CARIBBEAN On-line
COMPASS
SEPTEMBER 2021 NO. 312
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

Mermaid of Carriacou 1968 - 2021

Story on page 19



BRUCE SMITH



Mermaid of Carriacou - Jan. 1968

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The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

SEPTEMBER 2021 • ISSUE 312



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B & J HARRIS

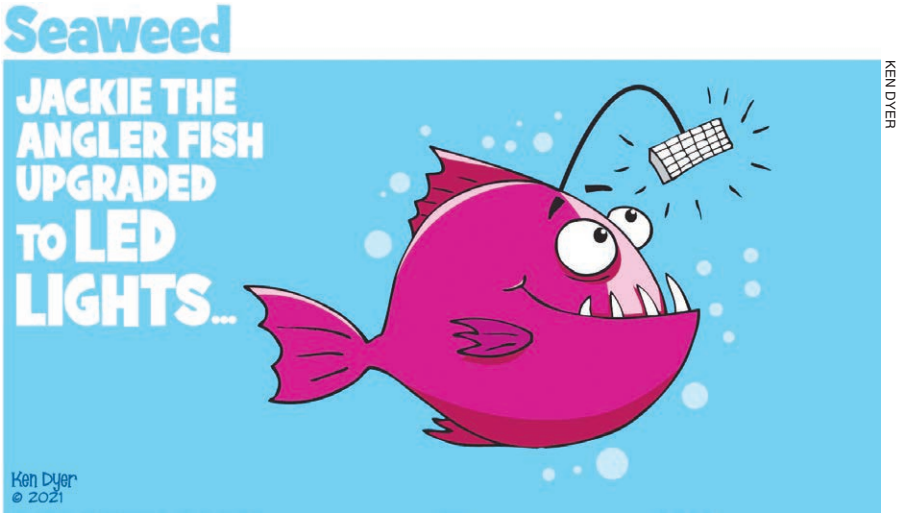
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KEN DYER

ON THE COVER:
A postcard depicting her 1968 launching and a painting of *Mermaid of Carriacou* done by Bruce Smith on the wall of Tanty Mavis's eatery in Carriacou. We bid goodbye to *Mermaid* on page 19.

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***COMPASS* COVERS THE CARIBBEAN!**
From Cuba to Trinidad, from Panama to Barbuda, we've got the news and views that sailors can use. We're the Caribbean's monthly look at sea and shore.



'Among the reasons why I enjoy Caribbean Compass and give it such high ratings every month: It is intelligently put together, easy to navigate, and easy to read — online and offline. So many from other lands are willingly and effectively contributing to Compass, one of the very few Caribbean publications that come out on a timely basis and with total regularity.'
— Maralyn Ballantyne, St. Vincent & the Grenadines

CARIBBEAN COMPASS

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Info & Updates

Regional system to strengthen maritime security
Safer seaports and wider maritime spaces in the Eastern Caribbean are


CHRIS DOYLE

Basseterre, St. Kitts. The Eastern Caribbean region is highly dependent on the maritime space for its economic survivability.

anticipated once the Regional and National Maritime Security Strategies currently being formulated by the Regional Security System (RSS) are implemented.

The strategy development is being funded by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the RSS, with technical support from the Organization of American States (OAS). It is intended to increase coordinated action at marine ports and within the wider maritime boundaries in RSS member states Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

According to RSS Executive Director Captain Errington Shurland, "The Eastern Caribbean region is highly dependent on the maritime space for its economic survivability. The maritime space is 128 times larger than the land space of the seven RSS Member States combined and forms part of the Blue Economy. In order to preserve the Blue Economy for generations to come we must develop coordinated maritime strategies to effectively harmonize activities and promote the sustainable use of that space."

The development of the Regional and National Maritime Security Strategies will also aid in planning and development within the maritime sector specifically, and the economic advancement of Organisation of Eastern Caribbean Ststes (OECS) member states and CARICOM. Beyond security, the territories will also benefit from improved awareness of activities occurring in their maritime domains, as well as more efficient mobilization and deployment of resources in response to various hazardous events and illicit activity. The recent La Soufrière eruption in St. Vincent is one example of resource mobilization and coordination at work.

The project is also assisting port managers with strategies to satisfy international standards at marine ports of entry, and increase information sharing and cooperation by identifying common areas for collaboration in the maritime space.

The individual national strategies and the RSS regional strategy are expected to be completed this month.

New rules

• THE BAHAMAS

Effective August 6th all fully vaccinated travelers wishing to enter The Bahamas will now also be required to obtain a Covid-19 test with a negative result, within five days of arrival in The Bahamas. This can be a Rapid Antigen Test or PCR.

There are no changes to the testing requirements for unvaccinated persons wishing to enter The Bahamas. All persons who are unvaccinated will still be required to obtain a PCR test taken within five days of arrival in The Bahamas.

All children between the ages of 2 and 11 wishing to enter The Bahamas will now be required to obtain a Covid-19 test (Rapid Antigen Test or PCR), with a negative result, within five days of arrival in The Bahamas.

Full details: https://www.bahamasmarinas.com/procedures-and-protocols

• THE FRENCH ISLANDS

The state of health emergency was declared on July 28th in the territories of Guadeloupe, St. Martin and St. Barths, to run until September 30th. It will allow for specific measures ranging from curfew to lockdown.

Fully vaccinated people age 12 and over arriving by yacht must have proof of PCR within 72 hours before departure.

Unvaccinated people arriving by yacht need to prove a compelling reason to visit (personal, family, health or professional order that cannot be postponed), plus show negative PCR or antigen testing as above, plus complete seven days isolation on arrival followed by testing. Days at sea can be taken into account in the isolation period.

—Continued on next page



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Also, any arrival in Martinique by sea must be declared to CROSS AG by email (antilles@mrccfr.eu) with the subject "Declaration of entry into Martinique - Vessel



CHRIS DOYLE

Any arrival in Martinique by sea must be declared to CROSS AG in advance.

(name)" and the following documents attached:

- The attached completed entry declaration, to be sent at least 24 hours before the scheduled arrival time,
- Any document justifying a compelling reason to visit,
- The negative result of a biological virological screening examination for each passenger, carried out less than 72 hours before departure.

Visit www.martinique.gouv.fr/ for more information.

• SURINAME/FRENCH GUIANA

According to Noonsite, Suriname now only permits vaccinated travelers. However, David Matelicani of Marina Saint Laurent du Maroni in French Guiana told Noonsite, "Crews arriving in French Guiana from Brazil, South Africa, Cape Verde or any other destination where the time spent at sea is greater than a week are free to step off their yacht from day one."

• TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Sharon Rose James of Members Only Maxi Taxi Service reports:

For cruisers wanting to come to Trinidad & Tobago, the mandatory TTTravel Pass is now available for arrival by sea. Please note the TTTravel Pass is now a mandatory requirement for entry via sea or air. This pass is part of a five-step process to enter Trinidad & Tobago.

Our borders are open and we look forward to welcoming you back to Trinidad & Tobago, with all new protocols being observed.

The link for the TTTravel Pass is on our website, as is the New Protocols for Entry to Trinidad & Tobago document to be followed for entry into Trinidad.

Visit:
http://membersonlymaxitaxi.com/new-protocols-for-entry-into-trinidad-tobago-via-sea

• COSTA RICA

Yachts can now enter Costa Rica, but only at the following marinas: Golfito, Los Sueños, Pez Vela, Banana Bar and Papagayo. Inbound yachts must dock in authorized marinas and register in advance with an agent to handle the arrival protocols. Typically the agent will require at least eight days advance notice of arrival to handle the paperwork with the agencies.

The Costa Rican Government is not requiring coronavirus tests as a requirement to enter the country. Those entering by sea who have not made stops elsewhere are not required to undergo quarantine, provided that they have been at sea for over 14 days.

Complete the online Health Pass (https://salud.go.cr/) for all crewmembers prior to departure.

All crew must have medical insurance with coverage for medical expenses in cases of becoming ill with Covid-19 in Costa Rica; this can be international or purchased in Costa Rica.

Information confirmed by Marina Papagayo.

Any questions about insurance can be directed to seguros.marinas@ict.go.cr.
See www.visitcostarica.com for full details.

• AND MORE

The information above was correct to the best of our knowledge as this issue of *Compass* goes to press, but things change rapidly so contact resources given for updates.

For more yacht entry rules and updates visit Noonsite www.noonsite.com.

CARICOM eyes Draft Joint Tourism Policy

At the 42nd Regular Meeting of CARICOM Heads of Government, held virtually in July, heads of government, recognizing the need to re-open economies while balancing the health and economic livelihood of community nationals, agreed that new protocols for health, safety, visitor management and sanitization measures were of utmost importance in encouraging the resuscitation of the tourism sector.

The heads of government received the first report on a Draft Joint Tourism Policy for CARICOM: Covid-19 Emergency Plan for the period Q3 2021 to Q4 2022, prepared by the Interim Tourism Working Group which they established earlier this year.

They endorsed the recommendations of the group with respect to building the Covid-19 health safety risk resilience and enhancing CARICOM destination capacity among others.

The heads of government agreed to consider the use of a "vaccination passport" for vaccinated persons traveling by air and sea, supported by a digital vaccination database, possibly based on the Barbados model in the first instance.

—*Continued on next page*

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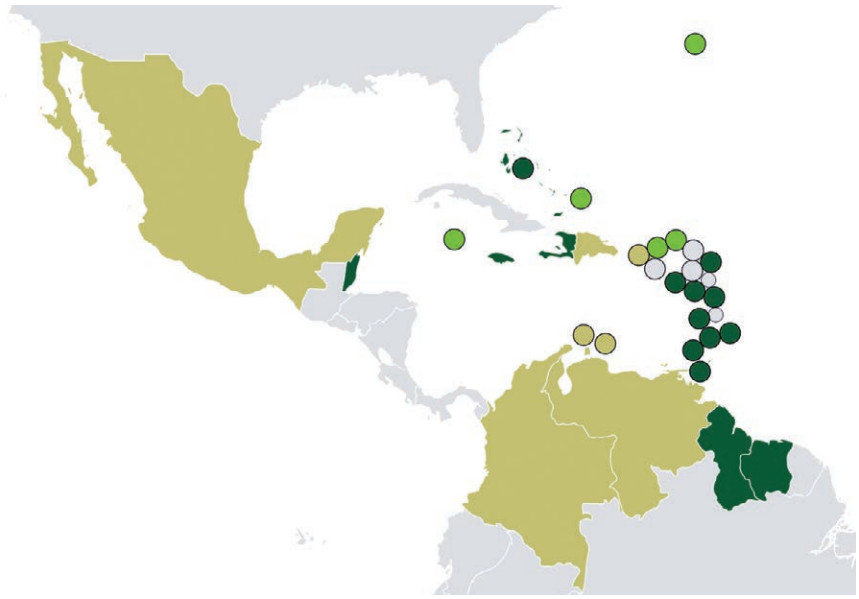
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—Continued from previous page

They also agreed to consider proposals to create a regional travel bubble for a pilot period of six months, taking account of previous lessons learnt.



CARICOM

CARICOM member states are dark green, associate states are light green, and observers are in olive.

The Caribbean Community is an intergovernmental organization of 15 member states throughout the Caribbean having primary objectives to promote economic integration and cooperation among its members, to ensure that the benefits of integration are equitably shared, and to coordinate foreign policy.

Visit https://caricom.org for more information.

Historic shipwreck found in Antigua

Maurice Belgrave found the remarkably well-preserved remains of a 250-year-old naval vessel in Antigua during a routine job cleaning an anchor chain. He told BBC reporter Gemma Handy, "Whenever I'm down there, I run my hands through the mud. I saw the lumbers and realised it was the skeleton of a real big boat… I feel delighted that something so significant was rediscovered by me as an African."

The presence of the 40-metre (130-foot) wooden ship in Tank Bay at the entrance to Nelson's Dockyard was confirmed in June by a team of visiting archaeologists. Lack of funds hindered efforts to professionally scour the identified spot until recently, when the French and Martinique governments, as well as the US-based Richard Lounsbery Foundation, paid for a visit by a group of international experts.

The mud which kept the wreck concealed just feet below the surface, traversed by hundreds of yachts a year, is credited with keeping it intact, offering archaeologists a veritable time capsule to explore.

Local historians believe the vessel to be the 1762 *Beaumont*, a French merchant ship later bought by a private individual, renamed the *Lyon* and used in the



DIEPPE MUSEUM

Historians believe the wreck to be the 1762 Beaumont, a heavily armed French merchant ship

American Revolutionary War. The *Beaumont* was built by the French East India Company, an imperial commercial enterprise founded in 1664 to compete with English and Dutch trading firms in what is today east Asia.

Read the full story at www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-57878969

Cruisers' site-ings

Heading south from North America's East Coast? Check out this SSCA webinar: "Weather for Heading South from the North East USA," presented by Chris Parker of the Marine Weather Center. A simple lesson on weather charts is included.

Watch the webinar at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToCG7xj-B5U



BUSINESS BRIEFS

St. Maarten Marine Trades seek more gov't support

St. Maarten is potentially missing out on millions of dollars in revenue from the yacht industry, according to St. Maarten Marine Trades Association (SMMTA) president Christopher Marshall in a report in *The Daily Herald*.

A survey in 2012 found that the sector generated more than US$300 million per year and represented 15 percent of St. Maarten's gross domestic product. SMMTA is convinced that the yachting sector in St. Maarten can grow much more.

"Despite the global coronavirus pandemic, the international yachting industry has grown over the past year and is projected to continue this trend at a rate of 5.2 per cent," he told the newspaper.

Due to the government's quick action in the face of the lockdown in the spring of 2020, St. Maarten was able to have a successful 2020-2021 yachting season, said Marshall. The SMMTA board worked hard to put a Covid-19 protocol in place, to make the entry rules clear for yachts. Marshall reported, "We worked closely with the Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport, Telecommunication, and Maritime Affairs, creating a task force for the yachting industry with participation of the police, Coast Guard, Immigration, Collective Prevention Services, and the Tourist Office. This cooperation went really well."

There are government officials who see the benefits of the marine industry and are in favor of putting new rules in place, Marshall added. "This public-private sector cooperation was hugely successful and enabled St. Maarten's marine industry to welcome a significant number of yachting clients this past season."

Although there is change happening, as is evidenced from the successful protocol, Marshall emphasized that "we need to go a lot deeper and a lot faster to capture a significant market…

"It would be fair to say that over the course of a season, from November to May, the combined value of the large and small yachts spending time here could easily be over US$5 billion. Nevertheless, our sector is not facilitated by the government at the level and pace that we would like to see as a provider of economic growth and opportunities for the local labor market."

Islands as far south as Grenada are embracing their marine sector, Marshall noted. "The governments of Antigua and St. Kitts have officials that are dedicated to the yachting industry, and they have put laws and rules in place that promote investments in this sector. Yachting is considered an export industry; you are selling goods and services to people that will not be staying on the island. Several islands have changed their laws to facilitate this industry, but in St. Maarten we have not put forth a similar effort.

"We have come a long way, but there is much farther to go. Swift and significant action is needed to capture this market that could be one of the key economic drivers of our economy, not only by bringing in sufficient spending, but also by creating the need for highly-skilled employment and the capacity to train the St. Maarten population to learn those skills.

"Our cooperation with numerous agencies in the government last year was a powerful and successful start. It is imperative that we continue together to address remaining issues and secure St. Maarten's place as the yachting hub in the Caribbean."

Read the full story at www.thedailyherald.sx/islands/smmta-eyes-more-government-support-in-taking-yachting-industry-to-next-level.

Cruisers welcomed at Budget Marine Trinidad

Smiles emerged behind the masks when store manager Risa Hall welcomed cruisers Hank and Annette of *SV Moon Shadow*, who sailed in from Suriname, presenting them with a Budget Marine gift hamper. The return of international sailors is good from a sales point of view, but it is also much more than that.

From its beginning, 25 years ago, Budget Marine Trinidad has been known for its positive, friendly buzz, with people meeting and sharing their experiences and expressing their boating needs. The ongoing exchange of information from all over the world has added immensely to the knowledge of the staff, regarding products and their practical application. This vital stimulus has been sorely missed while borders have been closed.



Cruisers receive warm welcome at Budget Marine Trinidad

So now it is time to catch up with the changing needs of current sailors. New and returning customers are encouraged to inform the staff about the specifics of what they require, either in person or online, via Budget Marine Trinidad's easy-to-use WhatsApp customer service (868) 280-0815 and its recently expanded quotation and ordering platform at www.budgetmarine.com.

For more information on Budget Marine see ad on page 2.

Sevenstar's Caribbean sailing schedules

Annet Bos reports: Sevenstar Yacht Transport is the world's leading provider of lift-on, lift-off yacht transportation. Our global spread of destinations provides access to the world's premier ports and cruising grounds. In addition to the schedules below, we can offer a customized travel itinerary or other sailing routes.



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Departing from Southampton, UK, and La Rochelle, France, between October 20th and November 10th, bound for Palm Beach, Florida; St. Thomas, USVI; St. John's, Antigua; and Le Marin, Martinique.

Departing from Tivat, Montenegro, and Genoa, Italy, between October 20th and November 10th, bound for Palma de Mallorca, Spain; Le Marin, Martinique; St. Thomas, USVI; and Palm Beach, Florida.

Departing from Newport, Rhode Island, between October 25th and November 15th, bound for Freeport, Bahamas, and St. Thomas, USVI.

Departing from Monfalcone, Italy; Genoa, Italy; and Palma de Mallorca, Spain, between November 20th and December 5th, bound for St. John's, Antigua; St. Thomas, USVI; and Palm Beach, Florida.

Departing from Southampton, UK, and La Rochelle, France, between December 20th and January 10th, bound for Palm Beach, Florida, and St. Thomas, USVI.

Departing from Palm Beach, Florida, between April 5th and April 25th, bound for St. Thomas, USVI; St. John's, Antigua; and Le Marin, Martinique.

• CARIBBEAN TO EUROPE

Departing from St. Thomas, USVI, between March 1st and March 15th, bound for Le Marin, Martinique, and Lorient, France.

Departing from St. Thomas, USVI, between March 5th and March 25th, and from St. John's, Antigua, and Le Marin, Martinique, between April 5th and April 25th, bound for Palma de Mallorca, Spain; Genoa, Italy; and Fethiye, Turkey.*

Departing from St. Thomas, USVI; St. John's, Antigua; and Le Marin, Martinique, between April 5th and April 25th, bound for Southampton, UK; Ijmuiden, the Netherlands; Palma de Mallorca, Spain; Genoa, Italy; and Tivat, Montenegro.*

Departing from St. Thomas, USVI, and St. John's, Antigua,* between May 5th and May 25th, bound for Palma de Mallorca, Spain; Genoa, Italy; and Fethiye, Turkey.*

Departing from St. John's, Antigua,* and St. Thomas, USVI, between May 5th and May 25th; from Freeport, Bahamas, between May 9th and May 29th; and from Newport, Rhode Island, between May 15th and June 5th, bound for Southampton, UK, and Ijmuiden, the Netherlands.

Departing from Fort de France, Martinique, and St. Thomas, USVI, between May 25th and June 10th, bound for Southampton, UK,* and Lorient, France.

For more information visit www.sevenstar-yacht-transport.com and see ad on page 5.

Islands 44 TF paint innovation

Islands 44 TF is an advanced, tin-free, self-polishing, dual-biocide-enhanced antifouling coating suitable for multi-season use in fresh, brackish, and salt waters. It offers a slime-resistant yacht finish with reduced VOC emissions and a low copper leach rate in a high-performance antifouling that is compatible with virtually every solvent-based bottom paint. Islands 44 TF is the only antifoulant paint that can directly overcoat tin-based antifoulant paints, also making it suitable for a signal coat or primer for other antifouling over tin-based paints.

Islands 44 TF is produced by Sea Hawk Paints, which is part of the AkzoNobel group.

Visit www.seahawkpaints.com for more information on Sea Hawk paints.

For more information on other AkzoNobel products see ad on page 39.

Budget Marine Bonaire staff anniversary

Budget Marine's 20-year staff member Thea Winklaar joined Budget Marine in Bonaire only two months after the store opened. This week, Thea celebrates 20 years of serving Budget Marine Bonaire customers!

Budget Marine's Robbie Ferron says, "The personal approach to customers and colleagues in Bonaire by Thea Winklaar is special. It is warm and welcoming and never dominating. Thank you for your contribution to Budget Marine, Thea!"

Visit www.facebook.com/BudgetMarineBonaire for more information on Budget Marine Bonaire.



New marina grocery store for Tortola

OM Holdings has announced that a new grocery story is expected to open early next year at Wickham's Cay II in Road Town, Tortola, BVI.

—Continued on next page

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The company's existing storefront, OneMart, is the second-largest food market in the British Virgin Islands.

Called "The Store," the new outlet will occupy 6,000 square feet and will carry every grocery product available at OneMart, plus general merchandise that mariners and yacht crews may need. The Store will also offer a full line of freshly baked goods, coffee, and freshly made sandwiches.

The Store will be located at the entrance of Wickham's Cay II, within a five-minute walk of the largest charter yacht marina in the Caribbean, The Moorings, and BVI Yacht Charters Group.

Visit https://omholdingsinc.com for more information.

Budget Marine at TTYC closes

Budget Marine Management announces with regret that our store situated at the Trinidad & Tobago Yacht Club (TTYC) has closed. The last day of operation was August 6th. Given the impact of Covid-19, among other factors, it was decided to focus the company's energy and resources on the main Chaguaramas store.

During Budget Marine TTYC's five years of operation, the cooperation of TTYC management, the support by its members, and the added dimension these gave to our chandlery service were much appreciated. It is sincerely hoped that the good relationships built up this way will continue into the future. Our Budget Marine team will make every effort to maintain a responsive and efficient service to our former TTYC customers, if not always in person, then via social media and our online catalog ordering service.

For more information about other Budget Marine stores see ad on page 2.

Generators for hurricane season

The time you could need your generator most is in the event of a hurricane. The following are some tips from Parts & Power for purchasing generators.

Diesel is the preferred fuel for a standby or prime power generator for the following reasons: fuel consumption is significantly lower with a diesel generator than with petrol or gas; you have greater torque with a diesel generator, which means that it will start larger loads than the equivalent petrol or gas; diesel is safer than petrol or gas — it will not ignite easily; diesel is the first fuel that is brought into a disaster area (LPG is the last); and diesel is less volatile than petrol and so stores better.

If you do own a petrol or gasoline generator, it is important to drain the fuel out of the fuel system each time you use it. Failing to do that may cause the fuel to evaporate and leave a varnish gum behind, restricting the fuel system when you may need it most.

Parts & Power, located in Tortola, BVI, maintains a staff of fully qualified engineers and they are available for service seven days a week. You can call the Service Hotlines at (284) 442-1588/440-3186.

If you would like further information on any of Parts & Power's product range, spare parts, service support, and Caribbean dealer network, please contact them at info@partsandpower.com or (284) 494-2830.

For more information on Parts & Power visit www.partsandpower.com and see ad on page 6.

Peters & May's active US-Caribbean service

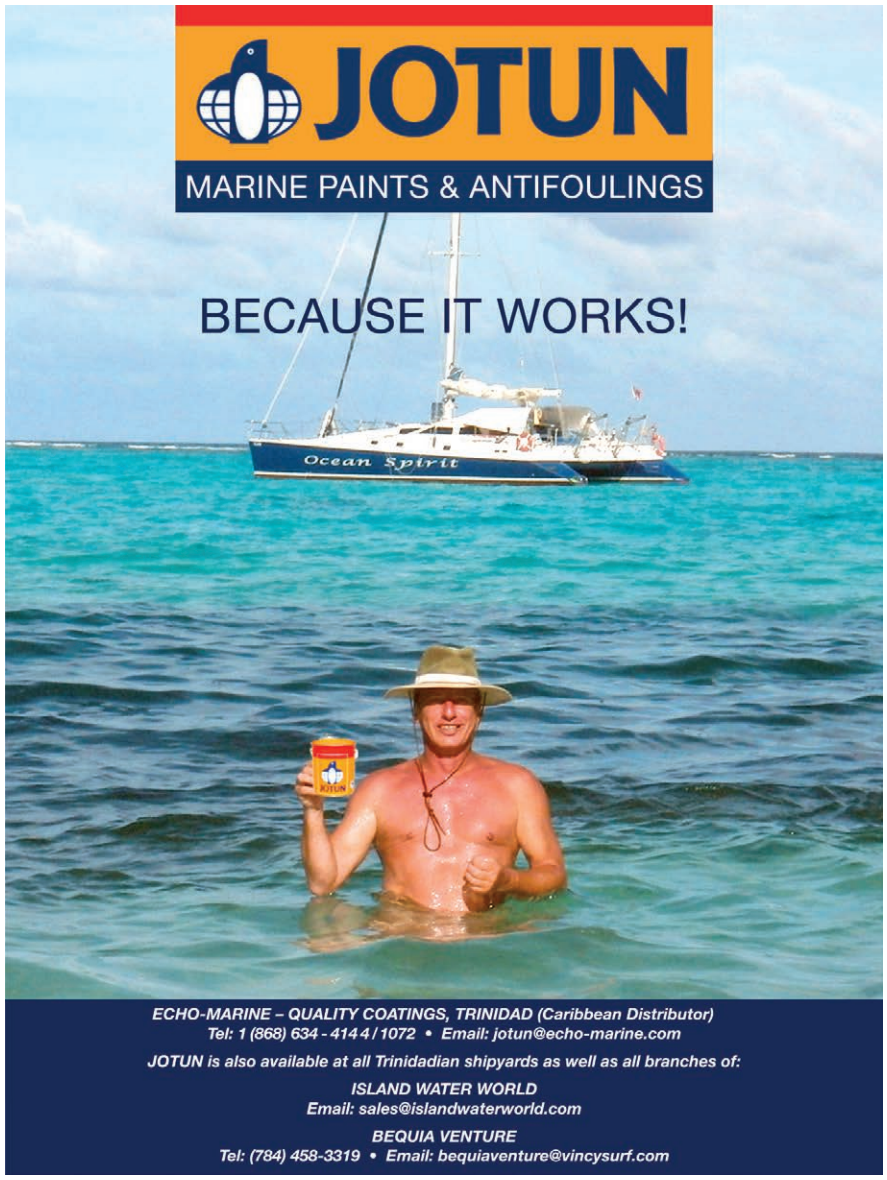
Karen Bartlett reports: With its spotless reputation as a world-leading yacht transport solutions provider, Peters & May US has the experience and professionalism to weather any storm, and the pandemic has certainly tested the maritime industry to its limits. "It's been a far better year than last year," says Matt Penfold, P&M US Managing Director, "but fresh challenges have nevertheless come along. With the pent-up demand in Asia after all the factories closed, they're now working at 200 percent to catch up, so at the moment it's a case of finding enough vessels to satisfy the requirements."

One consequence of the spike in demand has been a significant escalation in freight rates: Matt observes that pricing for containers coming out of China has quadrupled over the last few months. "We need to wait for the market to sort itself out," he remarks. "Once the shipping catches up with the demand it'll level out a bit: but it's a good thing in a sense because it shows that everything is moving again, and that makes our world spin round, financially."



Challenges aside, Matt explains that P&M US has been having "a blinding year" as the sole company providing a regular heavy-lift shipment service between the US and the Caribbean. "We've hit our budgets, our margins are up, and we've had a very busy transatlantic season as well." The company is currently preparing to load ships out of the Mediterranean when the charter season finishes in September. "We have other things in the pipeline which we can't mention yet," Matt smiles, "but watch this space!"

For more information visit https://www.petersandmay.com/en/contact-us/usa and see ad on page 21.





Caribbean ECO-News

Holistic assessment of plastic pollution in Southern Caribbean

The University of Plymouth, UK, reports that new research has resulted in the first holistic assessment of marine and land-based plastic pollution in the Southern Caribbean and some of the environmental and human factors that might influence its distribution.



EXPEDITION

The first holistic assessment of marine and land-based plastic pollution in the Southern Caribbean is the result of sample analysis from a pioneering all-female round-the-world sailing mission.

Writing in *Science of the Total Environment*, the study's authors suggest both terrestrial litter and the microplastics identified in marine samples may arise from the maritime and tourism industries. That in turn, they say, represents the complex challenges of managing plastic pollution since both industries are major contributors to the economies of the Caribbean region. The study is the result of sample analysis from a pioneering all-female Round the World sailing mission led by eXXpedition. Samples were collected in late 2019 from the seas and seafloor, and from land-based assessments.

Off the coast of five Caribbean countries, it identified 18 different polymers of plastic including synthetic fibres, paint flakes and acrylics, with the highest concentrations (5.09 particles per m^3) located off the San Blas islands in Panama.

Detailed ocean modelling and an assessment of regional policies indicated the abundance of microplastics in the area likely arose from a combination of distant sources carried by ocean currents and run-off from mainland Panama, which has some of the highest estimated levels (around 44 percent) of mismanaged waste in the region.

By contrast, the waters off Antigua, Bonaire and Colombia had lower quantities of terrestrial and marine plastics. Antigua, in particular, had a high diversity of polymers, with the research suggesting the majority of the microplastics collected were likely to have been transported by currents generated in the wider North Atlantic Ocean, even originating in the so-called North Atlantic garbage patch.

The research was led by scientists at the University of Plymouth (UK) in conjunction with the University of Georgia (USA), Plymouth Marine Laboratory (UK) and the Technological University of Panama.

Dr. Winnie Courtene-Jones, eXXpedition Science Lead and Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in the International Marine Litter Research Unit at the University of Plymouth, is the study's lead author. She said, "This study presents a snapshot of plastic pollution, and how it differs — in quantity, nature, origin and the policies in place to manage it — across the south of the region. It contributes towards the void of knowledge regarding marine plastic pollution in the Caribbean Sea but also highlights the need for international and interdisciplinary collaborative research and solutions to plastic pollution."

In October 2019, eXXpedition's round-the-world voyage left Plymouth to visit some of the most important and diverse marine environments on the planet, with the aim of inspiring a network of changemakers, informing effective solutions with industry, and influencing policy change on land.

Emily Penn BEM, eXXpedition founder and one of the co-authors on the current study, said, "Our vision for eXXpedition Round the World was to explore remote and inaccessible parts of the planet to pinpoint where the solutions to plastic pollution lie on land by better understanding the sources. The surprising thing from our discoveries is the huge diversity of polymer types, which means the pollution has come from many different sources and as a result means the solutions need to be diverse too. This study demonstrates why, for any game-changing action to tackle ocean plastic pollution, all sectors of the community must come together in a holistic way across the Caribbean region and beyond."

Visit https://exxpedition.com for more information.

Sea turtle hatchings in Bonaire

Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire reports: Bonaire's 2021 sea turtle hatching season started in July with the hatching of the first nests laid on Klein Bonaire and Bonaire. As of July 22nd, three nests had already hatched and all with good results. Hatching success of these nests varied between 70 and 95 per cent, with a total of 295 loggerhead hatchlings. What a great start of Bonaire's hatching season!

Visit www.bonaireturtles.org for more information.



W. GARETH RASBERRY

Drone monitoring protocol for sargassum

Dr. Kimberly Baldwin is the director of Marine Spatial Information Solutions (MarSIS), and a research associate at the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) at the University of the West Indies in Barbados. Tracking the effects of climate change in the Caribbean, her research focuses on the estimation, harvest, and removal of sargassum seaweed, a type of brown algae that floats in large mats for miles across the ocean. The rapid increase of sargassum in the Caribbean recent years not only threatens marine life entangled in its web, but also harms the local economy — specifically, the fishing and tourism sectors.

Since 2011, CERMES has been working regionally on a number of sargassum management projects, and in 2019, when the "SargAdapt" project was established to manage the impacts of and improve adaptation to sargassum influxes across the Caribbean, Dr. Baldwin first saw these trends up close. She took the lead in developing a standard Drone Monitoring Protocol to quantify the amount of beached sargassum.

In recent years, influxes have not only increased in quantity but also in frequency, now occurring up to eight months out of the year, oftentimes with marine life such as sea turtles and dolphins entrapped. With piles of beached sargassum up to three metres high, these rotting masses pose a health hazard to the coastal marine ecosystems and beach visitors alike.

Recognizing the time sensitivity of removal operations, Dr. Baldwin set out to create a surveying and estimation workflow that could be applied by teams working with her across the Caribbean. Drone technology seemed a natural fit.

Dr. Baldwin utilizes DroneDeploy (www.dronedelpoy.com) solutions to map and quantify the abundance of beached sargassum, and to map mats of sargassum still floating in the ocean. "Previously, our team had to walk kilometres of shoreline, gather field samples, and manually process the data," Dr. Baldwin explained. "This project is really exciting because accurate data collection is now easier, faster, and far more cost-effective." While traditional, physically intensive beach field surveys may take up to three hours to conduct, a drone beach survey takes just 20 minutes and can cover four times the survey area.

Since 2016, Dr. Baldwin has trained over 400 people across seven Caribbean islands in drone operations and mapping surveys. Dr. Baldwin plans to create a User's Guide for the sargassum Drone Monitoring Protocol and train five drone teams (comprising 50 people) across the Eastern Caribbean in its use.

This fall, Dr. Baldwin will present the SargAdapt Drone Monitoring Protocol at the 74th Gulf & Caribbean Fisheries Institute meeting as part of the Sargassum Science and Management Session. She hopes that by making her research more accessible, drone-powered solutions will continue to gain traction in the Caribbean as an affordable, efficient remedy to collaboratively managing environmental challenges in a changing climate.

—Continued on next page



BRICKLIGHTNING

Monitoring the influx of sargassum on Caribbean beaches is expedited by using drones.

—*Continued from previous page*

Antigua group developing marine conservation programme

The Environmental Awareness Group (EAG) reports: The EAG is pleased to launch the Antigua Marine Conservation Programme (AMCP). This programme, supported by the Team Antigua Atlantic Rowers and rooted in the best available science, will take a full ecosystem approach to sea turtle conservation, focusing on protecting the species we have all come to know and love by taking care of them and the habitats they call their home. This work will look at creating and sustaining ecosystem balance, so that not only will sea turtles themselves thrive, but the very habitats that support and surround them – and us – will thrive, as well.



ASHTON WILLIAMS

Antigua Sea Turtle Project team members measuring a nesting Green Turtle.

"When we made our record-breaking row of the Atlantic in 2018, we did it to give back something significant to the sea and to its protection," said a spokesman for the Team Antigua Atlantic Rowers. "We are confident that the EAG's Antigua Marine Conservation Programme will be a shining example of marine conservation and management."

"The EAG is a long-time member of the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST), and has contributed in important ways to the international push for sea turtle conservation in this local space," noted Dr. Karen Eckert, Executive Director of WIDECAST. "As the programme expands, WIDECAST experts will lend support in its design to ensure maximum impact, especially as regards to best practices in monitoring and managing seagrass beds and other critical ecosystems. It's wonderful to see this new programme developing, I know it will inspire much-needed ecosystem-scale conservation elsewhere in the region, as well."

"We also intend to work closely with local programmes that are already implementing projects within the marine space," remarked Arica Hill, Executive Director of the EAG. Hill continues, "We have been fortunate to create ties with the National Parks Authority and the Elkhorn Marine Conservancy, and we hope to work along with others so that we can share skills and resources."

AMCP's work will include the scientists who have volunteered their time with the EAG's Antigua Sea Turtle Project over the years. At its inception, Dr. Kate Levasseur, a researcher and sea turtle expert who has worked for years with the world-renowned Jumby Bay Hawksbill Project, will also lend her support in the development of AMCP.

The programme is still very much in its infancy stage, and the design of the programme, along with its strategic targets, will begin through stakeholder engagement and research from October 2021. The official launch of the programme is slated for March 2022.

Ile Pinel businesses asked to protect marine ecosystems

A report in the July issue of the *Journal of La Réserve Naturelle de Saint-Martin* looks at the human impact of activities on the island of Pinel.

Located within the perimeter of La Réserve Naturelle de Saint-Martin, in the heart of the protected marine zone, the restaurants on the island of Pinel are extremely popular with residents as well as tourists. They are part of the "postcard" of tourist attractions on the French side of St. Martin, and spearhead tourism in St. Martin along with the area developed around Orient Bay.

Their economic importance comes from the generation of important direct and indirect revenues. These activities, and the numbers of people who go there, mean that there is an ecological impact, especially in terms of the marine ecosystems close by.

Scientific studies presented to the members of the advisory committee show a correlation between the deterioration of these aquatic habitats and the human activities requiring pumping of sea water, desalination and waste treatment, added to the numerous boats, usage of anchors, and other public activities, all of which are factors leading to damage of the underwater seabeds and the coral.

In this light, the management association of La Réserve Naturelle de Saint-Martin is working toward the signing of a partnership agreement with the commercial entities on Pinel, so that they can actually see the impact that their activities have on natural ecosystems, and they will participate in their protection in order to diminish, or even eliminate, the recognized impact that these activities have on protected areas.

In addition, the businesses are invited to approach the management association of La Réserve Naturelle so that they can study together the actions that will be put into place to curb this process, which will consist primarily in the actions listed in the management plan: creation of mooring zones; better reception of the public; ongoing scientific studies, and development of programs to restore the seagrass beds.

Visit www.reservenaturelle-saint-martin.com for more information.

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REGATTA NEWS

Hobie races honor Grenada chocolatier

The seventh annual Mott Memorial Hobie Cat race, hosted by the Petite Calivigny Yacht Club, was held at Grenada's Le Phare Bleu Marina & Resort on July 18th. The Mott Memorial commemorates the life of David Friedman (a.k.a. Mott Green), who established the Grenada Chocolate Company in 1999. He famously sailed his Hobie Cat to transport chocolate from Grenada to Carriacou. After Mott's death, his Hobie came to PCYC. It was the start of the Club's dinghy fleet.


PCYC

July's competitive races didn't produce a clear winner until the semi-finals. As there were several juniors competing, race officer David Schiever altered the format to match the registration demographics, with the finals being divided into junior women, junior men, and a mixed senior class.

The most exciting event turned out to be the junior men's race, where Bresjhon Wilkie Gill beat out Cam Conant by inches. Kaleth Cushman took first in the junior women's race, followed by Karina Benjamin. The senior division's finish concluded on the beach with a literal run to the committee table — the first one to finish a shot of rum was declared the winner. Mike Bingley succeeded in that feat, Richard St. John was second, and Ralph Godkin followed in third place.

Special congratulations to Mike — not only is this his third Mott Memorial win, but he was the delivery skipper of Mott's Hobie in 2013, sailing it down from Sauteurs to Le Phare Bleu.

A huge thank you to our sponsors: Grenada Chocolate Company, Island Water World, and the Eastern Caribbean Rum company. As in years past, every participant received a Grenada Chocolate Company chocolate bar.

For more information on PCYC events visit www.facebook.com/PCYCGrenada.

ON THE HORIZON

St. Maarten Opti Championship next month

The Sint Maarten Yacht Club will host its 16th annual St. Maarten Optimist Championship on October 30th and 31st. This year, the event will continue to offer exciting sailing, excellent prizes and trophies, and much more fun!

This regatta is an AHO qualifier for the Opti World Championships.

Contact saskia@smyc.com for more information.


SMYC

Salty Dawg Caribbean rally this fall

SDSA reports: The largest rally leaving the US East Coast each fall is the Caribbean Rally hosted by the Salty Dawg Sailing Association (SDSA). The fleet departs from the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay to head offshore towards points south.

The Caribbean Rally helps sailors arrive safely in the Caribbean and opens the door to new lifelong friends and experiences while cruising.

Where will you sail to this fall? The Caribbean Rally provides a choice of destinations. While the bulk of the fleet heads to Antigua, some choose to make landfall in the Abacos in the Bahamas. If you're considering cruising the Caribbean, read "A Case for Making Landfall in Antigua" by Bob Osborn, Rally Director, at www.saltydawgsailing.org/antigua.

Whatever your destination, you will have the full support of SDSA.

The modest rally fee includes weather routing by Chris Parker of the Marine Weather Center, position tracking by PredictWind, and an extensive level of coordination and support from our shoreside team during the offshore passage.

Once accepted into the rally with the rally fees paid, you will have access to extensive information which helps you prepare for a safe passage, including details about your destination and arrival plans.

This year's events begin on October 28th in Hampton, Virginia, for final boat and crew preparation, seminars, social events, and weather briefings. The rally departure is scheduled for November 1st (weather permitting).

Contact bob@saltydawgsailing.org for more information.

The Caribbean 1500 is back!

World Cruising Club reports: It has been a frustrating year for us all, stuck at home, unable to reach our boats, or shut out from our favorite sailing destinations. But now we can announce that the Caribbean 1500 is back, so sailors in the US, get ready to sail south again this fall!

World Cruising Club is committed to helping sailors get down island this season. Plans are being made for the 2021 edition of the 1500 to set sail from the Chesapeake Bay in early November. Our intended landfall will be Nanny Cay Marina in Tortola, British Virgin Islands, subject to travel restrictions.

The longest-running ocean crossing rally in North America, the 1500 is a must-do for many cruisers. The start port and dates of the Caribbean 1500 fleet make the most of the weather situation to maximize Caribbean sailing, and our week-long pre-departure program gets you ready to go cruising.

Without a doubt the most difficult part of getting to the Caribbean is timing the weather window before departure. Fall on the East Coast is squeezed between late summer hurricane season and early winter gale season. By joining the 1500, you can rest assured that the "experts" are there to take the pressure off that decision. Our support team consists of professional ocean sailors working closely with weather forecasters at WRI to ensure the fleet makes it across the Gulf Stream and into warmer waters in the best possible conditions.


NANNY CAY MARINA

We are using our experience gained from running the 2020/21 transatlantic ARC and ARC Europe rallies to provide a Covid-secure event, taking you and your crew safely to the Caribbean.

Dates will get announced soon, with an exciting new start port welcoming sailors back to this iconic American sailing rally.

Visit www.worldcruising.com/Carib1500 for more information.

Caribbean Multihull Challenge adds a sprint

The Sint Maarten Yacht Club has announced that the Notice of Race for the fourth edition of the Caribbean Multihull Challenge (CMC) is now online and registrations for the regatta are open. The dates for the event are February 4th through 6th, 2022.

The CMC continues to grow and innovate. New in 2022 is a race within a race — a 60-nautical-mile sprint from Simpson Bay in St. Maarten upwind to St. Barth, and then a reach over to the French island of Tintamarre, where the racers will turn downwind in the famous Anguilla Channel to the western end of St. Maarten, and upwind again to the finish in Simpson Bay. The sprint is open to any CMC-registered yacht that can finish the course in six hours or less.

The sprint will be run on the windiest day of the three-day regatta, so that the Ocean Racing and Ocean Cruising Class yachts can maximize their speed and perhaps set a new course record.

The NOR and the registration form can be found at www.smyc.com/caribbean-multihull-challenge.


CARIBBEAN MULTIHULLS

Contact Stephen Burzon at StephenBurzon@gmail.com for more information.

Heineken Regatta set for March 2022

Organized by an experienced, innovative and friendly race team, the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta means four days of world-class racing in idyllic conditions, appealing to a broad range of tastes. The race committees provide custom-tailored racing for the thousands of sailors from over 35 countries that often participate: from Olympic medalists and world champions sailing Maxis and performance multihulls to holiday-makers on chartered bareboats and live-aboard families cruising the Caribbean.

Sailors are offered a mixture of races, with a combination of windward-leeward and coastal routes blended together into a cocktail of sailing options to suit each class. The all-out racing monohulls savor the prospect of eight races over four days, with windward-leeward stretches on two days and two longer coastal routes testing both boat handling and tactics, and the regatta attracts a large competitive class of 40-foot and 50-foot cruiser-racers as well.

Non-spinnaker cruising boats get more varied courses with less emphasis on close maneuvers, but lots of strategic opportunities to keep the racing tight.

Maxis and multihulls have their own areas, with routes suited to their sailing styles: an emphasis on coastal races with fewer windward legs for cruising-style multihulls and longer, more challenging races for performance multihulls and Maxis.

Live-aboard cruisers and others just wanting to be a part of the regatta will enjoy one medium-length race per day, with a leisurely start time and an emphasis more on "fun" than "serious."

Visit https://heinekenregatta.com/race for more information.

Keeping the Yacht Races Alive



The end of July and the first of August is regatta time in Carriacou.

For those readers not in the know, Carriacou is a smaller sister island to Grenada, with a population of about 9,000 and a strong tradition of building wooden sailing cargo and fishing vessels.

Back in the 1960s a Jamaican yachtsman and owner of the Mermaid Tavern, J. Linton Rigg, commissioned the building of the Carriacou sloop *Mermaid of Carriacou* (see story on page 19) and encouraged the local sloop owners to race. The Carriacou Regatta was born.

In later years yachts started to visit Carriacou and joined in racing with the local boats, but the rule that working boats sailed to was confusing to the visitors and so a separate series of races, based in Tyrrel Bay and held on the same weekend, evolved for yachts.

Over the years Jerry Stewart, a local tugboat owner, kept the yacht races alive and regularly raced his bright red Hughes 38, *Bloody Mary*.

Jerry was off island this year and so Paul and Sally O'Regan, assisted by Tim Sudell and Frank Pearce and others, picked up the reins. James Benoit, a Caribbean Sailing Association measurer, came up from Grenada especially to oversee the races and to approve handicapping to create a Fun Class for yachts without CSA certificates.

The skippers' briefing was held on July 29th at the Lambie Queen bar and restaurant. Three days of racing followed.

Fifteen yachts, including six multihulls, took part in Race One. This Round the Island Race started at 0900 in excellent conditions — a nice easterly tradewind and clear skies — until a black rainsquall made navigation somewhat testing. At that time most competitors were on the long leg south on the windward side of Carriacou, hugging the reefs under their lee, when they suddenly lost visibility.

Rounding the south of the island there was a run outside Saline Island and then to the Tyrrel Bay finish. On handicap in the nine-boat Fun Class (monohulls) the Beneteau 461 *Chao Lay* came in first, with the classic 90-foot yawl *Galatea* second and the Spencer 44 *Yellow Bird* third. In the six-boat Multihull Class, the 35-foot cat *Naiouli*, the Leopard 47 *Spirit of Everest* and the 46-foot cat *Avatar*, took first, second and third respectively.

Above: After placing behind Chao Lay *on days one and two,* Galatea *emerged victorious in the final race.*

Right: Nailouli *won first place among the multihulls in the Round the Island race.*

Below: The turnout showed that sailors were eager to get back out on the race course.



GILL DOUCH (ALL PHOTOS)

The evening's entertainment was provided by Frogs restaurant and bar with excellent food and music by Jimmy and Muriel. No prize for guessing the Frogs' nationality! Frogs had even constructed a gazebo where competitors could sit in the shade, look out across the bay, and talk racing.

The next day, Race Two saw a reduced fleet of seven in Fun Class and only two in Multihull Class. The South Coast Race is somewhat challenging, with a course taking in Jack-a-Dan island off Hillsborough, The Sisters Rocks, and Frigate Island off Carriacou's south coast (not to be confused with the Frigate Island off Union Island). Frigate Island is a lee shore with deep water right up to the rocks, the temptation when racing being to sail closer to it than one ever would when cruising — one crewmember said she just shut her eyes until the boat was past and clear!

Weather conditions were excellent with a steady tradewind blowing except in the lee of Carriacou, when rounding up to go into the bay. If too close to the headland, leaders fell into a hole in the wind and had to watch as they lost position by position, giving the followers joy.

The winners of this race were again *Chao Lay, Galatea* and *Yellow Bird* in Fun Class. *Spirit of Everest* beat *Mañana II,* a 37-foot amateur build, in the Multihulls.

In the evening competitors were able to sample those various bars and restaurants that were open for the event.

Race Three, the Jack-a-Dan Race, saw six boats in Fun Class and two again in multihull class. This course took the fleet twice out to Jack-a-Dan and back to Sisters Rocks, with plenty of opportunity to practice tactics and sail handling in great conditions. The winner was *Galatea*, followed by *Chao Lay* and *Yellow Bird*. *Spirit of Everest* again beat *Mañana II* in the Multihulls.

The prizegiving was held at Carriacou Marine, with live music by Stan & Cora and the Ruff Enuf Band.

The organizers send a big thank you to everyone who sponsored the regatta, especially main sponsor Budget Marine, as well as Island Water World, Carib Trace, Matching Green, Fitzroy Apartments, The Round House and Big Citi Grill. Also thanks to the Lambi Queen, Frogs, Twilight Restaurant, Gallery Bistro, Barakena and Carriacou Marine for hosting evening activities. Thank you to Lorraine Seatle for allowing her verandah to become the office; her help was invaluable. Huge thanks to Paul and Sally O'Regan for all of their hard work; without them, this would not have been possible. Not forgetting race officer James Benoit, who came especially from Grenada to help. Last, but not least, all competitors!



By everyone's account, the 2021 Tyrrel Bay yacht races were a great success.

Thanks to Frank Pearce, Sally O'Regan and Lorraine Seatle for information in this report.



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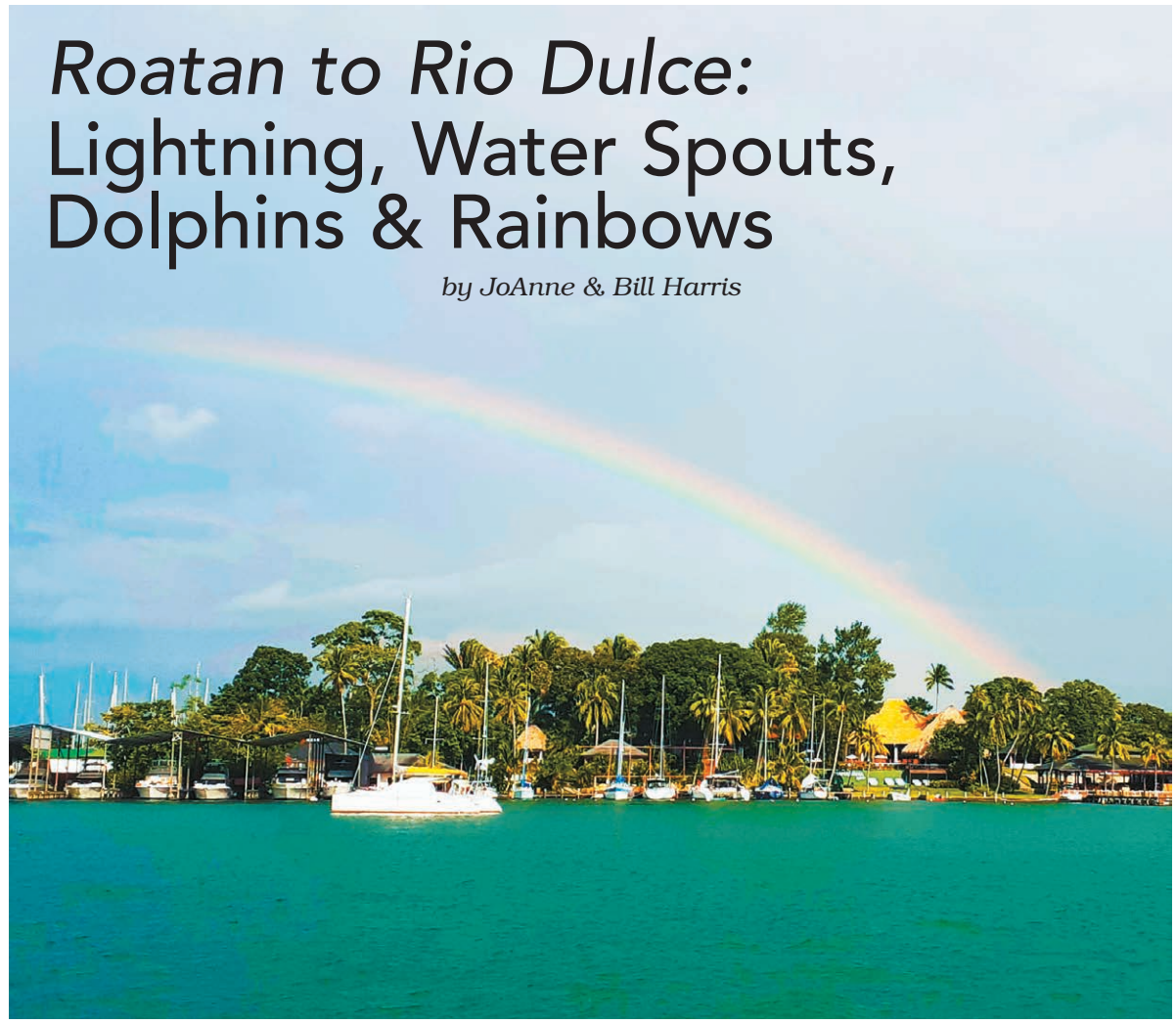
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Roatan to Rio Dulce: Lightning, Water Spouts, Dolphins & Rainbows

by JoAnne & Bill Harris



Above: We anchored in front of Nanajuana Marina, where a spectacular rainbow was on display.
Left: The Rio offers plenty of dinghy exploration opportunities.
Below: Activities at Nanajuana Marina included yoga sessions.

After we and our cruising buddies Sabina and Paul on *Chat-Eau* took our very first ever Covid PCR tests, which thankfully had negative results, we checked out of Roatan and *Ultra* was soon Rio Dulce bound for our third visit. The weather was expected to be calm so we fueled up in preparation to motor most of the way. Although the passage from Roatan, Honduras, to Rio Dulce, Guatemala, is just an overnight sail, it can by super easy or super wicked, depending on weather. We had experienced it both ways.

All was good for our 7:30AM departure. Our ETA in Livingston, Guatemala, was to be 26 hours later. We put the sails up and set off on a great motor sail for several hours.

However, *Ultra* had other ideas for us. The autopilot that had just been working perfectly for our recent trip to Cayos Cochinos and back (see story in last month's issue), decided not cooperate. We said to each other in unison, "All good, it is just an easy overnight passage and we can just take turns hand-steering." *Ultra* has hydraulic steering so it can be extremely tiresome to hand steer for long periods, but it can be done. In 13 years of full-time cruising, this has happened several times before — we just have to adapt to the challenge.



We did hourly VHF check-ins with *Chat-Eau*, to be sure all was well with each boat. We even played music for each other, told jokes, reminisced about fun times and told stories to keep each other alert.

The weather held out as long as promised but then deteriorated. Rain started to fall and the seas became a bit more turbulent, but nothing out of the ordinary. JoAnne's shift began and Bill had only been asleep for around 20 minutes when quickly long dark streaks started to appear in the sky and on the sea a swirly, misty mass had formed. JoAnne recognized it right away. She woke Bill to tell him that there was a waterspout directly ahead and it was headed our way. She turned the wheel hard to port to run away from it and called *Chat-Eau* on the VHF. Sabina answered and JoAnne explained that she did not want to sound alarmist, but wanted to alert them that there was a waterspout ahead. Sabina said she did not see it and was not even familiar with what a waterspout was or what to do. JoAnne explained it is a tornado over the water. The water and wind can be moving at rapid speed and could be violent. Sabina asked what to do and Bill and JoAnne both said in unison, "Steer well away from it."

Then, while looking ahead, we both saw a bright white boat hull come out of the black wall of clouds. Turns out that rather than being off to our starboard, *Chat-Eau* was directly ahead and very near the waterspout. Yikes!

As they were running from it and we were still steering off to port, six more waterspouts formed and we again turned more to port. It was crazy! The entire sky had a black hovering cloud line with white sky around it. Within the white, the waterspouts were forming from the sky to the sea. We could not outrun them, so we ran away from them.

We had a lot of experience with waterspouts from our days in Galveston Bay, Texas. During charters and sailing on our own, we'd had to run away from several of them. It always reminded us of when our fellow Texas friend and musician, Kelly McGuire, sang his song "Major Doubts about Water Spouts." We definitely do not care for squally weather, but after all of these years aboard, we are now used to it. However, waterspouts make for a whole other weather adventure.

After running from seven waterspouts in the afternoon, we encountered an extremely stormy night of many lightning strikes all around us with the bolts striking the water. Several years ago in Panama, *Ultra* had been struck by lightning while we were onboard. It was so unnerving we hoped it would not happen again. We stowed all of the extra navigation electronics in the oven and microwave to protect them just in case we were hit. The entire night was full of unbelievably



wicked lightning and rain, which continued until the light of day. All the while we were hand steering and trading shifts every two or three hours.

Finally the storm clouds broke and the rain stopped and the seas became calmer, too. Soon we were joined by hundreds of dolphins leaping into the air and riding the bow of *Ultra*. This immediately made us both wide awake, and we were thrilled to go out on the bow and watch the show.

We still had a few more hours to go until our arrival into Livingston, located at the mouth of the Rio Dulce. Luckily we had sunny clear weather the rest of the way and made our way over the shallow bar at the river's entrance with plenty of water beneath *Ultra* since we draw only five feet.

We dropped the hook in front of Livingston and hailed Gerson of Servimar Agency on VHF channel 68. Soon he arrived in a *lancha* with six other people onboard including the clearance agent and representatives from the navy, agriculture department, Customs and Immigration — and the boat driver. We completed the forms and handed over our passports and *zarpe* exit paper from Roatan. Servimar Agency had requested that we send photos of our boat documentation, passports, and negative Covid test results the day before our Roatan departure via a WhatsApp number. During a one-hour wait while our paperwork was being processed we enjoyed a great curry lunch and cold beers at Bugamama Restaurant, then went to pay for and collect our cruising permits and passports.

—Continued on next page

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Soon our hooks were pulled up and both boats proceeded up the river and anchored in Cayo Quemado. It had been a long day, so we stayed onboard and were prepared for a great night's sleep.



Above: Our Siamese, Sailor Kitty, wasn't too sure about having another feline onboard.

Below: Local and cruiser volunteers distributed 26 bags of food, clothing and more to needy families up and down the river.

Right: Multiple waterspouts were forming from the sky to the sea.



Well, Mother Nature had other ideas for us. In the middle of the night, the wind kicked up and heavy rain and tremendous lightning arrived. We were thanking our lucky stars that we had put out 130 feet of anchor chain and our 40-kilo Rocna. All good.

The next morning, we had a great breakfast, pulled up the hook and proceeded with *Chat-Eau* to motor farther along the river. *Ultra* anchored in front of Nanajuana Marina, where a spectacular rainbow had formed. *Chat-Eau* tied up to the Ram Marina dock to prepare for their haulout the next day.

After *Chat-Eau's* haulout, we received their calico kitten, Baby Cat, to cat-sit for the next few months while they were in the UK. Our Siamese, Sailor Kitty, and Baby Cat had met several times before, but we knew there would be an adjustment with two cats now onboard.

After a week and a half anchored out, we moved *Ultra* into the beautiful Nanajuana Marina. The very professional and friendly dockmaster, Edgar, and his team did an outstanding job of helping us med-moor. We were delighted to meet the wonderful owners, too. After a few days of sharing ideas with the Nanajuana team, we were excited to begin planning activities for the marina, hotel guests, and cruisers to enjoy. Activities included yoga classes, extreme workout classes, water fitness classes, massage appointments, barbecue nights, movie nights, music nights and much more.



We soon began our *Ultra* Community Projects as well, to help families in need here in the Rio Dulce. With our local and cruiser team volunteers (Dispensa, Jessica Cerna Tapaceria, Jorge Tienda, Nanajuana Marina, *S/V Coragem*, Hoob & Dikje, *S/V Magic Badger, S/V Panache, S/V Twinsanity* and *S/V Vagari*), 26 bags of food, clothing and more were filled and distributed via a dinghy parade up and down the Rio Dulce. Some of the families in need we had met for the first time eight years ago and others only two years ago. We had not seen any of them in at least 18 months. We sincerely appreciate everyone that generously donated food, money, time, clothes and more to make all of this happen. There is so much need that it is great to see everyone working hard to help others.

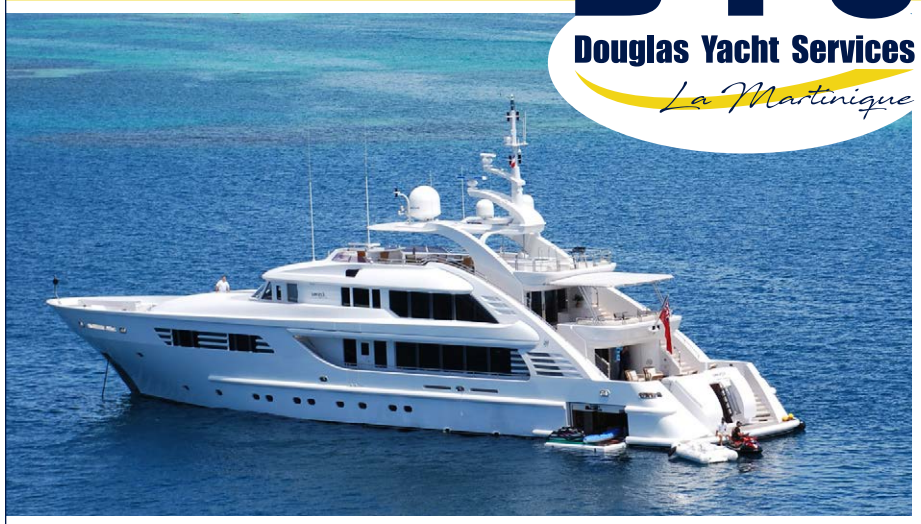
Soon we will haul *Ultra* out for her own dose of TLC.

JoAnne and Bill Harris are the Seven Seas Cruising Hosts and the Ocean Cruising Club port officers for The Bay Islands and mainland Honduras. Their cruising station is located at the: Arch Dinghy Dock & Cruisers' Palapa located in French Cay, Roatan, with coordinates: 16.21.390N, 086.26.488W. The Harris' continue to do their Ultra *Community Projects and Seven Seas Cruising Association Clean Wake Projects for Honduras and The Bay Islands. For more information about these projects contact bjharrisultra@gmail.com*

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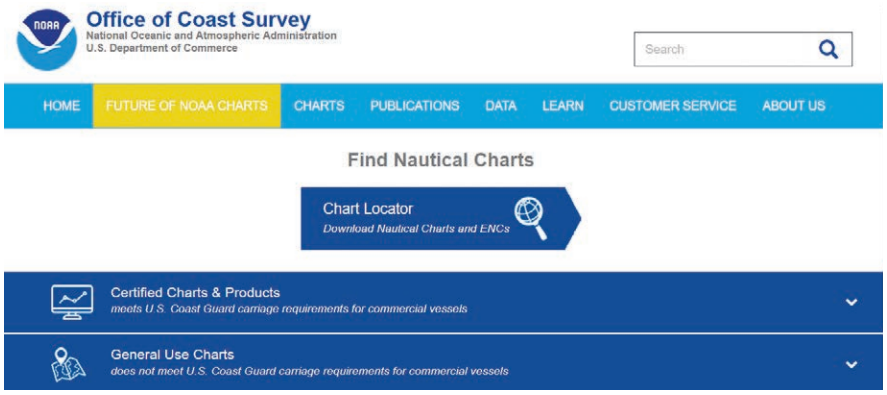


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NOAA to Sunset Raster Charts

...but you can create your own paper ENC charts

by Joan Conover

IF you'll be heading to the Caribbean from the US or plan to cruise Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, heads up!

Government cartography industries all over the world have had to keep many formats updated with changes to the thousands of nautical charts in existence worldwide. To meet this challenge, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has made a decision to stop producing one of its major chart products — the raster nautical charts. This means a total replacement of the current paper charting system created from raster-formatted data as provided by NOAA's Office of Coast Survey.

The reason is twofold: staffing and valid data. With two major formats for maps, raster nautical charts (RNC) and electronic nautical charts (ENC), the consistency and updates required for the two different products have become a manpower issue. More importantly, the products have diverged with different inputs. The data is not equal across formats. For example, US survey data is now only updated on ENCs; RNCs show different data, "project depths" or the design depth.

Both formats continue to contain updated safety data such as Aids to Navigation.

The elimination of raster charts has a major impact on the charting industry and commercial vendors; many chart products will require significant revisions. The type of file used to produce the chart products changes, as does the way the data is presented. It's a major change in the way vendors create their products. Based on NOAA's timeline, by 2025 RNCs will be "sunsetted" and all the RNC-formatted files retired.

The goal of this article is to make cruisers aware of what is happening, provide the way to comment to NOAA on the process or report errors, and demonstrate how to print out your own custom paper charts on a small scale.

Electronic chartplotting systems

Maritime electronic chartplotters/GIS devices provide various tools to assist cruising, ranging from depth alarms, tracking position via GPS, and aids to navigation, to vessel locations and weather, all displayed on a dynamic electronic map. They require electronic map displays as well as input dynamic data (boats/AIS, depth, location, etcetera), with more detailed data to support the increasing needs of mariners. They have become a part of our cruising lifestyle.

Most cruisers depend on chart-plotting systems from vendors such as Garmin, Furuno, B&G, Raytheon and others. More recent is the inclusion of Android or IOS smartphone systems such as handheld and/or laptop PC chartplotters. There are now chartplotter software and apps such as Aqua Map and MapTech iPlot, and the open source application, OpenCPN.

The Aqua Map system (http://globalaquamaps.com) is unique, updating data on release for on-demand download, as well as providing US Army Corp of Engineers survey data. The OpenCPN application (opencpn.org) has options to download current RNCs and ENCs direct from NOAA, and commercial charts formats are supported.

For USA waterways, including the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, in one way or another these systems all depend on NOAA's electronic chart data for mapping. Some data is commercially enhanced by vendors into specialized formats on chips, and some systems download, update and process the NOAA data directly from an internet process. For knowledgeable users NOAA provides a tool to allow conversion of ENC to GIS formats: https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/data/gis-data-and-services.html#enc-direct-to-gis. Of interest, KML format (Keyhole Markup Language) is available, which is used for Google Maps and other GIS systems.

The format of the future

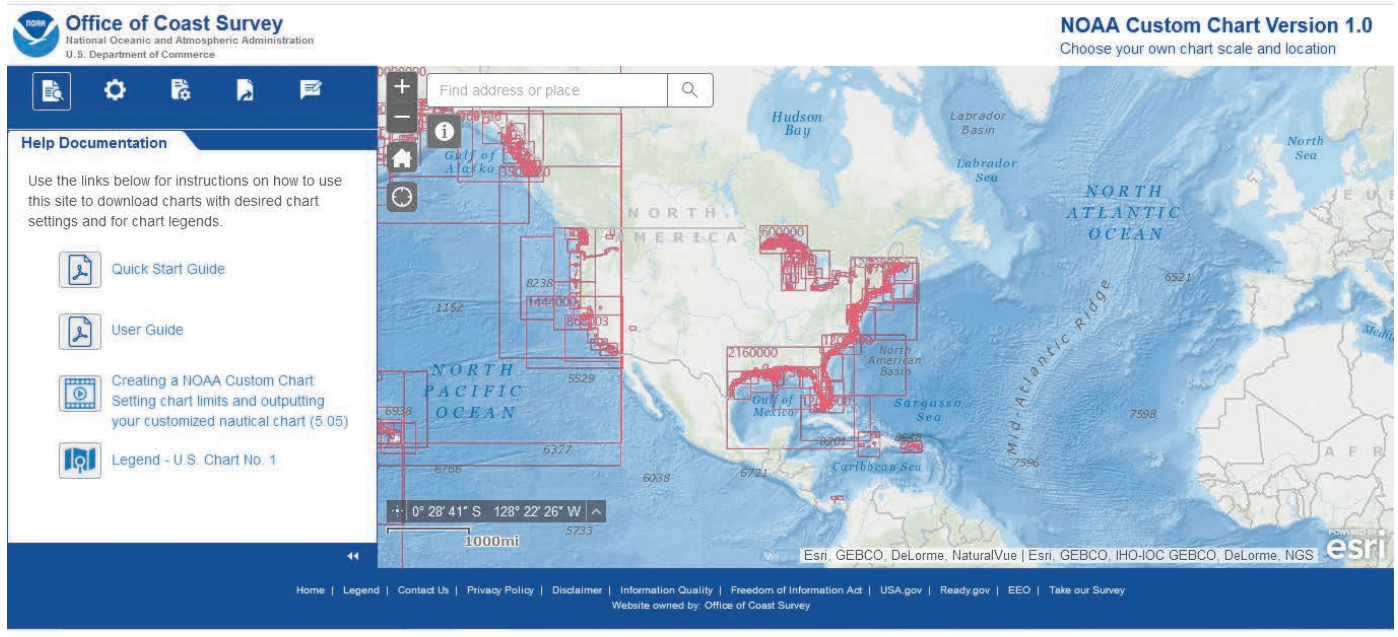
The NOAA plan is for ENCs to become the format of the future for both electronic and paper charts. And it is believed other governments are closely watching the progress of this effort.

From the UK Hydrographic Office: "We, like hydrographic offices around the world, are seeing electronic charting advance in all sectors of maritime use. Again, like hydrographic offices around the world, we're planning how these changes impact the products and services that we provide. The mix of products will continue to change, as technological advances open up new possibilities and as supplier and market conditions evolve. We'll provide updates to those who sell and use our charts as these occur."

See the plan for the future described at https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov. This US government process is well underway.

Paper charts will not go away

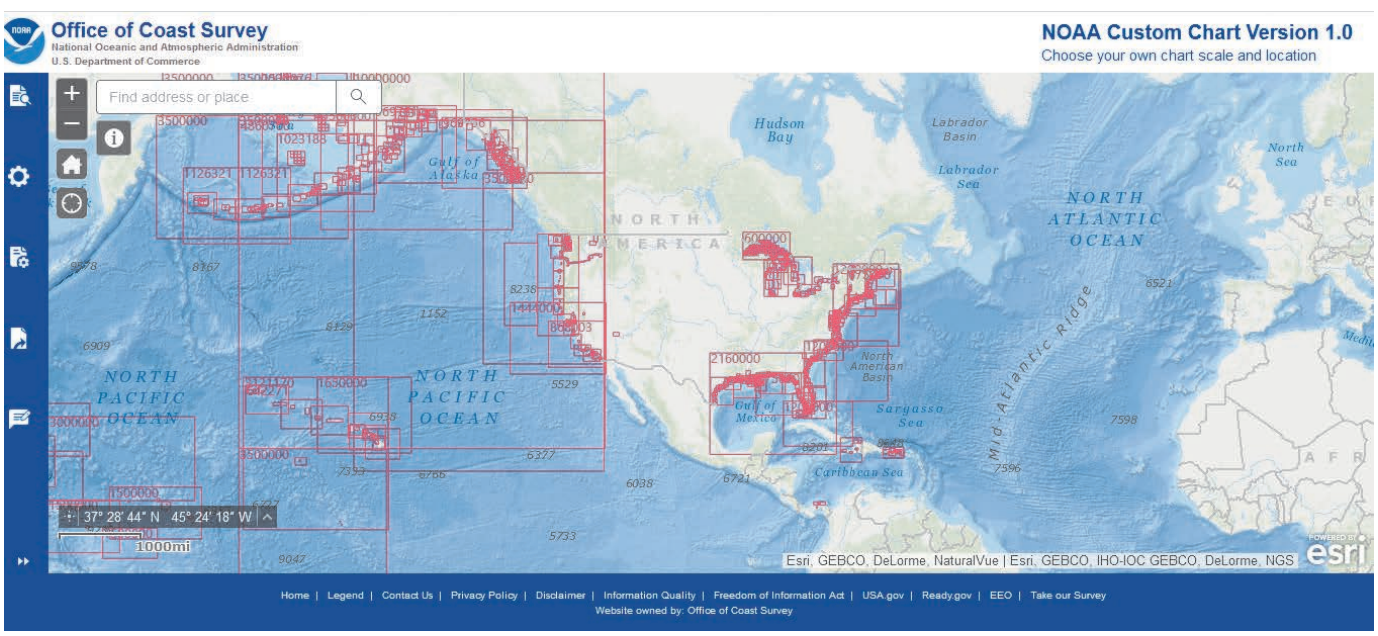
One area of concern is the creation of paper charts, and items such as guides/chart books/booklets, printed on waterproof paper. Paper charts will not go away; they have a very valid place in a boat's navigation strategy. Lee Estes, President and Managing Member of Edgewater Marine Industries' MapTech, comments, "Paper charts are necessary aboard many vessels — especially those without the means to support multiple, independently powered, redundant electronic navigation systems." MapTech, one of the officially listed NOAA chart vendors, has extensive paper charting expertise in supporting the well-known ChartKits, charts and cruising guides. Electrical systems may fail, but paper does not need electricity to be viewed, and larger printed-paper charts are critical for route and weather planning. Paper charts are also valuable tools for communication with crewmembers. Per the US Coast Guard, "Mariners are advised to use charts of a large enough scale that portrays enough detail to make safe navigation of the area possible." For small vessels, that usually means a paper chart.



Top: See the plan for the future described at https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov. This process is well underway.

Above: Choose your own chart scale and location.

Below: On the left side, in the blue area, find four icons. The first icon is HELP to describe how to create maps.



You can create your own ENC paper charts

Currently, there is a problem with producing the new NOAA custom charts as large commercially printed maritime charts. At the present time, RNCs provide the only recognized data source for printed nautical charts supplied by the official NOAA vendors. Until the ENCs can be officially recognized as "for navigation" by the US government, it's a problem for NOAA vendors from a legal and production viewpoint. One map vendor says, "It would seem to be prudent for the replacement paper chart system (NOAA's Custom Chart, or NCC, program) to be able to produce charts suitable to meet carriage requirements before any further raster charts are canceled."

As outlined above, there is not a process for official printing of paper charts from ENCs for commercial vessels. But private vessels can use a new tool developed by NOAA to create their own paper charts using a NOAA online system.

—Continued on next page

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The USCG says that there are "no Federal (US Coast Guard) Regulations or requirements for chart carriage aboard recreational vessels." So, for private vessels, boaters can create a downloadable PDF chart for various paper sizes.

USCG and NOAA sources state that mariners will still be able to obtain paper charts through the online NCC application at https://devgis.charttools.noaa.gov/pod. More information about NCC is available on the NOAA Coast Survey's website at https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/charts/noaa-custom-charts.html.

The NCC was developed to enable users to create their own customized charts directly from the latest NOAA ENC data. While these custom charts do not fulfill US Coast Guard carriage requirements for regulated commercial vessels, they contain the same up-to-date information contained on ENCs.

Unfortunately, finding a vendor to print to large waterproof formats (e.g. 34" x 44") is difficult if not impossible, and ENC chart packs of combinations and resolutions familiar to cruisers are not available.

Be aware that ENC charts look very different when compared to the older RNC charts: the data representation is significantly different, the linkage to older mapping/USCG chart numbers is not available for cross referencing, and the resolution in some areas needs improvement.

One way to use the Custom Chart program is to create a new map of a harbor or entry area, creating a small area image of just where a boat route will be in an entry, and on approach use the PDF to compare visually with your electronic chart plotter, existing paper chart, and previous experiences there if any.

If there is a visual error, depth or marker in the ENC compared to the paper charts, report the error to NOAA Office of Coast Survey as mentioned below in the Nautical Chart tool, ERROR report. This is a perfect place for cruiser crowd sourcing for correcting.

Create a chart, step by step

To create a chart, go to https://devgis.charttools.noaa.gov/pod

This is the online tool system with all the loaded US ENC charts available. Use this system to create a custom chart as a PDF and to create a map to the scale and size of paper you desire.

On the left side, in the blue area, find four icons.

The first icon is HELP to describe how to create maps.

The second is the DISPLAY SETTINGS icon, a wheel. Under settings select meters/feet; the miscellaneous area lets you select the resolution and detail for the print (the further down the more detail).

The PRINT SETTING area is where you create your map. Under PRINT SETTINGS set scale, print paper size and orientation, landscape or portrait. At the bottom of PRINT SETTING there are two boxes, one is to select EXTENT (the map area you want to print out), click on the box, then highlight on the map where you want the map area to be created. The other box lets you move the highlighted extent around until you are satisfied with the location. Then use the EXPORT QUEUE icon and create the PDF file. In the PDF example pictured, METERS were selected, Harbor box selected under Miscellaneous, scale was 25000, print size is 8"×11". The larger the print format the larger the file.

The final icon is FEEDBACK, and this is a critical one to report errors and comments to help improve this system. Only if you report via the FEEDBACK tool is the request officially submitted; plus there is a live person in the loop processing the feedback! A phone call does not work, but submitting a map error (label on top of a marker) or depth value issue—that's how the maps can be corrected by user FEEDBACK inputs.

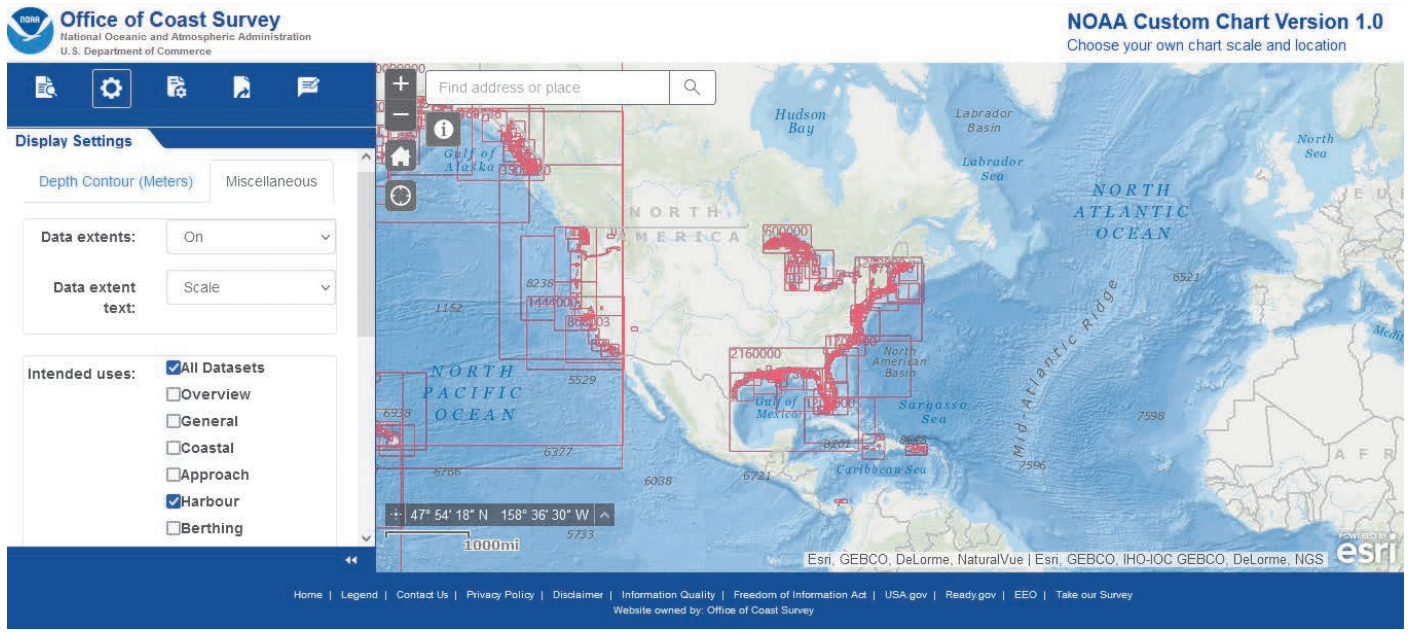
NOTE: 11"x17" print size is going to be an option soon. The larger print formats are useful IF you have a large-scale commercial printer loaded with roll paper.

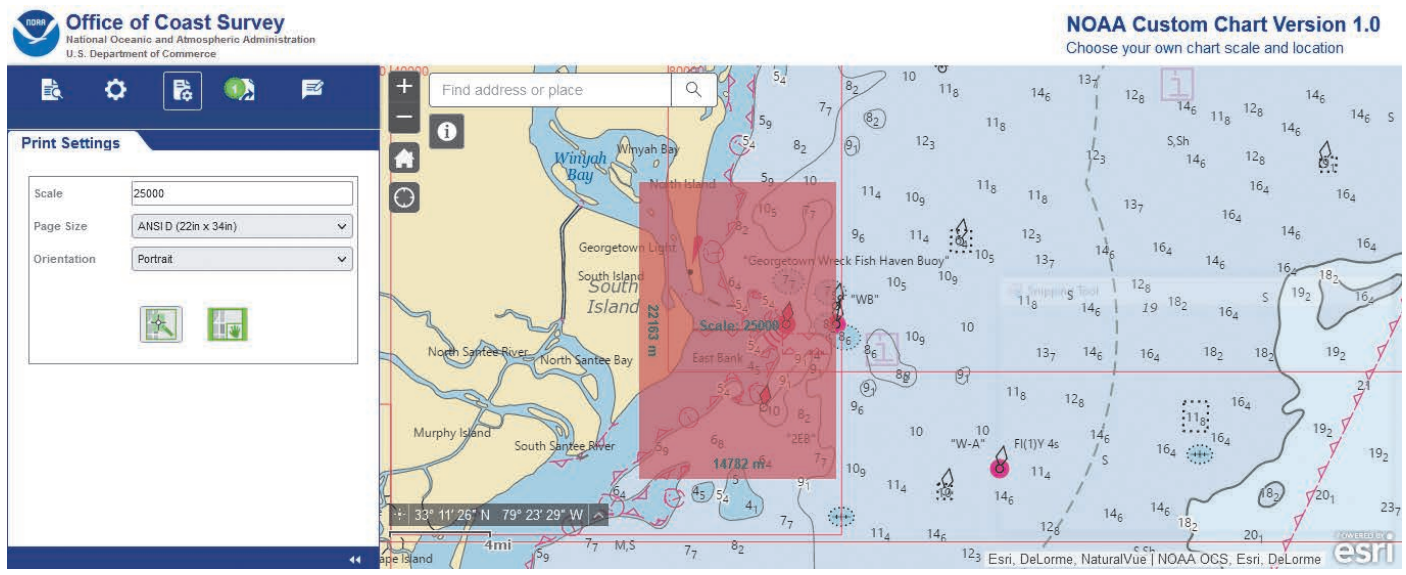
Updates and comments

As cruisers we all require valid information for our chartplotters and on our charts; the most recent data is critical for safety. The USCG and NOAA both recommend frequent updates to your electronic data and the use of current paper charts. US waterways are constantly being modified by weather, tides and human activities, and only updated products can reflect identified changes. Check the date marked on your electronic maps and charts. If they are even a few years old, chances are the shallow areas, markers and inlets have been modified by nature or human activities. Offshore deep areas probably are still the same depths, but markers/buoys and now offshore wind farms offer obstruction to vessels!

NOAA's Custom Chart program is not a finished product; it's a work in progress. The inputs from NOAA cartographers, and discussions with USCG and NOAA, are ongoing in many areas. One vendor, MapTech, sends out an excellent newsletter to update map users on the progress. Good news, the NCC charting system allows boaters an opportunity to view the data, use and test the systems as the programs change.

NOAA also seeking comments from the public regarding paper and raster charts through the NOAA ASSIST tool at https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/customer-service/assist. With NOAA Office of Coast Survey, ASSIST, cruisers can input comments, which become part of the US governmental record. Between cruisers and with professional suggestions from major vendors such as MapTech, it is hoped to have better navigation data for US nautical charts.

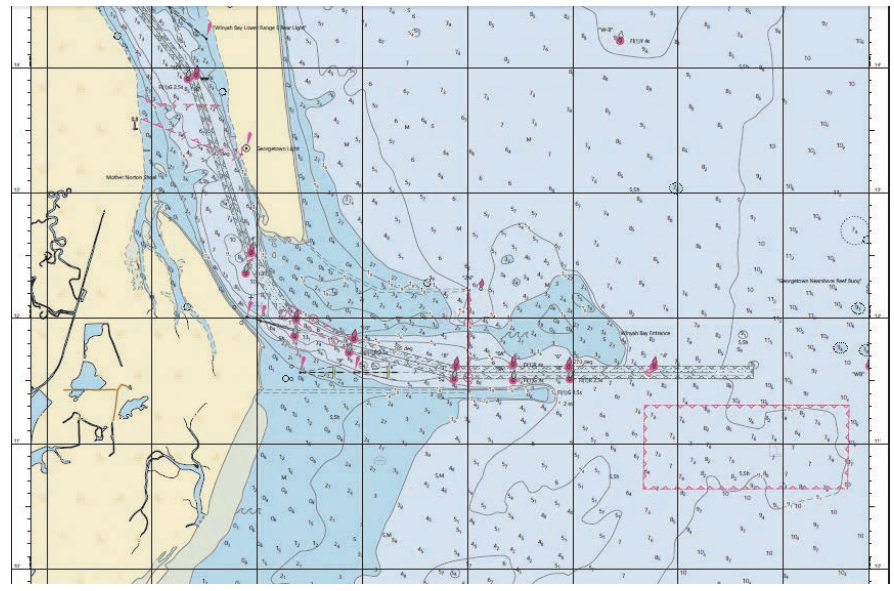




Top: The second icon is DISPLAY SETTINGS, a wheel. Under settings select meters/feet; the miscellaneous area lets you select the resolution and detail for the print (the further down the more detail).

Above: Note in the image the EXTENT has been created, and scale and print size selected. Then select the EXPORT icon at the top (the green button for a good chart).

Right: The PDF is created and you can download it to your computer or drive.



Joan Conover is the Vice President of the Seven Seas Cruising Association As a non-profit cruising organization, the SSCA researches topics of critical interest for cruisers as part of its outreach; this article is one result. The above information is a compilation from various US governmental (NOAA and USCG) responses, SSCA info-webinars, and commercial vendors. SSCA will continue to try and provide the most recent information on developments we believe will be of use for cruisers; contact the SSCA with comments and suggestions at cruisingstations@ssca.org

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Mermaid of Carriacou

January 1968 – July 2021

by Sally Erdle



Mermaid *underway in Carriacou before leaving the Windward islands for the last time.*

The Carriacou sloop *Mermaid of Carriacou*, launched in 1968, sank late on the afternoon of July 18th, 2021, after leaving the shipyard in La Ceiba, Honduras, where she had undergone extensive repairs. According to her owner and captain, John Smith, while the engineless wooden sloop was being towed from the yard through a shoal-filled zig-zag entrance to open water earlier that day, *Mermaid* ran aground twice. Pumps and buckets couldn't keep up with the resulting leaks, and she went down in deep water at 15°56.3539N, 86°52.1166W, some 12 miles south of the island of Utila. John and his two crew were rescued after dark by Utila Search & Rescue.

Mermaid of Carriacou was owned, sailed, and repaired by John Smith, now age 74, for 44 years. His sister-in-law, the writer, photographer and sailor Jan Hein, says, "*Mermaid* grew to be his life's partner. She's his story."

Mermaid marked a change

The building of *Mermaid of Carriacou* marked a sea change in the history of boatbuilding in the Grenadines: the evolution from working cargo and fishing vessels to racing and pleasure craft.

Nikoyan Roberts, Manager of Nautical Development in the Grenada Tourism Authority, wrote in the March 2021 issue of *Caribbean Compass* (see page 19 at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/march21compass_online.pdf), "The first Carriacou sloops and schooners were built in 1886. Thus began the legacy of boatbuilding traditions passed on from fathers to sons on two small Grenadine islands: Carriacou and Petite Martinique… Initially these wooden sloops and schooners were used to facilitate inter-island trade between other Caribbean islands including St. Barts, St. Maarten, Anguilla, Antigua, Barbuda, Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia and Dominica to the north and Trinidad, Tobago and Venezuela to the south.

"Moving with current trends and changing economic conditions, their use morphed over the years from marine trading into competitive, specialized racing or pleasure sailing. The Carriacou Regatta Festival was born in 1965 and is currently the longest-running regatta in the Caribbean for wooden boats, or any others for that matter."

According to Art Ross, in his book *Sixty Years of Sport: Sailing from the Age of Gatsby to the Grenadine Islands,* the Jamaican-born yachtsman J. Linton Rigg founded the Carriacou Regatta in August of 1965, after helping establish the Bahamas National Family Island Regatta in 1954. Ross wrote, "He wanted to put Carriacou on the map by encouraging the building of more and faster working sailboats, and to give the sailors and yachtsmen a chance to mix… By 1968 he had a great regatta going on. Competition was fierce; the most successful boat builder, Zepherine McLaren, and he built jointly the sloop *Mermaid of Carriacou*… he did go on to race and win most all of the races in *Mermaid*." As Douglas C. Pyle tells in his indispensable book *Clean Sweet Wind, Sailing Craft of the Lesser Antilles*, Rigg bought the materials for the boat and had a suit of sails cut by Ratsey & Lapthorn (famous for building sails for America's Cup challengers), while McLaren did the hull design and the building.



BILL CAMERON

John aboard Mermaid *in Carriacou, December 1998.*

Mermaid marked a change in John's life, too. John's previous boat, an engineless trimaran, broke up after a collision off Aruba with a tanker; John dove the hull for three days, trying to save the boat, while the Dutch Coast Guard circled in a P2 Orion overhead. Afterwards John spent some time sleeping in the Swedish cemetery in St. Barts. In the article "John Smith: Mermaid Man," published in the August, September and October 2019 issues of *Compass* (see links in footnote), he relates: "*Mermaid of Carriacou* was bought for me in 1977. She was a neglected sinking old beauty… she had become derelict after three years of no one working on her. Although *Mermaid of Carriacou* was undefeated in nine races over the years, immediately after she was built she became kind of a white elephant because without an engine and at 20 tons she was a little too big to fish and a little too small to carry enough cargo to make money. When Rigg died in 1976, no one else really wanted the boat. Richard David Kaplan of the JM Kaplan Foundation and Edwina Churchill, an artist and granddaughter of Winston Churchill, bought this vessel for me."



COURTESY ART ROSS

Mermaid of Carriacou *was launched in 1968.*

Although *Mermaid* had been built to race, John, out of necessity, took her back to her roots: "Now I had to make a living. So I did anything, from fishing to carrying tons of salt, or lumber from Honduras to Florida, or concentrated passionfruit juice from the old agro lab in St. Vincent, or coils of rope from Florida back to Grenada. It's a working boat and I'm a working guy. I am proud to say that for over four decades, by carrying a few passengers, a few goats and bullocks, and a lot of cargo — tons of salt, tons of charcoal, and thousands of tropical plants, plus timber and fruit extracts and rope and salted fish — I have been able to support myself and my ship without it having to become a tourist vessel."

While designed for speed, *Mermaid* was built in the Carriacou tradition. At 44 feet long and rigged as a gaff cutter, she had six-by-eight-inch deck beams, four-by-four frames, and an inch-and-a-half-thick deck. The floors were iron mangrove; the original frames were white cedar. Carriacou sloops are said by some to be built to last a decade. John multiplied that by five. "I've hauled this boat 42 times in 42 years," he says, in locations ranging from Florida to the Virgins, Leeward and Windward Islands, Venezuela, Aruba, and Honduras.

Some haulouts were simple affairs of caulking and painting. Others were more extensive, such as one in 2009 in Aruba, which involved replacing five planks with a local wood called *saqui-saqui*, sistering seven frames and installing one lodging knee of mangrove, using five pounds of fasteners, 20 feet of threaded rod and 25 nine-inch galvanized carriage bolts. The entire bottom was coated with epoxy tar and painted with 20 liters of Interspeed 640.

John once said, "A haulout is kind of like my vacation, when I don't have to worry about pumping."

From the Grenadines to Honduras

After crisscrossing the Caribbean for years, John and *Mermaid* eventually headed west from the Windward Islands for the last time, bound for Central America. John wrote in 2003, "When a large part of the Eastern Caribbean has been turned into a theme park with 'Bareboat' as season ticket, it is no wonder that a certain minority of sailors want to, in the words of Capt. Kirk, 'Go where no one has gone before.'" John left Grenada singlehanded after the back-to-back hurricanes Ivan and Emily in 2004 and 2005.

On the way John and *Mermaid* spent seven years in Venezuela, in the offshore islands of Margarita, Coche, Cubagua, Cayo Herradura, Orchilla, Los Roques and Las Aves, as well as at Cumaná, Higuerote and Puerto Cabello on the mainland.

Stops followed in Bonaire, Curaçao and Aruba, which he had been visiting since 1972. He wrote of departing Curaçao: "After tightening all lanyards with a come-along I am underway. I immediately rig preventers on the 28-foot-long boom and am soon running free in 12-foot seas, holding seven knots into the south-southwest. At 0800 I round Westpunt and sail into the Bucuti anchorage in Aruba. This is probably my sixth visit to Aruba. I check out the local haulout facility on the site of the Varadero Yacht Club. At $10 a foot and $20 a day I can afford maybe a week, plus paint. In a few more days I am back in the water and move to the anchorage outside the lagoon. Against the better judgment of folks who live on the beach I decide to get underway, solo, and just head due west — maybe to somewhere I have not ever visited, and Panama sounds quite interesting."

The resulting voyage turned into 26 days at sea, 16 of them either hove to or becalmed, culminating in a near shipwreck on Isla Colon. In 2010, when John was interviewed by Billy Campbell aboard *Mermaid* at Bocas del Toro, Panama, for the award-winning documentary *Vanishing Sail, the Story of a Caribbean Tradition* (https://vanishingsail.com), he recounted, "I was not rested and I fell asleep when I shouldn't have, at which point the steering gear chose to break after years of perfect work. I was five miles from the coast of Panama when I fell asleep at 2:30 in the morning and woke up about 150 feet from the coast of Isla Colon in Bocas del Toro, with no mainsail up, just the staysail, heading toward the beach with broken steering.

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"I managed to gybe the boat, and dropped the staysail and dropped my 250-pound fisherman anchor 'Dr Jekyll.' He saved my butt and I was able to hoist my mainsail and put up the outer jib… and I sailed out through eight- to ten-foot seas, one out of five breaking, going forward 50 feet and then sideways 80 feet and then forward 100 feet. For two hours I was within 100 yards of the lee shore, with my heart in my mouth. I was able to get where I am now, so I'm a very humble man having survived that, but it was scary."

After three years at Bocas del Toro, John and *Mermaid* sailed to Honduras searching for a haulout. He spent eight years in Honduras, noting the availability of "fine timber, inexpensive medical and dental care, plenty of fish and still some room in the offshore Bay Islands." He says, "Guanaja was my refuge when west."

The last haulout

Compounded by the Covid pandemic; crew, money and supply issues; and surgeries on John as well as on the boat, *Mermaid's* final haulout, on the Honduran mainland at La Ceiba — a shipyard more attuned to commercial vessels than wooden sailboats, and home to a flock of sheep — turned into a marathon 35-month refit, from August 2018 to July 2021, with a couple of launchings and re-haulings when things went awry.

John says, "In June 2019, *Mermaid of Carriacou* was launched at Le Ceiba after a months-long haulout, but I decided to re-haul after discovering that the garboard cotton was already weeping a bit and the yard here had a dozen boxes of oakum and I wanted a dry boat. So, back in the 'sheepyard.'

"In August 2019, the *Mermaid* was launched again and we set out for Guanaja. During the attempted run, the port garboard opened at the after end and we almost sank. The water came up to my ankles in the galley. The crew were dirt dwellers so they were uncomfortable — especially with the captain overboard on hookah gear. I doubt if the Irish lass will ever go to sea again. I lost some books and tools. We were towed by a fishing boat back to the 'sheepyard' and hauled out again. The port garboard back on now, refastened with threaded 316 stainless rod."

Work done at La Ceiba, mostly by John alone, included replacing a deck beam that cracked when *Mermaid* hit a Roatan reef, plus replacing 14 mangrove lodging knees and two long buttonwood knees aft to strengthen the shelf. At one point John reported, "I am refastening, grinding, spiling and installing several new long lengths of prime pine inside of the hull as 'ceiling,' providing additional backing for the over 60 feet of threaded rod used on most butts and new frames, and over 80 feet…

→



NICOLE MIKOLON

Above: Mermaid *in Guanaja, 2013. John says, 'Guanaja was my refuge when west.'*

Below: Ready to splash. The 2019 launch was successful, but Mermaid *didn't stay in the water long.*



JERRY JOHNSON



JOHN SMITH

Above: Mermaid's *interior. Painting of Mermaid by Canute Calliste. One thing John most regrets losing is his library.*

Below: Mermaid's *hull is sealed. The last transom plank will be put in later.*



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...of Santa Maria beam shelf. Slow work. No options. What I really need is an extra hand to fit the 14-foot planks at the stem that are well over my head. I heard from my Belizean shipwright friend. He has abandoned the idea of coming to La Ceiba to give me a hand and has taken other work. So I will re-caulk the entire hull alone, meaning a few extra months in the yard." He used 25 pounds of cotton, 60 quarts of seam compound and over 120 feet of 316 stainless rod.

This summer he wrote, "Still on *Mermaid*, though these past 20 years I have been mostly alone I still appreciate the manifest glory of just keeping this old boat afloat and waking each day a free man. Except for two hernia surgeries I have not been off of the boat in 29 years. Still no engine, no shoes and no bank account, but I do get a VA pension these days.

"I have plenty of singlehanding experience but after three years on hard, the pandemic, and a big refit I would really like to sail with someone who actually knows how to hand, reef and steer — a rare set of skills in Honduras. It will be too late in the season to head east; I'll just be glad to be afloat. Just want to get away from this horrendous coast and back to the Bay Islands.

On July 15th, 2021, he reported: "*Mermaid* launches this afternoon. I will be at the dock a few days. Friends are sounding the channel and I have contacted a friend with large powerboat [to tow *Mermaid* out to open water]."



JERRY JOHNSON

Mermaid *in the water after relaunch in June 2019.*

After *Mermaid* was put in the water, a routine familiar to all wooden boat owners began as the dried planks slowly began to "take up," swell, and stop the leaks. "When first launched she tried to sink, but with a 3,500gph, a 2,000gph, two 1,100gph, and an 850gph pump, plus crew on Edson manual pumps, we kept her up. After eight hours, leak has halved, long night, friend aboard: we watch on watch.

"After 36 hours in the water using a single 2,000gph pump about 40 minutes an hour while watching internal rivulets turn to trickles and then just stop — two more days maybe, then a dive look-see before any executive decisions are made.

"Plenty pumping, now 54 hours, slowing, but will dive on Saturday. Life is good, no worries, though it is common knowledge here that '*Mermaid* is sinking.' After all, 'you cannot build a ship out of wood'!

"Initially it took 25 minutes to empty the bilge, this morning it took 14 minutes to clear the bilge, and just now it took two minutes or less."

On July 18th, "...72 hours wet and less water in bilge every hour, but being especially watchful. Now about five gallons an hour; the smallest pump stays well ahead and gives the satisfying sound of sucking air.

"I will be a few more days, hoping for a tow and not many shoal patches en route to an offing."

Sinking and rescue

According to Andreas Weber, who set up a GoFundMe account to assist John after the sinking, "The disaster unfolded as he was about to leave for Utila. With a total crew of three, the *Mermaid* was pulled through the shallows off La Ceiba to the open sea, as she had no engine. The boat ran aground several times during the process... John immediately set reduced sail to crawl away from the lee shore with four steel wrecks on the reef and many dangerous rocks. But *Mermaid* already took on water. John had just bought brand new batteries, two 2,000gph pumps, and a 1.5-inch gas pump that gave up within 15 minutes. The leak worsened after they ran aground, but they were already out of the gate, a dangerous gate. John prepared the lifeboat while his crew manually pumped, tried to rebuild the brand new gas pump, and cleared out the strum boxes of the electric pump... to no avail, as the water covered the batteries and inverter. It was evident they could not save *Mermaid* without a working crash pump. Two ships arrived, neither had a pump — they were there to evacuate the crew, not to tow or share a pump.

"John was the last man in the lifeboat, with ditch bag and flares. A line was thrown to them [from the rescue vessel], the lifeboat was brought alongside and the three wet sailors were pulled aboard. John could not look back to see the *Mermaid of Carriacou* going down into the abyss. She was his home for most of his life."

John says, "I did my best. No crew injured or lost. 'In the lifeboat, boys' was the toughest order I ever had to give. Tough times, but had tough training for just this eventuality. Hard luck better than no luck; nighttime lifeboat rescues do not always go so well."

Ashore in Guanaja

John is now living out of his ditch kit and donated clothing in a shack on Guanaja. Lost with *Mermaid* were 52 years of ship's logs, writings, and computer info.

John reports, "First sleep on land in 29 years. Still in shock, but [losing *Mermaid* was] an inevitability I always knew existed. It's difficult adjusting — little tiny sandflies, oooh! But sprat for breakfast, plenty of fruits and endless fresh water. Quite an amazing spot, which I first visited aboard *Mermaid* in 1983.

"Very similar to Carriacou in that the Anglo influence and genetic exchange has resulted in a most beautiful ethnic mix. Where in Carriacou the Scots who arrived were skilled shipwrights, here the Irish, English and international pirates sought refuge after being betrayed by Henry Morgan. Fearless folks. I was treated with more respect and human dignity in the first three hours after being rescued by the Bay Islanders than in three years stuck in a mainland boatyard.

"As well as being the best boat operators in the world, and acknowledging a real sense of pirate brotherhood, the Bay man is totally fearless, forever faithful and never forgets a face."

Next goal: back to Carriacou

Andreas says, "John's story with *Mermaid* began long time ago on the island of Carriacou. This is the place where he feels at home and where he would like to continue. After his sad loss he aims to get back to Carriacou and live with his sailor friends."

John adds, "I'm good. Had a serious change of perspective but the goal remains the same: return to Carriacou for a while, maybe round up the last few shipwrights and start again. It will be good to be among folks who understand the hardships, risks and gratefulness — there are not many folks in Carriacou who have not been through rough times on the sea."

After *Mermaid* sank John posted this on Facebook:
He who binds to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy
He who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sunrise
— William Blake

"John Smith: Mermaid Man," was published in Compass in August, September and October of 2019. See 26 at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/august19compass_online.pdf, page 26 at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/september19compass_online.pdf, and page 24 at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/october19compass_online.pdf.

"A Singlehander's Sojourn at Bocas del Toro" was published in the October 2014 issue of Compass. See page 18 at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/october14compass_online.pdf.

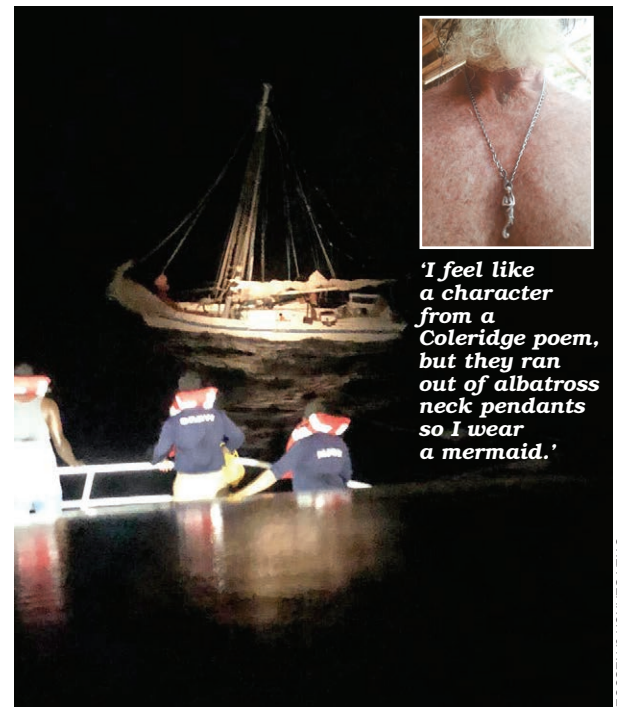
John Smith is the author of Little Fish Big Pond, *available at Amazon.com*



DANNY KAY JACKMAN

Above: John in Honduras, 2018.
Mermaid's *last haulout began in August of that year.*

Below: The last sight of Mermaid of Carriacou. *'"In the lifeboat, boys" was the toughest order I ever had to give.'*



UTILA SEARCH & RESCUE



STORM ANCHORING IN THE CARIBBEAN

by David Lyman
with the help of a few fellow sailors

THE height of hurricane season is upon us, and Don Street, Larry Tyler and I have been kicking around what gear and techniques we've used to survive hurricanes at anchor in the islands. This is far from a definitive report, and much has been published on the topic previously in *Compass* and elsewhere, but we felt that a reminder or two might be helpful.

Besides, this was a good excuse for the three of us to swap stories — and you'll notice we often don't agree.

Anchoring techniques in a hurricane

If you would be at anchor in the event of a big blow, where — in which harbor, cove or roadstead — would you want to be? What's the bottom like there? What's the storm's track?

I'd want to position the anchors so that the boat faces the worst of the blow. What techniques would you use to get the anchors down and firmly wedded to the bottom? What do you consider adequate scope, ten to one? Do you dive to see how the ground-tackle fares? What do you use for chafe guard?

What else to you do to ready your boat for a hurricane? Do you plan to stay onboard and ride out the storm? Do you have an exit plan should all fail and you and the boat wind up on the beach?

Let's get to some answers.

Anchors and Anchoring

Our debate rages on: CQR, Bruce, Danforth, Herreshoff Bronze, the Bulwagga, Fortress, Delta, Rocna. Navy, Yachtsman, Fisherman, a large stone… have I forgotten anything? It's like arguing over golf clubs, but then none of us plays golf.



Above: Anchorages like Ste. Anne in Martinique are popular. But in the event of a big blow, where do you want to be?

Below: Afaran's *working anchor was a 45-pound CQR on all chain. Buried in a sandy bottom, with the shank and chain lying flat, is good.*



In this article I share my first-hand Caribbean storm-anchoring experience. Don and Larry offer some food for thought, too.

I've always had a Danforth or two aboard my four boats. This funny-looking anchor was invented in 1939 by Henry Danforth and was used to great effect during the D-Day landing on Normandy Beach. The anchor, with its wide triangular flukes, was dropped astern as the LSTs approached the beach; it set quickly in the sand, and held. After off-loading troops the LSTs kedged themselves back into deeper water. The Danforth works well in all types of bottom, except sea grass.

The Danforth is light, light enough to be loaded into the dinghy and run out and dropped. It sets quickly, if you have at least 30 feet of chain attached. I've also had one secured aft on the pushpit, as a stern kedge. The Fortress, a more modern version of the Danforth, is very light and also sets quickly — great to load into the dinghy and run out as a second anchor. While some may prefer it, I consider it too light to be a storm anchor.

On *Searcher*, my Bowman 57 ketch, my working anchor was a 66-pound Bruce, the largest they make, on all chain, stowed on a bow roller. Next to it was a 43-pound Danforth on 30 feet of chain and 300 feet of five-eighths-inch nylon rode, ready to run out quickly as a backup, should my working anchor drag.

My storm anchor was an 80-pound Luke, with chain and rode stowed below under a bunk. Paul Luke, whose yard is just down the coast from my home in Maine, modified the Fisherman anchor's traditional configuration so it can be taken apart into three pieces and thus more easily stowed. It can be put back together on deck in three minutes. (Don Street disagrees with my choice of a storm anchor: "The Luke anchor is highly regarded in Maine but I feel useless in the Caribbean. The fisherman-style anchors will only dig into sand if the flukes are sharp. We dragged the Luke so often we abandoned using it.")

I rode out three hurricanes on *Afaran*, my Lord Nelson 41: Hurricane Emily, in Bermuda 1987; Hurricane Hugo, in Coral Bay, St. John, USVI, in 1989; and Hurricane Luis, in Maho Bay, St. John, USVI, in 1995. In all cases, I deployed the working anchor — a 45-pound CQR on all chain — and a 90-pound Fisherman, set in a Y off the bow.

The Fisherman sets fast, due to its design and sharp arrowhead flukes. It buries itself in most any bottom, and if there's a wind shift, will reposition itself or quickly reset. The Fisherman, or Yachtsman, design has been around since Columbus sailed, so why it is not seen on today's yachts? It doesn't look nice, it's dangerous to stow on deck and is a pain to deal with.

Don says, "On *Iolaire* through the years we used the Wilcox Crittenden (a copy of the three-piece Herreshoff, but not in three pieces) as her standard anchor. This always held her until it started blowing 25 gusting to 30, when we set a second anchor. I once bought a three-piece Luke, but found it absolutely useless in Caribbean. The three-piece Australian version we also found useless, but a 150-pound copy of the Herreshoff was a life insurance policy. I'd also bet on a stainless steel cast Danforth from WWII. High tensile Danforths are easily stowed by making the cross arms removable. Other good storm anchors include Northill, CQR, Fortress, and Bruce."

Larry, who has been sailing *The Dove* in the Caribbean for 30 years, has the following to add: "I have only ever used a CQR on this boat and on my last boat. The CQR has always protected me, even down at the bottom of the world in the Beagle Channel with lots of kelp forests, and in Antarctica, as well as during numerous typhoons in the Philippines. I had a Fisherman anchor on my last boat and it might have been nice to use one down in Patagonia with so much kelp in the anchorages. Now, I see a lot of new spade-type anchors on the bows of sailing boats and different articles written about tests done on them. They are similar to the CQR but with no swivel and a roll bar. I have no idea if they are any better."

The seabed

Actually, staying hooked to the bottom in a blow is less about the anchor than the bottom itself, the seabed. Is it soft mud, sand, gravel, kelp, sea grass, ledge, coral rubble, or a mixture? No anchor is going to set if the seabed is hard coral or smooth ledge. Aside from being an environmental taboo, anchoring amid coral heads risks your anchor getting lodged or the rode chafing. Anchor in an unknown harbor and you wind up snagging a cable, a sunken derelict, or an abandoned anchor.

Paper charts provide an idea of bottom composition along with the depth marking. In the old days, a man went forward into the chains and cast a lead. This ten-pound lump of lead had a hollow notch in the bottom, filled with grease to pick up a sample of what was on the bottom. Haul it up and you had a good idea of what lay beneath you. Active Captain on Navionics may give some idea of bottom conditions in particular anchorages. Better yet, go for a swim before selecting your final anchoring spot to see what's down there. If there's deep sand, no obstacles, and not much slope, great. And of course get back in water after dropping the hook to make sure it's properly set.

Your boat's foredeck

Many modern yachts are meant to be tied to a dock. Few have a strong point forward to which a thick mooring line or multiple anchor lines can be secured. Deck cleats are often too small to secure a hawser, with no backing plate under the deck. Chocks and fairleads often require an anchor line to make a sharp turn, increasing friction and chafe. Important: The windlass must not be used for securing storm gear. The windlass is for retrieving ground tackle, not as a strong point. (I made this mistake once, and bent the windlass shaft so it wobbled.)

A samson post is a strong wooden or metal post rooted in the keel and passing up through the deck where the top eight or 12 inches provide a strong attachment point for the anchor cable, or for mooring and towing warps. Secure anchor rodes to a samson post forward, or, if you want to be able to adjust them from the cockpit, lead them aft to your jib winches. *Afaran* had a stout samson post just aft of the windlass (see photo), ideal for securing more than a few lines. With a tugboat hitch, or a series of bends, I could release each line to make adjustments. When I acquired *Searcher* I had a samson post installed just off center, forward of the windless — and used it.

—*Continued on next page*

—*Continued from previous page*

A word about nylon rode chafe

I'm told that chafe is one of the biggest causes of yacht loss in a hurricane. If that's so, then what can be done about it?

First, we need a snubbing line attached to anchor chain to reduce shock loading the anchor when the boat rears back in gusts or is hit by a wave. We use stretchy nylon anchor rodes for the same reason: to lessen the shock to the anchor and deck gear. But nylon line is soft and easily damaged by UV and chafe.

There are two kinds of chafe: external, resulting from a line rubbing on a chock as it stretches, and internal. During repeated stretching the internal line fibers rub against each other causing friction which heats up the fibers — they melt and the line parts. Yes, the fibers will melt, if not kept wet. Chafe gear protects the line from rubbing on something, but actually exacerbates the heating-up problem, as rain or seawater can't cool the line. So, I have a better idea for dealing with line chafe.

(*Practical Sailor* has a report on several manufactured chafe guards in their July 2021 newsletter.)

My chafe solution

If the aim is to eliminate chafe, simply don't run your nylon lines over the side.

Instead, attach a short length of chain from the strong point on deck, through the chocks or over the bow roller, and a few feet outboard, where it can be shackled to the nylon snubber or anchor rode.

Snubbing line: Make up a 30-foot length of nylon as a snubbing line. Splice thimbles at each end. One end is shackled to the outboard end of the short chain, the other end shackled to a chain hook that's clipped to the anchor chain. No chance of chafe now, and you can still haul in the chain and attach the snubber in a different location.

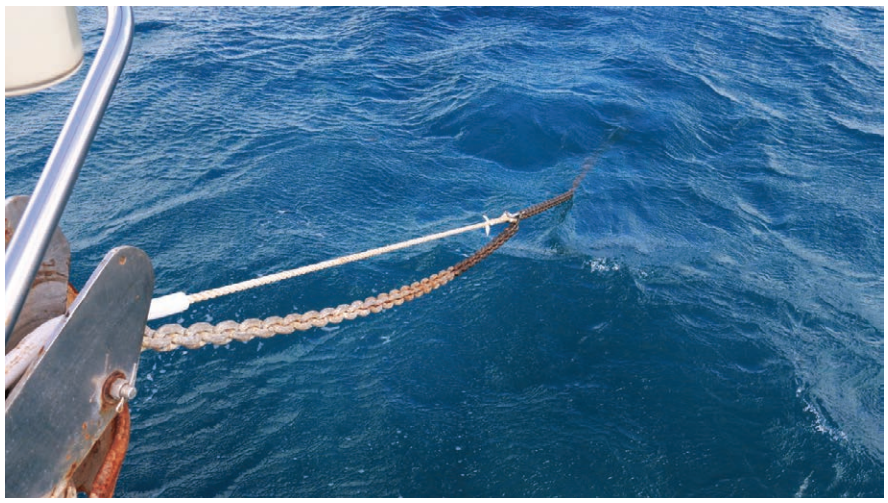
Nylon anchor rode: If you use a nylon anchor rode, use another short length of chain over the side, deploy the anchor, run out the scope, and attach a shackle at an appropriate point in the rode by taking a two turns around the bendy end of a shackle, loop the bitter end around the standing line and bring it back through the shackle (see photo). Attach the shackle to the end of the chain, run the lazy end aboard and secure. The strain is now transferred to the chain. The modified anchor hitch I've described will not jam and can be unwound when pulled on deck and the tension released. This gives you the ability to haul in the rode, disconnect the rode from shackle and the chain, adjust and re-deploy.



Above: Afaran *had a stout samson post just aft of the windlass, ideal for securing more than a few lines.*

Below: A snubbing line attached to the anchor chain reduces shock loading the anchor. As the snubber stretches out, the anchor chain begins to take the load. Note chafe guard over the bow roller on The Dove.

Bottom right: The modified anchor hitch used in my chafe solution will not jam.



Don, in one of his articles, says if you have a bowsprit with a strut fixed to a plate at the waterline, that would be a good spot to shackle a chain-to-rode purchase.

A word about nylon anchor rode. Keep your storm rodes below, out of the sun, until needed. UV damages nylon, resulting in a loss in strength. Use the best line you can afford, as it will have more internal lubricant to lessen internal friction while stretching.

Staying aboard during a hurricane

I wrote about my experiences staying aboard in Hurricane Hugo in 1989, in *Compass* last summer (see the May, June, and July 2020 issues at www.caribbeancompass.com/backissues.html).

I lost *Afaran* in 1995 when Hurricane Marilyn came through the USVI. The boat was moored in Great Cruz Bay, St. John, and I was not aboard. Less than two weeks earlier, I'd ridden out Hurricane Luis in Maho Bay and put her back on her mooring. Had I been aboard in Great Cruz Bay when Marilyn came through I would not have survived. But then I would not have been in Great Cruz Bay; I would have moved *Afaran* to Maho Bay again, where the chances were far better of survival.

Whether or not to stay aboard is a question that only you can answer. Would I stay aboard again, at my age? Depends on my boat, its location, the intensity of the blow, the shape of the harbor, the bottom, and the number and condition of the boats around me. And research suggests that in the future, there may not necessarily be more hurricanes, but they will likely be more intense.

There's one more consideration. Insurance coverage. Are the boat and I covered for total loss from a named storm? If so, there's less reason to remain aboard. Insurance companies advise owners: prepare as best you can and go ashore. Make sure your broker has a copy of your written "Named Storm Preparation Plan."

One more thing. What's your exit plan should the boat be blown ashore? Where will you be? Blown on to a beach, you might be able to step ashore and the boat might be easily re-floated. What if the lee shore is a rocky cliff or high seawall?

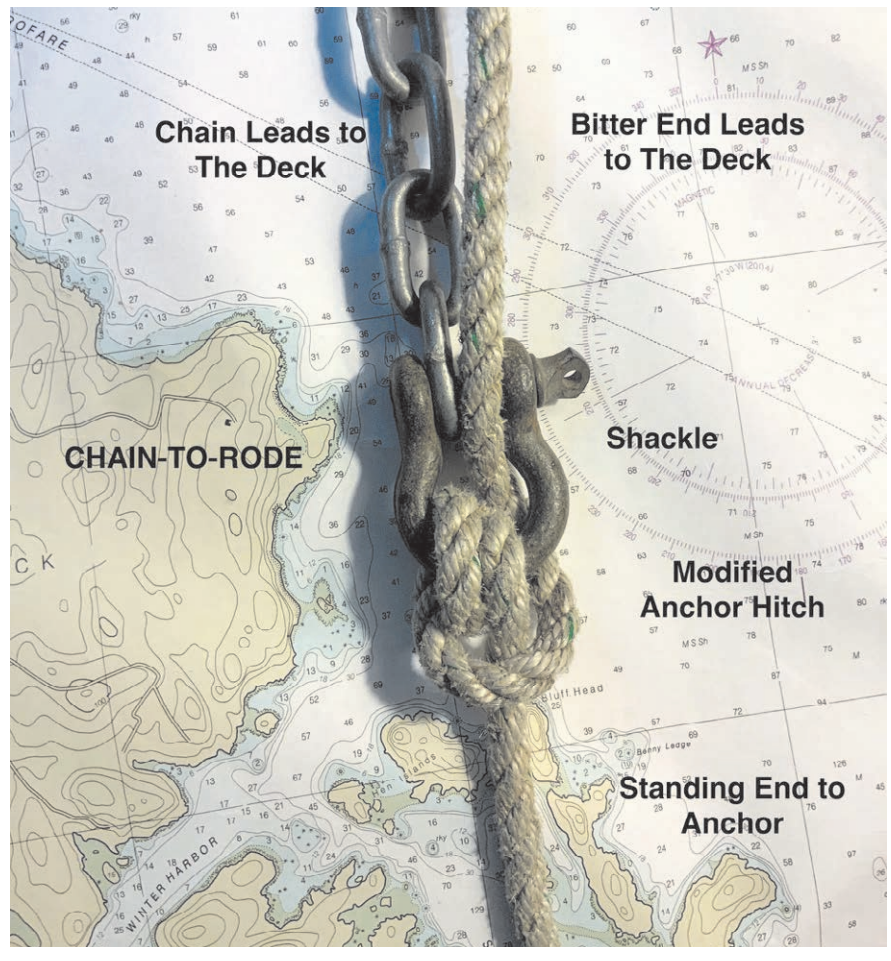
If you haven't done so already, it's high time to review your strategy, dust off your storm plan, inspect your ground tackle, and review your anchoring techniques.

Resources

- *Practical Sailor* magazine has conducted numerous tests on the holding power of various anchors, and their independent reports are online and in print. For example, see www.practical-sailor.com/sails-rigging-deckgear/anchor-resetting-tests.
- Daria and Alex Blackwell's book *Happy Hooking — The Art of Anchoring* is available at Amazon.com and at their website, www.coastalboating.net.
- Don Street's "Anchors... and Why They Don't Work," was published in the January 2015 issue of C*ompass*; see page 36 at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/january15compass_online.pdf.

Read more on hurricanes in Don's website, www.street-iolaire.com.

- Fatty Goodlander's book *Creative Anchoring*: *Everything About Anchors and Anchoring* is available from his website, http://fattygoodlander.com.
- Chris Doyle wrote about making anchor upgrades in the July 2020 issue of *Compass;* see page 12 at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/july20compass_online.pdf.
- I wrote about my experiences being aboard during a hurricane in the May, June, and July 2020 issues of *Compass;* see www.caribbeancompass.com/backissues.html





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BOOK REVIEW BY BLOSSOM BROWN

Defying the Dragons

Adventures of a Pirate Girl: Hitchhiking the High Seas, *by Davina Menduno, ©2021. Wildgeese Communications, 286 pages. ISBN 978-1-7371327-0-7 (trade paperback), ISBN 978-1-7371327-1-4 (eBook)*

"Here be dragons..." said the old charts about potentially dangerous unexplored regions, and Davina Menduno has risked the dragons by writing this sailing memoir. If Liesbet Colleart broke barriers in the cruising memoir genre by writing openly and honestly about the "sea trials" of her liveaboard marriage in the recently published *Plunge: One Woman's Pursuit of a Life Less Ordinary*, Davina has gone further into uncharted waters with her sex-forward account of being a single young female boat-hopper with a lively libido, replete with unabashed accounts of hot encounters on the high seas. And she's not kidding about "high" seas, either.

The dragons of sexual conservatism will have plenty to tut-tut about, but Davina swashbuckles through the sailing world as young men have done since the phrase "a girl in every port" was invented, and she's not ashamed of it. Pirates are meant to be lusty, right?



Some object to contemporary sailors identifying as "pirates," either because real pirates were — and still are — not very nice people, or because pirate-themed costume parties have become a cliché. But the author justifies her choice. She writes:

So what is this fascination with pirates? Why are these vicious and violent thieves so popular?

To understand the current fascination with the pirates of old, you first have to understand the context in which they lived. During the late 1700s, naval ships from various European countries (England, Spain, France) roamed the seas in constant, bloody battle. There were also privateers — essentially pirates sponsored by kings and queens — paid to loot the merchant ships of opposing countries to fill the royal coffers. Often, privateers would turn pirate and keep the booty for themselves. There were public hangings and beatings. The slave trade was in full swing. Indigenous people were being massacred. Women had no rights; they were owned by either their fathers or husbands. It was a dangerous time.

Instead of accepting a life of servitude, pirates took matters into their own hands. Just like sovereign powers of the day, pirates used violent means. They were the infamous and often respected entrepreneurs of the deep.

It was a time when naval and merchant ships operated as strict dictatorships. Captains had absolute power to administer brutal punishments and even execute a crew member who got out of line. Things were different on pirate ships — revolutionary, really. Predating any modern democratic government, pirates organized themselves in relatively liberal, egalitarian ways based on elected captains and officers. A pirate's code — an actual document clearly defining each person's percentage of the take — often also described an onboard culture based on mutual trust.

Because of their refusal to be enslaved in the system, pirates remain in the collective consciousness as symbols of freedom and self-reliance. A pirate is an archetype for someone who takes charge of their own destiny despite the odds.

Her original dream was to "sail the world and have an amazing man." But after getting her captain's license and a boat, she didn't find a man to sail with. She sold her boat after three years and nearly abandoned the dream. "Love and sailing, it turned out, hadn't woven together smoothly as I'd envisioned. And so I teased the two strands apart, reducing that richly embroidered tapestry to just me hitchhiking my way around the world on other people's boats: a last-ditch effort." She jumps on a yacht heading from North Carolina to the Caribbean.

Davina's Caribbean adventures will perhaps be of the most interest to *Compass* readers. Her account of crossing Pacific on a number of other people's boats is (barring eye-popping scenes like what she got up to on a French Polynesian interisland ferry) sometimes a bit pedestrian, but that is exactly what gives the reader a sense of how frustratingly tedious a pirate girl found it riding along on less adventurous people's dreams.

Finally arriving in New Zealand she meets a French couple.

"Cristina and Jerome had met a lifetime ago in the Caribbean. Cristina — a single mother of a small boy — had left Colombia and was living on Martinique, a French-speaking island, painting portraits to make a living. On the beach one day she noticed an attractive young man on a catamaran anchored out a ways. She left her son in the care of someone on the beach and swam out to make his acquaintance. Jerome was cruising and already had crew but she convinced him to take her and her son on, at least until the next island. Long story short: They ended up having two kids together and raised the three while slowly cruising the Caribbean and the Pacific for over 12 years. They had lived my dream."

The author's dream "to sail the world and have an amazing man" turned out successfully, albeit differently. She sailed halfway around the world by hitchhiking, and her amazing man is the result of an unexpected but sincerely wanted pregnancy. She now lives on Waiheke Island, New Zealand, where she is raising her son and sailing in the Hauraki Gulf. It's a pirate's tale with a happy ending.

This book is available at DavinaMenduno.com and online booksellers.

LOOK OUT FOR...

The Grape-Like Governor's Plum

by Lynn Kaak

Every month in the Caribbean there's something special to look out for.

Known as Governor's Plum, Madagascar Plum or Indian Plum, *Flacourtia indica* is found throughout the tropics. As the common names of many Caribbean fruits include the word apple (star apple, sugar apple, wax apple and even pineapple), so it is with "plums." But the governor's plum isn't to be confused with *Spondias purpurea* (Hog Plum, Jamaica Plum, Bequia Plum, Jocote, etc.) or *Spondias mombin*, the Yellow Mombin, Spanish Plum or Gully Plum. In the French islands, *Flacourtia indica* can be known as *cerise* — although it's not a cherry. Where the name Governor came from is a mystery.



Originally from Asia and Africa, the Governor's Plum eventually found its way to the Caribbean. Since it can be grown from seeds, grafting or cuttings, it wasn't hard to spread.

The part of the tree that is most popular in the Caribbean, and probably most other places, is the globular fruit that it produces. The fruits can be about two and a half centimetres (one inch) in diameter. They look like grapes, albeit more firm, and can be eaten like them. They even have small seeds resembling those of grapes.



The Governor's Plum generally isn't grown commercially, but more for a convenient snack or for landscaping.

The flowers start out looking like little green fuzzy balls that then open up into a larger fuzzier ball reminiscent of a dandelion gone to seed. They are usually situated at the end of the branches.

The leaves can differ greatly between trees. Some are longer, some more oval. They may look smooth, or have a slightly corrugated appearance. Look for the fruit for identification, as the leaves will not be an easy giveaway.

The Governor's Plum can be grown as a shrub or a tree. It responds very well to being cut back, making it useful for landscaping. If left to become a tree, it typically only attains a height of about five to eight metres (15 to 25 feet), so it isn't exactly a towering giant.

It is fortunate that the tree isn't very tall, as it is not a tree that lends itself to climbing: the spikes on the branches and the trunk tend to be a strong deterrent to climbing for the fruit.



The "plums" may also be made into preserves or fermented into wine. Traditional medicinal uses in some parts of the world are mostly for arthritis and pain relief, and the leaves are used as an antidote for snakebites.

Sometimes Governor's Plums are available for sale in stores or at the market, or you may be lucky enough to come upon a tree while hiking. Look for the darker purple fruit, as they ripen from red to purple. If fully ripe they are pleasantly sweet, but they can have a tendency to be a little acidic. They have an astringent feel to them if slightly underripe, but are still tasty.

Rolling them between the palms makes them a little softer and tends to make them even tastier, especially if they aren't quite perfectly ripe — which gives them yet another common name in the Caribbean: Rolling Cherry.

The Sky from Mid-September to Mid-October

by Jim Ulik

Though I'm past one hundred thousand miles
I'm feeling very still
And I think my spaceship knows which way to go
Far above the moon
Planet Earth is blue
— "Space Oddity" (1969), David Bowie

The above lyric excerpts reference Major Tom and the difficulties he experienced adrift during his mission to the stars. Bowie's interest in science fiction and fascination with *2001: A Space Odyssey* led him to write "Space Oddity." The song was released a few days before the Apollo 11 mission and *Eagle's* setting down on the surface of the Moon. As for astronomy, the influence of David Bowie's music led astronomer Felix Hormuth to name an asteroid he discovered after the musician (342843 Davidbowie). To be sure, asteroid 342843 Davidbowie is not "still," as it orbits the Sun at 70650 km/h (43900 mph). The asteroid, measuring 1.4 km (4,600 feet) in diameter, makes its closest approach to Earth on September 16th.

Thursday, September 16th

Look for the Moon to rise a few hours before sunset. Today it is nearing the halfway point between first quarter and full. Saturn will appear to move closer to the Moon as the night progresses. Far above the Moon the asteroid named after David Bowie will share the night sky with the Moon, Saturn and Jupiter.

Friday, September 17th

The Moon shifted east over the last 24 hours. That puts the Moon south of Jupiter. Both objects will remain in the constellation Capricornus through the night.

In the western sky Venus and Mercury are lined up along the ecliptic. Spica, the 16th brightest star in the night sky, can be seen east of Mercury.

Monday, September 20th

The Earth is located between the Sun and the Moon. From our perspective the Sun's rays will illuminate nearly 100 percent of the Moon. Between three and 12 percent of the sunlight is actually reflected off the Moon back to Earth. During its full phase the Moon will pass through Earth's atmosphere (see Image 2). According to measurements made by the ESA/NASA Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO), the outermost part of Earth's atmosphere extends well beyond the lunar orbit. The gaseous layer that wraps around Earth reaches up to 630,000 km (391,464 miles) away, or 50 times the diameter of our planet.

Wednesday, September 22nd

Today marks the September, or Autumnal, Equinox. The Sun will shine directly on the equator and there will be nearly equal amounts of day and night throughout the world. This is also the first day of fall in the Northern Hemisphere and the first day of spring (vernal equinox) in the Southern Hemisphere.

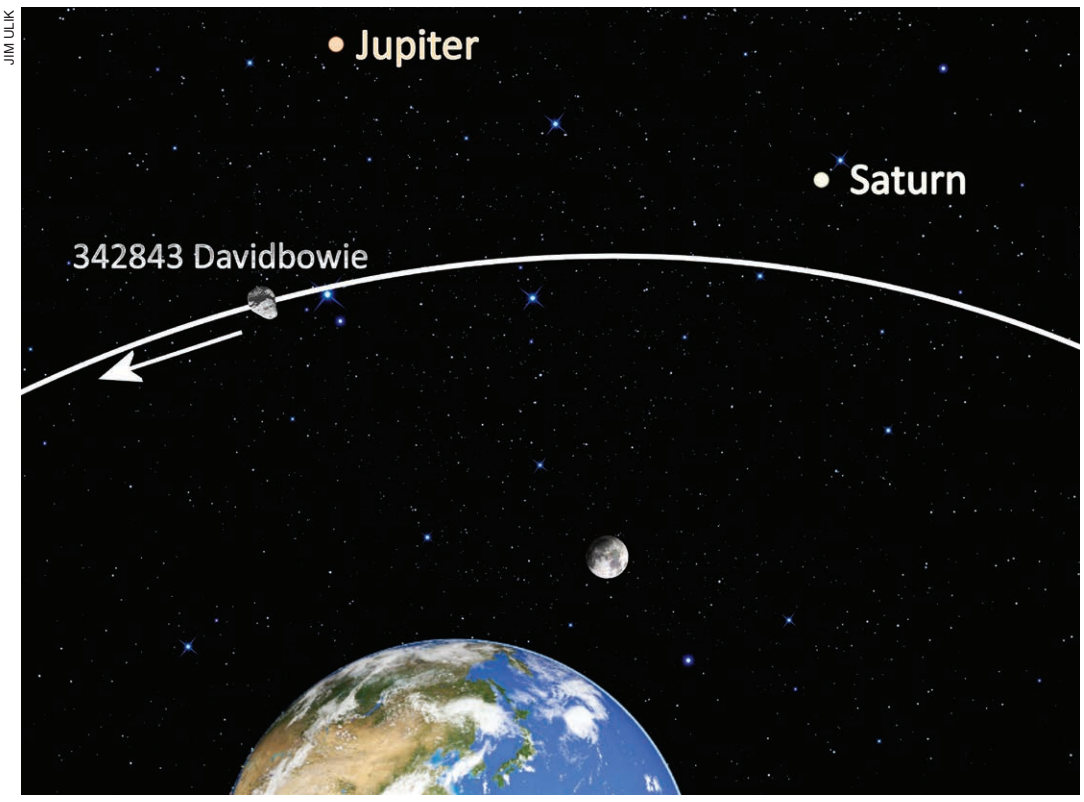
Monday, September 27th

Meteors from the Daytime Sextantids might be seen radiating out of the eastern sky for about an hour before sunrise. There is a lesser ability to view one during the daylight hours unless it is very bright or leaves an obvious smoke trail similar to contrails left behind by aircraft. The shower is active September 9th through October 9th.

Tuesday, September 28th

The Moon has reached third quarter. This is a good time to identify north and south. Follow the line (terminator) between the dark and light sides of the Moon. Extend the line toward the horizon in either direction to find north or south.

JIM ULIK



From Earth's perspective at around 1900 hours Saturn appears to be near to the Moon as asteroid 342843 Davidbowie passes by.

Monday, October 4th – Sunday, October 10th

The General Assembly of the United Nations declares October 4th to 10th World Space Week to "celebrate each year at the international level the contributions of space science and technology to the betterment of the human condition."

More than 8,000 events in 96 countries celebrated "The Moon: Gateway to the Stars" last year. This year World Space Week celebrates "Women in Space" and the theme is "Satellites Improve Life."

Tuesday, October 5th

The Earth's atmosphere will take a glancing blow from a debris field left behind from an unknown asteroid or comet. This has the potential to produce a few meteors radiating out of the northeastern sky. This shower, called the October Camelopardalids, is only active for two days, October 5th and 6th. The meteor shower can be seen emanating out of the constellations Camelopardalis and Draco. Both constellations are close to Polaris.

Wednesday, October 6th

The Moon is now at its new phase. Consequently, the solar wind and flares are now bombarding the side of the Moon that is away from Earth. See Image 3. There isn't a magnetic field to protect the Moon so the solar storms ionize the lunar surface ejecting particulates up to a mile into space. The solar wind transports the material and gasses towards Earth.

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page

Friday, October 8th
The Draconids is a minor meteor shower that will peak tonight producing about ten meteors per hour. It is produced by dust grains left behind by comet 21P Giacobini-Zinner, which was first discovered in 1900. The best viewing is in the early evening. Any meteors will radiate out of the north below the bright star Vega.

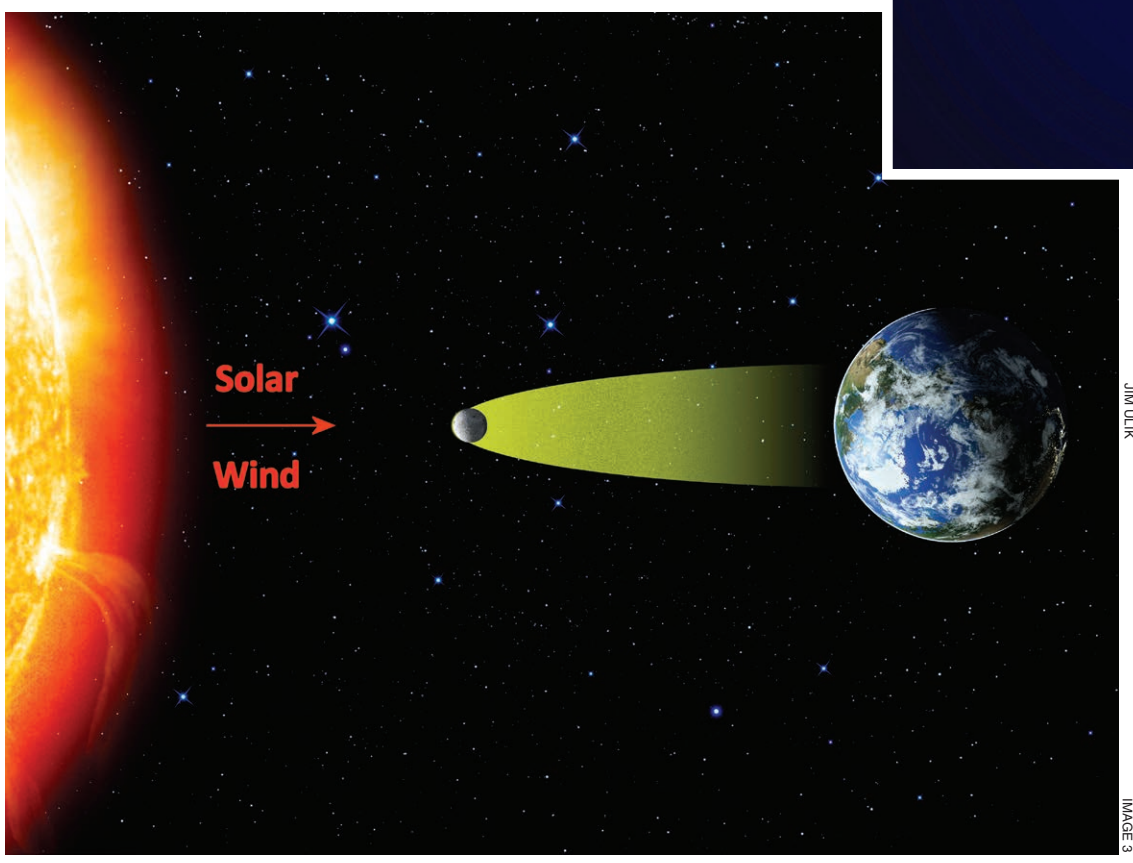
The Autumn Arietids is another minor meteor shower that peaks tonight. Look for an occasional shooting star to radiate out of the eastern sky. This shower is active September 7th through October 27th.

Saturday, October 9th
The Moon will make its monthly pass by Venus tonight. The cosmic pair is located in Scorpius near Antares, one of the largest known stars. The red super giant is 680 times the diameter of our Sun.

Monday, October 11th
The Delta Aurigids is a minor shower that is active September 20th through October 16th. The meteors may be few but they will glow brightly as they quickly pass through Earth's atmosphere. Their velocity is 230,000 km/h (143,000 mph).

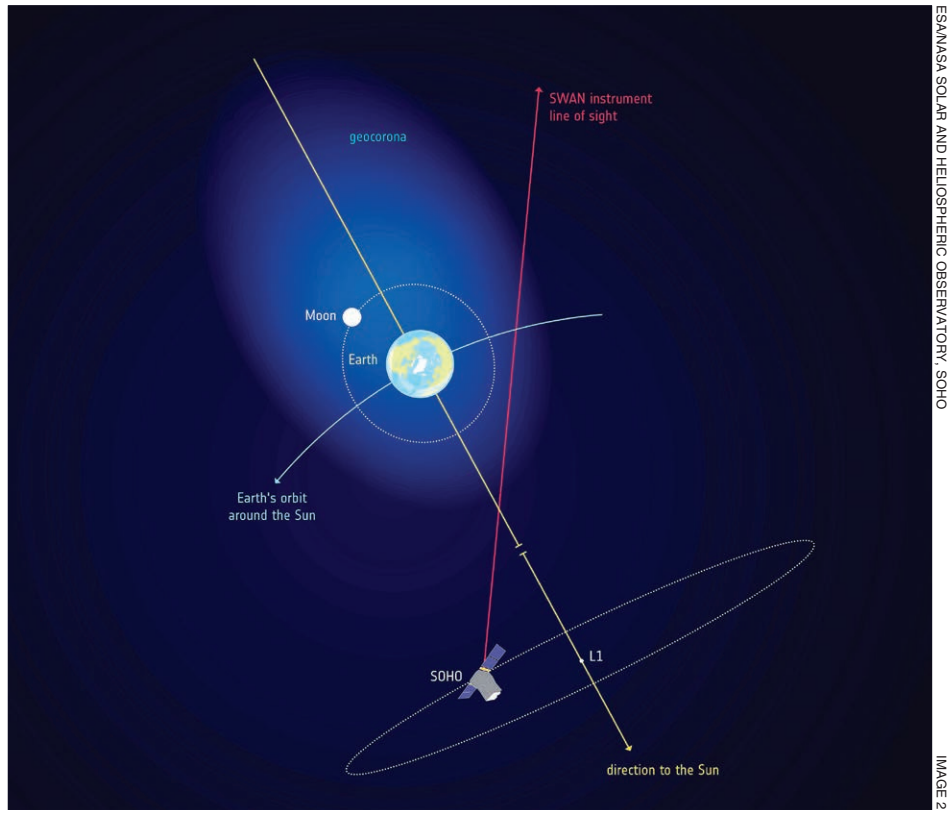
Wednesday, October 13th – Friday, October 15th
The Moon has made another loop around Earth. On October 13th it has returned for another close approach to Saturn. Over the next two days the Moon will gradually move eastward past Jupiter.

In the News
If an unknown asteroid the size of 342843 Davidbowie impacted Earth the damage would extend outward over 500 km (310 miles) from its impact point. That would encompass an area over 1600 square kilometers (975 square miles).



JIM ULIK

IMAGE 3



ESA/NASA SOLAR AND HELIOSPHERIC OBSERVATORY, SOHO

IMAGE 2

Above: The solar wind pushes Earth's atmosphere beyond the Moon.

Left: The solar wind or solar storms interact with the Moon's surface, transporting material and gases to Earth.

Astronomers searching the night sky for hazardous asteroids are in remote areas at high elevations. The reasons are to minimize interference from pollution, light pollution and atmospheric turbulence. Currently the observatories are facing a situation where the discoveries of celestial objects are diminishing because of the glare from satellites and space debris. NASA has approved development of the NEO Surveyor asteroid-hunting space telescope. NEO Surveyor will find 90 percent of near-Earth objects (NEO) with diameters of at least 140 meters. An impact from an object that large could level an entire city.

What can be done if an asteroid is headed towards Earth? NASA has developed and will launch the Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART). The mission plan is to impact an asteroid to adjust its speed and path away from Earth.

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

Jim Ulik sails on S/V Merengue.

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The Bananaquit or Sugar Bird



The Bananaquit is a creature of the American tropics where bananas thrive and blossoms abound throughout the year. Notably skittish and constantly on the move, this bird is usually seen feasting upon a banana tree, or darting from flower to flower, hopping and probing with quick, nervous movements, in search of the sweet, precious nectar.

The Bananaquit is found in Central and South America, as far south as northern Argentina and throughout the Caribbean, except Cuba and the Cayman Islands. Found in a variety of habitats including mangrove forests, gardens, parks and anywhere with wild or planted flowers, the Bananaquit is one of the most abundant birds in the Caribbean islands and maybe one the most celebrated, as the "yellow bird" of Harry Belafonte's famous calypso.

It is known by many names including Banana Bird, Paw-Paw Bird, Yellow Breast, Marley-Quit, Bessie Bird, Beeny Quit, Si-Si Bird and finally Sugar Bird, for its notorious love of nectar, bowls of sugar and sweet drinks. The species profits greatly from human proximity and is so admirably adapted to human environments that it can easily become tame, approaching humans at outdoor tables to take sugar from bowls, or even to sip from an unattended beer! Quite astonishingly some Bananaquit populations, for instance those in Tobago, have acquired a formidable taste for eight- to 12-proof alcoholic beverages, such as beer, and a most curious capacity to remain unaffected by it!

The Bananaquit is also an avid fan of sweet ripe bananas and a regular visitor at our banana feeder, where it pierces the banana skins with its sharp beak to access the flesh inside. It is particularly fond of banana blossoms and can often be seen suspended upside down while happily drinking the nectar from the enormous tear-shaped flower.

A regular visitor at hummingbird feeders, the sweet Bananaquit is not much bigger than a hummingbird, yet the way the two groups of birds feed is entirely different: the hummingbird feeds poised in midair, while the Bananaquit is bold and acrobatic, clinging to the stems of flowers at all possible angles. It feeds by thrusting its head between the petals, using its extendable forked tongue to extract the nectar stored within. As a nectar feeder, it acts as a pollinator for small flowers, but blossoms with extremely long tubular corollas, whose nectar is beyond reach of the bird's beak and tongue, are pierced by the sharp curved beak near the base and "robbed" of the nectar.

The Bananaquit supplements its diet with a few insects, ants, flies and insect larvae. It uses a technique called "gaping" to eat the inside pupae by piercing the casing, opening its bill slightly and licking the contents with its special forked tongue.

Although often placed with the Honeycreepers in the family Emberizidae, the Bananaquit has been assigned its own monotypic family, the Coerebidae. The typical adult Bananaquit, *Coereba flaveola*, is a distinctive bird, about 10 to 13 centimetres long (four to five inches) with a blackish-grey mantle, bright yellow breast and belly, luminous white eyebrows and slaty throat. There are, however, many geographic variations, with no fewer than 41 recognized subspecies differing in bill length and colour (for example: the extent of yellow on the belly varies and the colour of the throat may be black, grey or white). Subspecies in the Venezuelan islands of Los Testigos (*C.f. laurae*), Cayo Sal (*C.f.melanornis*) and Los Roques (C.*f.lowii*) have entirely black or sooty plumage, while the subspecies in the islands of Grenada (*C.f. aterrima*) and St. Vincent (*C.f.atrata*) have two colour morphs living side by side — the normal "yellow breast" and an entirely blackish or melanic morph. Interestingly, in both islands, the distribution of the two morphs is strongly related to variation in rainfall: the drought tolerant "yellow breast" occurs in the driest habitats, while the "black morph" is predominant in the wet parts of the islands, including rainforest habitat.

The Bananaquit can be observed singly, in pairs, or in larger groups when food is in abundant supply. The species forages at all levels, from ground flowers to the highest forest blooms, often mixing with tanagers, mockingbirds, bullfinches and warblers. Typically a very gregarious bird, the Bananaquit is a tiny bundle of energy — fast-paced, energetic and noisy. It is a tireless singer whose early morning chorus is one of our garden's loudest symphonies, as large numbers gather in the blossoming trees, squeaking away to their hearts content. The song of the male is a rapid series of sibilant, somewhat wheezy "*sisisis*" and "*wiz-wiz-wiz sisisisi*" while the female's call is a hurried, squeaky "*tsip*."



The song can be heard throughout the year and at any time of the day, varying with individuals, environment and geographical location. The male sings more frequently than the female and has the greatest song variation. There are at least 120 types of song per male, each created by omitting or adding notes at the end of the song.

The Bananaquit is an industrious builder. This prolific bird builds nests all year around, not to breed in, but to sleep in. Both males and females build their own globular dormitories, which resemble breeding nests but are very much smaller and flimsier. An individual may have the same dormitory for months, or he may swap nest with his neighbor, but if the nest is lost to weather or another bird, the Bananaquit will quickly build another. Hence, Bananaquit dormitories are so abundant that they are the most frequently seen nests in the Caribbean.

The breeding season occurs throughout the year, but peaks with the rainy season's first showers (which can occur from March to August), typically the most productive flowering period and a prime time for insects. The male attracts a mate by singing non-stop around the female's dormitory. Once he has her attention, the pair initiates a courtship ritual that includes facing each other, bowing, scraping, and turning heads, often while holding nest material in the bill. The pair will then leave their individual dormitories to build a larger, more elaborate nest suitable to raise a family.

The breeding nest is a meticulous thick-walled globular structure, three times larger than a dormitory and constructed with a large amount of plant matter including dry grasses, twigs, soft leaves, feathers, banana leaf fiber and occasionally material stolen from other birds' nests. Some Bananaquit nests examined in Tobago were assembled with 400 to 650 individual pieces of nest material! Built with a high side entrance protected by a protruding lip that opens into a cozy, dark chamber below, the breeding nest is an architectural wonder that takes about seven days to construct, as opposed to the few hours needed for a dormitory. The nest is woven into the end of a thin branch on a tree, shrub, or vine about one and a half to 15 metres (five to 50 feet) from the ground. Whenever possible it is placed near a wasp nest as protection against predators. Studies show that Bananaquits who nest near wasp colonies are more successful in rearing chicks and retaining their mates.

The female lays two or three small eggs, which she alone incubates for about 14 days. During this time, the female sleeps in the breeding nest while the male sleeps in his own dormitory close by. Although most of the parental care is done by the female, the male Bananaquit helps by guarding his mate while she incubates and assists with protecting and feeding the hatchlings with regurgitated food. The chicks' diet consists largely of insects, which provide them with all the essential protein for rapid development. Sugar Bird babies fledge at 15 to 18 days old, vanishing into the foliage while squeaking their sharp calls to allow their parents to bring them food. Interestingly, fledglings are never invited to use their parents' dormitories and instead are left to sleep outside until they find an abandoned nest or learn to build their own, well before acquiring adult plumage at one year old. Like their parents, Bananaquit chicks are fast-paced and remarkably successful at survival — at three weeks old they are fully independent, bravely clambering through the vegetation, probing the flowers for nectar, peering boldly into crevices for insects, or eagerly joining a gang of other Bananaquits to devour a bunch of ripe bananas.

THE REEF BUILDERS

Part One

by Darelle Snyman

In a previous article I briefly touched on the reef builders, those coral species whose architectural abilities are responsible for the wonderful underwater gardens we love to explore. In this two-part article we will take a closer look at more of these Scleractinian corals, also known as the "stony" or "hard" corals.

Brain corals

As a group, brain corals are probably the most easily recognizable. Their distinctive spherical shape, with its meandering polyp-bearing valleys and ridges, resembles a human brain. These amazing organisms are slow growers, with each generation adding less than five millimetres a year to the growing limestone structure. They might be slow growing but can become massive in size, up to six feet tall (1.8 metres), and can reach the astonishing age of 900 years. Brain corals are unique in that their tissues are more closely connected than those of other corals, and are not separated by skeletal structures. Such tissue integration allows for easier transfer of nutrients, oxygen and hormones among the coral polyps, but can also make the colony more vulnerable to the spread of disease.

All corals compete for sunlight on a reef to provide their tiny photosynthetic hosts, the zooxanthellae, with as much light as possible. Brain corals can become quite competitive in this regard, even slowly overgrowing one another for that prime sunny spot. For all coral species the buildup of sediments is a problem as it blocks out life-giving sunlight. Brain corals deal with this problem by extending their polyps and using their tentacles as sweepers to remove debris that collects in their grooves.

It can become very confusing to distinguish the different brain coral species from one another. Identification often requires a closer look at their ridges and valleys. Grooved Brain Coral (*Diploria labyrinthiformis*) is probably the most easily recognizable species because of its intricate folding pattern and wide ridges. The stunning yellow-hued specimen in the photo was one of many I found in the clear waters of Belize. The valleys between the prominently grooved ridges are deep and narrow.

Symmetrical Brain Coral, also known as Common Brain Coral (*Pseudodiploria strigosa*), is also common, and I often confuse it with the similar looking Boulder Brain Coral (*Colpophyllia natans*). Both can be encrusting or dome shaped, attain massive sizes and vary in the same shades of yellow-brown, green or gray. The ridges of Symmetrical Brain Coral are rounded and lack a groove, while the ridges of Boulder Brain Coral have a distinct groove that runs along the ridge crest.

The meandering grooves of brain coral form ideal places for small fish, such the Neon Goby (*Elacatinus oceanops),* to hide and rest and, more importantly, they are the ideal real estate to establish cleaning stations. That is why you will often see larger fish circling around brain corals, patiently waiting for their turn to be cleaned.

Brain coral also plays host to another reef resident, the Christmas Tree Worm (*Spirobranchus giganteus*), whose colorful Christmas tree shaped "crowns" are a familiar sight, protruding above the coral surface and filtering microorganisms from the water.

Cactus corals

The cactus corals are another brainy-looking group of meandering corals whose native range is restricted to the Caribbean. Colonies of cactus coral typically form flat discs or low, encrusting mounds, and make beautiful photographic subjects with their intricate ridge patterns. They are sometimes fluorescent in color, making them stand out against the reef, glowing in hues of green and red. To date I have only encountered them in their typical colorations of grey or brown, such as the beautiful specimen of Ridged Cactus Coral (*Mycetophyllia lamarckiana*) that I found (and photographed) hidden away among the other coral. Ridged cactus coral has distinct scalloped edges and low ridges that run towards the center but do not connect there. Unlike many coral species that reproduce by releasing masses of egg and sperm into the surrounding water during spawning, Ridged Cactus Coral is a brooding coral: fertilization and larvae development occurs inside the parent coral and the resulting planula larvae are only released when they are capable of independent settlement. The larvae of brooding corals tend to be larger and they already play host to the symbiotic algae critical to their survival.

Smooth Flower Coral

Smooth Flower Coral (*Eusmilia fastiginia*) is a strikingly different-looking stony coral reef resident, easily identified by its long, widely spaced tubular corallites (the individual skeletal cups on each polyp). Sometimes, however, the spaces between the corallite branches become filled with algae or sediment, making it appear as if the corallites are budding from the ground. The tips of the corallites, which can be oval or peanut shaped, are ridged, giving them a jagged appearance. They vary in shades of yellow-brown to brown or grey. The carbonate skeleton is covered with a translucent, jellylike tissue that connects the colony.

During the day the polyps hide in their protective corallite shelter, but at night they come alive, extending translucent white tentacles that scour the surrounding water for passing morsels. It is from these nightly displays of their fleshy, flower-like polyps that they received their common name. This delicate, photosynthetic coral is easily damaged by wave action and therefore mostly encountered in shallow, protected areas of the reef.

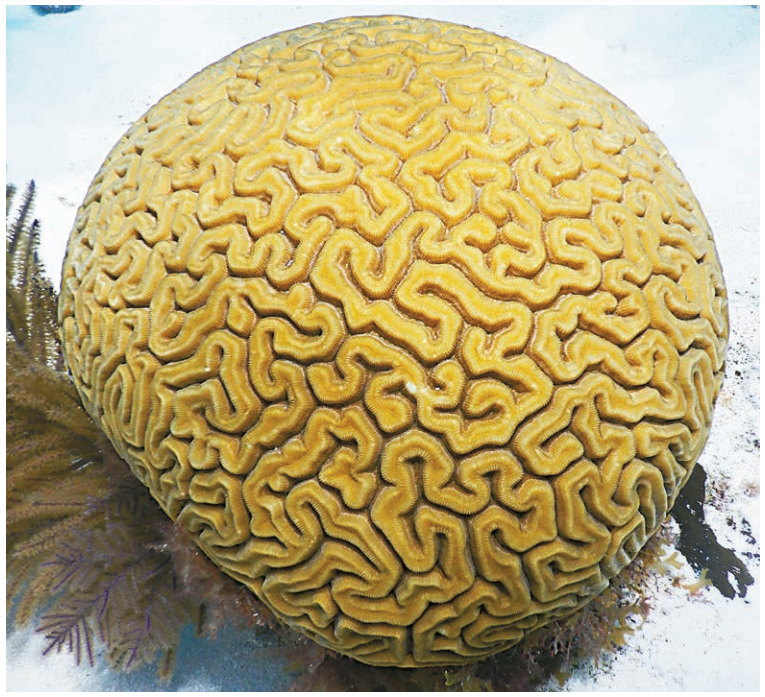
Lettuce Coral

The variety of shapes that stony corals can assume is astounding and none is as diverse as the delicately beautiful Lettuce Coral (*Agaricia agaricites*). Lettuce Coral is one of the most abundant corals found in the Caribbean. Colonies often occur in beautiful tan-colored encrusting sheets with irregular projections, while others are more leaf-like or plate-like in appearance. The growth form a colony assumes is greatly influenced by the light intensity and the velocity of the water it is exposed to.

The Thin Leaf Lettuce Coral (*Agaricia tenuifolia*) is a fast-growing species that stands out with its clusters of thin upright bifacial fronds. The shallows at Lighthouse Reef, Belize, with its strong wave action, yielded stunning examples of these beautiful corals to photograph. They vary in shades of brown to grey and their growing edge is often a different color. The leaf-like blades have strongly developed grooves that run parallel to each other and polyps are present on both sides of these delicately fine blades. Due to its ability to readily colonize disturbed areas and outcompete other, more long-lived corals it is sometimes considered a "coral weed.'

The diversity of these reef architects seems endless.

Next month we take a closer look at more species of massive corals and the unique blue crust coral.





From Top:

Its intricate folding pattern and wide ridges make Grooved Brain Coral an easily recognizable species.

The distinct scalloped edges and low ridges of Ridged Cactus Coral run towards the center.



The Thin Leaf Lettuce Coral stands out with its clusters of thin upright fronds.

The tips of the Smooth Flower Coral's corallites are ridged.



Whatcha Gonna Do with All That Coconut?

by Mary Heckrotte

Having grown up with pines and oaks and black walnut trees, just the very sight of a graceful palm, leaves rustling in the balm of an ocean breeze, moves my soul. Riding on a rickety bus, loud music thumping, I am mesmerized by the variety of palms in the Caribbean countryside. Some palms spew like emerald fountains, some fluff like feather dusters, and others stand like tall skinny women having a bad hair day. It took a bit of Caribbean living for me to realize that not all palm trees have coconuts on them. But those that do offer up yet another opportunity to discover new culinary experiences, not at all akin to any past experience with dried-out coconut that came in a bag. Nothing says "tropics" quite like a coconut.

Though coconut palms probably originated in the Malaysian Archipelago, their buoyant seeds, the coconuts, have traveled on their own. Much like cruisers, coconuts arrived in the Caribbean and other tropical areas in their own "boats" after bobbing about on the world's oceans. Of course, because coconuts are nutritious and useful, settlers and explorers certainly helped with their dispersal.

All parts of the coconut palm are put to use. In fact, in Sanskrit the word for coconut means "tree which gives all that is necessary for living." Coconut trunks and fronds still are used in construction for housing and at one time were used for building ships, including hulls, masts, ropes, and even sails. The nut is used for food, oil, sugar, medicines, and a source of uncontaminated water. The shell can function as dish, cup, or other utensil, or be made into jewelry or fasteners for clothing. The husk is used to make rope, brushes, and fishnets. The husk fibers are used as cooking fuel, and toddy is made from fermented sap. The oil is added to candies and margarines as well as cosmetics and soaps.

Coconuts took a bad rap in the US a number of years ago for their high level of saturated fats. More recently, research indicates that not all saturated fats are alike. One report demonstrates that "the fatty acids in coconut oil, the medium-chain triglycerides, do not raise serum cholesterol or contribute to heart disease, but are in fact very healthy." Coconut is rich in lauric acid, which is said to be anti-viral, antibacterial, and anti-fungal. Health food aficionados now spend big bucks for "premium virgin coconut oil," which they claim is made with the least amount of processing. A native Mayan woman, the housekeeper of a friend on the Rio Dulce in Guatemala, produced coconut oil that my friend brought to the weekly swap meet. I tried it. I like the flavor it adds to food. To be honest, though, until I know more about the health effects, I will use it only occasionally. And the limited amount of coconut meat we consume will certainly not alter our health one way or the other.

The largest of all seeds, coconuts take nearly a year to mature. Fortunately the coconut palm blooms 13 times per year so new fruits are continually available. When buying coconut or choosing one from a windfall, select one that is heavy for its size and that has liquid sloshing about inside. Once the fibrous husk is removed, you will see three little "eyes" on one end of the nut. This is where the coconut got its name as the word "coco" is derived from Spanish or Portuguese for "grinning face." Be sure that the little eyes are not moldy, soft, or weeping.

Getting to the meat of a coconut is not for the faint-hearted. We were in Isla Mujeres, Mexico, when a chivalrous sailor at the Naval Base saw me looking at greenish-brown coconuts that had fallen on the ground near the beach. He offered to open one for me. With a machete, he whack, whack, whacked off the outer fibers, split the whole thing in half, and handed me my first-ever "live" coconut, all faster than I could peel an apple with a paring knife. What a comeuppance I had when, later at Cay Chapel in Belize, I tried to replicate the process. I sat on a log on the beach, my biggest butcher knife in hand, my second live coconut wedged in front of me, and whacked for nearly an hour at the husk. All I managed was a tangle of fibers and a sore arm. Unfortunately, I've still not mastered the art. Oh, I've read the instructions, seen the demonstrations: you jab the coconut onto a spike set in the sand, then tear the husk from the nut. The idea is to cut and tear with the "grain" of the fibers, far easier said than done. So the best bet is to find a local ten-year-old kid with a machete — or a chivalrous naval officer.

Once the husk is off, you're still not home free. The next step is to crack the nut open. Here is one set of instructions from *The Natural Pantry*:

1) Hold the coconut over a bowl in one hand such that the "midriff" rests in the middle of your palm, with the tip on one end and the eyes on the other.

2) Whack the coconut with the back (that is to say the blunt side) of the cleaver a few times around the center until it cracks open cleanly into two nearly equal halves. Make sure you use the blunt side of the cleaver.

3) Catch the juice in the bowl as it drains from the cracks.

Juice? But isn't that coconut milk inside? Well, no. It's water. Many folks relish the water's refreshing, slightly sweet flavor, particularly from the young green



PETER GILL

coconut. Throughout the Caribbean at market and roadside stands you will see green coconuts with the top lopped off and a drinking straw stuck inside. The very best vendors offer these treats chilled. The water, whether from a green or a mature coconut, is excellent mixed with fruit juices and in tropical rum drinks. It also has a subtle coconut flavor when used as the liquid for cooking rice or added to breads, stir-fries, curries, and stews. For times when you have no fresh coconuts at hand, you can find coconut water in bottles in the dairy section of many grocers or at stands in the markets. Be sure that this water has been kept chilled, as it will sour quickly when un-refrigerated.

Also inside the green coconut is a gelatinous substance with a somewhat fruity-nutty taste. It is what will later become the "meat" as the coconut matures. This "jelly" can be scooped out with a spoon, eaten as is, or added to recipes. It is not particularly sweet.

Coconut milk doesn't happen naturally: somebody has to make it. It's fairly simple. Just combine equal amounts of boiling water and grated or flaked coconut (fresh or dried) in a bowl. Let the mixture steep for ten minutes. Then strain out the coconut by pressing it through a fine-mesh strainer or squeezing it through cheesecloth. The resulting liquid is coconut "milk." For the greatest simplicity and convenience, powdered coconut milk is available at your grocers, either boxed or in small foil packets. Just follow the package instructions. It is excellent.

To make coconut "cream" (similar to the sweetened, canned coconut cream used in drinks and desserts) use an equal amount of dairy milk instead of water and simmer the mixture until it has somewhat thickened. Sweeten this to taste, dissolving the sugar while the cream is still bubbling. Strain.

Okay, so once a mature coconut is open, there's more work ahead to get the meat out. Our friend Monty Barrett from the sailing vessel *Akka* can grate coconut faster than anyone I've ever watched. He made his own "grating machine" by taking a garden trowel, sawing inch-deep indentations about every quarter inch around the blade, then bending the resulting "prongs" fore and aft alternately. He attaches the trowel handle to a flat board, sits on the board, and proceeds to grate the insides of opened coconuts into a bowl held between his feet. It's like watching snow fall in the mountains!

Now if you don't want grated coconut, you can use a sharp blade or screwdriver to pry the meat loose from the shell. Placing the shell halves in a hot oven for just a few minutes will help loosen the meat from the shell.

It will come loose in chunks but will have a brown lining attached. A vegetable peeler will peel this lining away. The peeler will make long slices of the white meat, too, which can be used for the "Toasted Coconut Appetizer" recipe below, sprinkled over desserts, or used in various other dishes. You can also toss the large coconut chunks into a food processor and grind them as small as you wish.

To toast coconut for toppings, spread grated coconut on an ungreased cookie sheet. Toast in a 300°F oven, uncovered, for 30 or 40 minutes, stirring often, until golden.

To color coconut for decoration, dip a toothpick in food coloring and stir it through the coconut. Then rub the coconut with your fingers to distribute the color. Repeat until the color is the intensity you want.

And if the kids run out of something to do, just hand them paints, brushes, and a pile of coconuts. Their imaginations will fill into create wild and wonderful critters and people's faces.

Whacking, cracking, grating, grinding, peeling, processing... as you can see, getting coconut to its edible state can be a great deal of work, particularly if you happen on a windfall and do all the jobs yourself. Frozen coconut from the grocer is easier and nearly as tasty, but must be kept frozen until used. Dried coconut is easily stored, convenient, but not as good. And neither is nearly as much fun. There's a challenge in do-it-yourself harvesting, but the taste of fresh coconut is superb, making it all worthwhile. And who could be more accustomed to meeting new challenges than cruisers?

Coconut Appetizer
1 mature coconut
cooking oil
salt to taste
garlic powder to taste (optional)

Shell and peel coconut, keeping chunks of meat as large as possible. With a vegetable peeler, slice the coconut into long pieces. Over a medium flame, heat about 1 inch of oil in a wok or skillet. Put a few coconut slices at a time in the oil and cook them until just lightly browned. Remove slices and drain them on a paper towel. Sprinkle with salt and garlic powder if desired. Continue with remaining slices. Serve warm or cold. If you want to reduce the calories, place the slices on a baking sheet, sprinkle them with salt and/or garlic as desired and bake them at 400°F until just golden. The fried ones are better!



CRISCO1492

Coconut Wow!
(Recipe from Doug Wilson, *S/V Sakoose*)
1 green coconut
rum

Drill two holes in coconut, being careful not to spill water. Fill with rum. Put two corks in holes and allow to ferment till the corks blow out. Drink! (Note: Doug says: "Actually, I've never waited that long. Drinking from a coconut is more romantic than drinking from a glass.")

Tropical Crab Dip
2 cups sour cream
4 green onion tops, minced
2 teaspoons curry powder
dash freshly ground black pepper

—Continued on next page

—*Continued from previous page*

1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup flaked coconut
8 ounces flaked crabmeat

In a quart-size plastic bowl with lid, combine all ingredients. Cover bowl and chill several hours. Serve with crackers.

Coconut Pepper Rice

1 cup freshly grated coconut
2 tablespoons butter
1 small onion, minced
1 cup white rice



CHRIS DOYLE

2 cups fresh coconut water
1 chicken bouillon cube
1 to 3 Scotch Bonnet or Habanero peppers, minced (depends on how hot you like it!)

In a skillet over medium heat, sauté the coconut in butter for a couple of minutes or until it begins to brown. Add the onion and continue to sauté until soft. Add the rice and stir-fry 3 to 5 minutes.

In a saucepan, bring the coconut water to boil Add the bouillon cube and the rice mixture. Reduce heat, cover pan, and simmer until rice is tender, about 25 minutes. Stir in peppers. Serves 4 to 6.

Beer and Coconut Shrimp with Orange-Mustard Sauce

4 eggs
1 cup beer
3 1/2 teaspoons Creole or Old Bay Seasoning
1 1/4 cups flour
2 Tablespoons baking powder
2 pounds raw shrimp, peeled and cleaned, tails left on
2 cups freshly grated coconut
olive oil
2 cups orange marmalade
1/4 cup Dijon mustard
3 Tablespoons horseradish

In a medium bowl, combine eggs, beer, 1 teaspoon Creole or Old Bay Seasoning, flour, and baking powder. Mix until smooth.

Sprinkle remaining Creole or Old Bay Seasoning on shrimp. Dip the shrimp in beer then roll them in coconut.

Pour oil to 1 1/4 inches deep in wok or deep fryer. Heat to 350°F. Drop coated shrimp a few at a time in hot oil and fry until golden brown. Remove and drain on paper towels. Keep warm.

To make dipping sauce, combine orange marmalade, mustard and horseradish in a small bowl. Serve shrimp on a platter with dipping sauce in a small bowl in the middle.

Homemade 'Yeast'

(Recipe from Bill Murfy, *S/V Gunga Din*)
1 coconut
1 teaspoon sugar

Cut the top off the coconut and add the sugar to the water inside. Cover with a cloth and leave until the juice is frothy. This will take a couple of days. Use 1 1/2 cups of this liquid in a batch of bread to substitute for 2 teaspoons of yeast.

Coconut Bread

3 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup sugar
1 cup shredded fresh coconut
1 egg, beaten
1 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350°F. Sift flour, baking powder, and salt into a large bowl. Add sugar and coconut and mix well. In a small bowl combine egg, milk, and vanilla. Pour into dry mixture and mix well. Let stand 20 minutes. Place dough into a greased loaf pan. Bake 45 to 50 minutes until done. Remove from pan and let cool on a rack. Makes one loaf.

Impossible Coconut Pie

2 cups milk
4 eggs, beaten
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup Bisquick
1 1/2 cups freshly grated coconut
dash of nutmeg

In a large bowl, mix the ingredients in the order given. Pour into a greased and floured pie plate. Bake at 350°F for 40 to 50 minutes or until top is golden. This pie makes its own crust.

Coconut Pie Crust

1 cup grated coconut
1 cup pecans or walnuts, ground
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons honey

In a large bowl, blend all ingredients. Spread coconut evenly over bottom and up sides of a 9-inch pie plate, pressing firmly with a wooden spoon. Chill thoroughly, then use with no-bake fillings such as custards.

Coconut Candy

(Recipe from M.E. Langdon, *S/V A.D.L.*)
1 large coconut, grated
1 cup water
2 pounds brown sugar
1 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

Heat sugar and water until it just begins to bubble. Add coconut and ginger. Stir off and on until mixture cleaves from bottom of pan. Drop by teaspoons onto waxed paper.

This article first appeared in the February 2005 issue of Caribbean Compass.







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Read in Next Month's *Compass*:

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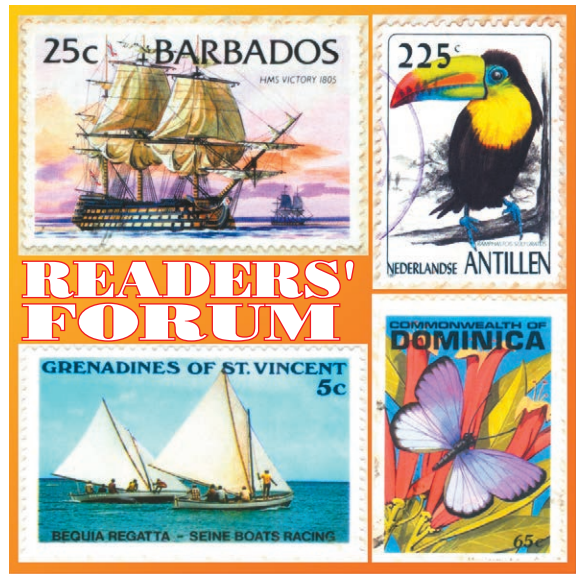
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'FAT LADY' A FAVORITE
Dear *Compass*,
I saw a reprint of one of my favorite *Compass* articles — "It Ain't Over Till the Fat Lady Sinks" — in your August issue. I knew the author, Ruth Chesman, and her husband Vern from Mt. Hartman Bay in Grenada. Also saw that the legend Paul Johnson has crossed the great divide. Sad to learn that John Smith's *Mermaid of Carriacou* submerged. Got to be a great story there. John's one of my favorite island characters.
Ralph Trout
Thailand

There is a story about John Smith and Mermaid of Carriacou *in this issue — see page 19.*

BOOKSHELF COMMENTS
Dear *Compass*,
I read with interest and enjoyment John Everton's "Sailors' Bookshelf" selections in the August issue. I agree with his choice of Naipaul's *The Middle Passage* as a book that gives insight into Caribbean history, and was most pleased to be introduced to *With Fidel*, which I had not heard of before.
But while *The Middle Passage* is based on Naipaul's personal experience and keen observation, and *With Fidel* consists of real interviews, *They Came Before Columbus* seems to rely on anecdotes, exaggeration and speculation. Far be it from me to argue with a former history teacher such as Mr. Everton, but according to "The University of Wikipedia," Van Sertima's theory about African influence on pre-Columbian Mesoamerican cultures has been abundantly rebutted (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivan_Van_Sertima). In fact, according to Wikipedia, academics wrote in the *Journal of Current Anthropology* that Van Sertima's claims "diminished the real achievements of Native American culture."
Obviously there is no lack of true African influence on Caribbean culture and history. I would be interested to read more dependable sources on that. Suggestions are welcome!
Holly Brownlee
S/V Andiamo

LATE HURRICANES
Dear *Compass* Readers,
I have just re-reviewed the tracks of November and December hurricanes during the 70 years from 1952 to 2020, and the 99 years from 1851 to 1950 — a total of 169 years.
For sailors in the Eastern Caribbean, the old saying "October, all over" is mostly true, as the only hurricanes that ever affected the Eastern Caribbean in November were Klaus, in 1984, and Lenny, in 1999.
All other November and December hurricanes were either in the Atlantic above 19°N, in the Western Caribbean or in the Gulf of Mexico.
A few interesting observations:
In 1888 a tropical storm hit St. Vincent, then tracked up through the islands, curving with the island chain and hitting every single island up to Barbuda before heading out into the Atlantic.
In 1896 a tropical storm formed between Trinidad and Tobago, then tracked north to leeward of all the islands, passing west of St. Martin, departing northward and dissipating in the Atlantic.
In 1887 a tropical storm hit Grenada, then developed into a major hurricane hitting the northeast corner of the Yucatán Peninsula before continuing north and hitting the Mexican/US border at the mouth Rio Grande.
Don Street
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Paul Erling Johnson: A Tribute 1938 – June 28, 2021

by John Everton

Paul Johnson was a man of mythic proportions, one who was dealt more than his share of charisma. To those of us who got to know him — well, he was, on the one hand a real-life down-to-earth character, a friend, and a mentor, and on the other hand a man who rose above the status reserved for human beings to a higher plane.



EVERTON

Paul with his son Magnus.

I wrote about Paul and my friendship with him in the October 2020 issue of *Caribbean Compass* (see "Tales of a Salty Legend" on page 18 at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/october20compass_online.pdf) and in a review of the feature film *The Sailor*, recently released in Slovakia and soon to be released in North American cinemas, which will be published in next month's *Compass*. The movie is heavily coloured with Paul's impending mortality and preparing for his "last sail, over the bar." I was able to see Paul watching the film in Swampy Jo's bar in Carriacou. To see yourself as a movie star on the big screen is certainly a thrill, and for Paul that experience could be seen on his face. That he was able to do that a few months before his demise brought his life full circle.

Paul Johnson, or Johnson as he was commonly known, certainly lived a life beyond category. Best known for his art as a boat designer, builder and sailor, as well as for his paintings, he was equally as well known for his legendary rum drinking and womanizing — the younger the women the better.

He was also a storyteller par excellence. I recall one Sunday when Paul had invited my wife Roni and me over to *Cherub* around 11:00AM for pot roast, which was cooking to perfection in a cast iron pot. I assumed we'd be eating shortly after midday. After listening to his stories for six hours, accompanied by endless glasses of rum, we finally sat down at 6:00PM. I was so weak from hunger I remember it as being one of the tastiest meals ever. Paul endeavoured to do every task well.

Johnson touched and inspired the lives of countless people, from those he met in his travels to the many who have purchased his designs for motoryachts and powerboats and built his signature "Venus" yachts worldwide. The lines of his double-ended ketches of various sizes resemble those of the Colin Archer lifeboats and those on *Escape*, the boat on which Paul and his twin sister were born.

He will be missed by many, including his children Magnus Spencer Johnson, Eliala Salvadori and Merlin Johnson.



KIRSTY MORRISON

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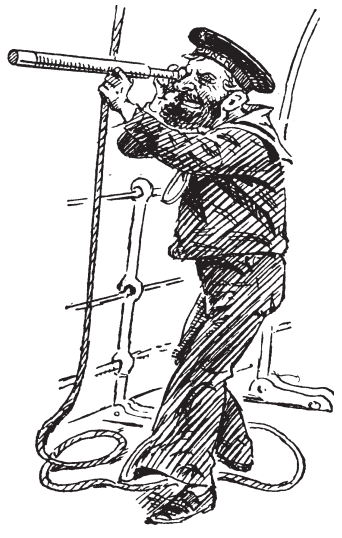
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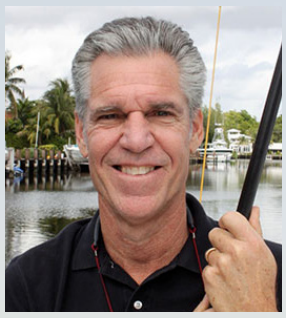
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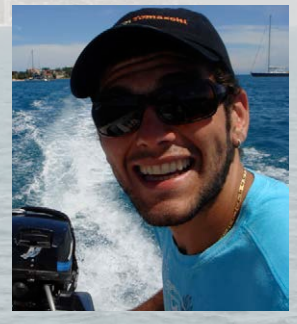
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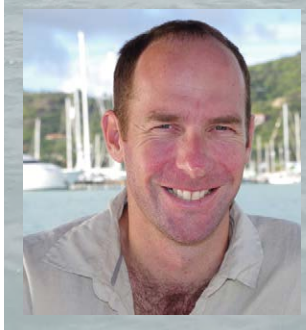
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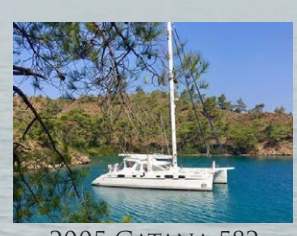
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CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

6 Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI (Labor Day), and in Bonaire (Flag Day)
16 Public holiday in St. Kitts & Nevis (National Heroes' Day)
19 Public holiday in St. Kitts & Nevis (Independence Day)
20 FULL MOON
22 Autumnal Equinox
24 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Republic Day)

OCTOBER

4 Public holiday in St. Lucia (Thanksgiving Day)
9 – 15 Pure Grenada Dive Fest. http://puredivinggrenada.com/divefest
11 Public holiday in the Bahamas (National Heroes' Day), and in Puerto Rico and USVI (Columbus Day)
17 (TBC) Tobago Blue Food Festival
20 FULL MOON
23 (TBC) Willy T Virgin's Cup Race, BVI. www.royalbviyc.org
25 Public holiday in Grenada (Thanksgiving Day)
27 Public holiday in St. Vincent & the Grenadines (Independence Day)
28 Jounen Kweyol (International Creole Day), St. Lucia and Dominica
29 – 31 (TBC) World Creole Music Festival, Roseau, Dominica. caribbeanevents.com/iwe-event/world-creole-music-festival
30 – 31 16th St. Maarten Opimist Championship. www.smyc.com/optimist-championship
30 – 1 Nov (TBC) Haiti Cup fishingboat regatta, Cap Haitien, Haiti. www.haitisailingcup.com
TBA Bonaire Regatta. www.infobonaire.com
TBA Columbus Day Regatta, St. Thomas, USVI. stthomasyachtclub.org
TBA St. Lucia Arts & Heritage Fest. www.stlucia.org/en/events

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



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MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2021

Crossing the channels between Eastern Caribbean islands, an ebb tide carries you off to leeward and a strong flood tide creates lumpy seas, so crossing with a favorable tide is faster and more comfortable. The table below, courtesy Don Street (www.street-iolaire.com), showing the local time of the meridian passage (or zenith) of the moon for this and next month, will help you calculate the tides.

Water generally tries to run toward the moon. The flood tide starts running eastward soon after moonrise, continues to run east until about an hour after the moon reaches its zenith (see TIME below) and then ebbs 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.

The first hour after moonrise, the westerly current is barely negated. The second hour the flood tide is stronger, the third and fourth hour it's strongest, then it eases off in the fifth and sixth hours. The maximum tide is three or four days after the new and full moons.

September					
DATE	TIME	21	0001 FULL MOON	11	1636
1	0722	22	0044	12	1738
2	0813	23	0128	13	1837
3	0908	24	0209	14	1935
4	0958	25	0252	15	2025
5	1050	26	0337	16	2113
6	1140	27	0424	17	2158
7	1229	28	0513	18	2241
8	1317	29	0604	19	2330
9	1406	30	0655	20	0005
10	1456			21	0005 FULL MOON
11	1548	**October**		22	0047
12	1644	1	0747	23	0131
13	1742	2	0838	24	0218
14	1843	3	0928	25	0308
15	1943	4	1018	26	0356
16	2042	5	1107	27	0447
17	2137	6	1156	28	0538
18	2228	7	1246	29	0628
19	2316	8	1340	30	0718
20	0001	9	1436		
		10	1535		

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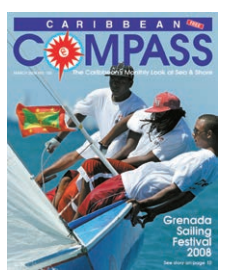


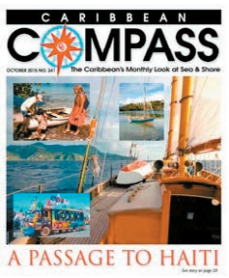
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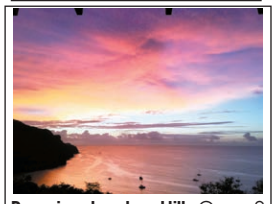
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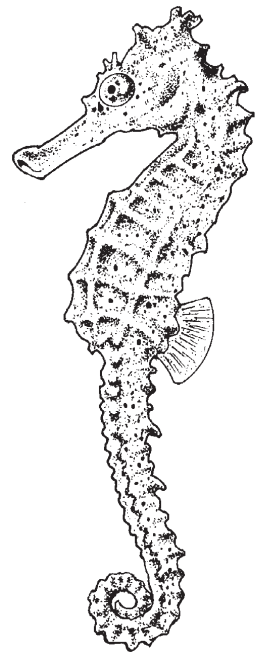
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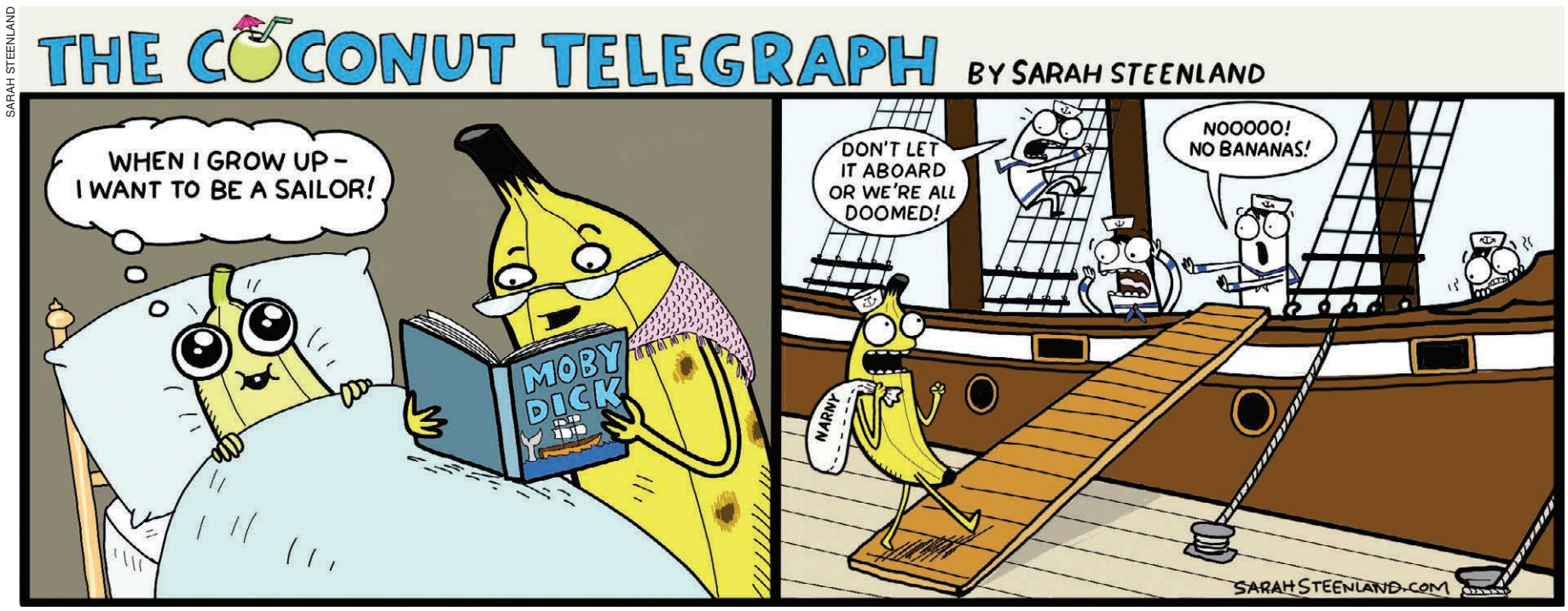


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