we could get some much-needed sleep. He was the night watchman for the little fleet of "pirate" boats. Roy and I collectively have traveled over most of the world, and these were the nicest bunch of "pirates" we've ever met!

Next morning we upped anchor, fired up the 575 horses and headed home at a leisurely 16 knots. You can see Margarita from the mainland so no major navigation skills were involved. We found dock space at the marina by the Hilton Hotel, checked in with Customs and Immigration and were home before noon.

Visiting the other islands convinced us that we have the best deal in the Caribbean here on Margarita Island. Don't believe everything you read in the American press about Venezuela. Capitalism flourishes here — new construction everywhere, bank financing on new cars and houses, and all the other consumer goods people go into debt to own in America. And as far as we've discovered, there's no place else in the Caribbean where you can vacation or live as inexpensively as you can here — especially if you have US dollars or Euros to exchange for local currency.

Now that we have the boat, Roy can concentrate on playing with all the lovely ladies and I can do some serious sportfishing. My lady mentioned that the first pound of fish I catch will be one very expensive meal.

For more information on Margarita visit my website www.discovermargaritaisland.com where I have additional photos of our island trip. E-mail me at discovermargaritaisland@yahoo.com if you have specific questions.



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October

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