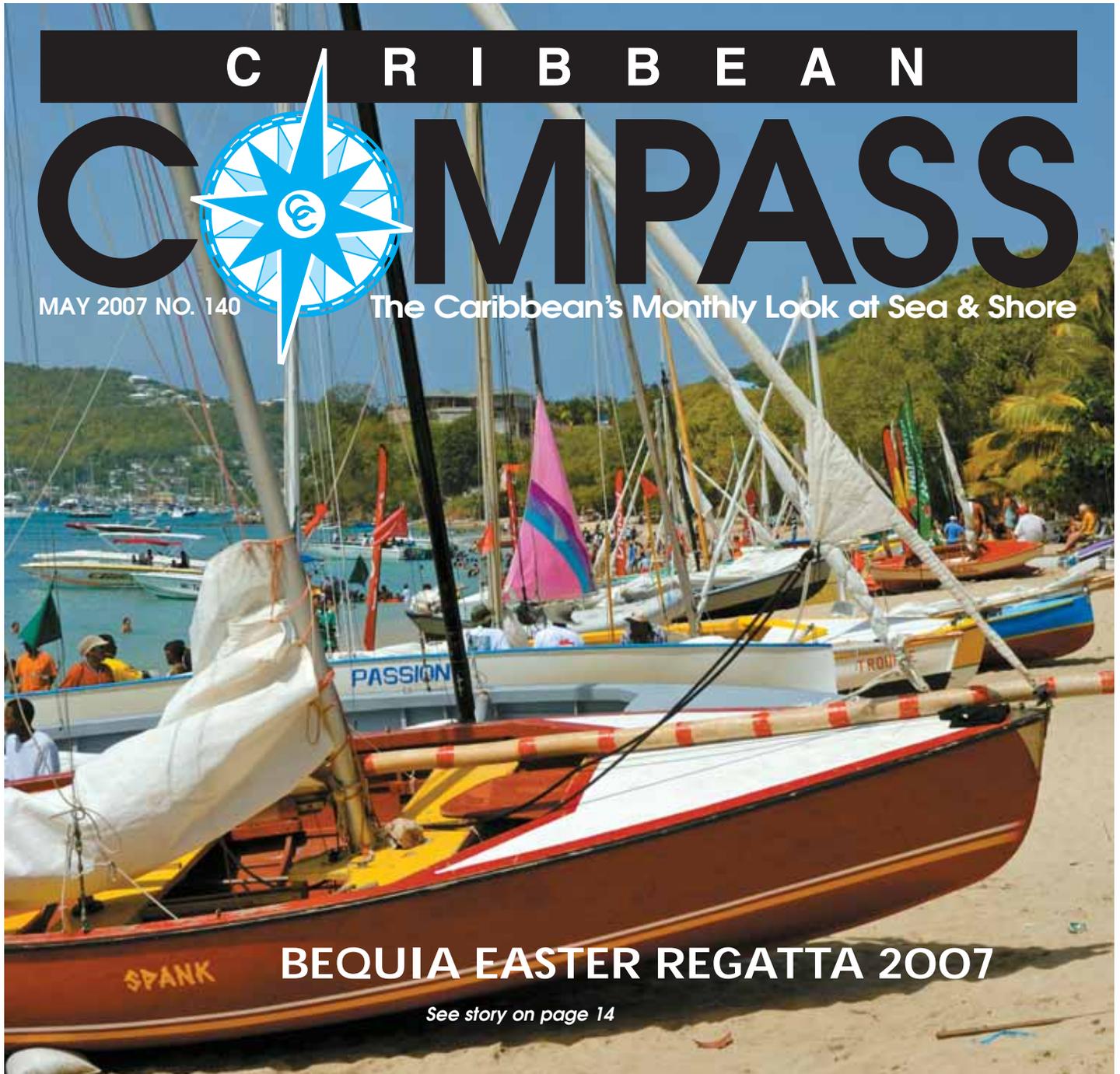


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MAY 2007 NO. 140

The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore



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See story on page 14

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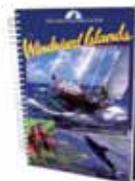
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Info & Updates

Update from Portsmouth, Dominica

Jan Brocksieper, treasurer of the Portsmouth Association for Yacht Security (PAYS) in Dominica, reports that most of the Indian River Tour Guides are now participating in PAYS as well. Current PAYS participants, with their cell phone numbers for easy contact (area code 767), include Albert (317-4533), Deedee "Sea Bird" (265-8101), Edison (225-3626), Fostin Alexis (277-0013), Jeff "Sea Bird" (245-0125), Jerome "Cabra Tours" (245-6332), Martin "Providence" (245-2700), Max Taxi Service (235-2028), Eric "Spaghetti" (614-6398), Lawrence "of Arabia" (225-3623) and Charly "Charly Love" (225-5428). Please support their effort to make Portsmouth into one of the safest anchorages in the Caribbean!

Weather Broadcast Changes

Melodye Pompa reports: The weather broadcasts on single-sideband radio from NMN/NMG are apparently in the midst of change. There is a very human voice now giving the weather broadcasts, instead of "Mechanical Mike". They also have a new schedule, which you can find at www.nhc.noaa.gov/tafb-atl.shtml. Unfortunately, the schedule posted there is not entirely accurate. The Caribbean weather comes on about ten to 15 minutes into the broadcast, and they appear to have dropped the New England portion but have *not* moved it to another broadcast, as stated in the schedule. However, they are still giving information for the Mid-Atlantic (the Carolinas, etcetera) just before the Caribbean. It appears that this new format will allow time slots for tropical weather warnings, position reports and forecasts. That is good news. Previously, you needed to know where a storm was in order to listen to the weather forecast for that area of the world.

Hawaii in Antigua

Frank Pearce reports: About 30 yachts and 150 people invaded "Hawaii" the weekend of March 10th and 11th. In a pincer movement, some beat upwind from Jolly Harbour Marina and others ran downwind from English Harbour. Hawaii, a.k.a. Carlisle Bay, was obliterated in an onslaught of music, Hawaiian punches (a blow to the head that took days to recover from) and authentic



Left to right:
Elizabeth Jordan
(AYC), Pascale Sol-
Rangel (Island
Provisions/Best
Cellars), Clarence
Pilgrim (Amazing
Grace Foundation),
Sue Willis (AYC),
Roger Gardner and
Junior (Amazing Grace
Foundation)

Hawaiian barbecued food. Most of the staggering was done on the beach, celebrating a culinary victory cooked against the odds. The event was primarily a fundraiser for the benefit of the Amazing Grace Foundation, an Antiguan home for severely disabled children and adults. It was proven that "doing good" can be fun.

The fundraiser was the inspiration of Elizabeth Jordan, Vice Commodore (Commodorable?!) of Antigua Yacht Club, who was ably assisted by many helpers from AYC. The event raised more than \$6,000 for the benefit of the home. All of the food was supplied for free by Island Provisions Ltd, who are wholesale and retail food suppliers to yachts, hotels and private concerns. Other donors were Baileys Supermarket, Crab Hole Liquors, Francianes, Dockside Liquors and Claude's Gas Station in Falmouth. Thank you all so much for your support.

Hawaiian costumes were the order of the day: coconut bikinis (ouch), leis and grass skirts — with Roger Gardner, one of the leading stars in helping the Foundation, looking suitably disgusting in a grass skirt and with more hair than his head has seen for years.

—Continued on next page

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MAY 2007 • NUMBER 140



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

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—Continued from previous page

The locals of Old Road Village were wary, but eventually the smell of Kalua pork and Hull-Hull chicken, cooked by Peter "Magellan" Smith and Dickie "Fridge" Spratley, was irresistible and they were welcomed to join the party. Taking advantage of the effects of the green or blue Hawaiian punch, an auction was held on the beach run by Paul "Piggy" Van Beek. This raised about US\$1,200. Donations auctioned off included a beautiful hand-painted chifton sarong by Liza Kirwan and a delightful watercolour by Maiwenn Beadle. While all of this was going on, up in Falmouth Harbour the AYC held the 6th Annual Laser Championships, another Antigua victory, with Karl James winning all six races.

World Bank Gives Islands Storm Insurance Credit

On March 8th, the World Bank's Board of Directors approved a US\$14.2 million zero-interest credit from the International Development Agency (IDA) to four country members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines). An IDA grant of US\$9.0 million was given to Haiti to support their participation in the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF). The CCRIF will enable governments to purchase catastrophe coverage akin to business interruption insurance that will provide them with an early cash payment after a major hurricane or earthquake. Pooling their risk will save the participating countries some 40 percent in individual premium payments.

"The Facility, the first of its kind in the world, represents an important shift from reacting to disasters after they hit, to being much more proactive about disaster management and mitigation," said Caroline Anstey, World Bank Country Director for the Caribbean. "These projects will allow Haiti and the OECS beneficiary countries to pay their contribution to the CCRIF, giving them immediate access to funds if hit by an earthquake or hurricane."

The IDA credit will provide Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and St. Lucia with resources to meet their payments of annual insurance premiums during the next three years.

On February 26, 2007, the World Bank hosted a donor pledging conference where Bermuda, Canada, France, the United Kingdom, the Caribbean Development Bank and the World Bank pledged US\$47 million for the CCRIF's reserve fund. A total of 18 Caribbean countries are participating in the CCRIF, which is expected to become operational before the 2007 hurricane season begins in June.

For more information visit <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects>.

Compass Brunch 2007

It's become a tradition: every year Compass Publishing Ltd. says "thank you" in person to as many contributors to *Caribbean Compass* as are able to be in Bequia on the Thursday before Easter.



Guest speaker, yacht designer Paul Johnson (left), chats with writer Morris Nicholson at this year's contributors' get-together

The Compass Writers' Brunch has become a moveable feast, having been hosted for many years by chef Owen Belmar at the impeccable Petit Jardin restaurant. Last year we enjoyed a delightful brunch cruise aboard the classic Bequia-built schooner *Friendship Rose*, and this year 30 attendees were welcomed at world-famous Mac's Pizzeria for a tasty and generous brunch buffet.

Enjoying the opportunity to meet and mingle at Compass Writers' Brunch 2007 were former guest speaker Sir James Mitchell; environmental writers Herman Belmar, Nathalie Ward and Lesley Quashie; adventure writer Hans Baer; book reviewers Bob Berlinghof, Morris Nicholson, Cherian Gordon and Paul Tyler; and feature writers Amal Thomas, Mariann Palmberg, Kedisha Compton, Heather Bacon, Tito and Roberta Figueroa, and Charles and Cornelia Brewer.

The Compass Crew included our subscription fulfillment team from the Sunshine School — Hansley, Liston and Armstrong — and their teacher Keithroy Lavia, as well as production manager Wilfred Dederer, managing director Tom Hopman and editor Sally Erdle. The April 5th get-together's guest speaker was yacht designer, boatbuilder, artist and world cruiser Paul Johnson. Paul was born aboard a yacht in England in 1938, designed the handsome "Venus" double-ended gaff ketches, and has never lived ashore for more than a few months (notably after shipwrecks forced him to). He gave fascinated listeners an overview of the changes he has seen in cruising culture and technology since he first started making international passages in the 1960s. Thanks to Mac's Pizzeria, Paul Johnson and all our guests for making this year's "thank you to our writers" such an enjoyable party.

Donna Lange Reaches Bermuda

Sailor, musician and songwriter Donna Lange, a popular figure on the Virgin Islands yachting scene, has nearly completed a solo east-about circumnavigation. Donna, a 45-year-old grandmother from upstate New York, left Bristol, Rhode Island, in November 2005 aboard her 28-foot Southern Cross sloop, *Inspired Insanity*. Her first stop was New Zealand, where she spent seven months.

Although she originally intended to sail from New Zealand non-stop back to Rhode Island via Cape Horn, Donna made a two-week stop for engine repairs at Ushuaia in the Beagle Channel, and also made a stop for rest and repairs in the Virgin Islands. After making landfall at Virgin Gorda on March 28, she visited Tortola, where she was made a life member of the Royal BVI Yacht Club. She set sail from St. Thomas on April 5th after checking into US territory, getting some replacement parts for her 26-year-old boat, and enjoying a jam session with old VI friends.

—Continued on next page

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 En route to Bristol, she encountered a "monstrous" storm coming off the US east coast with reported 60-knot gusts and 40-foot seas. A knock-down damaged her



self-steering gear, forcing Donna to hand-steer for three days toward Bermuda, the nearest refuge. *Inspired Insanity* was towed into St. George, Bermuda on April 18th. As this issue of *Compass* goes to press, Donna reportedly plans to fly to New York to visit her family. Her welcome party in Rhode Island has been set back from April 21 to April 28th, which has been declared Donna Lange Day. For more information visit www.donnalange.com or www.donnalange.org.

YSATT's New Team

At the Annual General Meeting of the Yacht Services Association of Trinidad & Tobago (YSATT) held on April 18th, members voted in the Management Committee for the year 2007 – 2008. The new committee is: President, Tommy Johnson of CISL Marine; Vice-President, Mark Farfan of Dynamite Marine Ltd.; Treasurer, Donald Stollmeyer of Power Boats Mutual Facilities Ltd.; and members Risa Hall of Budget Marine, Jane Peake of Peake Yacht Services, Andreas Stuvén of Ace Sails and Canvas Ltd., Charlie Bell of IMS Yacht Services, Richard Harmer-Brown of Dockyard Electrics Ltd., and Allan Dowden of Yacht Maintenance Services.

What is 'Fully Crewed'?

Justin Newcomb reports: pay attention to your yacht insurance policy's small print! A recent judgment from England's High Court concerned a warranty that the US\$3,000,000 yacht *Newfoundland Explorer* would be fully crewed at all times. This is not uncommon.

While laid up afloat in Fort Lauderdale, *Newfoundland Explorer's* starboard side John Deere generator overheated and she was severely damaged by fire. Crucially, none of the crew was on board the yacht at the time. The captain was at home, 15 miles away. In the insurance proposal form, the assured had stated that the yacht had one full-time crewmember, the captain, and two occasional crewmembers.

The assured argued that "fully crewed at all times" just meant that crew must be employed, or that sufficient crew must be employed to look after the yacht properly, but that either way their location at any one time was irrelevant.

The court, however, decided that the phrase "fully crewed at all times" meant that there must be at least one crewmember on board the yacht at all times, although certain duties could still be carried out immediately ashore, such as adjusting lines, and an emergency could still require all crew to evacuate the yacht, without affecting cover.

This judgment only affects policies governed by English law, but it is wise to read your policy for similar wording. The governing law is normally stated in the policy and/or the separate standard terms referred to in the policy, towards the end of either document.

Justin Newcomb is with yacht consultants MatrixLloyd SL. For more information visit www.matrixlloyd.com.

Tourism Intelligence Available

Did you know that the number of overseas trips taken by US citizens is increasing, with the main tourism destinations aside from Canada and Mexico being Europe (44 percent) and the Caribbean (19 percent), and that the average "spend" at the destination per visitor was US\$1,317? Well, if you had read *Tourism Industry Intelligence* Vol. 13, No. 8, you'd know that! In addition to market and consumer trends, *Tourism Industry Intelligence* includes aviation and hotel watches, technology updates and more.

Tourism Industry Intelligence is a newsletter edited by travel and tourism industry...

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...analyst Dr. Auliana Poon, and published monthly by Tourism Intelligence International. Dr. Poon writes: "The newsletter provides a refreshing, down-to-earth and easy-to-read analysis of key industry trends worldwide — for 189 Euros per year (ten issues)." This newsletter is available via e-mail. For more information contact info@tourismintelligence.com or visit www.tourism-intelligence.com.

Cruisers' Site-ings

- The Caribbean Safety and Security Net, which broadcasts on SSB 8104.0 every day at 1215 UTC, is pleased to announce that it has moved to a new home on the Internet: www.safetynet.com. The new format offers more flexibility to add new pages for both short-term and long-term issues. The new e-mail address for Security Net issues is SVSecondM@aol.com. The Caribbean Safety and Security Net gives thanks to the following for assistance during the development and testing phases: Lance Batten and Susie Bowman of S/V *Eaux Vives*; Pat Glatz, formerly of S/V *Belleamir*; Conny Hagen of Arawak Divers, Cariacou; Rick Johnston of S/V *Panacea*; John Pompa; Heinz Neuber of S/V *Antigua* and Rose Russo.
- Denny Schlesinger reports: I recently launched a new custom search engine dedicated to the cruising lifestyle. Based on Google, instead of searching the whole world wide web, it only searches selected websites of interest to sailors and cruisers. Initially we search 230 sites that I hand-picked over the past five years as webmaster of Marina Bahia Redonda, Venezuela. As sailors and cruisers add their favorite sites to the engine, we hope to reach about a thousand websites in all. Of course, caribbeancompass.com is included as a charter member. Please give The Cruising Life Custom Search Engine a try: <http://cruisinglifecse.com/>. If you like it, please tell the cruising community about it. You might also think of using it on your search page.
- Pippa Peffingell reports: The latest information about events at Jolly Harbor Yacht Club, Antigua, is now available at our new website: www.jhycantigua.com. The site is still being developed, but we hope to build a site that will be useful to members and visiting yachtsmen alike. There are plans for a forum and classified ads, as well as an events calendar and details about who's who in JHYC. There is also a links page with useful contacts for visitors and residents.
- Sarah and Afsaneh report: The Antigua Charter Yacht Meeting's website, www.antiguayachtshow.com, now has a great photo gallery of the 2006 show, with yacht and party photos, and lots of the three-day Chefs Competition. We wish to thank Peter Duce, *Boat International*, Suzy Finnerly and Buggsy, and Roddy Grimes Graham for their photographic work. Registration for the 2007 show, December 5th to 10th, is open.
- Share the adventures of cruisers Annie and Eric at www.websailing.com.

Sailing Circus in St. Pierre

A theater circus company who perform on the deck and most of the sailboat *La Loupiote* will be presenting a show called "Entre île et aîle" (Between island and wing) on May 6th and 7th in St. Pierre, Martinique. For more information visit www.voilierspectacle.com.

15th Anniversary of Hemingway International Yacht Club

The Hemingway International Yacht Club (HIYC) of Cuba is making preparations for its 15th Anniversary celebrations on the 31st of May, and Commodore Eschrich extends an invitation to *Compass* readers to participate in this event. The HIYC has organized a program of nautical activities which includes a sailing regatta, a rowing race, a water-ski competition and a shore fishing tournament.

Commodore Eschrich and the members of HIYC are pleased with the friendly relations they've established with hundreds of yacht clubs, associations, institutions and important figures of the international nautical community. HIYC represents various international associations in Havana, including Trans-Ocean, IGFA, the Ocean Cruising Club, the Cruising Club of Switzerland and The Little Ship Club.

Over these last 15 years, the HIYC of Cuba has hosted numerous regattas organized by yacht clubs from the USA, Spain, the UK, Martinique and Guadeloupe. In April, Commodore Eschrich's birthplace of Santiago de Cuba hosted the Transcaribes Rally.

In other activities, the HIYC will be working with the Ernest Hemingway Museum to offer a conference on Ernest Hemingway and Sport Fishing. It will also sponsor a conference on the history of Latin American and Caribbean port cities, to be held from the 3rd to the 5th of October. This will be organized by the Institute of Cuban History.

For more information contact yachtclub@cnih.mh.cyt.cu.

Celebrate the Seventh Annual Summer Sallstice

Celebrate the seventh annual Summer Sallstice with sailors worldwide on the weekend of June 23 and 24 — the longest sailing weekend days of the year. Begun in 2001, Summer Sallstice was created as a holiday just for sailors, to be celebrated wherever you sail in the Northern Hemisphere.

To participate, simply sign up at www.summersallstice.com and then go sailing on the weekend of June 23 and 24. The website allows you to post your sailing plans, invite others or see what other sailors are doing in your area. Whether you've just launched the boat or you're in the middle of a circumnavigation, you can sign up to be part of this global celebration of sail.

By signing up you also become eligible to win prizes donated by Sailtime, Moorings, Hunter Marine, West Marine, Hobie, Offshore Sailing, SunSail and many of your favorite marine businesses. Prizes include a one-week BVI charter with the Moorings, a Hobie Kayak, a sail at one of Sailtime's 30 bases and more than 200 other prizes.

New for 2007: a virtual circumnavigation to save the seven seas! Summer Sallstice has teamed up with The Ocean Conservancy to help inform and mobilize sailors in support of ocean conservation. Join the celebration and support healthy seas as you sail.

For more information e-mail john@summersallstice.com or visit www.summersallstice.com.

Welcome Aboard!

In this issue of *Compass* we welcome new advertisers Boat Doctor of Trinidad, page 51; First Mate of Trinidad, page 34; and Jones Maritime of St. Croix, page 21. Good to have you with us!



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NORTHERN LIGHTS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Island Water World Opens in St. Thomas

The new Island Water World location at Yacht Haven Grande, St. Thomas has opened its doors to the public. With over 3,000 square feet of showroom space, the new Island Water World store promises to give US Virgin Islanders more choice at very competi-



tive prices. They will be stocking many new brand items such as Quick windlasses, Sterling battery chargers, Kyocera solar panels, Sinergex invertors, Waeco Refrigeration, and a lot more.

From high-end marine electronics to rope, chain and Burmese teak, Island Water World is known for its broad range of marine products in stock and priced right. Based in St. Maarten and with stores in Grenada and St. Lucia, Island Water World continues to grow in the region. The addition of the St. Thomas store will consolidate its position in the Caribbean as a first-class supplier of marine parts and accessories. Island Water World St. Thomas, located at the new Yacht Haven Grande marina, can be contacted by telephone at (340) 714-0404. For more information on Island Water World, see ad on page 56.

GRPro Clean Antilles get Environmental Management Certification Bruno Augustin of GRProClean Antilles and Sea Logic reports: "We have just received renewal of our ISO 14001 certification for our environmental management, making us the only Caribbean company in the nautical industry certified for taking environmental management into account in our boat cleaning and refurbishing activities. In 2007 we invested in an injection/extraction machine, enabling the in situ cleaning of carpets, cushions and fabrics. We have been pleased to service several super-yachts visiting Martinique using this process, including the Astondoa 90 Candy Flor and the Royal Huisman 133 Surama."

In the Sea Logic line of nautical accessories, Augustin writes that they are developing their range to include: Certec, the French manufacturers of inflatable and air-fights products for nautical applications, including the innovative "Rafale" auto-inflatable lifejacket with harness; TropiKool freezers and coolers — ecologically friendly and ideal for the tropics; Tek-it Easy composite decking material, also known as "tek deck", ranked the top choice of the synthetic teak decking products by Practical Sailor and Powerboat magazines; Bushnell waterproof compass binoculars with night vision, as used by Ellen MacArthur; and Caribbean Yachting Charts from Maptech and Nautical Publications.

For more information see ad on page 35.

DYT Vessel to Help Monitor World's Oceans

Dockwise Yacht Transport (DYT), the world's only float-on/float-off yacht transport service, is partnering with the International SeaKeepers Society to outfit DYT's new super ship, the 686-foot (209 meter) Yacht Express, with the organization's innovative SeaKeeper 1000TM ocean and meteorological monitoring system. The SeaKeeper 1000 TM is a fully automated unit that samples, measures, records and then transmits its data to various scientific and public communities across the globe. It is deployed in some 50 locations, plotting a broad and continuous picture of the critical measures of ocean health, such as salinity, temperature, oxygen and pollution.

Yacht Express is the largest vessel of its kind in the world and has been added to the DYT fleet this year to provide yacht owners with faster and more frequent delivery of their power and sailing yachts across the oceans.

"The ship's regular routes will enable us to provide consistent, ongoing readings of ocean conditions over time," said DYT President and CEO Clemens van der Werf, "which will offer better analysis opportunities compared to private yachts that are only in certain regions on different occasions." Clemens added that those who typically use the DYT service have the same sentiments as the original group of luxury yacht owners who founded the SeaKeepers Society in 1998 — they are concerned by the deteriorating health of the waters they have come to know and love. "This is our chance to give back something to our clients and the marine environment."

For more information on Dockwise Yacht Transport, see ad on page 30.

—Continued on page 42

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Eco-News

Islands at Risk from Global Warming

The most recent assessment report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), established by the World Meteorological Organisation and the United Nations Environment Programme, warns that small islands and coastal areas including salt marshes and mangroves are threatened by sea-level rise caused by global warming. Developing countries — where adaptive capacity is relatively low and which face other challenges, such as tropical storms — are especially at risk. Deterioration in coastal conditions, for example through erosion of beaches and coral bleaching, is expected to affect climate-sensitive local resources such as fisheries, and reduce the value of these destinations for tourism.

Corals are vulnerable to thermal stress and have low adaptive capacity. Increases in sea surface temperature of about 1 to 3°C are projected to result in more frequent coral-bleaching events and widespread mortality, unless there is thermal adaptation or acclimatization by corals.

The report adds that by mid-century climate change is projected to reduce water resources in many small islands to the point where they become insufficient to meet demand during low rainfall periods.

There is a ray of hope. The IPCC notes that the array of potential adaptive responses to global warming is very large, ranging from purely technological (e.g., sea defences), through behavioural (e.g., altered food and recreational choices) to managerial (e.g., altered farm practices), to policy (e.g., planning regulations). However, adaptation alone is not expected to cope with all the projected effects of climate change. Non-climate stresses can increase vulnerability to climate change by reducing resilience and can also reduce adaptive capacity because of resource deployment to competing needs. Current stresses on some coral reefs include marine pollution and chemical runoff from agriculture. Adaptation measures are seldom undertaken in response to climate change alone but can be integrated within, for example, water resource management, coastal defence, and disaster planning. Cuba and the Dominican Republic have recently agreed to cooperate on environmental protection in both countries and to join forces to work on the issue across the Caribbean region. The agreement provides for scientific exchanges in energy efficiency, as well as drawing up an adaptation and mitigation plan to address the effects of climate change, especially in coastal and marine areas.

For more information visit www.ipcc.ch.

Sign Up to Save Reefs

The International Declaration of Reef Rights was announced on March 7th by the Reef Check Foundation to promote action to save the world's coral reefs. A goal of one million signatures has been set, and the Declaration will be presented to the Heads of State of all 101 countries with coral reefs on December 31, 2008, as the culmination of the International Year of the Reef.

Data collected over the past ten years by Reef Check, the world's largest coral reef monitoring organization, show that over-fishing, global climate change, pollution and sedimentation continue to damage the health of coral reefs worldwide. The Declaration asks signers to pledge to take practical action to stop human impacts on coral reefs, such as choosing seafood that is caught in a sustainable manner and supporting reef-friendly hotels and tourism operations. Reef Check invites you to sign the International

Declaration of Reef Rights by visiting www.reefcheck.org/petition/petition.php.

New Hurricane Buoys

In April, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) deployed the first two of eight new hurricane buoys off Puerto Rico in an effort to fill a gap in important weather data coming from warm, storm-generating waters there. Six more hurricane buoys will be placed in the southwestern Atlantic Ocean before the 2007 hurricane season ends in November.

These buoys measure wind, waves, barometric pressure and air and sea temperatures to determine hurricane formation or dissipation, extent of wind circulation, maximum intensity and center location. Hurricane buoys also provide year-round data for analysis and forecasts of other marine disturbances.

"We are in a period of an active hurricane cycle and this deployment equips our forecasters with an additional tool to track hurricanes and support our mission of saving lives and livelihoods," said retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "Additionally, this feeds into the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, or GEOSS, which is an international collaboration to share vital weather data and other environmental information critical to our understanding of the Earth's processes."

Air Pollution from Shipping?

Are oceangoing vessels overtaking vehicles as air polluters? The evidence indicates they may soon produce more sulfur dioxide — which adversely affects humans, land and marine ecosystems — than all the world's road-based vehicles combined.

In a report entitled "Air Pollution and Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Oceangoing Ships: Impacts, Mitigation Options and Opportunities for Managing Growth" the International Council on Clean Transport called for tighter emission standards for international shipping. It said such efforts are needed to address the public health consequences and the contribution ships make to global warming.

The report also said that the International Marine Organization has been slow in adopting the best available technologies and fuels. "International ships are one of the world's largest, virtually uncontrolled sources of air pollution," said ICCT president Alan Lloyd. "Air pollution from diesel trucks and buses in Europe, Japan and the United States has declined steadily for over a decade. At the same time, air pollution from international ships is rising virtually unchecked."

The study noted that IMO's fuel sulfur limit for ships is "several thousand times" greater than that of fuel used by on-road vehicles in Europe and North America. The ICCT is pushing for the fuel sulfur limit in sulfur-oxide emission control areas to be lowered to 0.5 percent. This single move, reducing the cap from the current average of 2.7 percent, would reduce sulfur oxides generated by ships by 80 percent and particulate matter by 20 percent.

The ICCT report also found that reducing air pollution from ships was cheaper compared with land-based sources. According to the report, lower sulfur fuels, optimized engines and exhaust after-treatment will significantly improve the performance of marine vessels, while emissions from ships in port can be further cut by using shore-side electricity sources.

For more information visit www.theicct.org.

Environment Disturbed at La Tortuga

Isla Tortuga is a low, dry Venezuelan offshore island that provides a number of unspoiled anchorages pop-

ular with cruising yachts. The Fundacion La Tortuga reports that road construction in the vulnerable south-central part of Isla Tortuga is causing alarm. The group says that the earthworks, apparently for a residential or tourist development, will destroy unique geological features as well as the habitat of species which are found only on the island.

Studies collected in the Venezuelan Geological Code indicate that the island is of extraordinary scientific value for the country and the world. The numerous studies that scientists from the Fundacion La Tortuga, the Venezuelan Oceanographic Institute and the Universidad de Oriente have carried out in the island over more than two years indicate that the island, as a whole, is a fragile environmental system in which activities such as those now underway may cause irreversible damage.

The Fundacion La Tortuga has requested that the relevant Venezuelan institutions investigate this situation. It is hoped that the devastation of this unique dry island environment can be avoided.



Environmental group Fundacion La Tortuga fears that road building on Isla Tortuga may cause irreversible damage to the fragile island environment

Mullet Pond Studied

According to a March 27 report in the Daily Herald newspaper, a survey was conducted recently by Ocean Care, Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC) and St. Maarten Pride Foundation to assess the flora and fauna of Mullet Pond, St. Maarten. The pond is part of Simpson Bay Lagoon, one of the largest saltwater lagoons in the Caribbean.

Using underwater photography, the group documented a wide range of fauna and flora in the pond, one of the few parts of the lagoon that still has a viable mangrove area. It serves as a breeding area for many fish that eventually find their way to the reefs and seagrass beds surrounding the island.

Many aquatic species were found during the survey that are less abundant in open water, including pale and ringed anemones, thorny starfish, various sponges, mangrove oysters, mangrove tunicates and tiger worms. Juvenile barracuda, parrotfish, schoolmasters and grey snapper were seen in large numbers among the mangrove roots. Above water, many land animals and birds could be found sheltering in the foliage, including a nesting night heron and numerous green iguanas.

According to the environmental groups, Mullet Bay Pond is threatened by plans to destroy the mangroves and make way for a yacht marina. The group hopes that the survey will raise public awareness of the ecosystem and that steps can be taken to protect it from destruction.

Other areas on the island that previously were mangrove habitats, such as Dawn Beach and Red Pond, have already been cleared to build hotels. For more information visit www.epicislands.org.

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REGATTA NEWS

Antigua's 6th Annual Laser Open Championship Races

Antigua's 6th Annual Laser Open Championship series, held on March 10th and 11th, attracted ten entrants. For the sixth year running, Karl James was the winner, with Shawn Malone second and Alan Hart third; a triple success for Antigua!

International participants included Paolo Redaelli from Italy, Lucas Alexander from Australia, Jacob Rost from Germany and David Reid from the USA.

Although a St. Lucia contingent had planned to compete, they were unable to obtain flights. In addition to the top three winners, other Antiguan entrants included Raphael Harvey, Marc Fitzgerald and Richard Chadburn, plus 14-year-old Tyvone "Buju" Richardson who won the Radial class.

Excellent sailing conditions prevailed and the races were completed without incident. The organizers give many thanks to Tony Maidment, Henry Pepper, Chris Martin, Shameena Bailey and Kadeem Warner for making it all happen. Thanks went especially to Karl, for not only representing Antigua in great style, but finding time to organise the series of seven races, lay the marks and provide inspirational enthusiasm.

Trini Juniors Shine in BVI Event

Trinidad sailors dominated the Laser class at the 2007 BVI Spring Regatta (see full report on page 12).

On the first day of competition, some boats struggled to keep from broaching in gusts up to 26 knots. Others reveled in the brisk breeze and turned wind into pure power. Several youth sailors from Trinidad gave fellow competitors from the USVI, BVI and St. Lucia a run for their money in the Laser classes. St. Thomas' Tyler Rice, whoaced the Laser Radial class in the Heineken Culebra International Regatta (see full report on page 10), said, "Those Trini sailors are intense. They have incredible boat speed downwind. I was faster upwind and probably played the shifts better, but they'd get me every time downwind."

Day Two saw winds from 20 to 30 miles an hour. A rough sea put sailors and boats to the test. Trinidad's 17-year-old Ryan Rocke "rocked" the Laser class, scoring a first overall out of the Laser Standards, Radials and 4.7s, and topping the Laser Radial class as well. "I got good starts, even though the wind would shift two or three times while we were in start sequence," Rocke said. "Then I played the shifts. I played every single one of them to advantage."

For the last day sailors were able to enjoy a consistent 20 knots of breeze, sunshine and relatively flat water in races that, in many classes, determined who was to stand on the winners' podium. In the Laser classes, Ryan Rocke stretched his lead by 24 points over fellow islander Stuart Leighton. Rocke said, "This was my first international regatta and I'm very pleased with my results. It was a lot less shifty today, so I was able to really get ahead." Rocke led the Laser Radial and Lasers overall. Meanwhile, Trinidad's Anthony Alkins, also sailing his first international regatta in the Laser class, led the Laser 4.7s.

Easter Boat Hop in St. Maarten

Robbie Ferron reports: The conditions were Caribbean Excellent (which is even better than excellent) for the first annual Quantum Sails Easter Boat Hop (Regatta) held on the 6th and 7th of April. The regatta was sailed in the western part of the Simpson Bay Lagoon and hosted by the Sint Maarten Yacht Club. Not only was there great camaraderie and family atmosphere, but also a high level of sailing by the nine-boat fleet. With one-design racing the fleet stays very close, and these went around the courses as tightly packed as the America's Cup boats do.

We used a variety of courses, including many windward/leeward. At the end of the first day we raced



The Quantum Sails sponsored Easter Hop saw close one-design racing

back to the yacht club where all the boats stayed on the dock overnight. The next day we raced back to the western end of the lagoon.

The winner was Frits Bus, who with Lyn Rapley and some extra weight on the second day managed to pull off a long series of first places. Second was myself, and the big surprise of the week-end was the third position of the Optimist Youth team, Tropical Kids, which was steered in turn by each of the sailors of the Optimist senior racing team:

Stephen Looser, Jolyon Ferron and Harry Antrobus. This regatta was the one that emphatically showed the level of advancement that the Sint Maarten Youth Sailing Programme has achieved.

Fourth position went to Rien Korteknie, who beat the Gilders family team by one point.

Another family team, the van der Burgs, took sixth, staying ahead of the "Kick em Annette" team entered by Peter Grannetta and "De Zwarte Hand" entered by Ton Hooijmans. Coming in at the back but showing great speed potential was the team of Jefferson Benjamin who clearly showed enormous potential in being able to stay up with the fleet on his first outing.

The sponsor, Quantum Sails, provided goody bags, cookies, bunny ears, afternoon tea, and, after the prizegiving, a magnificent barbecue at the yacht club. Bernard Sillem, one of the leading sailors, proved that even active sailors can help manage the course. Petra Gilders and Joan Price helped Cary Berley on the Committee Boat. There is every reason to believe that this event is likely to be a highly desirable one on the sailing itinerary in the coming years.

Provo Mariners' Week in June

The first Mariners' Week Celebration will be held in the Turks & Caicos Islands on the Island of Providenciales, or Provo, from June 6th to 12th. The new celebration will honor seafarers, ship- and boatwrights, riggers, and all those who have worked to sustain nautical cultures in the Caribbean Basin.

The organizers, the Turks and Caicos Maritime Heritage Federation, also plan to establish a sailing centre on Provo that will focus on research and the collection of information about the Turks & Caicos' maritime heritage, and host an exchange of information with other Caribbean maritime cultures. The first Mariners' Week Celebration will feature three days of sailing competition, called the TCI Challenge

Cup Regatta. This year, for the first time, the Bahamas' traditional sailors are bringing their famous sloops to contest Turks & Caicos boats; it should be a very interesting battle. The 17th Annual Fools Regatta will enter this mix to bring in a more open racing competition. In years to come, the organizers are hoping that most of the maritime cultures in the Caribbean will come to race.

The Turks and Caicos Maritime Heritage Federation is a non-governmental organisation with close ties to most of the other preservationist and conservation organisations in this archipelago.

For more information visit www.maritimeheritage.tc/

Caribbean International Opti Regatta

The 15th annual Scotiabank Caribbean International Optimist Regatta, hosted by St. Thomas Yacht Club in the USVI, is set to sail from June 21 to 24. More than 80 skippers from eight to 15 years of age are expected, and participants will hail from all three US Virgin Islands, the British Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Bermuda, Trinidad and other Caribbean island nations such as Martinique and St. Lucia. "We're also expecting up to four teams of sailors from the US mainland," says Karen Rice, who co-directs this year's regatta with Cindy Hackstaff.

Pre-regatta activities will begin on June 18 and run through June 20, when top national and international



Scotiabank's annual international Opti event in St. Thomas attracts young sailing talent from around the Caribbean and the US mainland

sailing coaches will teach a three-day instructional clinic. Cost of the clinic is US\$185 and includes breakfast and lunch for the three days.

Final registration and a practice race will be held Thursday, June 21. However, those that register prior to May 15 will have their names entered in a special drawing to win top-notch sailing gear. Sailors can enter on-line at www.styc.net.

The three-day regatta will kick off Friday, June 22, and end with a beachside barbecue brunch and awards ceremony on Sunday, June 24, locally celebrated as Father's Day.

Racing will take place in Cowpet Bay. "If we can logistically make it happen, we're trying for a separate racing area for the Green Fleet (novices), to help them feel more comfortable racing in larger fleets," Rice says. Trophies will be awarded to the top five in each fleet and top three overall.

The regatta entry fee is US\$135 and includes an event T-shirt, registration goody bag and all meals from Thursday's (June 21) Welcoming Party through Sunday's Brunch.

For more information, contact Cindy Hackstaff at cindy@styc.net, Karen Rice at karen@styc.net, or visit www.styc.net.

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Laid-back Venue Charms Sailors

by Carol Bareuther

The island is only ten square miles in size. Fewer than 3,000 folks call it home. There are no marinas or boatyards. But in spite of this, or perhaps because of it, Puerto Rico's offshore island of Culebra is the perfect venue for the annual Heineken Culebra International Regatta.

A friendly rivalry that started in St. Croix continued to Culebra and made for some great on-the-water spectating in the Spinnaker Racing A Class. The Stanton brothers, Chris and Peter, along with a youthful and talented St. Croix-based crew, maneuvered their Melges 24, *Devil 3*, with such skillful tactics as to keep Trinidad's *Storm* firmly in second place on the scoreboard.

"They're fast. I'll give them that," said Trinidad's Peter Peake, who co-owns the Reichel-Pugh 44 *Storm* along with Californian Les Crouch.

In Spinnaker Racing B, St. Thomas' Chris Thompson proved that laid-back is good luck. "The hospitality here in Culebra, and with all the motherships rafted up together in the bay, reminds me of my windsurfing days where we'd sail island to island," said Thompson, who skipped his J/27, *J-Walker*, to a first in class.

Puerto Rico's Julio Reguero, sailing his J/105, *Umakua*, pulled a narrow one-point win over fellow islander Jose Sanchez aboard his C&C 36, *Balaju II*. In addition to securing a good win, Reguero's racing talent serves as a good role model. His ten-year-old son, Andre, competed in the Culebra International Dinghy Regatta that was held simultaneously with the big boat event, and placed third in the White Fleet.

Three Harkoms, Christopher Lloyd of the BVT's heavily modified Beneteau 44, was the boat to beat in Performance Cruising. Fortunately for them, and unfortunately for their competitors, they were indeed unbeatable with a string of flawless first-place finishes. Some say the boat is a "cheater", re-built to be a CSA-rule beater. But, others look at the crack crew and their constant trimming and tactics and see another reason why they win.

Puerto Rico's Chuck McLaughlin has skipped first *Dottie I*, then his Pearson 26, *Dottie II*, in just about every spring regatta held in Puerto Rico — from Humacao to Fajardo to Culebra. It's no wonder he's always first.

In the beach cat class, four-time Hobie 16 national champion and four-time Olympian Enrique "Kike" Figueroa handily won — in spite of turtling on the first race of the first day. "We're hoping to qualify in the Tornado this summer and compete in Beijing in 2008," says Kike, who sails with Jorge Hernandez as crew.

Competition proved razor sharp in both the J/24 and IC24 one-design classes.

St. Croix's Jae Tonachel was glad for the two days of buoy racing. "Races around the buoys are shorter and lets us get more racing in for the day. We kept hoping to catch up to and beat *Urayo*," said 17-year-old Tonachel.

Gilberto Rivera, driving his Puerto Rico-based *Urayo*, was happy for the course racing too. "One race a day

decides it. More races makes it more fun."

Only one point separated St. Thomas's *Green Boat*, skippered by Taylor Canfield, from Puerto Rico's *Orion*, helmed by Fraitto Lugo, in the IC24s. The *Green Boat* ultimately won and continued the winning streak that began at the St. Croix International Regatta.

Finally, Puerto Rico's Henry Santos skippered the winning boat in the Chalana class, *Son of Wind*. Chalanas are a backyard-built rather than factory-fabricated boat with a 75-plus-strong, highly competitive, one-design class that has a history dating back more than a century.

"My crew was great," Santos said. "We had some challenging conditions in the five- to six-foot swell and gusty 15- to 20-knot winds, but these guys really knew how to work the boat. In fact, in the last few races, it came down to a match race between Carlos's *Malas Manos* and us. Imagine, match racing like in the America's Cup on our Chalanas. And, I'm telling you, it was that close."



DEAN BARNES

St. Thomian Paul Davis' J/27, Magnificent 7, slices through heavy seas

Sixty-six boats, hailing from the Puerto Rican mainland, US and British Virgins, Trinidad and from as far away as Germany, competed in this year's third annual event, held March 9 to 11. The regatta has attracted a strong following in a short amount of time, thanks to a core group of stalwart Puerto Rican sailors who seem to have seawater in their blood as well as know how to throw a great party. Another reason is that the regatta is the second of the Caribbean Ocean Racing Triangle (CORT) Series, which kicked off with the St. Croix International Regatta, February 9 to 11, and ended with the BVI Spring Regatta, March 26 to April 1.

Geoffrey Pidduck, an avid sailor from Antigua who flew north to serve as one of three international judges, set the scene nicely by describing the regatta this way: "Everyone who is here is here to sail, everyone knows everyone. There's a certain camaraderie, an air of friendly competition. This is in contrast to some of the bigger Caribbean regattas where over half the fleet are bareboaters from all parts of the globe."

That said, the competition was definitely keen. The race committee gave most of the fleet buoy racing the first day and an around-the-island course the second. The one-design IC24s and J/24s, as well as the beach cats and native Chalanas, stuck with buoy racing for the second day at sailors' request, and it was nice to see the race committee's sailor-friendly and flexible decision.

Culebra International Regatta 2007 Winners

Spinnaker Racing A

- 1) *Devil 3*, Melges 24, Chris Stanton, St. Croix, USVI (4)
- 2) *Storm*, Reichel-Pugh 44, Peter Peake, Trinidad (10)
- 3) *Don Q Limon*, Melges 24, Enrique Torruellas, Puerto Rico (12)

Spinnaker Racing B

- 1) *J-Walker*, J/27, Chris Stanton, St. Thomas, USVI (4)
- 2) *The Good, The Bad & The Ugly*, Kirby 25, John Foster, St. Thomas, USVI (11)

- 3) *Ex Mero Motu*, J-24, Toni Mari, Puerto Rico (13)

Cruiser Racer

- 1) *Umakua*, J/105, Julio Reguero, Puerto Rico (4)
- 2) *Balaju II*, C&C 36, Jose Sanchez, Puerto Rico (5)
- 3) *Boomerang*, K-33, Pat Nolan, Tortola, BVI (10)

Performance Cruising

- 1) *Three Harkoms*, Modified Beneteau 445, Christopher Lloyd, Tortola, BVI (5)
- 2) *Shamrock IV*, J/120, Thomas Mullen, New Hampshire, USA (7)
- 3) *Dejavu*, J-30, Fernando DeJesus, Puerto Rico (8)

Jib & Main

- 1) *Dottie II*, Pearson 26, Chuck McLaughlin, Puerto Rico (4)
- 2) *Blue Max*, C&C 44, Juan Requena, Puerto Rico (18)
- 3) *Mary-Ellen*, Jeanneau 54, Howard Silverman, St. Croix, USVI (18)

Beach Cat

- 1) *DRD/Suzuki/Red Bull*, Tornado, Enrique Figueroa, Puerto Rico (9)
- 2) *Spookie Monkey*, Hobie 16, Pedrin Colon, Puerto Rico (16)
- 3) *Heineken*, Hobie 16, Francisco Figueroa, Puerto Rico (19)

Chalana

- 1) *Son of Wind*, Jose Perez, Puerto Rico (5)
- 2) *Malas Manas*, Carlos Marrero, Puerto Rico (14)
- 3) *Tasmania*, Henry Bastidas, Puerto Rico (20)

IC24

- 1) *Green Boat*, Carlos Aguilar, St. Thomas, USVI (16)
- 2) *Orion*, Fraitto Lugo, Puerto Rico (17)
- 3) *bMobile*, Colin Rathburn, Tortola, BVI (18)

J/24

- 1) *Urayo*, Gilberto Rivera, Puerto Rico (7)
- 2) *El Shaddai*, Jae Tonachel, St. Croix, USVI (13)
- 3) *Fuakata*, Carlos Sierra, Puerto Rico (20)



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Seven Classes Race for Good Times — and Good Watches!

by Carol Bareuther

Caribbean regattas share a commonality: steady tradewinds, warm waters, and sand-in-the-toes beachside parties that even get blue-blazered yachties to let their hair down and have some rum-inspired fun. Yet, each regatta has its own unique character. For the International Rolex Regatta, held for the 34th year out of the St. Thomas Yacht Club, March 23 to 25, its personality is made up of some of the best sailing talent in the world, combined with a friendly camaraderie that centers on the Club itself as a central meeting place. And, of course, the chance to sail off with a Rolex watch.

Eighty-seven yachts with skippers and crews hailing from throughout the Caribbean, US mainland and Europe participated in this three-day event that saw breezes of more than 12 knots each day over a combination of round-the-buoy and round-the-island courses. A watch was awarded to seven skippers, the top skippers in each of the regatta's seven classes.

For some of these skippers, picking up a Rolex meant maintaining a lead they gained the first day of competition. Such was the case in the Spinnaker Racing 1 Class. *Caccia Alla Volpe*, a Vallicelli 44 driven by Carlo Falcone from Antigua, maintained its lead over France's Clive Llewellyn, aboard his Grand Soleil 48, *Mad IV*.

"We started today with a three-point lead over our competition [*Mad IV*]," said Karl James, an Olympic Laser sailor who called tactics and trimmed the main aboard *Caccia Alla Volpe*. "Our goal was to stay close to them and we did. We're used to around-the-island racing in Antigua, so this course wasn't difficult for us."

The Stanton brothers, Chris as skipper and Peter calling tactics, along with their all-star crew, maneuvered their Melges 24, *Devil 3*, to a lead in Spinnaker Racing 2 on the first day and never let it go. The St. Croix-based crew is no stranger to this winner's circle, having taken home a Rolex a few years back while sailing their *J/24*, *Jersey Devil*.

"This one might go to me," said Chris. "The first one went to my dad. He and my mom have really been behind us in sailing."

He added, "It was nice to have a bunch of sport boats in our class that all sailed about the same angles. The last day, it seemed like the winds were light at first, but they really weren't. We had a great start and because the seas were much more calm, we were really able to fly. In fact, we crossed the finish line and the next boat in our class crossed about ten minutes later; we were that far ahead."

Similarly, *J-Bird*, an Olson 30 sailed by a California crew accustomed to manning a sleek-sailing Andrews 80, got out in front and never relinquished their lead in the Spinnaker Racing 3 Class.

Keith Kilpatrick, *J-Bird's* tactician and jib trimmer, said, "We didn't have any local knowledge, but we're a pretty experienced crew. In fact, we got a good start and shot off from there."

Yet another boat that suffered no losses was *Three Harkoms*, a modified Beneteau 442, owned by



Tim Kington's Crash Test Dummies out of Trinidad, a former Rolex winner who really had some speed

Tortola's Christopher Lloyd. "We haven't lost a race yet, but I shouldn't say that too soon. We still have BVI," Lloyd said.

He added, "I've got a great crew. They never stop working. I have to say, we have a bit of local knowledge, too. I sailed my first regatta over here in 1972. There wasn't a Rolex yet; it was just a club race."

Martin Jacobson from Greenwich, Connecticut, sailed a near flawless regatta aboard his Swan 44, *Crescendo*. *Crescendo's* tactician and part-time skipper, James Wilmot, said, "It was just a lovely regatta. We really enjoy racing around the islands. It's beautiful."

In the Beach Cat class, Puerto Rico's four-time Hobie 16 national champion and four-time Olympian, Enrique Figueroa, scored nothing but first-place finishes. He sailed aboard a Tornado, while many other boats in the class were Hobie 16s. Figueroa said, "The 16s can go pretty fast in this breeze, so we had to keep an eye out for them. But I have to say, many times it was lonely out there. We got pretty far ahead." Figueroa and crew Jorge Hernandez hope to qualify this summer for a slot at the Summer Olympics in Beijing in 2008.

This year's International Rolex Regatta was the qualifier for the US Virgin Islands representative for the Hobie 16 class in the Pan American Games, set for this summer in Rio de Janeiro. St. Croix's Chris Schreiber and St. Thomas's Terry Jackson earned this slot by placing fifth in class, higher than St. Thomas's Tom Kozyn and Lisa Oseychik, who finished in ninth. Finally, in the IC24 class, the race for first turned into a tiebreaker. The BVI's Robbie and Michael Hirst, aboard their *Mio Broadband*, scored the same number of points as Puerto Rico's Fraitto Lugo skipping his Orion. However, the Hirsts tallied a greater number of first-place finishes to win the class.

Robbie Hirst said, "Our crew work was very good. You had to figure out your strategy on the first beat, where to position yourself, or you got buried by the fleet."

International Rolex Regatta 2007 Winners

IC24 One Design (One Design - 19 Boats)

- 1) *Mio Broadband*, Robby & Michael Hirst, Tortola, BVI (47)
- 2) *Orion*, Fraitto Lugo, Ponce, PR (47)
- 3) *Bambooshay*, Christian Rosenberg, St. Thomas, USVI (61)

Spinnaker Racing 1 (CSA - 6 Boats)

- 1) *Caccia Alla Volpe*, Vallicelli 44, Carlo Falcone, Antigua (11)
- 2) *Mad IV*, J/V Grand Soleil 48, Clive Llewellyn, Paris, France (13)
- 3) *Yeoman XXXII*, Rogers 46, David Aisher, Kent, UK (17)

Spinnaker Racing 2 (CSA - 9 Boats)

- 1) *Devil 3*, Melges 24, Chris Stanton, St. Croix, USVI (6)
- 2) *Crash Test Dummies*, Melges 32, Timothy Kington, Diego Martin, Trinidad (17)
- 3) *Expensive Habit*, J/100, Robert Armstrong, St. Croix, USVI (19)

Spinnaker Racing 3 (CSA - 17 Boats)

- 1) *J-Bird 4*, Olson 30, Doug Baker, St. Thomas, USVI (6)
- 2) *The Good The Bad & The Ugly*, Kirby 25, Johnny Foster, St. Thomas, USVI (22)
- 3) *SP MRI & CT Center/Tax Return*, J/24, Carlos Feliciano, Caguas, Puerto Rico (25)

Non-Spinnaker Racing 1 (CSA - 17 Boats)

- 1) *Three Harkoms*, Modified Beneteau 442 44, Christopher Lloyd, Tortola, BVI (4)
- 2) *Affinity*, Frers 49.51, Jack Desmond, Massachusetts, USA (11)
- 3) *El Presidente*, Thomas 35, Jeffrey Fangmann, St. Croix, USVI (13)

Spinnaker Racing/Cruising (CSA - 9 Boats)

- 1) *Crescendo*, Swan 44, Martin Jacobson, Connecticut, USA (8)
- 2) *Team Paul Mitchell*, Beneteau First 40.7, Mark Palermo, Louisiana, USA (16)
- 3) *Shamrock V*, J 120, Thomas Mullen, New Hampshire, USA (17)

Beach Cats (Portsmouth - 12 Boats)

- 1) *DRD/Suzuki/Red Bull*, Tornado 20, Enrique Figueroa, San Juan, Puerto Rico (6)
- 2) *Heineken*, Hobie 16, Francisco Figueroa, San Juan, Puerto Rico(12)
- 3) *Fitness Warehouse*, Hobie 16, Dennys Junco, Carolina, Puerto Rico (23)



2007 BVI SPRING REGATTA

Strong Winds Make Exciting Racing

by Carol Bareuther

Wind was the word as skippers and crews competing in this year's BVI Spring Regatta, sailed March 29th to April 1st out of Tortola's Nanny Cay Marina, spent almost as much time preventing their boats from broaching as they did outwitting the competition. The fleet this year was a record 145 boats, which included everything from a 2005-06 Volvo Ocean Race winner, *ABN AMRO One*, to a contingent of hot Laser sailors from Trinidad.

If the winds had been lighter, the outcome in Spinnaker Racing A may have been different, says New Zealander Brad Jackson, who drove *ABN AMRO One* during the BVI regatta. "If it had been under ten knots, we would have had to really worry about *Titan XII*," says Jackson, about Tom Hill's Reichel-Pugh 75. As it was, the round-the-world winner easily finished with flawless first place finishes.

The same wasn't exactly true for *Devil 3*, a Melges 24 skippered by St. Croix's Chris Stanton, but Stanton and his brother, Peter, who called tactics, did keep their new sportboat in the lead all three days. Eyeing recent competition from a pair of Melges 32s — Trinidad's Tim Kimpton and his *Crash Test Dummies* crew, and Wisconsin's Dave West with his Midwesterners — the *Devil* only let the other two boats trump them in three races out of eight. Says Stanton, "We made fewer mistakes maneuver-wise. Then on the last day, the real reward for us was hitting 17 knots."

The crew aboard *J-Bird III* worked their little Olson 30 into a half-point win over Rick Wesslund's *J/120*, *El Ocaso*. Small boats may not be this California-based crew's forte, as they usually race owner Doug Baker's Andrews 80, *Magnitude*. They set the San Diego to Puerto Vallarta record last year, but who can resist the rum and reggae of a Caribbean regatta?

St. Thomas couple Chris and Christine Thompson proved they were anything but lonely empty-nesters in the wake of both kids going off to college last fall. With a group of good friends as crew, their *J/27*, *J-Walker*, won Spinnaker Racing D in the BVI, a class-win feat that they also accomplished at three other regattas earlier this season. "This was a good weekend and good for us. We got to sail with friends, and like everybody else this weekend, we optimized the boat to the limit. That is, we really got the greatest amount of boat speed possible without breaking anything or hurting anyone."

The BVI's Peter Haycraft has raced in every single BVI Spring Regatta. And, he's placed in the top three in his class many of these years, including this one, when his Sirena 38, *Pipedream*, beat out Puerto Rico's Julio Reguero, skippering his *J/105*, *Umakua*.

Affinity, Jack Desmond's Swan 48, held on to its lead in Performance Cruising A, while Performance Cruising B was clearly dominated by the BVI's Christopher Lloyd's highly modified Oceanis 440, *Three Harkoms*. John Sweeney, crewmember on the unbeatable *Three Harkoms*, summed up the regatta's blustery second day best when he commented, "Another great day on the water." No wonder, the boat sailed so fast that it nearly caught a number of the bigger boats that started five minutes ahead of them in Performance Cruising A.

Competition proved close in Jib & Main. David Huester scooted his Moorings 515, *Mary Jane*, out in front, but Steve Schmidt's Santa Cruz 70, *Hotel California Two*, and the BVI's Bill Bailey on his Hughes 38, *Second Nature*, tied with an identical number of points.

The bareboat classes in the Spring Regatta aren't as numerous as those in St. Maarten or Antigua. Still, this international mix of sailors took their performances seriously. Just ask the UK's Tony Mack, who skippered his Moorings 515, *Joyce Smith*, to first in Bareboat A, while Bareboat B was dominated by the Netherlands' Jan Soderberg in the Beneteau Oceanis 440, *Chess*.

The Large Multihull and Beach Cat classes were light this year. Even so, the BVI's Richard Woolldridge, aboard his *Triple Jack*, dominated the large cats, but St. Croix's Joe San Martin took revenge in the final race



DEAN BARNES

when his *Piglet* posted a first. High winds led to the beach cat fleet staying on the beach for the last day's competition. That gave St. Croix's Tom Ainger, driving his Inter 20, *Caribbean Auto Mart*, the class win.

Racing was so close in the IC24 class that the winner wasn't determined until the last race, with that honor going to BVI brothers Robbie and Michael Hirst, sailing their *MIO Broadband*. This year saw on-the-water judging in this class for the first time. "It helped the less experienced sailors learn the rules, but it didn't change a lot for the first half of the fleet," Hirst commented.

Finally, in the Lasers, Trinidad's Ryan Rocke led the class from Day One and stretched his lead by 24 points over fellow Trini sailor, Stuart Leighton. "This was my first international regatta and I'm very pleased with my results. It was a lot less shifty today, so I was able to really get ahead."

2007 BVI Spring Regatta Winners

Spinnaker Racing A

- 1) *ABN AMRO One*, Volvo Ocean 70, Brad Jackson, New Zealand (8)
- 2) *Titan XII*, Reichel-Pugh 75, Tom Hill, Sr., Puerto Rico (16)
- 3) *Noonmark VI*, Swan 56, Geoffrey Mulchy, UK (28)

Spinnaker Racing B

- 1) *Devil 3*, Melges 24, Chris Stanton, USVI (13)
- 2) *Crash Test Dummies*, Melges 32, Tim Kimpton, Trinidad (19)
- 3) *Chippewa*, Melges 32, Dave West, USA (24)

Spinnaker Racing C

- 1) *J-Bird III*, Olson 30, Doug Baker, USA (23.5)
- 2) *El Ocaso*, J/120, Rick Wesslund, USA (24)
- 3) *Team Paul Mitchell*, Beneteau First 40.7, USA (24.5)

Spinnaker Racing D

- 1) *J-Walker*, J-27, Chris Stanton, USVI (12.5)
- 2) *The Good, The Bad & The Ugly*, Kirby 25, John Foster, USVI (21.5)
- 3) *Magnificent 7*, J-27, Paul Davis, USVI (25)

Cruiser Racer

- 1) *Pipedream*, Sirena 38, Peter Haycraft, BVI (17)
- 2) *Umakua*, J-105, Julio Reguero, Puerto Rico (22)
- 3) *Abracadabra*, J-105, Carlos Camacho, Puerto Rico (23)

Performance Cruising A

- 1) *Affinity*, Swan 48, Jack Desmond, USA (8)
- 2) *Advantage*, Grand Soleil 50, Brian Bennett, USA (13)
- 3) *Black Hole*, Beneteau First 40.7, Patrick Kroll, UK (15)

Performance Cruising B

- 1) *Three Harkoms*, Modified Beneteau 445, Christopher Lloyd, BVI (5)
- 2) *Divva*, Modified 30 Square Meter, Robin Tattersall, BVI (13)
- 3) *Elmo*, Grand Soleil 43, Robert Eggleton, USA (18)

Jib & Main

- 1) *Mary Jane*, Moorings 515, David Huester, UK (8)
- 2) *Hotel California Too*, Santa Cruz 70, Steve Schmidt, USA (11.5)
- 3) *Second Nature*, Hughes 38, Bill Bailey, BVI (11.5)

Multihull

- 1) *Triple Jack*, Kelsall One Off, Richard Woolldridge, BVI (6)
- 2) *Piglet*, Newick, Joe San Martin, USVI (9)

Beach Cats

- 1) *Caribbean Auto Mart*, Inter 20, Tom Ainger, USVI (6)
- 2) *XO Bistro*, Hobie 16, Tom Kozyn, USVI (16)
- 3) *TBD*, Prindle 19, Davis Murray, USVI (21)

IC24

- 1) *MIO Broadband*, Robbie Hirst, BVI (53)
- 2) *Bambooshay*, Chris Rosenberg, USVI (57)
- 3) *MIO Roaming*, Andrew Waters, BVI (84)

Laser

- 1) *Ryan Rocke*, Trinidad (28)
- 2) *Stewart Leighton*, Trinidad (52)
- 3) *Tyler Rice*, USVI (65)

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High Winds and High Spirits

by Wanda Brown Nicholas

Winds and spirits were high as a record was broken at the 5th Annual Grenada Round-the-Island Easter Regatta. The event, held April 5th through 9th, was hosted by Prickly Bay Marina. Trinidadian Peter

hour happy hour at Prickly Bay Marina's after party. Fifteen yachts registered for the Round-the-Island race on Saturday, to race in two classes: Multihull and Monohull. The big challenge was to break the multi-



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for dancing into the night. Saturday also saw the Port Louis Junior Challenge Race, a great success with 22 sailors between the ages of eight and 15 taking part in five races. The triangle course off the Prickly Bay beach was ideal. Danny Donelan from Port Louis presented certificates to all those competing and Budget Marine gave prizes to the winners. In the Laser Class, Nick Goodchild came first; in the Optimist Class, Kendall Martin; the Mosquito Class was won by Kimo Sampson. Kite building and flying was a highlight of the land activities for the junior sailors.

Sunday was the day of the Budget Marine Races 4 and 5, again with excellent wind conditions off the south coast to decide the overall placing for each class. *Morning Tide* came in first in both races and secured the overall winner's place in the Cruising Class for the race series. Darryl Braithwaite's *Second Wind* was the overall winner in the Multihull Class.

A memorable evening at the Beach House Restaurant & Bar followed as guests were invited to dance to the rhythms of the Tivoli Drummers. Following the prize-giving ceremony and dinner, dancing was to the popular tunes of the Back in Time band. Chris Mayhew, captain of *Blurred Vision*, commented, "The location for the prize-giving was excellent and the food was superb!"

Left: Tight action was the rule on Good Friday and Easter Sunday as all monohulls raced in Cruising Class off Grenada's south coast

Below: On the Saturday, junior racers showed their style, too



Morris, captain of overall winner *Morning Tide*, called the event "a very enjoyable and exciting Grenada Easter Regatta." He added, "The boats raced closely together and the Round-the-Island Race was a classic!"

The early Thursday afternoon arrival of a feeder race from Trinidad at Prickly Bay Marina kicked off the Easter festivities. After sailing up from Trinidad with favorable wind and sea conditions *Survivor* came in first, *Beex* second, and *Morning Tide* third. That was followed by a Welcome Party, which, like all the regatta's land events, was open to the public and had great turnout.

Weather conditions were excellent off the south coast on Good Friday for two races sponsored by Prickly Bay Marina. On this day, as well as on Sunday, all boats raced in one class, Cruising. Race One was voided because the southern mark drifted away, but Race Two more than made up for it, with first place going to Robbie Yearwood's *Blew by You*; *Morning Tide* took second and Mike Williams' *Aquilo* came in third. Grenada Board of Tourism Director Joycelyn Sylvester Gairy joined Peggy Cattain, race coordinator, and Jacqui Pascall, event coordinator, at the day's prize-giving ceremony. David Emanuel and his band played lively music during the Westerhall Estate Rum's two-

hull record for the fastest time around the island, held by *Huff N Puff* at 5 hours and 50 minutes. It was a windy day, and in the 20 to 22 knots of breeze Roger Spronk's cat *Shadowfax* blew her jib off the north end of the island and *Sasha*, another catamaran, got her spinnaker jammed at the finish line. Although the multihull record was unbroken, Champie Evans on *Julia* set a new record for the fastest monohull: actual time around the island was 6 hours, 3 minutes and 49 seconds, for a corrected time of 5 hours, 32 minutes and 25 seconds. This made for an exceptionally exciting Race Three as well as the great news that the Carib Cup will stay at home in Grenada. Well done to Champie and crew!

The after-race party on Saturday was excellent, with steel band music provided by Angel Harps and sponsored by Republic Bank. This Carib Cup party drew the crowds for the 8:00PM prize-giving, hosted by the Grenada Board of Tourism's Yachting & Cruise Development Officer, Ian Winsborrow. Jacqui Pascall presented the Carib Cup and Peter Blake trophies to the Round-the-Island Race's first-place winner, Champie Evans. This was followed by an enthusiastic Carib beer-drinking competition, which was well supported. Barracuda and his band supplied great music

But the Easter fun wasn't over yet. Next came the celebrations on Easter Monday's "Fun in the Sun" day, also at the Beach House Restaurant. Maypole dancers came from Windsor Forest, the Grenada Salsa dancers performed, and David Emanuel and his band played a great set. There were hidden toys for the Easter hunt, which the kids loved, and a running race for prizes. The garden setting was ideal for the occasion. The biggest laugh was the bungee pulling challenge that got everyone on the beach involved. There was much cheering when a competitor managed to reach the beer bottle — and it got moved another yard farther away! Prizes donated by Digicel were received by all the winners.

The 5th Annual Grenada Round-the-Island Easter Regatta was a hit for sailors, landlubbers, juniors, kids, sponsors and hosts!

For complete racing results visit www.aroundgrenada.com.

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BEQUIA REGATTA - WITH A FRENCH TWIST!

by Nicola Redway

After a week or more of leaden grey skies, fluky winds and constant rain, the weather finally turned on April 4th, just in time to bless Bequia Easter Regatta 2007 with near perfect sailing weather.

But it wasn't only the weather that was worrying the organizers in the run-up to Easter. They were also aware that the Cricket World Cup was having a knock-on effect — particularly on travel — throughout the region and there were fears that this could affect attendance. What a delight it was, then, to be starting the regatta on a blustery, sunny Good Friday morning with 36 yachts signed up, just short of last year's record-breaking total. By far the largest contingent (a full third of the total entry, in fact) was from Martinique. The French boats swelled the Racing Class to a record 14 entries, creating a thrilling and highly competitive three-race series.

There are a few things that need to be said up front about the growing number of Martiniquan sailors who have been coming to Bequia since 2000. Number one, they are extraordinarily committed racers, utterly dedicated to competing at the highest possible level in every race; number two, they simply love to be in Bequia at regatta time; and number three — they know how to party everyone else under the table! (Oh yes, and they don't care a hoot about cricket...) Remember the phrase from the movie 'Field of Dreams': "If you build it, they will come..."? Well, with the help of the enthusiastic French racing boats, the Bequia Regatta Race Committee has in recent years built a superb Racing Class. The hope now is that racing boats from around the region will be encouraged to come to Bequia in 2008 to sample for themselves the great racing and hospitality that make this tiny island's regatta so popular.

But back to 2007: Turnout in the J/24 Class also exceeded expectations, with seven boats from Grenada, St. Lucia, Barbados and St. Vincent making up the fleet for their specially designed six-race competition. With six Bequia Regatta regulars in the CSA Cruising I Class, and a mixed bag of regulars, some interesting-looking Bequia Regatta debutantes and even a 60-foot gaff schooner in Cruising II, the stage was set for four days of first class competition across the board.

—Continued on next page

Below: Three firsts out of three in Racing Class for Nicolas Gillet on Clippers Ship



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—Continued from previous page

A Very Good Friday

The Friendship Bay Race on Good Friday took all but the J/24s around the outer islands on the south side of Bequia. The super-fast Surprise *Clippers Ship*, skippered by the talented 24-year-old Nicolas Gillet took first place in Racing Class, romping home in 136.66 minutes on corrected time, nearly three minutes ahead of another French Surprise, *GFA Caraibes*, skippered by Gerard Corlay. A mere 0.25 seconds of corrected time separated Jack Arthaud's B28 *Aseece Equipement* and Arthur Villain's teenage crew on the familiar bright pink Surprise *W.I.N.D.* for third and fourth places respectively.

In Cruising I, Barbadian Ron Hunt on his J/30 *Jaystar* was the clear winner over John Verity's Sigma 33 *Dubloon of Marigot*, who beat out Kent Richardson's Beneteau 456 *Dark Star* for second place. Over in Cruising II it was dark horse newcomer Ken Campbell in his C&C 51 *Magic* who came in ahead of C&C 38 *Hot Chocolate*, skippered by Rich Washington, with a margin of just 23 seconds on corrected time. Another Bequia newcomer, Peter Bennett, racing in his beautiful dark-hulled C&C 44 *Destiny*, took third place, ahead of *Actuel*, a Jeanneau Sunrise from Martinique skippered by old-timer Gaetan de la Goublaye. With C&Cs taking the top three places, the battle for supremacy amongst them was well and truly on.

The J/24s had a shorter version of the scenic Friendship Bay course for their first day of racing, and it was St. Lucia's *Jabal*, skippered by Nick Forsberg, who came in well ahead of Carriacou's Jerry Stewart on *HOIC* in second and Lucian Jerry Bethel's *Banana Wind* in third. With a number of (thankfully temporary) breakdowns on Day 1, the talk at the results and daily prizegiving at the Frangipani Hotel that night was all about the challenge of the next day's Round the Island Race, with the field pretty much wide open in all classes and more good sailing weather anticipated.

Saturday Around Bequia

Saturday morning broke clear, but by 10:30 the clouds had lowered and some ugly squalls came in, which challenged both the yacht racers and the local double-enders that caught the worst just as they were starting on their first race. But the skies soon cleared, the wind settled and by the end of the day another great day's racing was in the bag. In Racing Class it was *Clippers Ship* once again that was the stand-out winner, with a five-minute (corrected time) gap between them and the second-placed boat *Open the Barre*, an A40 skippered by Bastien Leglohec. Third place was close — only 15 seconds of corrected time separated *Open the Barre* and *Hallucine*, the sleek Open 45



Ron Hunt's Jaystar earned a long awaited Overall First in Cruising I

skippered by Regis Guillemot. In Cruising I, this time it was *Dubloon of Marigot* who was the clear winner, coming in a full five minutes ahead of *Jaystar*, who in turn was five minutes of corrected time ahead of Steve Schmidt's majestic Santa Cruz 70 *Hotel California Too*. In Cruising II, C&Cs *Magic* and *Hot Chocolate* again took first and second, with Martinique's Patrick Velasquez on *Virgo* taking a well-earned third after missing Friday's race when his boom broke at the start.

With a series of three races for the J/24s on Saturday, it came down to a tussle between four boats — *Jabal*, *Banana Wind*, *HOIC*, and Peter "Wipers" Hoad's *Jabulani*. In the end it was one, two, three for *Jabal*, *HOIC* and *Jabulani*, with *Banana Wind* squeezed out by just one point.

Easter Sunday: Solitaire and Sunshine

When the second get-together party and daily prizegiving took place at the Porthole Restaurant on Saturday afternoon, the talk this time was not only about the day's

results and the prospects for the final race on Monday. Sunday's Round the Island single-handed race, which for the first time was allowing spinnakers to be flown in the CSA Class, was also creating a real buzz of excitement. Eight French boats were joined by Barbados veteran Jerome Reid on *Jump Up*, Ben Jelic on the Kiwi 35 *Sea Devil* and Steve Schmidt on *Hotel California Too*, all of them eager to prove their skills in this demanding test of individual seamanship. The results? Regis Guillemot on *Hallucine* reigned supreme over the young bucks, coming in 90 seconds ahead of Emmanuel Velasquez on *GFA Caraibes*, who in turn beat the seemingly unbeatable Nicolas Gillet on *Clippers Ship* into third place. In the non-CSA Class there were just two boats entered — *Actuel* and *Virgo*, both from Martinique. Patrick Velasquez on *Virgo* came in way ahead with an impressive corrected time of 173.29 — faster than all but the top four boats in the single-handed CSA/Spinnaker Class.

—Continued on next page



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—Continued from previous page

For everyone but the single-handers it was Lay Day... another gloriously sunny, breezy day on which to enjoy the popular Sandcastle Competition and Crazy Craft Race in Lower Bay, and drink in the spectacle of the full fleet of 32 local boats taking off from the shore for

Caraibes to take second place by a mere 2.4 seconds on corrected time. This result earned them Second Overall, beating Overall Third winner *Ascee Equipment* by one point. In Cruising I, it was *Jaystar, Dubloon, and Dark Star* in first, second and third, echoing the overall results. In Cruising II, familiarity with the tri-

M.P. for the Northern Grenadines, each gave rousing speeches of thanks both to the Bequia Sailing Club's all-volunteer team and to the competitors. Then the serious business of prize-giving began. All the cheers were loud, but perhaps the loudest were reserved for the determined young all-girl crew on Martinique's

Ken Campbell's C&C 51 Magic beat out a strong field in Cruising II



J/24 Jabal, skippered by Nick Forsberg, triumphed in J/24 class

their Sunday race, then returning to pull up on the beach to be ready for their start on Monday. With a good-natured beach splash and street fête taking place all day, there was truly something for everyone.

Tactical Triangles on Monday

Bequia's tactical Easter Monday Admiralty Bay Triangle race is famous for separating the men from the boys and the old hands from the rookies, but this year, convention was somewhat upturned. *Clippers Ship* raced true to form, taking first in Racing Class and First Overall, but to everyone's delight and to their very great credit, *W.I.N.D.*, with their teenage crew, beat out the vastly more (Bequia) experienced *GFA*

angle course proved critical for *Virgo*, who took first place ahead of newcomer *Magic*, who nevertheless came out as the clear Overall Winner with his two firsts on Days One and Two. *Hot Chocolate* made third (and hence Overall Second) while *Actuel* pipped *Destiny* by a mere 14 seconds in Monday's race to take fourth place, giving *Actuel* Overall Third — ahead of *Destiny* by a single point.

A happy and boisterous crowd of competitors of all ages and from all sides of the regatta gathered in the Frangipani Hotel's waterfront space for the Grand Prize-giving on Easter Monday. Former SVG Prime Minister Sir James Mitchell and Dr. Godwin Friday,

Surprise *Studio10 Le Ponton* who placed overall seventh, competed tenaciously throughout the weekend, and with truly no hint of sexism whatsoever, won the (predominantly female) Race Committee's award for Best Dressed Crew!

It really was a terrific regatta — not only for the smoothly run and challenging yacht races but also for the exceptional *bonhomie* that pervaded the event. Thanks must go to sponsors SVG Ministry of Tourism, Sport and Youth, Heineken, Mount Gay, Pepsi, Digicel, Mountain Top Spring Water, Tradewinds Cruise Club and the Frangipani Hotel, and to all other donors large and small for their vital support of Bequia's premier event.

Everyone is already looking forward to Bequia Easter Regatta 2008, so make a note in your diary — it's March 20th to 24th!



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Winners, Old and New

by Kedisha Compton

They say the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. It must be true for women as well, because when asked to write about the Bequia Easter Regatta at the annual Compass brunch, which was held this year at world-famous Mac's Pizzeria, I said "Yes".....

Thirty-two double-enders took part this year, racing in seven length-based classes, with entries from Mayreau, Canouan and Carriacou competing with the Bequia boats. There was one new addition: the 18-foot *Sweet Image*, another creation from Bequia boatbuilder Arnold Hazell, competing in Class 5A. *Perseverance*, one of the fastest boats in its class, did not race this year, but another boat built by Arnold Hazell, *Cloudy Bay*, provided serious competition.

The first race for the Grenadines' fishingboats was the Pepsi Challenge, on Saturday April 7th, which began at Friendship Bay. The smallest boats, Class 1, started first. As the biggest boats, the 28-footers in Class 7, set out a large dark squall blew in, resulting in a collision that damaged a boat from Carriacou. The race finished at Hamilton Point in Admiralty Bay, then the fleet then sailed down to Lower Bay, where the next day's race was scheduled to begin.

On Sunday, the 8th of April, I am awakened by the sound of sails flapping on the beach in Lower Bay and the steady ringing of halyards against masts. Today's race is the Heineken Challenge, starting at Lower Bay, going around the Admiralty mark, out past the North West mark, then down to the Ship's Stern mark — with Classes 1 and 2 making one lap; Classes 4 through 7 making two laps — then to the finish back at the Admiralty mark. It is a windy, hot day; after many previous days of rain the weather is finally paying respect to the regatta fans and players.

The race begins around 10:00AM with the Commodore's hoarse voice being heard loud and clear over the hand-held speaker: "To your places, the race is about to begin!" There are a few murmurs, followed by a "Get ready". The spectators give their undivided attention, and photographers scurry around to get their best shot. The horn blares and

the race has begun, again starting with Class 1. Class by class, the boats head out of Lower Bay following the route required.

Easter Sunday, combining the mounting excitement of Race Two for the double-enders, a single-handed race for the yachts and a day-long beach fête for all, seems to be the best part of Bequia's Regatta. It also gives the local entrepreneurs a chance to bring out their ice boxes and barbecues and sell to the unquenchable crowd. After all of the fishingboat classes have started, race fans migrate to various vantage points around the island to follow every tack made by their favorite boats, loudly agreeing or disagreeing with each move.

Onshore the music has reached its peak, and flocks of bikini-clad ladies and Rip Curl dressed men walk the hot roads barefoot. I join in, too, hardly noticing the rising heat. People caress cold beers and other "cool downers", slowly shifting to the rhythm of the music. As the day wears on, many retire early to prepare for the next day's race.

Monday has finally come. It's the last day of Bequia's annual regatta festival, and although everything has become rushed and last-minute, everyone's eager for the final race. It's the Mount Gay race, a shorter course. The boats begin in Lower Bay and head downwind for West Cay. Classes 1 and 2 round a mark off Moonhole; the bigger boats beat up around Middle Cay and then run back down the Paget Farm passage. All classes tack back into Admiralty Bay where the racing concludes and onshore the Almond Tree fête goes full speed ahead with lots of food and drinks and live music. Like I always say, "It ain't ah party unless yo' got music!"

Later on Monday evening the grand prizegiving is held at the Frangipani Hotel, which is also race headquarters. The first place trophy for Class 1 is presented to *Lady G*, skippered by Damien Bess of Bequia. Class 2 sees a tie between *Bad Feeling* of Mayreau and Bequia's *Never D*, while another...

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'Get ready!' Class 5A boats prepare for the Easter Sunday start at Lower Bay

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...Mayreau boat, *Martann* skippered by Bonnie Forde, captures top honors in Class 4. (There was no Class 3 this year.)

Bequia boats dominate the bigger classes. *Sweet Image*, skippered by Robert Hazell, proves her worth as "new kid on the block" with an overall first in Class 5A. In Class 5B, the recently modified *Shamu*, skippered by Ekron Bunyan, triumphs. In Class 6 it is a real old-timer's turn: the 130-year-old Bequia whaleboat *Iron Duke*, skippered by Courtney Adams, takes top place. And Lachie King skippers *Bluff*, another well-seasoned regatta competitor, to an overall first in Class 7.

There is a huge celebration with drinks courtesy of sponsors Mountain Top Spring Water, Heineken, Mount Gay and Pepsi. Good news travels fast and although the weekend has only just ended, "dem say it was ah success".

Bequia Easter Regatta 2007 Overall Winners

FISHINGBOATS

Class 1

- 1) *Lady G*, Damien Bess, Bequia
- 2) *Red Saw*, Man Tawe, Bequia
- 3) *De Reef*, Dickson Bynoe, Bequia

Class 2

- 1) (tie) *Bad Feelings*, Samuel Forde, Mayreau
- Neuer D*, Cephus Gurley, Bequia

- 2) *My Love*, Stanley Harry, Bequia

Class 4

- 1) *Marian*, Bonnie Forde, Mayreau
- 2) *Libity*, Elmore Snagg, Canouan
- 3) *Ark Royal*, Roy Decoteau, skipper from Petite Martinique, boat from Canouan

Class 5A

- 1) *Sweet Image*, Robert Hazell, Bequia
- 2) *Tornado*, Kingsley Stowe, Bequia
- 3) *Nerissa J*, Mike Harry, Canouan

Class 5B

- 1) *Shamu*, Ekron Bunyan, Bequia
- 2) *Arrow*, Rory King, Bequia
- 3) (3-way tie) *Devine*, Delacey Leslie, Bequia
- Shannalou*, Ray Leslie, Bequia
- Worries*, Andy Mitchell, Bequia

Class 6

- 1) *Iron Duke*, Courtney Adams, Bequia
- 2) *Trouble*, Evan Chambers, Bequia

Class 7

- 1) *Bluff*, Lachie King, Bequia
- 2) *Passion*, Matthew Joseph, Carriacou
- 3) *Cloudy Bay*, Trevor Adams, Bequia

YACHTS

Racing Class

- 1) *Clippers Ship*, Surprise, Nicolas Gillet, Martinique
- 2) *W.I.N.D.*, Surprise, Arthur Villain, Martinique
- 3) *Ascee Equipement*, B28, Jack Arthaud, Martinique



Class 5B's overall winner *Shamu* kicks up a rooster tail

PHOTOS © WILFRED DEBERN



Studio 10 Le Ponton voted 'Best Dressed Crew'

Cruising One

- 1) *Jaystar*, J/30, Ron Hunt, Barbados
- 2) *Dubloon of Marigot*, Sigma 33, John Verity, St. Lucia
- 3) *Dark Star*, Beneteau 456, Kent Richardson, USA

Cruising Two

- 1) *Magic*, C&C 51, Ken Campbell, USA
- 2) *Hot Chocolate*, C&C 38, Rich Washington, USA
- 3) *Actuel*, Jeanneau Sunrise, Gaetan de la Goublaye, Martinique

J/24

- 1) *Jabal*, Nick Forsberg, St. Lucia
- 2) *HOIC*, Jerry Stewart, Carriacou
- 3) *Banana Wind*, Jerry Bethel, St. Lucia

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Understanding Caribbean Weather

Part One:

Some Basic 'Whats' and 'Whys'

by Clayton Lewis

When Fiona and I were asked to take over the daily VHF weather report for the Cruisers' Net in Trinidad after a couple of weeks last season we decided to include a daily item of weather information. These weather tidbits got good reviews from cruisers and we thought they might be of interest to anyone who sits out the hurricane season checking weather reports every day. They provide a little background on what's behind those weather reports and will help you to understand some of the terminology.

Where Do Tradewinds Come From?

Imagine a belt of air around the world at the equator; it receives more sun than other regions of the world. Hot air rises from this equatorial band high into the atmosphere. It has nowhere to go but away from the equator, causing strong upper air flows — one toward the north pole and one toward the south pole. Altitude and movement towards the poles eventually cool these flows and after substantial cooling both air masses start to fall. Most of the falling (weather reports call this subsidence) is in the area around 30° north latitude and 30° south latitude.

The global effect is an equatorial band of hot, low pressure air and mid-latitude bands of cooler, high pressure air, one in each hemisphere. These global pressure differences (which meteorologists call gradients) cause air to flow from the high pressure mid-latitudes toward the low pressure equator.

The Coriolis force (more information later) bends these flows toward the west and they become the well-known north and south tradewind belts. Tradewinds are weaker in the summer, when there is less temperature difference between the equator and the mid-latitudes. They are strongest in the winter when the mid-latitudes are much colder, causing the strong trades we know as Christmas winds in the northern hemisphere.

What's a Tropical Wave?

The flow of the tradewinds in the band between the equator and mid-latitudes can be affected by land features. During the summer in particular the strong contrast in Africa between the wet equatorial jungles and the dry, hot Sahara to the north has a powerful influence on the northern hemisphere tradewind flow. Think of the tradewind flow as a river and the African climate contrast as a writhing disturbance that tends to disrupt the flow. The result is that waves form in the river of air. These waves have a period of about two days and, like any wave, consist of low and high pressure bands. The bands stretch north and south from the equatorial area upwards to mid-latitudes. You can think of them as enormous rollers that form over Africa and roll west. The troughs, that is, the low-pressure parts of the waves, are called Tropical Waves. When a trough reaches far north it's called a "high amplitude" wave; "low amplitude" waves don't stretch very far northward.

Tropical waves don't form every two days except in the peak of the summer. If they did, the six-month hurricane season from June through November should see about 90 tropical waves. Instead we get about 60 per year as the historical average.

What is the ITCZ?

If you've read the classic cruising books — Eric Hiscock or Miles and Beryl Smeeton — you will have read about the doldrums. In this era of acronyms that very descriptive word has been replaced by "the ITCZ," the Inter Tropical Convergence Zone. What is converging in the zone between the tropics are the two tradewind bands, the southern hemisphere trades and our northern hemisphere trades. The trades meet in the equatorial area where intense heat causes the rising of hot air. This is where the tradewinds finally taper off. The ITCZ is characterized by large amounts of moisture being driven aloft, resulting in heavy cloud formation, little wind and frequent showers and thunderstorms.

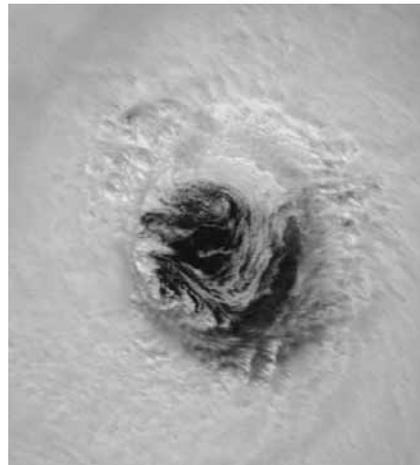
The ITCZ, a.k.a. the doldrums, varies from about 20 to 150 miles wide and is most intense when it is narrowest.

Strong winter trades in either hemisphere push the ITCZ away towards the other pole. So in our winter the ITCZ is pushed south, as far as 5°S. Weatherman Eric Mackie (more information later) likes to say it is checking out the one-piece bikinis in Brazil. Likewise, strong winter trades in the southern hemisphere push the ITCZ north during our summer, sometimes as far as 15°N, bringing us unsettled weather as it passes over us. This north-south movement of the ITCZ lags

behind the sun's annual north-south migration by about two months, so the ITCZ is farthest north in August, typically about 10°N. It is no coincidence that this is also prime hurricane season.

What Causes Hurricanes in the Mid-Atlantic?

Most Atlantic hurricanes start near tropical waves. We've all experienced the wind patterns associated with a tropical wave; wind north of east as the wave approaches and south of east behind it. Imagine riding a satellite above the wave. You look down and see the winds to the left of the wave are coming from the northeast — angling downward from your viewpoint while the southeast winds to the right of the wave are angling upward from the equator. The cloud formations near tropical waves show these "down left" and "up right" patterns and are known as the signature "inverted V curvature" of a tropical wave, visible in satellite imagery.



See the power? The average hurricane releases energy each day equivalent to 200 times the electric generating capacity of the entire world. All that energy comes from warm water

Imagine standing just inside the inverted V. Winds on both sides are trying to spin you counterclockwise, down-left and up-right. It's a prime location for cyclonic circulation to begin.

If the ITCZ gets involved at the same time, pushing north with a bump protruding into the inverted V of a wave, it brings the southern trades into the picture. Now well north of the equator, the southern trades bend to the right due to Coriolis Force adding westerly winds to the open bottom of our inverted V; this strong force helps the system to rotate counterclockwise.

These conditions of interaction between a tropical wave and a northern bump in the ITCZ are often implicated in forming tropical systems and can be the birthplace of hurricanes.

Hurricanes and Water Temperatures

If you go to Chris Parker's site (<http://caribwx.mwxc.com/marine.html>) at this time of year, the first thing in his forecast is the SST — the Sea Surface Temperature. Of course, the reason is that SST is perhaps the most important factor in the formation of hurricanes.

The average hurricane releases energy each day equivalent to 600 terawatts, six times 10¹⁴ Watts. What the heck does that mean in real-life terms? It's 200 times the electric generating capacity of the entire world. All that energy comes from the warm water. After a hurricane passes, sea temperatures are cooler by as much as 6° C (11° F), in one case of a super typhoon 9° C (16° F). All that energy has been absorbed into the weather system with the evaporating water.

In order to have an adequate source of surface energy, the ocean should be at least 26° C (79° F). Furthermore, this layer of warm water should be at least 200 feet deep. As the passing hurricane stirs up the water it can kill itself by dredging up water that is too cool.

Sometimes when a hurricane runs over a particularly warm spot in the ocean (an anomaly) such as the Gulf Stream or a warm eddy, it goes through a rapid intensification. Meteorologists first recognized the importance of deep, warm eddies during Hurricane Opal in 1995. Opal encountered a warm-water eddy in the Gulf of Mexico and strengthened in intensity from Category 1 to Category 4 in only 14 hours. Both Katrina and Rita in 2005 intensified to Category 5 over hot eddies in the Gulf of Mexico.

Similarly, a hurricane can stumble if it passes over a cooler area of water such as the track of a recent hurricane. This is one reason that it is rare to have two intense storms in the same general area in the same season.

So long as the hurricane remains over warm water it may gain strength. Once it hits land the source of fuel is gone and it runs out of steam (pun intended).

Wind Shear. What is it?

Over and over again in the National Hurricane Center forecasts and Jeff Master's blog (www.wunderground.com/blog/JeffMasters) we have been hearing the words "wind shear" when a low threatens to develop into a tropical system. Low wind shear is necessary for hurricanes to develop and high wind shear can cripple or collapse a storm which already has developed.

Wind shear is the difference between the wind speed and direction at the jet stream level and that at the surface. Ideally a developing hurricane wants zero wind shear — that is, no difference in speed or direction of the wind at all levels from the surface up to about 40,000 feet. Wind shear of 20 knots or less is considered "favorable for hurricane development".

Here's why: The center of a hurricane system becomes a hollow column, like a drinking straw, around which warm, moist air is sucked aloft. The column pumps up water vapor which cools and condenses, releasing untold energy and lots of rain. This heat pump is the engine driving the hurricane. The straighter and more vertical it is, the better it will pump. Higher winds aloft will tilt the column; a different wind direction aloft will also tilt it. Enough tilt and the upper level core will be torn away and detached from the circulation feeding it from below, killing the heat engine and destroying the system.

What is Coriolis Force?

Coriolis Force plays a part in the formation of hurricanes and in steering them once they form. But what is it?

The equator is 25,000 miles long. Imagine standing on the equator for a full 24 hours. As the earth spun through one revolution you would travel 25,000 miles to the east in 24 hours — about 1,000 miles per hour. But if you stood still at one of the poles for a whole day, you would not have traveled at all since you are at the center, the axis, of the earth's rotation. (However, you would have very cold feet.) Points between the equator and the poles move at different rates: fastest closest to the equator. Points at 30° north or south latitude, for example, move at about 850 mph.

So imagine standing in Jacksonville, Florida, at 30°N and hurling a ball directly south aiming at the point on the equator. You would be aiming for Quito, Ecuador. As you let go of the ball, you, the ball and Jacksonville are traveling east at about 850 mph but Quito is traveling east at 1,000 mph. By the time your ball dropped on the equator, Quito would have moved well off to the east. The ball would fall into the Pacific. If you drew a line on the globe to follow the trajectory of the ball, it would curve off to the right of your intended flight. Play the same mental game for throwing a ball from Quito aimed at Jacksonville directly to the north and you get the same result — the trajectory gets bent to the right because the ball is moving east faster than Jacksonville. In fact, any flight of the ball in the northern hemisphere will be deflected to the right. The apparent force causing this movement is named the Coriolis Force. And it doesn't just affect balls! Air currents are subjected to the same force.

In the southern hemisphere Coriolis deflects trajectories to the left. Imagine flinging that ball again! This makes southern hemisphere tropical storms spin clockwise, not counterclockwise as they do here in the north.

Next month, *Understanding Caribbean Weather, Part Two: South Atlantic Hurricanes, Scatterometers, Weather Models and some Useful Weather Info Sources.*

—Continued from previous page

Understanding Your Requirements

Understanding how to calculate your power requirements means you can make informed choices about what systems you have and how you operate them. I have heard of people who won't have a pressurised water system on board as it uses too much power, but lets work it through. My water pump draws 10 amps and is rated as pumping 3.25 gallons a minute. I use in total 6 to 8 gallons a day, of which over half is fed directly from my watermaker into bottles for drinking



Lighten up! High-efficiency bulbs use 20 percent of the power of conventional halogen or incandescent lights

and jerry jugs to refill the main tanks and shower bags. So we actually pump about 3.25 gallons a day. Assuming the pump is only 30 percent efficient, then that means it runs for about three minutes a day or 1/20 of an hour. Multiply the amps (10) by 1/20, and the power used is 1/2 amp/hour a day.

Many people would consider an electric head as taking way too much power, but when the flush cycle is less than 15 seconds and the amperage 16 amps, then you can flush your head 15 times a day for just 1 amp/hour of power. Electric heads often macerate the waste before discharge into a holding tank or overboard and as this aids the dispersal/treatment process their fitting may even be considered a green issue.

Maximising Your Efficiency

How then do you maximise the efficiency of your power systems? First, you need to check you are not wasting power on systems that you don't need all the time. As we have already seen, even very small units can use a lot of power if left on for a long time.

High-efficiency lights use 20 percent of the power of conventional halogen or ordinary lights. The domestic-style high-efficiency lamps are now becoming available in 12- or 24-volt versions in a variety of sizes from 3 to 15 watts. The larger ones give off a similar amount of light as a normal domestic 75 watt bulb and would probably be too bright for anywhere but the largest cabins. LED lighting uses even less power, but the light is not to everyone's taste. I use some excellent lights made by Alpenglow, which use a 9-watt PL type tube (compact fluorescent) with two power settings. These give a pleasant, warm light and two lights provide us with excellent illumination in the main cabin for just 0.6 amps per hour.

Refrigeration is probably the biggest consumer of power on most boats and in many cases this is exacerbated by poorly insulated boxes. It is possible to provide both refrigeration and freezer capabilities of a good size for 60 amp/hours a day or even less. I have come across 40-foot boats with 13-cubic-foot refrigerators and 6-cubic-foot freezers. It is virtually impossible to maintain such systems away from the dock, but

you can sometimes retrofit additional insulation inside to make the boxes smaller and much improve their efficiency.

Car type radio/CD players are notoriously inefficient in power simply because they are designed to be used when the vehicle engine is running and plenty of power is available. Try to find a system which is designed to be used on batteries with a 12-volt input and that will have been designed to be much more power efficient.

In the same manner, laptop computers are more power efficient than desk-top units, and portable DVD players can often be used to drive LCD televisions more efficiently than house-hold units.

Remember: every amp/hour of power you save is one you won't have to replace when it comes to charging.

Making 'Green' Improvements

Is there an easy answer to all this? No, of course there isn't; if there were we would all be doing it already. However, we can improve things greatly and the good news is that the answer is definitely very "green". Solar- and wind-generated energy work well here in the Caribbean because the reliable tradewinds and sunshine are available throughout the year. Moreover, the charging period over the daylight hours for solar and all the time for wind power allows us to charge that extra 20-percent battery capacity as well as reducing the degree of battery cycling. Solar panels will produce power even in overcast conditions, and it has to be a very dismal day to get no benefit from them at all.

Unless we are designing our boat systems from new, we have to live to some extent with whatever the builder decided we needed. However, the provision of supplementary charging will pay dividends in the long run with reduced generator or engine running time and longer battery life. Generators or engines should be run first thing in the morning when the batteries are likely to be at their lowest point of charge and ready to accept the maximum input. The bigger your battery bank, the greater the power input it will accept from your alternator, which should be sized accordingly. Solar panels can maintain your systems during the day and also improve on the state of charge so that your discharge period is reduced to the 14 hours of night.

We have sufficient panels to rely completely on solar power, and a wind generator gives us a reserve on top of that. We have a house battery bank of 660 amp/hours capacity using gel batteries, which are in their tenth year of life and suffered from a poor charging regime in their first five years until we gradually developed our better power management. Our windlass battery is 17 years old and evidence of the relationship between depth of cycling and battery life!

So how much power can you expect? A 100-watt solar panel can produce 25 amp/hours of power a day if left in a fixed position, more if it is angled towards the sun throughout the day. Our wind generator is capable of producing 30 amps, but unless you like anchoring in very windy places the reality is perhaps 10 to 60 amp/hours a day. Recently in Falmouth Harbour, Antigua, with normal March conditions, we were running all our boat systems including refrigerator, separate freezer, and watermaker making 9 to 12 gallons a day, and had an excess of power most days. We often watch DVDs on our laptop and normally recharge that daily. We started with a wind generator and later added two 60-watt solar panels. We later added another two 75-watt panels and found we could manage with virtually no engine charging. When we put in our freezer we also added another two 80-watt panels to give us a total of 430 watts of solar energy. Thus it is a continual process of development to find what works for you.

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Go Green — Use Renewable Energy

by Angelika Gruener

Anchored in a wide bay, we sit in our cockpit enjoying a breakfast of freshly baked bread with butter, jam, Camembert, and some delicious pâté, a left over from yesterday's dinner. It is one of those serene mornings in the Caribbean that promises a wonderful day ahead.

Suddenly an awful smell disturbs our morning ritual. It's not scorched milk or a rotten potato. No — even worse!

Yesterday cruisers had come in and decided to anchor just in front of us, even though there was ample space elsewhere in the five-mile-wide bay. And now, guess what? They are running their engine. At first we think they are weighing anchor, a good excuse. But after some time we realize they are charging their batteries — while the wind blows all their fumes into our boat.

Some days later these people complained when others anchored in front of them and ran their dive compressor for an hour.

The number of cruising yachts has multiplied enormously in recent years. No longer can anyone have an anchorage just for himself and expect to do whatever he wants. In this huge bay, where we anchored totally alone 18 years ago, there are now more than a hundred yachts. But fortunately there is still room for everybody, and usually boats anchor far enough from each other to maintain privacy. And even more fortunately, most of our neighbors are not like the "breakfast stinkers".

Nearly every boat in the bay sports numerous solar panels. And the yacht chandleries must have had a remarkable increase in income over the last few years by selling wind generators. Most of the "water campers" now have one or even two of these windmills running, in addition to a couple of solar panels. The effect is outstanding; these boats do not have to use their engines to charge the batteries. Fumes and noise do not bother others; fuel is saved.

We met a catamaran owner who has mounted 16 solar panels on his boat. This gives him enough energy to run his numerous electrical units — dish washer, washing machine, toaster, coffee machine, fridge, freezer, microwave, TV, and so on. In addition, he has an electric outboard motor for his dinghy, which, once charged, runs for hours in utter silence. I was fascinated by this, and thought it would be marvelous to motor up a jungle river noiselessly, and to hear, and especially see, all the animals in the dense jungle. They would not hear us, so they would not run away before we even got a glimpse of them. And best of all, as long as the sun is shining and the wind is blowing, there will always be enough "free" energy to run a tiny electric motor.

Usually people go sailing because they love nature, so we should be considerate about nature. We should also respect our neighbours, who get closer and closer as more boats arrive every year. We all have the same desire: we want to enjoy sailing, and staying in nice anchorages, with as much comfort as possible. But we cannot

expect this at the expense of others' nerves. Nowadays, it should go without saying that everybody has to calculate how much electrical power their boat will need per day, and to figure out how to get this energy into the batteries without using the generator or the main engine. If you need more energy than solar panels and wind generators can produce, then either your power consumption is too high or you are not capturing enough renewable energy. If you have only two solar panels, it is time to think about installing a wind generator, and/or more solar panels. As I already noted, the demand for comfort is getting higher; that means more electrical power consumption.

Wind generators nowadays produce a lot more energy than the old ones like the Wind Bugger we bought 18 years ago. At that time this was the only one available, and we were very happy with it, even if at 20 knots of wind it was as noisy as a helicopter at take-off. It is unbelievable that such noisy windmills are still being built and sold, albeit under another name and with a different design. You can hear them from far away, throughout the whole anchorage.

But at least they only rattle; they do not smell, like the engine in the yacht in front of us. Meanwhile, the goal for cruisers should be to get the quietest and most efficient wind generator. In just the last few months some nice new ones have come on the market, but it is hard to get them. There is such high demand that the chandleries cannot get them shipped in fast enough.

Because we are in need of a new wind generator, we looked and listened around on other boats. It is always interesting to learn what others have. You get new ideas. Are they content; are they complaining? We went around the anchorages and asked which wind generator seems to be the best. We found out that some are so noisy or vibrate so much that they have to be stopped during the night, otherwise sleeping is impossible. What nonsense! During night hours, assuming there is wind, we will need a wind generator while the solar panels can't work. Next we found completely silent windmills, but they do not bring many Amperes. Finally, there were only two brands left producing an acceptable amount of energy and running without vibration so that they can run night or day without disturbing the owners and the neighbours. One model is also very quiet. We hope that more highly efficient and noiseless wind generators will come onto the market, as there is a huge demand for them. Most serious cruising yachts already are equipped

with one, or even two, units.

Only a few cruisers still resist using renewable energy. They prefer to charge batteries and produce every Ampere by running the engine, sometimes many hours a day. Those cruisers never consider the presence of others and the effect of the fumes and noise of a constantly running engine. And I do not want to mention the volume of expensive, polluting and non-renewable fuel they are using!

I have to ask those people if they enjoy suffering hours of diesel or petrol exhaust fumes from neighbouring vessels while they are aboard their floating homes. If the answer is "no", then they should embark immediately on a new project: installing enough solar panels and wind generators to satisfy their demand for electricity. Otherwise they should anchor far behind all the other boats, where their stinky habits can't bother anybody else.

Angelika Gruener is cruising the Caribbean aboard S/V Angelos.



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PRODUCT POSTINGS

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For more information on Aquapac cases, visit www.aquapac.net. Aquapac cases are available at Budget Marine; for more information see ad on page 2.

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Good News for Divers and Snorkelers

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Mask Saver can be purchased on-line at www.oceangoods.com or at selected dive shops.

Electric Head Purifies Waste

The new ElectroScan from Raritan offers an efficient and cost-effective way to safely dispose of septic waste while underway. ElectroScan is a US Coast Guard-certified Type 1 Marine Sanitation Device (MSD) for recreational and commercial vessels up to 19.7m.

Using saltwater, ElectroScan monitors and treats wastewater in its 3.8L treatment tank. (An optional salt-feed system is available when cruising in fresh or brackish water.) Compatible with both manual and electric marine toilets, it is available in 12-, 24- and 32-volt DC configurations.

The treatment tank's twin chamber design forces waste into direct contact with a series of specially coated electrodes that temporarily convert saltwater to hypochlorous acid, a powerful bactericide. With each new flush, the waste is forced through to the second chamber, where treatment continues. In addition to eliminating the need for large holding tanks and harmful chemicals, a naturally-produced disinfectant effectively treats the waste. When the discharge enters the marine environment, virtually all pathogens have been destroyed.

ElectroScan monitors itself continuously to ensure proper conditions exist to treat bacteria, viruses and similar pathogens. Raritan's new controller with an LCD display shows and records the operation of each cycle for the system's activity, including specific data up to 3,270 cycles. ElectroScan controls the electrodes to reduce power consumption by up to 36 percent. Solid-state overload protection eliminates fuses and relays and protects against damage from reverse polarity.

For more information visit www.raritaneng.com.

Rule's New High-Speed Inflator/Deflator

Rule's new super-fast air pump cuts inflation time for a typical four-man dinghy to less than two minutes — far quicker than using a foot pump. The unit is supplied with a whole range of adjustable nozzles to fit plastic, rubber and sprung valves, on all major brands from Avon to Zodiac.

The pump can also be used for other types of inflatable products, such as RIBs, marker buoys, even PVC airbeds. In deflator mode, it enables every last ounce of air to be removed, making it much easier to re-pack and stow the inflatable after use.

The unit also has a built in temperature-sensitive valve that prevents over-inflation and also protects the pump from overheating. Lightweight and compact, yet with a rugged construction, the new Rule Inflator/Deflator is simple to use and is powered from a standard 12-volt boat or car battery, drawing a maximum of 28 amps and producing an airflow of 550 litres per minute.

For more information visit www.jabscow.com.

Fuel Vent Cap for Added Safety

Shrink-wrapping is an increasingly popular option for long-term storage of small boats, but when volatile fuel vapors collect under a shrink-wrapped boat, the stage is set for a potential disaster. After filling the tank and adding fuel stabilizer, it's essential to close the tank and properly cover the fuel vent to prevent fumes from escaping. This is not a job for duct tape! Dr. Shrink has the ideal product in the form of an inexpensive polyethylene fuel vent cap. The flexible cap fits snugly over all fuel vents and doesn't protrude; the sturdy plastic is recyclable. Dr. Shrink serves the global market as a single-source supplier of shrink-wrap and all installation accessories.

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The Unexpected Pleasures of Porlamar

by Cruisin' Canucks

Sailing destinations' reputations precede them, and Porlamar was no different. Our slog from Cumaná was to be straight to Grenada and no looking back — bye-bye, Venezuela!

However, our speed over ground was telling *Ladyhawke* that her plans were about to be changed. Astute navigators will undoubtedly be amused at our lackadaisical attitude towards the current between Margarita Island and the mainland. I can tell you that after our unceremonious arrival in the dead of night in Porlamar, that we now always check the tide and current tables for the area, whether they are in the Caribbean or the Pacific Northwest. The combined issues of mechanical failure, high stress factors and amazingly tight deadlines (which we all know we aren't supposed to have cruising) had caused a total meltdown among the crew aboard *Ladyhawke*, and Porlamar was just going to be a rest stop... or so we thought.

In the morning we made our way to the dock of Marina Juan. On our arrival, the first of Porlamar's unexpectedly pleasant features greeted us with open arms. Juan reminds you of a mixture of a great safari guide and the fellow who walks on water. He was our saviour in many instances and you could not find a more colourful character in Venezuela. If you need a dinghy dock, use Juan's. If you need to use the radio, use Juan's. If you need a taxi, they are there. If you need a bus to go shopping, Juan provides it. Security for your dinghy is provided by myriad staff who not only welcome you as you tie up, but also carry your garbage or parcels for you. (The can for tips is halfway down the dock and was never as full as it should have been.) Could this all be true?

If you speak English, French, Spanish, German or other European languages, you will have someone at Juan's who will be able to communicate with you quite fluently. Veronica minds the store and keeps all the cruisers supplied with essentials such as beer, eggs and ice with an infectious smile and manner that invites hugs from everyone. Oh, yes — morning coffee is FREE! This place is an oasis in the desert sea! Why didn't we plan to stop here in the first place?

So off we went to start getting arrangements made for repairs on several systems. We hopped on the free bus and headed to the shopping center. Our low expectations were delightfully shattered when we walked into a mall that seemed like it had been picked up from any metropolitan city in the USA or Canada and dropped off on Margarita. Barb's mood certainly picked up a few notches as the price-checker computer was repeatedly checked for accuracy. "There is no way it could be that cheap" was the saying of the day.

Everything that we had missed in Cumaná seemed to have been purposely put on the shelves that we stumbled upon first. Those black olives just barely made it out of the supermarket prior to being devoured by yours truly. I promptly stuffed Barb's almond chocolate bar wrapper in the empty olive can and discarded the evidence of our indulgence into the trash bin.

We noticed that the veteran cruisers didn't have the same glee that all of the newbies to Margarita had, but we were undaunted by their lack of enthusiasm. Perhaps the problem was the temptation to think that all of this was free — until it came time for tipping almost everyone you met. Some cruisers said they would have preferred to have a set rate, as opposed to the illusion that many services were free. The problem, I think, is exacerbated by the number of zeros in the Venezuelan currency: "2,000 Bolívars tip? Wow, that's outrageous!" Until you sheepishly realize that it is between 50 cents and one dollar US currency, depending on the rate of exchange you use. I don't think you could get that style of friendly service anywhere in the world for a two-dollar tip.

In the anchorage in Porlamar, you also get wi-fi service, as long as your vessel stays reasonably still. This service was not free, but nor was it expensive, so all was good. You have to pick your spot in the anchorage to ensure good coverage, as well as do whatever possible to lessen the "Roll-a-mar effect" in this anchorage. *Ladyhawke* had less of a problem than most, but I think tonnage had a lot to do with it.

The morning VHF Cruisers' Net was always entertaining and a great place to get all the info that you needed to get around in Porlamar. It offers one of the finest weather reports in the Caribbean, served up fresh daily by CJ, the cruisers' very own "guy in the sky". CJ's condo overlooks the bay so that this veteran cruiser can stay in touch with us all. Dominos on Sunday? You bet! The downside of the net would show its ugly head every once in a while as the truly colourful characters proceeded to show their best sides and their worst sides in public, often within the same broadcast. Listening and participating was a true adventure to start anyone's day. The attempts by others to contact the water boat and the fuel boat were a daily ritual, and so were the chuckles as the radio oozed the frustration of the newly arriving vessels. After all, now as Porlamar veterans we'd earned the right to smile, hadn't we?

The presence of a worldwide cruising community is visible in the numerous national flags flown by the yachts in Porlamar. At any one time there are usually



There is treasure at the end of this rainbow — the unexpected pleasure of Porlamar

close to a hundred in the anchorage, their crews getting a taste of the fine shops and metropolitan atmosphere that only Margarita can offer. In a single day, you can "shop till you drop" and have cruising conversations with a person from a far-away country. The chairs at any one of the cruiser bars can be filled with equal numbers of those who are "living the dream" and those who have slipped into a haze of Happy Hours.

Porlamar offers so much that we can easily see why everyone likes to stay as long as possible. Once we realized that we were going to be here for a month or so, we kept singing the "Hotel California" theme: "You can check out, but you can never leave." You need to consider including this wonderful location in your travel plans. You will not be disappointed. Bring along your "tip fund" cash and your sense of humour, as Porlamar will captivate you.

Porlamar will be a regular stop on *Ladyhawke's* busy itinerary.

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Having followed the standard "Milk Run" from Europe to the Caribbean, we were keen to see some of the less visited islands — and Castro's failing health gave us an added incentive to cruise Cuba while it still retains its unique character. My father had visited Cuba before the revolution and was keen to see how it had changed in the intervening 50 years.

Once my parents had booked travel to Cienfuegos on Cuba's south coast, we were committed to a time and a place — something we cruisers are always warned against. We planned to arrive in Cuba in late November, allowing a leisurely cruise along the south coast before meeting up; however, that plan lay in tatters after delays caused by the need to change the engine head gasket in Curaçao. Mother Nature also didn't like my plan, and produced a week of strong tradewinds, which confined us and all our fellow cruisers to Spaanse Water. The extra days spent in Curaçao allowed plenty of time for final farewells and the odd shared bottle of wine with our cruising friends who were taking the more conventional route to Panama via Colombia.

Eventually, on 4th December 2006, we headed northwards on our longest trip since arriving in St. Lucia almost a year before. We covered the 644 miles in exactly five days, mostly tearing along under reefed sails and recording our personal record of 158 miles in 24 hours. We didn't stop on Haiti, but we did sail close enough to see its spectacular mountain ranges — maybe by the time we return to the Caribbean next time round it will be politically stable enough to visit.

Arrival at Santiago de Cuba

Our arrival in the marina at Santiago de Cuba was as surreal as one might expect of Cuba. We arrived in the midst of a torrential downpour and were met by the smiling dock-master, George, clad only in his swimming trunks. I guess that if it is raining hard and you don't have a raincoat, then stripping down to your trunks isn't such a bad idea!

Over the next 24 hours we experienced the check-in process for which Cuba is famous. As one Customs agent told us, "We learnt our bureaucracy from the Russians...". First up was a doctor, who for £17 issued a statement that we were not contagious. She must have been telepathic, as she didn't ask a single question.... Next was the vet — we don't have a pet onboard; the vet was there to inspect our dried sausages. Close behind the vet was the trio of a Customs officer, an Immigration officer and the Harbour Master. They tested our Spanish to its meagre limits, but all were keen to know where we had visited previously, and were especially interested in our Venezuelan visas. Before they departed, they sealed our hand-held GPSs and flares in a carrier bag with "Aduana-Cuba" tape — to prevent us giving them to Cuban wannabe emigrants? Our final visitor for the day was "Whisky", the drug-sniffing Labrador — how did she get back up the companionway ladder?

CUBAN CRUISING

by Ruth Ross-Thomson



No Spanish? No problem. Music is the universal language, and in Cuba it's everywhere. Here musicians play outside the museum at Santiago

—Continued on next page



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Navigating the good life

—Continued from previous page

After a long afternoon of watching forms being filled in, we were happy to see George appearing down the dock with a tray of ice-cold Cuba Libres, made from the famous Havana Club rum, and the slightly less famous local brand of cola. When did you last arrive in a marina and get welcomed with a complimentary sundowner?

The check-in process continued the next morning with a visit from the agriculture inspector who confiscated a slightly mouldy onion and a clove of garlic. Thank goodness he didn't see the weevil infestation lurking in our Curaçao muesli. Next was the "pest officer" who told us about Cuba's problem with large numbers of flies (he wasn't exaggerating), and then proceeded to fumigate the boat with peach-scented fly spray. By mid-morning our Cuban visas had been issued and we were finally cleared in and free to leave the marina.

(As an aside, a Portuguese yacht arrived in Santiago shortly after us. We don't know what triggered it, but they were subjected to a full boat search by a half dozen guys in jumpsuits. Water tanks were opened, waypoints from their laptop and GPS were noted, and every single locker was inspected.)

Unlike many countries, in Cuba a scaled down check-in process is repeated every time you enter a harbour, no matter how small the harbour. In the very small harbours, the Guardia (police) will commandeer a local rowing boat and a fisherman (or woman) to row them out to your yacht. We have heard from some cruisers who have found the constant check-in process to be oppressive, but we found all the visiting officials to be friendly, smiling and interested in what we were doing. While conversations were hampered by our poor Spanish, we always managed to communicate, even if we needed the dictionary or our inflatable globe. We have even on occasion resorted to drawing pictures. Some Customs and Immigration officers in the Windwards and Leewards could learn a lot from their Cuban colleagues about customer care.

Cuban marinas, sadly, could learn a lot from their friends in Venezuela. In several of Cuba's natural harbours, anchoring is "no permiso", forcing cruisers to use the local marinas. Cuban marina docks are solid, but the concrete is crumbling along the edges, leaving nasty metal spikes reaching out to scrape your shiny topsides. There are electrical outlets on the docks, but the sockets are likely to be incorrectly wired. There are plenty of showers, but there may not be any water, any lights or a roof. There are toilets, but there may be no toilet seats, paper or water. The chandlery is well stocked, but it is stocked with cans of local coke and Havana Club rum.... Maybe that's not really a problem!

Our first stop in Santiago was to exchange some of our US dollars for local pesos. A few years ago, the dollar was the standard tourist currency in Cuba. These days, thanks to George W. dollars are officially unwanted. We exchanged our dollars at a pitiful exchange rate, and then got ten percent commission deducted. Ouch! If heading here, bring Euros or ££ for much better rates.

With pockets full of pesos, we hit the centre of Santiago de Cuba to soak up our first experience of Cuban life. We weren't disappointed. From the four elderly gentlemen playing "Buenavista Social Club" favourites outside the museum, to the young guys proudly displaying their bright yellow 1952 Chevy, we were entranced. There were none of the hustlers we had been warned about, and we even felt comfortable wandering around the town after dark.



The beautifully restored yacht club at Cienfuegos is home of a great, cheap restaurant

Santiago to Cienfuegos

However, a schedule is a schedule, and after a couple of days it was time to start heading west towards Cienfuegos. The southern coast of Cuba between Santiago and Cabo Cruz provides the most spectacular backdrop for a few days' sailing — from the rugged Sierra Maestra (peaking at 1,972 metres about three miles inland) the coast gradually sinks down as you sail westwards, to uninterrupted miles of uplifted marine terraces. The scene is completely awe-inspiring and impossible to capture on camera.

At Cabo Cruz, we discovered that docking there was "no permiso", due to packages of drugs being landed along this remote coast from Jamaica, just 80 miles away. However, we were permitted to anchor off and snorkel on the reef. Sadly, the coral in Cuba, described in our guide as "the finest in the Caribbean", has suffered the same fate as further south, with many of the reefs now littered with dead coral.

The next stop along the coast is the Archipiélago de los Jardines de la Reina — the Gardens of the Queen. This is about 120 miles of mangrove islets surrounded by shallow water and coral heads, a massive version of the Islas Aves in Venezuela.

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With just five days left before we were due in Cienfuegos, we decided to forego the labyrinthine inner channels and instead scooted up the outside in reassuringly deep water. We broke the trip up with a couple of overnight stops, both of which required a final approach into the anchorage consisting of a couple of miles' motoring with less than a metre of water below the keel. That's another few grey hairs added to my collection.

Despite the remoteness of our anchorages, we received visits from fishermen who most just seemed to want a chat to add a bit of variety to their day. If we did want a lobster for supper, they had several to spare. As compensation for not trading for lobsters (once a vegetarian, always unable to boil animals alive), we kept a supply of cold beers for visitors, so everyone was happy.



The harbour at Santiago de Cuba is location of one of Fidel's holiday homes

Here's our prime example of the wonderful Cuban people we met. Having declined lobsters the night before, we had an early morning visit from the skipper of one fishing boat who brought us a plate of boiled eggs, freshly fried fish filets and crackers. What a fabulous breakfast. I explained how happy I was to have eggs as I had not been able to buy any in Cuba so far — so the skipper promptly rowed back to his boat to bring me a tray of two dozen fresh eggs. Only in Cuba!

Cienfuegos to Casilda

We spent a couple of days in Cienfuegos to allow our new crew to get accustomed to life on board, and also to search out some fresh provisions. Shopping in Cuba is like no other shopping experience. All Cubans receive a weekly allowance of staples such as bread, rice, pasta, sugar, beans and toilet paper from the government. This means that these "basic" products are not stocked in the stores — hence the need to stock up well before leaving Curaçao. Recently, farmers have been allowed to sell any produce they grow in excess of their required government quotas, so if you can find a market, you can stock up. Peppers, cucumbers, and muddy-brown root vegetables seem to be the only vegetables available, but the papayas, bananas, pineapples, oranges and guavas were delicious.

We had planned a nice, gentle overnight sail back east to Casilda, from where we would be able to spend Christmas snorkelling off the nearby reefs, walking along the six-mile-long white sand beach and catching a horse buggy up to Trinidad, a wonderfully conserved old colonial town. Ahh, those plans.... An approaching cold front from the north caused us to have to beat the entire way to Casilda in strong winds; we took 23 1/2 hours to cover the required 40 miles.

Still, we dropped anchor at 4:00pm, poured the tea and heaved a sigh of relief. Ten minutes later, we were underway again following a visit from an official who informed us it was currently "no permiso" to anchor at Casilda. There is a marina at Casilda, but the entrance is only 1.8 metres deep — not quite enough for our two-metre draught. So where to go with just over an hour of daylight?

After a quick review of our guides and electronic charts we headed out into a coral reef and sandbank-infested maze. With only a mile to go to our alternate anchorage, we discovered that the critical buoys marking a narrow channel through a sandbank were missing. Having gone aground once in the fast-falling light, as we tried to ease our way across, we doubled back in hope of finding another alternate anchorage. A small mangrove islet a little way to the north promised some shelter from the forecast wind, but for once our trusty 23-kilo Delta anchor just refused to hold in the soft, silty mud. After five attempts, it was pitch black, and there was no option to go anywhere else. We had read about using two anchors in series, but had never tried it. It seemed like a good time to give it a go. We secured our lightweight aluminium forest anchor in front of the Delta, dropped the whole lot over the side, and it set instantly. The new crew withstood all these rigours, but it sure wasn't the way I'd hoped to introduce my parents to the joys of Caribbean cruising.

Once the weather perked up, we headed down to islands at the northern end of the Gardens of the Queen — Cayo Blanco and Cayo Zaza de Fuera. Both islands are dominated by mangroves, with a few palm trees planted near the beach bars that were constructed to serve the day-trippers arriving from Casilda. The highlight of the islands was the wildlife: the beaches are criss-crossed with trails from the multitudes of hermit crabs and the dozens of prehistoric iguanas. Add to this the *jutia* — a four-kilo edible tree rat — and you may not have everyone's ideal range of pets, but they are fascinating to watch.

Our last night in the cays was wonderful. We sat in the cockpit with our sundowners and watched for the green flash as the sun settled in the west and the full moon rose in the east. This is the aspect of the cruising life that I really wanted to share with my parents.

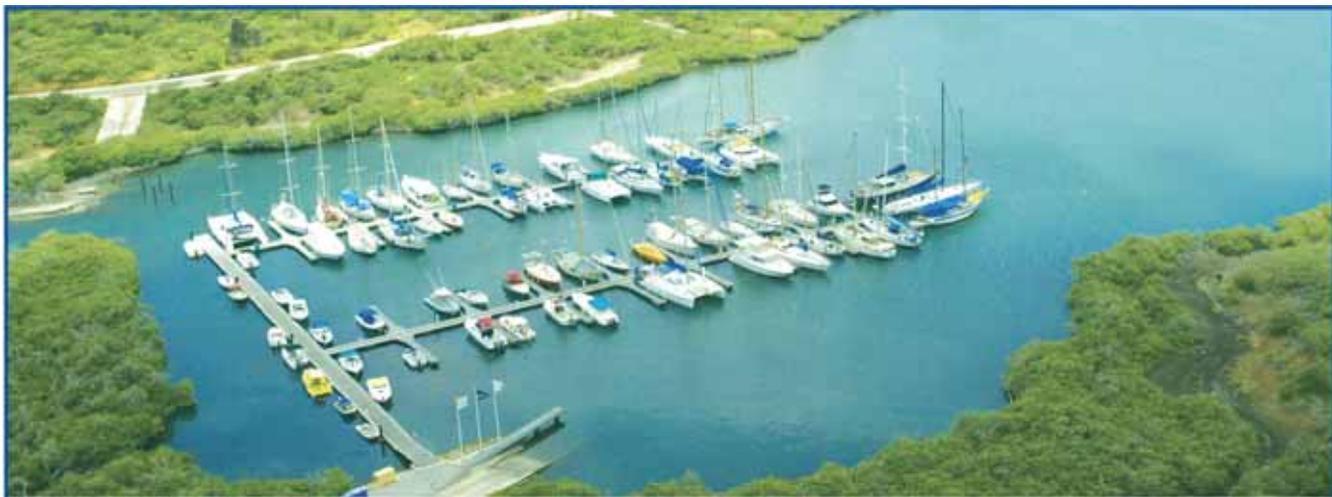
Town Time

We decided on an early return to Cienfuegos in order to visit Trinidad by road. We had briefly toyed with the idea of renting a hire car. After all, there are only a few cars around, so we thought the drive wouldn't be difficult. Thank goodness we went for the taxi. There may not have been many other cars on the roads, but I would never have coped with the ox carts, horse-drawn buggies, goats, Tour-de-France-style cyclists riding four abreast, cowboys herding cattle, and stretches of potholes which force cars to drive for a mile on the wrong side of the road.

The centre of Trinidad is frozen in time with a beautiful collection of opulent buildings from the 19th century. Armed with the "Lonely Planet" guide book, we hiked up to a point from where we could look out over our cruising grounds to the south, and also down into a valley to the north, once home to the prosperous sugar plantations. Carlos, our unofficial guide (actually the security guard from the communications station atop the hill), explained how it now costs more to produce the cane sugar than it can be sold for. He also told us how, following the "Triumph of the Revolution", an entire citrus plantation owned by a German family was bulldozed. Progress?

Trinidad gave us our first opportunity to try out a *paladare*. These are unofficial restaurants where you are served home-cooked local food by a family in their own house. We were "guided" to the paladare by a friendly local lady and ended up enjoying a splendid lunch seated in the basic courtyard of someone's home. Lobster figures large on the menu in Trinidad; I guess they are the "spare" lobsters that the fishermen land in Casilda, six miles away.

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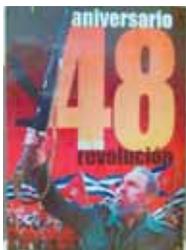
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Our family time together on *Do It* was complete, and Angus and I decided to have a holiday and head up to Habana for a couple of days. We booked a room in a *casa particular*, similar to a "bed & breakfast". For a very reasonable price, we had a room in an old colonial terraced home — in a slightly dodgy-looking area. At street level, the place looked typically run down; peeling paint is a feature everywhere in Cuba other than the restored tourist centres. However, once past the three-metre-high doors and up the stairs to the first floor, a whole different world awaited us. The place was immaculately tidy, not a speck of dust anywhere, which was quite amazing given that every inch of flat surface was festooned with glass animals, porcelain babies, ornate gilt-framed mirrors, massive vases overflowing with gaudy plastic flowers, several complete tea sets, and dozens of rows of delicate glasses. I hardly dared to turn around in case I caused mass devastation with my backpack.



Habana (yep, it is spelt with a "b" over here) certainly met our expectations. On Day One, we followed the "Lonely Planet" walking tours around the partially restored old town, enjoying the spectacular architecture and cursing the fact that our digital camera had died a few days before. There was no hassle from anyone, and we felt completely at ease even when returning to our "casa" late at night.

On Day Two we hit the museums — hard. To prepare ourselves for an arduous day, we started at the Chocolate Museum, which served drinking chocolate to wash down the chocolates handmade on site. Next up was the City Museum, housed in a baroque palace complete with a strutting peacock in the courtyard. A short stroll across town brought us to the Museum of the Revolution. This former presidential palace with decorative touches by Tiffany displays the nation's history as told by Fidel's fans. (I'm not sure it is necessary to display the blood-soaked clothes worn by various "Heroes of the Revolution" as they died.) A swift reviving coffee in the art deco Bacardi Tower, and we were ready to tackle the Capitolio, which is a smaller-scale version of the White House in Washington, DC. Having seen the massive mahogany doors and mahogany table capable of seating 24 comfortably, we weren't surprised that there's not much local mahogany left!

Back Aboard

We returned to Cienfuegos relieved to find *Do It* still afloat. This was the first time we had left her for more than a night since we left the UK. It was time to escape from life in the marina and head down to the white-sand anchorages promised in Cayo Largo. Once again, we have found it "no permiso" to anchor in places recommended by our guidebook. Rather than anchor off a nearby beach, the local authorities insisted that we anchor within sight of their marina (or better still, tied to their dock).

Cayo Largo is a larger version of the earlier *cayos* we visited: a low island covered with mangroves and scrub. But in place of the iguanas and tree rats, there are thousands of tourists ensconced in their all-inclusive holiday resorts. This is not the Cuba we knew from the earlier part of our visit, and as the Cuban economy places an increased dependence upon tourism, we can only hope that this type of resort tourism doesn't spread too far.

From there, we headed down to Grand Cayman, a sharp re-introduction to the capitalist world!

So what has been the biggest surprise in Cuba? The tiny numbers of cruising yachts encountered. In six weeks, we only encountered eight other cruising yachts. I'm not sure why there are so few other yachts there, but we shall certainly return one day.

PRACTICALITIES

Money

Cuba operates a dual monetary system. Broadly speaking, Cubans use Pesos Nacionales while tourists use Pesos Convertibles (CUCs). Prices in produce markets are in Nacionales; you can pay in CUCs and receive your change in Nacionales. The exchange rate during our visit was approximately 23 Pesos Nacionales to 1 CUC.

EXCHANGE RATES (in December 2006):

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Euro 1 = CUC1.17
US\$1 = CUC0.93

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Cruising Permit – CUC15
Entry tax – CUC10
Departure tax – CUC10
Visa extension (for one additional month) – CUC25 per crew member
Our total for a two-month visit: CUC165 (£97/Euros 141/US\$177)

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Books

Cuba – A Cruising Guide, by Nigel Calder, Imray, Laurie, Norie & Wilson, 1999
The "must have" Cuba pilot book, with detailed pilotage information, but few adjectives.

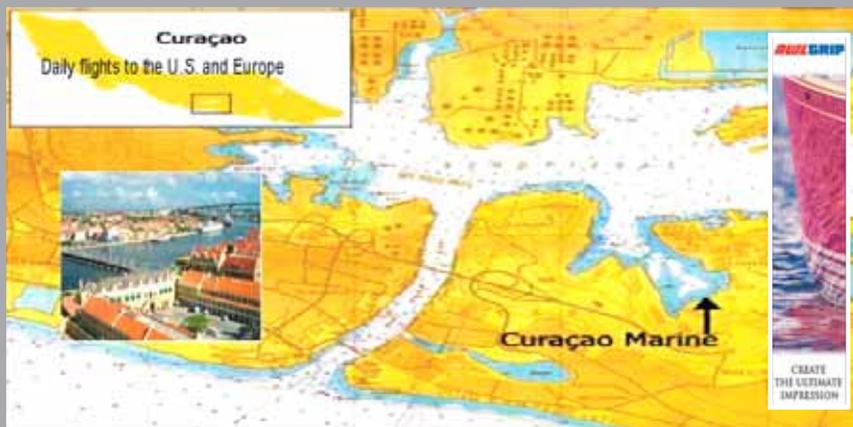
The Cruising Guide to Cuba, by Simon Charles, Cruising Guide Publications, 1997
Complementary to the Nigel Calder guide. It has more details about what awaits you ashore, but less detail on the tricky pilotage.

Cuba Lonely Planet, Brendan Sainsbury, 2006
Indispensable guide to what to see/do/eat once you get to your destination. Also loads of background information about the history and culture.

Charts

The Cuban hydrographic department has produced a series of seven excellent chart books that cover the entire coastline. We were given photocopies, but we saw the originals on sale in both Santiago de Cuba and Habana.

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ALMOST PERFECT HURRICANE HOLES

Part 2:

Bocas Del Toro

by Julia Bartlett

As I said last month, I am in search of the perfect hurricane hole. Somewhere I am stalked neither by hurricanes nor violent thugs. Somewhere I can explore by sea and land in relative safety, where I can anchor in a deserted cove, wander in the rainforest and walk to a friendly bar in the evening.

When I researched Bocas Del Toro, located on the western end of Panama's Caribbean coast, I was impressed. It's below the hurricane belt and Panama was recently awarded the Pinkerton Global Intelligence Agency's highest rating for tourist safety. "Wow!" I thought, "This might be the perfect hurricane hole."

I needed to cover the miles fast so I decided to jump on a couple of planes, arriving in Bocas on one that qualified more as a mosquito. In San José, Costa Rica, I tottered up a ladder reminiscent of a jungle suspension bridge, loaded with my laptop and bags, and just had time to collapse into my seat before the pilot started revving the engines. And I mean revving, like a motorcycle at a stoplight; the whole plane shook.

"Fasten your seatbelts and keep them fastened," he ordered. "It's going to be rough up there. There are safety instructions in the pocket in front of you." That was the entire preamble, and I could only just hear it above the roar as we gathered speed down the runway while I fumbled frantically with the seatbelt. Then we were airborne. I hoped that everyone had a strong stomach; I couldn't see any of those little bags.

View from Careening Cay of homes on stilts. Many hotels and restaurants are 'right on the water', too



Through murky grey clouds dark green splotches in the ocean gradually emerged below us, none of them very big, and none looking like the magical islands I had read about on the Internet. Then a couple of bounces on the runway and I was in Panama.

Believe me, it has got to be less traumatic to get here by boat.

The next day the sun came out, the waters turned blue and I began to feel the magic of the islands. You hire cycles or boats here, not cars. There are more than 300 islands scattered like petals across Bahía de Almirante, varying in size from 40 miles long to just a few hundred feet. Most of them are scantily populated, if at all.

If you want more open, but still protected, waters the Laguna de Chiriquí lies to the east, set into the coast alongside Bahía de Almirante.

These waters were where Henry Morgan and his buccaneers, who sacked both Portobello and Old Panama, hung out, waiting to ambush the Spanish galleons leaving Portobello laden with looted gold. It is also where many are rumoured to have buried their retirement funds.

Treasure hunters are by nature secretive, not wanting to share their prizes, so it is difficult to know how much has already been found. It is said that there was a major find in 1956 on the Two Sisters Cay when a group of North Americans spent four

months there before disappearing in the night leaving behind a large excavation. Divers tell me that there are still galleons aplenty beneath these waters, not salvaged because of a lack of funding — but nobody is willing to divulge their whereabouts.

Although your yacht insurance company will be happy with the Bocas latitude (about 9°20'N), it does lie in tropical waters. There was a tornado in 1975, a storm worth mentioning in 1964 and an earthquake in 1991, which felled the cathedral built almost a hundred years before. But the biggest danger is fire, because most of the buildings are wooden.

Another important attribute is that, apart from the minor crimes found everywhere, it is, as Pinkerton's say, safe. As a woman I feel safe cycling in the countryside on my own and walking in town at night. That's not to say that one shouldn't take sensible precautions, especially during holiday periods, the same as everywhere else.

The community is small, with a population of 4,100. The police presence is visible but low-key; their main task seems to be asking the surfers, mainly male, not to go bare-chested in town.

The town of Bocas is the capital of the province and is lively, colourful and somewhat unorthodox. The cultures and races haven't merged. Indigenous Indians look like indigenous Indians and ex-pat suburban Americans look like... you've got it! Then there are the surfers, who come in all shapes, sizes, ages and colours but still look like all they care about is the next wave.

Characters like Mel Gibson and Jimmy Buffet come here to play and they blend in, earning only a passing glance. I suppose it has the sort of atmosphere that Key West must have had at one time. By boat you can wander around the islands, in clear, sheltered waters, drifting back into town to provision, catch up on the gossip and hang out in your favourite bars with names like "Bohmalks" and "The Pickled Pirate". At night the main street is lined with craft-laden stalls run by locals and surfers, some lit by flickering candles.

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By day and night the Bocas exude vibrancy and a joy in life that is contagious. I feel that I have to take deep breaths and stretch to keep up. Everything is rampant here, the flowers, the *molos* and hammocks, the smells, the cultures, the smiles and the garbage.

Hotels and restaurants are advertised as "over the water" because they are. Many are built on stilts, like local homes. Other sections of the waterfront are taken up by docks for the *pingas*, dugouts and water taxis. If you want to travel any distance in the Bocas you have to go by boat.

There are two marinas, Bocas Yacht Club & Marina, on Isla Colon across the bay from Bocas Town, is a beautifully maintained, new facility where you can look overboard into clear waters. They have purchased a travelift, which is already in the area, but are still negotiating a site on the mainland for the yard. Then there is Careening Cay Marina, on Isla Carenero, which has been a family-owned enterprise for the last nine years. The owners live on site and supervise all aspects of the marina business. Both marinas have websites with full details.

There are a small number of marine services in Bocas, but most boat parts can be found in Panama or Colon (where cruisers prepare for transiting the canal or crossing the Pacific Ocean), or ordered through Marine Warehouse at Bocas Marina.

The cruising community is outnumbered by retired gringos lured here by the Panamanian government's wonderful incentives — including qualifying as a pensioner from the age of 18. As a *pensionado* you can reap benefits such as 50-percent-off entertainment, 25-percent-off restaurants, 20-percent-off doctor's



Above: Colorful local craft shops cater to an eclectic clientele

Left: "There are more than 300 islands scattered like petals across Bahía de Amirante. If you want more open, but still protected, waters the Laguna de Chiriquí lies to the east"



consultations, 50-percent-off hotel stays and a whole list of others including travel and legal discounts.

Although Spanish is the national language, Bocas is historically English-speaking. The first schools were set up by the United Fruit Company and English is an important part of the school curriculum, so you can still get by here in English.

Apart from the beautiful, glossy, bought-and-paid-for cruising guides by the likes of the Zydlers, Eric Bauhaus and Lars Akerholm, Marine Warehouse produces a free directory and guide to Panama which is worth looking out for. "Bocas Direct", which is specific to the Bocas, can be found on-line. It is worth a few minutes of Web surfing to find some of the other excellent sites on the area depending on where your interests lie.

The down side of the Bocas is: where do you go from here? Well, it seems that cruisers who do leave either go north or through the Panama Canal. But many of the boats in the marinas return season after season. They have found their perfect hurricane hole.

If you'd like to chat more about Bocas Del Toro you can e-mail me at juliamary2000@yahoo.com and I'll be happy to answer what I can or try and point you in the right direction.



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Cruisers Love Free Fun: THE CHRISTIANSTED BOARDWALK

by Ellen Sanpere

Sailing the tradewinds amidst pods of dolphins, finding a perfect shell, or snorkeling a coral garden is fun. Counting meteors in a star-filled sky, surfing a wave just right, watching frigate birds soar and swoop is fun. Landing a tasty tuna just in time for dinner or witnessing the green flash is *fun*.

Cruisers love having fun, and "free" is *really* fun. On board, it's all free, or least, costs nothing extra. Ashore, however, there are admission fees and price tags attached to nearly everything. Free fun does exist, however, if one knows where to look. In St. Croix, the best place to look is the Christiansted boardwalk, which, by the way, is convenient to cruisers who stop for low-priced fuel. It's a short dinghy ride from a peaceful, protected (and free for 30 days) anchorage, with water so clear one can count the links on an anchor chain.

A quarter-mile of pedestrian-only planks connect the seaplane terminal with Fort Christiansvaern, and someday may extend around Gallows Bay to the commercial dock and US Customs office. Meanwhile, it is a perfect platform for walkers, joggers, people-watchers, bird-watchers, seaplane-watchers and watchers of anything else associated with harbors. Benches, piling tops and adjacent restaurants provide free front-row seating.

At the eastern end of the boardwalk lies the Christiansted National Historic Site, which is seven acres and five buildings run by the US National Park Service (NPS). Yellow Fort Christiansvaern is set in grassy Jackson Park, where ancient mahogany trees shade benches and picnic tables. The fort was built for the Danes by slaves and Free Black artisans in 1738, and re-built in 1749 after a fire and a hurricane. It protected the landowners as well as the harbor. Restored to reflect the 1830's period, it has dungeons, ramparts, old cannons and a military exhibit, plus a sweeping view of Gallows Bay. At the fort and at the Steeple Building Museum (1753), seniors with a NPS Golden Pass get in for free; regular admission is US\$3. The other buildings are free, including the Old Customs House built in 1734 and a second story with graceful "welcoming arms" staircase added in 1829. During the Danish period, all imports and exports went through the Customs House and the Scale House (1856), now the NPS visitor's center, before going to the Danish West Indies & Guinea Company warehouse across the street. Information brochures on three St. Croix NPS sites are free at the Scale House; plaques at the various buildings provide more background. See www.nps.gov/chri. Information is also available for a free walking tour of this quaint, attractive town, that looks much as it did in colonial times.

Sunny benches on the bulkhead are well placed for viewing marine traffic in and out of Christiansted

Harbor. The *Hot-C* ferries passengers to Protestant Cay for a day on the beach or to rent water toys. The Hotel on the Cay hosts Tuesday night beach barbecues, and the pleasant steel pan music can be heard throughout the harbor.

Adjacent to the park is the King Christian Hotel, where the Avocado Pitt offers light refreshment and

crab is fed, pampered and raced for two weeks before being released on the beaches of St. Croix. When the racers are ready, Sue sounds the kazoo, and "They're OFF!" Tito does the call as up to a hundred crabs race to the outer circle for sponsored prizes for their "owners." While watching the races is free, it's hard not to want a crab of one's own to race. The only rules are,



seating in the shade under an arched colonnade. Around the corner, window shoppers drool at Crucian Gold's creative displays. Crucian Brian Bishop and his sons are never too busy to chat while showing their unique handmade jewelry designs.

Kings Alley Walk is one of several shady arcades abutting the boardwalk where a weary board-walker can find rest and refreshment. It's also a shortcut to retail opportunities (tax-free) on King and Strand Streets or a free tour of Government House. Pleasants Bar has a pool table, and near the Kings Alley Hotel lobby is an ice cream hut. The hotel's "Coming Soon" restaurant will offer air-conditioned comfort, but less of a view than the open-air Fort Christian Brew Pub, the only micro-brewery in the Virgin Islands.

There's free family mega-fun every Monday at the Brew Pub: Tito and Sue's Crab Races. By 5:00PM, the queue extends across the boardwalk, as old and young, local and tourist pay US\$2 to name a racing hermit crab. Former live-aboards Tito and Sue Bacallao have hosted the races since the mid-1990s, and keep more than 400 crabs in a "crab condo" at their home. Each

"Don't point your finger and don't stomp your feet." Violators' limbs are wrapped in masking tape to restrict illegal movements that frighten the crabs and can affect the race results. Kids each get a toy after the races, and micro-brewed beer is free with an entrée purchased in the restaurant. Waving like a monarch, Miss Judith, queen of the boardwalk, makes a nightly appearance, selling peanuts and candy. Her wardrobe is unique and her smile infectious.

When sugar was king, more than a hundred windmills processed cane on St. Croix, and a mill-base replica stands behind the Comanche Hotel, providing a unique background for cruiser photos. Nearby, the Free Beer Tomorrow mural of a steam engine going through a tunnel on the wall of the Pan Am pavilion fools the eye and the beholder. It is one of many murals on St. Croix by local and transient artists. Another is inside the pavilion, and a new one by yachtie Diane Givens-Hayes appears upstairs at Stixx on the Waterfront's soon-to-reopen restaurant. Downstairs, one can sit in the shade and watch the world go by.

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page

Tenders to yachts from all over the world tie up at the Stixx dinghy dock. Cruisers and ex-cruisers seem always to bump into someone they know, and this is a good place to get directions, help and local knowledge. It's been said that St. Croix is the friendliest island, and this might be the friendliest part.



parades that score high on the free-fun-o-meter. In December, the boardwalk is jam-packed as lighted holiday-decorated boats (power and sail) parade through the harbor, and the Gentlemen of Jones serenade. Powerboats pirouette in front of judges seated on the upper deck of the Caravelle, while crews dance and wave at the crowd. In late January or early February, Krewe de Croix and the Animal Welfare Center present Krewe de Barkus, a Mardi Gras parade of dogs dressed in colorful costumes. The most popular breed is the

Left: Miss Judith, a boardwalk regular, seen here in St. Croix's annual St. Patrick's Day parade

Right: Murals, such as this at popular cruiser hang-out Styx, add to the atmosphere of fun

"AKC" — All Kinds o' Crucian, of course.

The Silver Bay Dock is home to charter sport-fishing machines, and when they return from a day on the sea crowds gather to watch the crews clean the huge wahoo, tuna and dolphin. The tarpon do scavenger duty below, warming up for the Rum Runners job later. There's no cover charge for musical entertainment during dinner and Sunday brunch at The Mix, and the music fills the harbor, though it's rarely loud or late.

Around the corner is Jones Maritime, more fun but, alas, only the wind is free. Once just a sailing school, they offer performance sailing gear, charters, brokerage and dockage for the sailing crowd. Beyond their secured dock is the Seaborne Airlines seaplane base and the western end of the boardwalk. Every 15 to 45 minutes a pontoon plane lands or takes off to St. Thomas or Old San Juan, the noise and splash thrilling first-time observers.

Several events on the free fun aficionado's calendar can start or finish on the boardwalk. Tour maps are free, and there's no charge for Gallery Walk, held the first Thursday evening of November through May, when art studios and galleries stay open until 9:00pm. Socializing with the artists is encouraged with wine and cheese, gratis, and wonderful paintings, photographs, prints, glass, sculptures and original jewelry on display.

Four Friday nights a year, downtown merchants stay open late for Jump-Up, a giant block party. Streets are closed at 5:00pm, and food vendors set up for the crowd. Mocko Jumbies parade through town performing amazing maneuvers on tall stilts, eyes level with the second story. Different corners present jazz, steel pan or scratch bands to delighted audiences.

On St. Patrick's Day Saturday, the bands, floats and miscellaneous green creatures assemble in Jackson Park and parade down Company Street through Times Square and then up King Street.

The Half-Ironman International Triathlon starts, finishes and transitions in Jackson Park on the first Sunday of May. Swimmers swim from Protestant Cay to the fort, then bike and run all over St. Croix and back to the park. Spectators line the bulkhead and the streets to cheer for the 600-plus athletes. What a show — and it's free!

From fort to seaplane, the boardwalk is a special place in a special harbor. Cruisers can swim and snorkel to beach or bar. Squid squads patrol beneath the hull, rays jump sky high, and octopi hide in cement blocks on the bottom. The show from the cockpit features egrets, pelicans and sometimes a peregrine falcon

Scuba and Big Beard's boats load and unload divers and Buck Island day-trippers at the end of Queen Cross Street near their stores in the Caravelle Hotel. The hotel lobby has racks of informational brochures, free postcards and maps for touring St. Croix. The pleasant arcade has a babbling water fountain and quiet tables for enjoying a fancy cup of coffee and wi-fi access.

Sunday brunch means pan music and people-watching at Rum Runners, and every evening flood-lights and food scraps attract HUGE tarpon in shallow water. Locals and visitors can't help but gawk, and the fish stare back with eyes aglow. It's hard to believe so many big fish can occupy the small space between the boardwalk and the restaurant deck.

The Harbor Web-Cam, on the deck bar's corner wall, attracts those with cellular phones — many US phones work in the USVI with no roaming charges. Standing in the painted circle, they call someone at home with a computer, who then goes to the website www.gotostcroix.com. That person (presumably shivering in a snow-covered city) will see their cruising friends in front of a picturesque tropical turquoise harbor complete with bobbing boats and swaying palm trees. The challenge for the caller is to refrain from gloating too blatantly — or not.

This is also a great viewing spot for two of St. Croix's

perched on a spreader. When the sun sinks behind La Grande Princesse Hill, the serene harbor turns Monet colors. Behind the palms on the Cay, the moon rises and illuminates the starfish races on the sandy harbor floor for more free fun in America's paradise.

Ellen Sanpere first visited St. Croix in 1967, but did not return until 1995. She cruises aboard Cayenne III, a German Frers design Idylle 15.5, with her husband Tony. Christiansted is their home port.

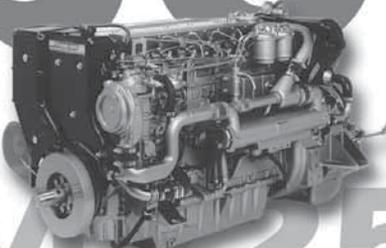


More Free Fun Stuff

Some free things to do and see elsewhere on St. Croix:

- Sunset Jazz, Frederiksted (third Friday)
- Pt. Udall Millennium Monument, easternmost point of the United States
- Heritage Trail driving tour
- Crucian Christmas Carnival, Frederiksted
- Mardi Croix parade, Cane Bay
- Sunset, West End — best place to witness the green flash
- Rainforest hiking tour
- Tito & Sue's Crab Races, Divi Hotel (Wednesdays), Deep End Bar (Fridays)
- Kite-boarding at Coakley Bay
- Music & volleyball, Rainbow Beach, (Sundays)
- All beaches have free public access
- Snorkeling from the beach; at least eight have easy access to living reefs
- Dive/snorkel at Cane Bay; walk from the beach to the 13,000-foot-deep ocean wall
- Dive the Frederiksted pier; many other sites accessible from land
- Diving from your own boat; largest living reef in the Caribbean, and several wrecks
- Buck Island Reef National Monument, marked snorkel trail, beach, picnic area
- Columbus Landing (1493), Salt River, the only place in USA Columbus visited
- Kayak in Salt River Bay National Park & Ecological Preserve
- Fort Frederik, Frederiksted
- Sandy Point Wildlife Preserve (weekends)

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ALL ASHORE...

St. Martin Ate Our Anchor

by John Rowland

It's the first day of April. We are anchored in Marigot Bay, St. Martin. We arrived in St. Martin on 12 February, seven weeks ago. While we were having dinner with friends last week, someone said, "St. Martin eats your anchor". I guess they are right. Our plan was to stay a month, at most. We're not alone: we meet many folks who stay here longer than they had planned. What seduces us to stay here longer than we plan?

The island is unique. The split political structure — half French, half Dutch — gives it a sort of charming, yet schizoid, character. The French side has a European feel and ambiance. The currency is the Euro. The approach to life is relaxed yet sophisticated. The Dutch side has a more North American feel. The currency is the US dollar. The pace is quicker, more business-like. The combination has an appeal which is difficult to describe. Yet that doesn't explain why so many of us stay longer than we plan. There must be other attractions.

The availability of goods and services at affordable prices is a major attraction for cruisers. Yachting is a big part of the economy in St. Martin. As such, there are chanderies and services here that are not available in many of the islands. Virtually every cruiser I talk to here has at least one item to be purchased or project to be done which would be difficult or impossible in other islands. Last year we bought our dinghy here; this year it was the new anchor and a long list of bits and pieces.

Provisioning is outstanding here. There are large markets with a good variety of familiar North American and European brands, discount stores and some smaller markets and shops with specialty items. For those of us who enjoy wine, there is no beating the selection and prices on wines on the French side. The US Marche, near the French bridge, has become a favorite of ours as a source of great wines and an excellent selection of meats, cheeses and basic groceries.

You can find clothing, electronics, and more here. We were able to get a battery for Nancy's aging Sony laptop. There are malls and "big box" stores, as well as shops of every size and description.

But given all this, a shopping trip won't last weeks. Days maybe, but not weeks. The feature of this island that holds your ground tackle is fun!

We enjoy the French side of the island. There are several delightful restaurants in Marina Port la Royale. The atmosphere is decidedly European and relaxed. The food is wonderful and the service is excellent, yet very lighthearted. We particularly enjoy The Village and La Main a la Pâte. We like to walk through the cobblestone streets of Marigot and browse the shops. There are sidewalk cafes where you can enjoy a coffee and a pastry. The people are friendly and helpful.

Four or five miles north of Marigot Bay is Grande Case. This picturesque little town is another attraction for cruisers. There is a good harbor and an excellent stretch of white sand beach. During the high season, the main street is closed off on Tuesday nights and the town turns into one big street fair. The ribs at Talk of the Town are not to be missed. The crowd is a mixture of cruisers, vacationers and locals, captured in the mood of a block party.

On the Dutch side of the island there are some fun places, too. Shrimpy's is a cruiser-oriented bar with laundry service, free wi-fi, a boat flea market every Sunday, and a VHF net (VHF 14, 0730 hours) Monday through Saturday. Visit Fathoms restaurant, just off the airport, on the southwest side of the lagoon. Half-price drinks and tapas during happy hour serve as a catalyst to make this a popular place for cruisers to gather. A similar happy hour structure at the yacht club, just on the east side of the Dutch bridge (on the lagoon side) has helped drive the custom of cruisers gathering to watch the boat traffic into and out of the lagoon at the evening bridge opening times. It is interesting to watch the huge mega-yachts squeeze through the channel and I'm sure all the boats appreciate the enthusiastic reception from the well-lubricated cruisers gathered on the patio.

To take advantage of the shopping opportunities, renting a car is a good option. We had a car and took the opportunity to motor-tour the east side of the island: there are some beautiful beaches and bays.

We stopped at the infamous Orient Bay. The bay is protected by two large reefs, providing a spectacular vista of breakers when the north swells are running. The south end of the beach is a "clothing optional" area. The fact of the matter is that this beach, at any point, is not a place for anyone with a puritanical view of beach attire. It is a beautiful beach of several miles, dotted with beach bars and restaurants and enjoyed by folks of all ages.

Perhaps the most fun in St. Martin is the number of cruisers here at this time of year. This is the turning point for those headed north and those headed south for the approaching hurricane season. But they come here, stay a bit longer than they intended, renew old friendships and acquaintances and make some new friends. We've enjoyed St. Martin but it's time to go — until next high season.

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READERS' SURVEY 2007 RESULTS

The results of the fourth *Caribbean Compass* Readers' Survey are in. We're always curious to learn whether our compass needs adjusting to stay on the course readers want, so thanks to all who took the time to share your opinions, concerns and suggestions. We'll be sharing pertinent information with the appropriate government agencies and other groups, and using the rest to bring you an ever-improving *Compass*.

COMPASS PEOPLE

Although this is not a scientific survey, the information it reveals gives a good indication of who *Compass* readers are and what you're thinking. In general, responses show that you are aware, thoughtful and eager for information relevant to your lifestyle. We've learned what *Compass* content you like best (your own Readers' Forum tops the list for the fourth time running!), and we've taken notes on what you'd like to see more (or less) of in future issues of *Compass*, so stay tuned!

The majority of respondents report that they read the *Compass* every month and usually read most articles, rating them good to excellent. Some readers note that although they don't read certain columns, they realize that they are important to others. Even departments that do not have universal appeal have their handful of passionate fans.

Copies of the *Compass* are reportedly easy to find, and two or more people read every copy.

As in previous surveys, the typical *Compass* respondent is 45 years old or over, is cruising the islands aboard his or her own yacht and is usually on the move. Two-thirds said that they came to the Caribbean with the intention of staying for more than one year, with the average having cruised for seven years in the Caribbean — talk about long-term visitors! A number of those who say they do not intend to stay for more than a year note that they regularly come to the Caribbean to cruise, often for four to six months each winter. The majority of respondents came from North America, and the rest from Europe.

Advertisers please note: Ninety-six percent of respondents said they consider the advertisements in *Compass* "useful" or "very useful!"

ISSUES

Security

Although more than half our respondents still say that they feel that security is getting to be more of a problem, there was a slight decrease from previous surveys. As in our last two surveys, the majority of respondents feel that local authorities are not taking adequate action to ensure visitors' security.

Nevertheless, nearly three-quarters of the respondents agree that the Caribbean is relatively safe compared to most other tourist destinations. Readers have obviously drawn a distinction between "security" and "safety" — that is, theft is an important concern, but readers don't feel that they are in personal danger.

To improve the security situation, readers see a need for prompt police response to yacht-related crimes (perhaps facilitated by VHF radios and quick-response boats), official follow-up after crimes and speedy justice in the case of any crime against a visitor.

Environment

As in previous surveys, most people are in favor of the introduction of marine parks and are willing to pay park entry fees, "as long as the fees go directly to protection of the environment, not to private enterprise or the government".

More than two-thirds do not believe that yachts contribute significantly to marine pollution.

Eighty-eight percent agreed that disposal of yacht garbage should be banned on small islands without adequate facilities. Nearly the same percentage felt strongly that yachting destinations, especially marinas and boatyards, should provide facilities for environmentally safe disposal of used oil, batteries and other toxic waste.

Although 95 percent said in the last survey that yachts should pay a fee to help pay for collection and disposal of yacht garbage when clearing into a country, slightly less than 90 percent feel that way now. One respondent commented, "Why should yachts pay for proper disposal? Local citizens throw their garbage and litter everywhere and when it ends up in the sea the yachts get blamed for it." Another noted, "Sailors

need to address their own garbage issues; we can't expect others to."

The Perfect Anchorage

According to this year's survey respondents, as in the past, the perfect anchorage has, far above all else, a clean environment and friendly people. Other desirable features include a dinghy dock, security patrols and the availability of fuel and water. Shops, moorings and marina facilities were considered somewhat less important. Write-in comments indicate that the ideal anchorage is also scenic, quiet, uncrowded and has helpful, non-aggressive boatboys.

The anchorage where virtually *nobody* wants to be suffers from security problems, harassment, noise, an unclean environment and overcrowding. Lack of facilities was not of much concern. Other undesirable factors written in include nuisance boatboys, too many moorings in the good anchoring spots, and lack of respect from other watercraft operators including jet-ski users, speedboat drivers and anchoring-challenged bareboaters.

Fully 100 percent of this survey's respondents say they prefer to be in areas without jet-skis.

Customs & Immigration

More than 80 percent of readers agree that most Customs and Immigration officers in the Caribbean are efficient and courteous.

As in our last two surveys, respondents said that they found the "most efficient and courteous" Customs and Immigration officials on the islands of Bequia and Martinique. In national groupings, the French Antilles as a whole came out ahead, with St. Vincent & the Grenadines a close second.

Although one reader felt that "most are improving", two countries that showed marked improvement in our 2004 survey compared to 2001 did some backsliding this time. We'll be having a private word with those who were voted "least efficient and courteous!"

Grenada (including Carriacou) received the same number of "most" and "least" votes, as they did in the last survey.

As in previous surveys, it is strongly suggested that tourism departments work closely with Customs and Immigration to build good customer-service skills. Survey respondents would also like to see Customs and Immigration hours, rules and fees clearly posted at each port of entry.

There is a loud and clear call in this fourth survey for sub-regional unity regarding yacht clearance. Readers suggest that Customs and Immigration procedures be standardized (and even computerized) for the entire Eastern Caribbean.

In fact, many survey respondents see a need for more collaboration among all the Eastern Caribbean governments and boating stakeholders to safeguard and improve yacht tourism.

The Future?

We introduced a new topic to our Readers' Survey this year, "What is your vision of the Caribbean in the next 5 years?" Interestingly, about half our respondents see a sweet dream while the other half see a nightmare. But the issues are the same.

Environmental concerns (e.g. pollution, environmental degradation, habitat destruction) are paramount. Overcrowding, overdevelopment, alienation of once-public land into private (or corporate) hands, mass tourism, increasing prices, more bureaucracy and the rampant proliferation of moorings in good anchorages are visions of an undesirable future. "I hope the beautiful coasts will not become spoiled by mega-projects, huge buildings and marinas," says one correspondent. "Otherwise the uniqueness of the islands will be lost."

A new specter has arisen in many respondent's minds: the fear of boating becoming increasingly expensive across the board due to a mega-yacht boom. A reader asks, "Do all the islands need to jump on the mega-yacht bandwagon? It would be interesting to know what they bring to the average citizen."

Some, however, see the other side of the coin: a Caribbean where the focus is on the environment, crime has been brought under control, governments appreciate and nurture the contribution to the local economy of all types of yachting, there is less bureaucracy, prices are still reasonable, and the standard of living for local people has been much improved.

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MAY 2007

♈ ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)

In the second week you'll feel a surge of inspiration and drive towards new ideas and changes to make life on board easier. Don't let negativity from female crew or cruising buddies blow you off course.

♉ TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)

Use this time to develop the many creative ideas flowing toward you during the first week. With business in the doldrums you may feel especially put upon in the third week. Maintain your course and keep a firm grip on the helm.

♊ GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)

Communications will be prolific and productive until the third week when things become garbled and you may find static and misunderstandings abound.

♋ CANCER (22 Jun - 23 Jul)

Love will dominate your thoughts this month. The problems you had last month will change tack to happier times.

♌ LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)

You will find difficulties in communicating creative ideas until the 11th, when propagation should improve.

♍ VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)

As the previous month's rough seas in your love life calm down, you will find that misunderstandings complicate matters for the last two weeks.

♎ LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)

Your love life will meet with bad weather after the 8th. You should get a surprise in the mail after the 11th.

♏ SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)

While you're in stagnant waters in the creative and communications areas of your life, romance will take a turn for the better.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)

The breezes of business will freshen, while your ability to make yourself understood meets with one storm after another. Don't let it throw you off course.

♑ CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)

Your love life will be a beat after the 8th. Try to stay cool and don't let lucky headwinds force you to change sails.

♒ AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)

Your business will seem to be stuck in the mud, but the tide is rising and good news is on the way.

♓ PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)

Even though you will find it difficult to express yourself, you will find romance with a new crew member to liven your days.

Crossword Solution

ACROSS	24) TEN	11) TALE
1) TENT	25) TEACH	13) THROTTLE
3) THAT	26) TEREDO	14) THEN
5) THROAT	27) TERRAPIN	17) THE
6) TAN		18) TENDER
7) TORTOISE	DOWN	19) TRUST
10) TEAL	1) THOLE	20) TEST
12) TAIL	2) TINY	21) THERE
13) TENON	3) TOR	22) TARP
14) TILL	4) THIMBLE	23) THIN
15) TEA	5) TEMPEST	24) TO
16) THREE	6) TALL	
18) TART	7) THRIFT	
20) TENDS	8) TIDAL	
21) TELLTALE	9) TERN	

Island Poets

ISLAND POEM

My beloved lover is light brown, slim
I can dream myself away
In his blue eyes.
He is clever, his brain is like the sharpest knife at the butcher.

His hair is soft and yellow, like a baby's.
His hands are big and strong
And warm
To get around mine.

But he is a Gemini, a twin — who changes
From hot to cold, from home place to wide world.
I'd learnt that. I'd learnt so much
— still he is my number one!

Yet, there is a problem: There is another she.
A beautiful white lady, twenty years old.
When she — without words — asks him for something.
He gives her what she needs — and a little more.

I haven't seen it yet, but I imagine
That he kisses her in the night,
When I seem to sleep in our double bed,
And he walks around.

I am not a jealous woman.
But I just wish it was me
To whom he gives all this attention, big money and care.
Sometimes, I wish I was *Runkath*.

— Anne Hjelmsø

French Curves

Dans la plage
shadows still long
on a pink shell beach.
Espied afar
a lithesome lass,
far too jaunty
in too brief a bikini.
"Bonjour" says she
with impish grin,
saucy
in the morning early.
Look, but don't touch
I decide,
Mais pourquoi pas?
Pas de problem!

Later on,
french kisses
in the evening shade
where palm trees
tell no secrets.
Encore amour
in calypso dreams.

— Nicholas Lee

Derelicts

It seems, in every harbor,
They are there:
Washed up on the beach,
Stripped and bleaching
Or a mast or a bowsprit
Protruding from the water
Or a mastless, hatchless hull
On a barnacle-encrusted anchor chain

It seems, in every yard,
They are there:
Faded gelcoat and rusted stainless,
Ragged sails on a broken boom,
Sagging rigging and tattered flags,
Sitting forlorn on the jack-stands
Waiting for owners who never come,
Eroding in the wind and rain.

It seems, in every bar,
They are there:
Drinking beer at oh-nine-hundred,
Bending the ear of a patient barman,
Full of sea stories of past glories.
The sad, empty look deep in the eyes;
The sloped posture; the crestfallen gait;
Afraid and lost and filled with pain.

Are these the derelicts,
These boats, these people?
I think not!
They are the debris,
The flotsam of derelict dreams,
Dreams that never materialized,
Dreams lost in life's storms,
Dreams run out of courage,
Dreams strangled from being held too long.

When I see them, I shiver.
When I see them, I pray.
Dreams are that which fill my sails.

— John Rowland

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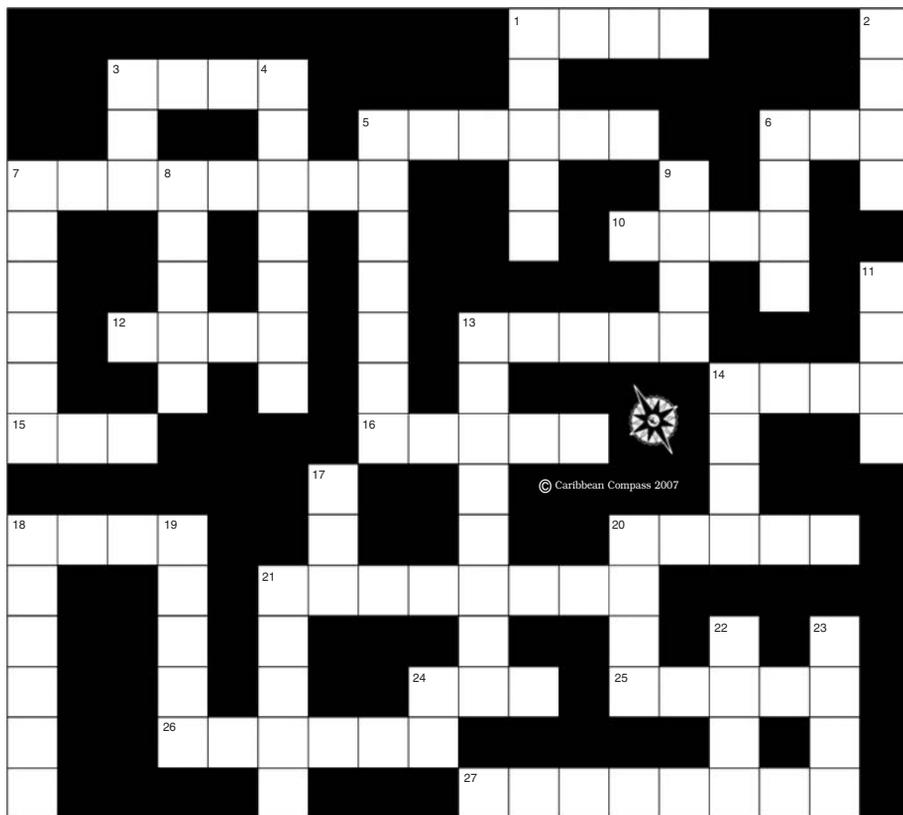


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Compass Cruising Crossword

Nautical Alphabet: 'T' for Two



ACROSS

- 1) Canvas shelter
- 3) Not this
- 5) Hollowed gaff end, fits around mast
- 6) ___ bark; color of old-time sails
- 7) Once sailors' food item from Galapagos
- 10) A shore bird
- 12) Rope end
- 13) Square heel of mast cut to fit into step
- 14) Cash box
- 15) "___ for two"
- 16) "___ sheets to the wind"
- 18) Sailor's girl?
- 20) Controls sheets
- 21) Wind direction indicator
- 24) "Fastnet Force ___"
- 25) Edward ____, pirate
- 26) Wood-eating worm
- 27) Freshwater turtle

DOWN

- 1) Type of wooden pin for holding oars
- 2) Very small
- 3) Name in Norway
- 4) Ring spliced into a rope
- 5) Gale
- 6) ___ ship, or square-rigger
- 7) Frugality
- 8) Pertaining to the effect of the moon and sun on the sea
- 9) Sea bird
- 11) Yarn
- 13) Engine control
- 14) Now and ___
- 17) Pronoun often preceding ship's name
- 18) Small vessel that services a larger one
- 19) "In God We ___"
- 20) Trial
- 21) "Over ___"
- 22) Short for canvas hatch covering
- 23) Thick and ___ block; one with different sized sheaves
- 24) ___ and fro

— Solution on page 36

parlumps marooned



- Admiral Marine Management
- Arawak
- Beautiful Touch Salon
- Blue Parrot Cafe
- Blue Water Divers

- BVI Apparel
- Caribbean Jewellers
- Culture Classic
- Day Sails
- First Caribbean ATM
- Harbour Market

- Hucksters
- Ice Cream Store
- Latitude 18
- Launch Catering
- Pusser's Landing
- Serenity Spa

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Lost: Further Adventures in Barbados

by Lee Kessell

A whole year had passed and Trevor was back in Barbados to spend the school holidays with his cousin Ernie. Trevor loved staying in Uncle Solly's little cottage, set upon coral blocks in a small village overlooking the wild Atlantic coast. He loved his Aunt Josephina's fish cakes and he loved it when Uncle Solly drove his car around the sugarcane fields at breakneck speed. Every Sunday Uncle Solly herded his family into the old car and set off for an afternoon drive. Uncle Solly was a terror on the roads; he had no respect for stray animals wandering lazily along the narrow roads and blew his horn at everyone and everything to get out of the way. But what really made Ernie's little sister Nyna cover her eyes with her hands and Aunt Josephina clutch onto the strap hanging by her right arm was the way Uncle Solly sped up nearing the sharp corners that cut the sugarcane fields into neat squares, putting his foot on the brake just in time and careening around the corner. When the cane was high you couldn't see a thing coming in the opposite direction and many a poor driver got the shock of his life. Trevor thought this a blast and would cry out "Hi-ho, Silver!" every time.

Last year Trevor and Ernie had harnessed the little old pony to the buggy that Uncle Solly had built and they had almost ended up as road kill, so they weren't going to do that again. Now what? After a week, the boys had done just about everything exciting they could think of and were now teasing the old dog lying by the kitchen steps. Aunt Josephina had had enough.

"Why don't you boys go walk down the old railway line? You know where it is, don't you Ernie?"

Ernie wondered why he hadn't thought of it himself. In the old days, a single-track railway ran all the way from Bridgetown, the capital, along the coast and ended up north past Bathsheba. At the bottom of the grassy hill was an old cutting through the limestone cliffs before the train made a stop at Bath. The passenger carriages were pulled by a puffing steam engine and although all the carriages looked the same, there were three classes of fares. When the engine threatened to conk out going up the inclines, the first-class passengers remained in their seats, the second-class passengers got out and walked and the third-class passengers pushed! Ernie laughed every time Uncle Solly told the story.

Off the cousins ran, down through the coarse grass. They came out at the old coral rail-track bed. Of course the rails were long gone, but the cutting would be there for all time.

Very soon, the boys found themselves in a tunnel formed by stringy, grey-barked trees with their branches meeting overhead. On one side of the track was a wall of porous limestone and on the other, a sheer drop down to a rocky shore and glimpses of blue water. It was very quiet too, gloomy and spooky, and it got gloomier and spookier the farther they went. The open drop to the sea rocks soon became another cliff of limestone and on the landward side the cliff opened out in hollows and caverns where Strangler Fig trees had taken root. It was easy to imagine all sorts of horrible creatures living in the caverns behind the long, grasping roots of the trees and when a slight breeze rustled the leaves at the top of the gully, Ernie called out, "A monkey! I'm sure I saw a monkey up there!"

"Where, where?" yelled Trevor. He had seen a few monkeys on his drives with Uncle Solly but never close up. Not so for Ernie, who was scared of the Green Monkeys that roamed wild all over Barbados. They had fangs that could bite through anything, he sniveled, and they were nasty and malicious creatures that ruined the

farmers' vegetables, taking a bite out of everything and tossing away what they didn't like. But Trevor wasn't convinced. He climbed up into the branches of the Strangler Fig and there he found a deep limestone cave. "Come on up Ernie! I've found a treasure cave!" So Ernie forgot about the monkeys and followed Trevor into the cave. Even Trevor was sensible enough to watch where he put his feet because with limestone you never knew when a jagged pit would open up and swallow you. The floor of the cave was dusty and there were husks of old nuts and decaying fruit dropped about. Ernie immediately thought of monkeys hiding out there, but kept the idea to himself. The cave smelt of animals and bats and the dim light that struggled through the prison of the tree roots cast deep shadows into the throat of the cave.

"Wish I had my torch with me!" gulped Ernie as he trod on a dry twig that cracked loudly under his sneaker.

"Sissy!" chided Trevor as he felt his way deeper and deeper into the dark recesses of the cave. Suddenly there was a gush of air over his head, a twittering of angry bleeps and a squadron of offended bats rushed out of the cave. Ernie shrieked and grabbed Trevor, who had also got one of the nastiest shocks of his life, but he put a brave face on it and cheeped: "Only bats! We woke them up, that's all."

Trevor felt his way along the wall of the cave and soon it grew quite dark. "There must be an end to this cave," he whispered while Ernie clung to his arm in terror, "and there must be a pirate's treasure here too." Just then, Trevor tripped over something solid, sort of round and hollow sounding. "I think I've found something!" he shouted. "I bet it's a pirate skull!" But Ernie didn't want to find a skull no matter who it belonged to. "I'm scared; let's go back," he whimpered. But Trevor shrugged off Ernie's hands and bent down to pick up whatever it was he had found. It certainly was a skull because in the deep dark he could feel the eye sockets and the hollow where the nose had been. But what was this? All of a sudden he felt long, saber-like fangs. In panic, Trevor dropped the skull and turned to run back out of the cave, knocking Ernie over and then falling on top of him. The two boys clung to each other in fear and where Trevor had expected to see the light from the entrance to the cave showing him the way out, all he saw was a terrible blackness.

"Do you know where we are?" sobbed Ernie. Trevor had to admit that he hadn't any idea, but he knew it was no good blustering about and getting lost even deeper in the tunnels so he pulled Ernie over to the rough limestone wall and said that they had better wait for Uncle Solly to find them. And that is just what happened. When the sun set and the boys had not returned Josephina told Solly where they had gone. So Uncle Solly got the big electric torch, called up the old dog and strode off to find the boys. "I'll give them both a good beating," he muttered.

The old dog, happy to be off for an adventure, ran along the old train line, barking and yapping and when Trevor and Ernie heard him they yelled for all their worth. It didn't take long for Uncle Solly to find the cave and shine his big torch's light into the bends and turns of the tunnels until it lit up the relieved young fangs.

Back home Aunt Josephina looked crossly at Trevor and Ernie and asked her husband, "Did you give them licks?" Uncle Solly winked at the boys. "Beat 'em real good for sure," he answered.

THE END

*cheeps: to suck one's teeth; a common, expression-filled sound for West Indians

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Hello! My name is Dolly and my home is in the sea.



DOLLY'S DEEP SECRETS

by Elaine Ollivierre

We have looked at ways in which some methods of fishing that use nets can be very damaging to the environment as well as to global fish stocks. But there are other methods without nets that are just as destructive.

Last month we described the damage caused by beam trawling, in which the sea bed is stirred up by nets and beams that are dragged across its surface. Imagine then, how much more destructive it is when the fishing method actually sets out to dig up the sea floor. This is what happens in **dredging**, which is the method used to catch species which live in the sand and silt of the sea or lake bed (for example, oysters and other shellfish). The dredge is a metal basket (or bag) with a bar in front, usually with teeth. As the basket is towed, the bar rakes up the catch. Any silt or sand passes back through the dredge while the shellfish remain in the basket. The basket is made up of metal rings to withstand the bumping over the ground, but these make the basket very heavy. If any small fish

or reef creatures such as sponges get caught up as well as the shellfish, they will be squashed under the weight and die.

Longlining is another fishing method which can be destructive. Fishermen put out a long, sinking line off the stern of the boat. The line can be many kilometres long and it has baited hooks at intervals along its length. It is then left in the water for some time before being hauled back into the boat. The problem with longlining is that it gathers too much by-catch. Some marine mammals, turtles and seabirds get caught on the hooks. The seabird by-catch is most worrying, because thousands of birds are killed by longlines each year. The birds are attracted to the baited hooks as the line is put into the water, so they dive to snatch the bait and are caught on the hooks.

Fishermen are trying a variety of methods to keep the birds away. The boats can carry waving plastic streamers to scare them off. If the bait used is defrosted it sinks faster, so there's less time for the birds to see it. Some boats release the line through a chute so that the birds can't see the bait at all. Others only release their lines at night when the birds are not there.

Other dangerous fishing methods include use of **poison** and **explosives**, but these are now illegal in most places in the world.

In an attempt to increase fish stocks, fish farming has seemed a worthwhile venture. However, even this has its problems. The fish are fed fishmeal, which is made from all the little fish that humans don't like to eat. These little fish are at the bottom of the food chain so their disappearance affects creatures higher up the chain who then don't have anything to eat.

Is there any good news? Well, at least everyone now recognizes that there is a problem. Only sustainable management of the world's major fishing grounds will ensure a continual supply of fish for the future.

WORLD PUZZLE

How many three-letter words can you make out of the letters of the word **FISHERMAN**?

— Answer on page 20

LOOKING BACK AND BEYOND

Beyond the Islands: An Autobiography by James Mitchell. Macmillan Caribbean, ©2006. 464 pages, black-and-white photos and maps. Paperback ISBN 1-4050-1417-2, £14.50; hardback ISBN 0-2300-2220-0, £17.95.

It is easy to be cynical about a political autobiography these days; the levels of specious reasoning and spin in the global news militate against any objective assessment, which is, of course, their purpose. That said, former Prime Minister of St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Sir James "Son" Mitchell has written a political autobiography. He has, after all, founded a political party, the process of which he documents in detail that might be bewildering for those not familiar with modern Vincentian history. He could not have survived and flourished for more than a quarter of a century without finely honed political instincts. Indeed, some of his autobiography is an account of his battles and his victories. After all, he is the one who survived having dung and stones flung at him during his first outing into politics and sometimes suffers the verbal equivalent today. On St. Vincent, there is still a cottage industry devoted to his deprecation, even in retirement. I have no expertise in the local politics but I do know that it would be wrong to dismiss this book on account of petty partisan bickering. There are many stories interwoven into his long reminiscence that raise it well above the level of base political motivation.

Son Mitchell was born into a different world from today's. Bequia was a much more traditional place of boat builders, sailors and fishermen, with few modern amenities. Then, the strength of families was the first, and often the only, barrier to the dangers of the outside world. It is a world quickly receding from view in the explosion of electronic media. *Beyond the Islands* records the life of a man rising from what once was a small, distant colony to become the leader of a newly independent nation and a recognized leader on the world stage. Sir James records his youth and the education of his mind and senses in and out of school. As a university student in Canada he worked as a railway porter. Later, from England, he hitchhiked on the continent and returned to reside in London. After years abroad, Sir James returned to Bequia, became a businessman and founded Bequia's iconic Frangipani Hotel.

The island nation of St. Vincent & the Grenadines was born in a time of crisis, in the aftermath of a destructive volcanic eruption and with superpower tensions on the rise. The difficulties attending the nurture and growth of this small group of islands, impoverished and lacking infrastructure, were immense. Sir James Mitchell records his work in opposition and government to thread the maze of international institutions to create and build a viable state. It is instructive to anyone who wants to understand the myriad problems confronting small countries in their efforts to make a better life for their people.

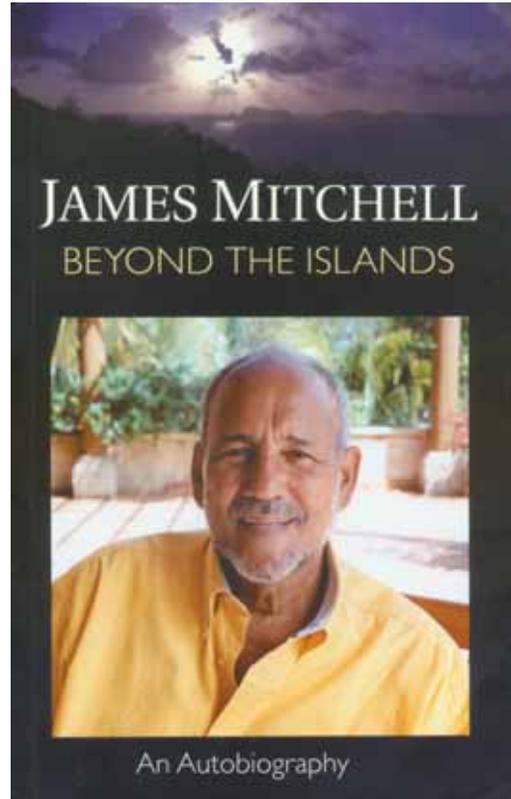
Some of the most interesting pages in *Beyond the Islands* are transcribed from Sir James' diaries. They have the arresting immediacy penned in the heat of the moment or during quick reflection in the aftermath of a prominent event. Storm clouds hovered over the islands of the Caribbean as the small republics struggled to find their feet and Sir James gives us an insider's view of these sometimes tragic events, ranging from the brutal collapse of Bishop's regime in Grenada to the Muslimeen coup in Trinidad. Through the diary entries we also get to know his concerns for his family and the difficulties of a public life. Together with passing asides, we get a glimpse of the man: a bit of a raconteur, literate, a lover of good wine, fine clothes and handsome women. However, Sir James is a reserved man in his book and he is willing to let his public striving and his known accomplishments stand for him without revealing more.

The book is not without its faults. Styles vary within it. I have been told that an editor died in the preparation of *Beyond the Islands* and this may account for stylistic differences between the terse opening chapters and the more expansive ones to follow. The nature of the intended audience is problematic. A natural readership

would include Sir James' fellow countrymen and women, his former constituents, the regional political elite, journalists, and scholars of local politics, regional politics and more. A casual reader might find confusion in the welter of names and organizations that Mitchell mentions. It is understandable that Sir James would want the historical record to be complete and it is obvious that he has drawn on considerable diaries and writings, but I would beg for a bit more charity to the uninitiated; a glossary would be helpful.

The Lesser Antilles have provided the world with faces and names in all fields of human endeavor that are far out of proportion to the isles' size. Names as disparate as the Mighty Sparrow, Derek Walcott and Dame Eugenia Charles come to mind. Sir James Mitchell has written his testament and now awaits the judgment of history.

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Six Ripe Slices of West Indian Life

Anthony Winkler was born in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1942. His family moved to Montego Bay when he was eight; a year later, his father sent him back to Kingston to live with his grandparents. He began his secondary education at the Excelsior High School, however, he moved back to Montego Bay where he attended Cornwall College. After leaving high school, Winkler moved back to Kingston again, where he worked as an accounting clerk.

In 1962, he migrated to California, where he attended California State University, from which he graduated in 1967. He also obtained a Masters Degree in 1968. After leaving university, he taught at the Pasadena City College for a short period. He then joined a firm of college text-book publishers who influenced him to begin writing. He became a full-time writer in 1975 and returned briefly to Jamaica, where he was married. Shortly thereafter, he returned to the United States, where he established himself as a writer of tertiary level text-books.

His first foray into fiction, *The Painted Canoe*, was published in 1983 and was a critical success both in Jamaica and the United States. In 1987, he published *The Lunatic* which became a bestseller. This was followed by *The Great Yacht Race* (1992), *Going to Home to Teach* (1995) and *The Duppy* (1997). In 1991 he wrote the screenplay for the film version of *The Lunatic*, and in 1999 his original screenplay, *The Annihilation of Fish*, was filmed in Los Angeles starring James Earl Jones, Lynn Redgrave and Margot Kidder. He has also written two plays, *The Burglary*, produced in 2003, and *The Hippopotamus Card* in 2004. His sixth novel, *The Dog War*, was published in 2006. He currently resides in Atlanta, Georgia.

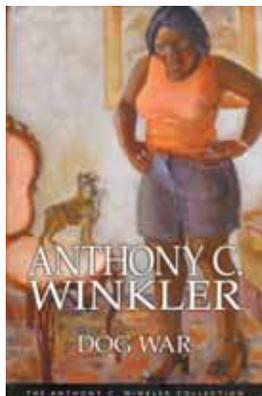
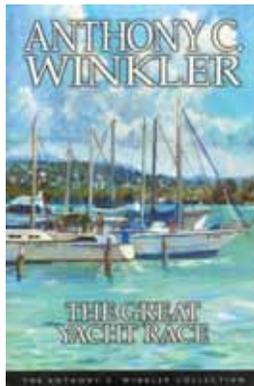
I had really enjoyed reading Anthony Winkler's collection of short stories, *The Annihilation of Fish*, and felt myself lucky to have been in Toronto to see his play, *The Burglary*, performed there. So I looked forward to reading his six novels which were recently reissued in paperback by Macmillan Caribbean as The Anthony C. Winkler Collection.

I decided to read the six books in chronological order, for want of any other reason for choosing a particular volume first. The themes are very diverse, though all the stories are centred on the life, culture and personalities of Jamaica.

My favourite, I think, was the first and probably most famous, *The Painted Canoe*. This tells the story of Zechariah, a fisherman who drifts out to sea after falling asleep in his canoe. The reader knows that he is suffering from incurable cancer, so his desperate measures to reach land are especially poignant. Meanwhile, we read of an expatriate doctor, deeply unhappy and envious of Zechariah's willpower and endurance. Apart from a rather saccharine ending for Zechariah, the contrasting tales of the two men make for absorbing reading.

The Great Yacht Race tells of the intense rivalry among Jamaican boat owners in anticipation of the annual yacht race from Lucrea to Montego Bay. The year is 1955 and personal friendships and animosities are revealed as preparations are underway. In what was still a colonial society where lighter skin and having lots of money were qualities to be admired, the interlinked stories of the upper class and expatriate

communities are all hilarious but often touching at the same time. To those of you who are regatta enthusiasts, the descriptions of the race itself will strike a chord as you read of the tactics and strategies used in desperation to be first across the line.



Coming Home to Teach was written about a time (1975) when a great number of expatriates were teaching in Jamaica. The Jamaican political situation then seemed to many to be unstable, and there was a huge "brain drain" of educated Jamaicans to the US, Canada and Europe. It was unusual to find a Jamaican returning home to work, so Mr. Winkler was a rare creature indeed.

Settling in the countryside to teach at a local

teacher-training college was difficult for him and his girlfriend (later, wife) but he soldiered on despite the eccentricities of other members of the staff, including the alcoholic principal, and the tyrannical attitude of his deputy. Disappointed with an outdated, irrelevant British curriculum and frustrated with the bureaucracy of Jamaican government offices, he eventually felt he had made enough of a sacrifice and returned to the US. Once again, accurate portrayals of the people and the political landscape of the time make for fascinating reading.

The Duppy is related in the first person by a man who has just died and goes to... well, a place that looks remarkably like Jamaica but where everyone can do anything they want. Is that heaven? This story has provoked much religious commentary but, even without any faith-based interpretations, it's an enjoyable tale with a happy ending.

I thoroughly enjoyed *Dog War* which is about a youngish Jamaican widow, Precious, who goes to Florida to stay with her police officer daughter and family, and who is tricked into a job as a "dog-sitter" for a wealthy American lady. Her impressions of life in the concrete jungle compare badly with life in rural Jamaica, although her biggest bone of contention (forgive the pun) is with the dog itself. Riccardio insists on using Precious' leg for various unmentionable pursuits, and fending off the dog, the butler and even her son-in-law takes all of her energies. The challenges of being a Caribbean immigrant in the world so totally different are clearly felt, but Precious (helped by her daily under-the-bed conversations with God) is a character strong enough for anything.

The author's love for his mother country and its multitude of zany inhabitants is very obvious in all the books. His characters are so finely drawn that we will all recognize similar individuals from our own backgrounds. My only problem with the books was the (almost) constant references to sexual intercourse and the more private parts of the human body. Using local dialect words for this only made it more graphic. I hated the book *The Lunatic* because of it. (Winkler's mother hated it too, apparently, but maybe not for the same reason.) In this story, the not-quite-mentally-stable black guy (Aloysius) meets up in the forest with a nymphomaniac white German tourist (Inge) whose life seems to be one long sexual exploit, shared in this case with a third party (Service) whom she finds in the nearby village. The tale almost ends in tragedy when Inge decides they need more money and they decide to burgle the home of the local land-owner. Even though, again, I am sure I know characters very like those in this book, I wasn't happy with the stereotypes — all white women are *not* in the Caribbean just for sex and all black men are *not* on the prowl for white women — and I felt that the language and the scenes verged on pornographic. Although I don't consider myself particularly prudish, I did have to cringe at a lot of what I read.

This volume apart (and, by the way, the introduction says that many readers have found *The Lunatic* hilarious, so maybe it's just me!), the other books are well worth reading for their accurate and witty insights into and beautiful descriptions of West Indian life and culture.

All six books are available from bookstores or www.macmillan-caribbean.com.

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A Rasta Reggae Fable



Joseph, A Rasta Reggae Fable. by Barbara Makeda Blake Hannah, Macmillan Caribbean Writers, © 2006, 202 pages.

Joseph is a thinly-veiled fictionalization of the life of reggae superstar and visionary Robert Nesta Marley, told from the point of view of one of his Rastafarian brethren (or "sistren"). Sister Shanti, the narrator, wants to write the true story of how Jamaica's premier star rose to fame and how he suffered as a result of the media, the political situation in Jamaica, and the "Babylon" system in general. The story begins at the funeral of the Bob Marley character, Joseph, and then is told in chronological order.

Sister Shanti's father is an elder in the Rastafarian movement, and she meets Joseph Planter when he is engaged in "reasoning" — discussing religious doctrine — with her father while smoking herb. They have a strictly platonic relationship, which is unusual for Joseph. After ascending to stardom Joseph has a mistress, the beautiful Zuleika, as well as a wife back at home and many other women along the way.

Zuleika was a formerly impoverished Jamaican who scraped together enough money turning tricks to escape to England and become a well-known singer. Her boss at the record company, who is sleeping with her, asks her to get Joseph to sign their contract and she uses her full powers of persuasion. Joseph is dazzled by her sexual power and to her surprise she falls in love with him.

The first tour of England ends with the Joseph's band splitting up, accurately reflecting how Bunny Wailer and Peter Tosh moved on to become successful solo artists, though neither had the universal appeal of Bob Marley.

In the book, new band members Red Dread and Mikey are inseparable confidants of Joseph's inner circle, as is Sister Shanti's husband Peter, a politically radical Rasta. Joseph is portrayed as sweet, thoughtful, and spiritual throughout, not giving much thought to "politricks" except through the lyrics of his songs.

His themes, for those who missed the '70s, were appeals for Africa to unite, for oppressors in "Babylon" to be resisted, for an end to police brutality, and pleas to love one another. He advocated use of ganja to find wisdom. Like his brethren, Joseph believes that the deposed emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia was the second coming of Christ, as predicted in the Bible, and a source of black pride. He also fervently believes that Rastas should emigrate back to Ethiopia. Although the vast majority of Jamaican slaves were from West Africa, Ethiopia is their spiritual "homeland".

The "bad guys" in the book are the rip-off record executives, and Sam Bergman, a journalist who is allowed complete access to Joseph and then betrays him. During a live concert to promote peace among Jamaica's warring political gangs, Joseph is shot and nearly killed. In real life, Marley, his wife Rita, and his manager were all shot at his home just before the event, but Marley still performed, ripping open his shirt to show his wounds at the end of his set. In this case real life trumped fiction for sheer drama and courage.

After a mystical trip to Ethiopia, Joseph and his inner circle plot how to establish their ideal city in their African homeland. Without giving away the ending, it is safe to say this well-meaning Rasta fable ends on a high note, even if, like a song from the recent Rising Stars' competition, it's also a bit flat and wobbly.

The real value of this book is in its descriptions of the early days of the Rastafarian movement, their ritual drum-beating retreats to the country, and the grace with which Joseph handles his increasingly complicated life. I would recommend this book for its Rasta vernacular and its attempt to show what a stand-up guy "Brother Bob" was. It doesn't proselytize or attempt to convince the reader that the former emperor of Ethiopia was the son of God. But it does describe a period when an entire generation still felt that music could shake the world and a more just society would be the result.

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

Confessions of a Culture Vulture

by Judi Nofs

Many years ago, while living in Trinidad, a friend called me a "culture vulture". His definition was someone who sought out the cultural events: concerts, art shows, dance programs, and poetry or book readings. Well, that does describe me!

In Venezuela I have sought out symphony performances in Margarita, Puerto La Cruz and Caracas. The state orchestras are very good and the concerts are free. In Margarita, Kyoko, from the sailboat *Oasis*, played violin with the symphony there. In Puerto La Cruz we attended symphony concerts in MareMares marina, PDVSA Cultural Salon and in the streets of Barrio Saigon. At the MareMares program of Strauss waltzes, the maestro invited the audience to get up and dance. It was a magnificent evening.

The Barrio Saigon concert was also very special. The people of the community made us very welcome. The maestro involved the children by having a few "conduct" the orchestra. He chose a program including classical music and movie themes. Two dance schools performed with the orchestra, performing folk dances indigenous to the area. Later, the maestro told us that six children from that barrio are in the youth orchestra.

Another activity nine cruisers participated in was tango lessons taught by a professor from the University of Tango in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The tango was taught in the Demetrio Demu Museum among the works of art.

For anyone who wishes to join the group of culture vultures, just look in the newspapers, listen to the radio or television, keep an open mind and offer your finds to others via the morning nets. Cruisers, you'll find it will make the places you visit much more interesting.



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MOVIE REVIEW BY JULIA BARTLETT

'At World's End'

The latest and the last of "The Pirates of the Caribbean" film series, "At World's End", opens in cinemas on May 25th. It was put on ice for a year after being shot back-to-back with the second film, "Dead Man's Chest", at locations in St. Vincent and Dominica.



Johnny Depp stars as the sleazy, campy Cap'n Jack Sparrow, who, despite his filthy fingernails, managed to exude sex appeal in the last two films the way one imagines a battered alley cat does. Is that going to be enough though to lure Elizabeth (Keira Knightly) aboard his ship, or is she going to play it safe and wed her long-time love Will Turner (Orlando Bloom) and play saint to his martyr? I know which way I would jump, but then again perhaps a woman who handles a sword like Elizabeth does should have her own command and love them and leave them.

At the close of "Dead Man's Chest" our bedraggled heroes had sheltered with Tia Dalma (Naomie Harris), a voodoo enchantress, and she had offered them a way to rescue Jack from Davy Jones' Locker. They needed a captain prepared to make the voyage to World's End and Captain Barbosa (Geoffrey Rush), who they thought was dead, reappeared to pick up the challenge.

In the new film, Tia Dalma accompanies them as they cross a frozen sea, presumably because she is lusting after Will. Perhaps he can get her to clean the black betel-nut juice off her teeth. Next they are hurtled over a gigantic waterfall while Jack's varied egos are locked in battle in Jones' Locker. Our merry crew eventually rescue him only to discover, horror of horrors, that Davy Jones has teamed up with Cutler Beckett to rid the world of pirates. Unfortunately the Safety and Security Net has given the ending away because they keep telling us that there are still pirates around.

It seems to be a tradition at the end of this sort of trilogy to have a big battle scene, so the Brethren of the Coast, including Sao Feng from Singapore (he made a quick passage), can fight the East India Trading Company while being spun in a whirlpool the size of a small country. At least the whirlpool saves polluting the ocean with dead bodies.

However you look at it, this trilogy is set to become a cinema classic and hopefully it will take over as a cruiser's favourite from the tired and trite "Captain Ron".

—Continued from page 7 ...Business Briefs

New Grenadian Harbour Master for Port Louis Marina

Port Louis, Grenada's ambitious EC\$1.5 billion marina resort, spa and maritime village development, is making steady progress in preparing the Port Louis Marina for the arrival of some of the world's most prestigious mega-yachts. To this end, Port Louis Grenada has recently appointed Junior Cuffie as the Harbour Master, with responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the Marina docks. He will also be expected to ensure — as far as is reasonably possible — that all boats in the Marina and all the docks are kept safe and secure, and that slips are rented. Cuffie will also work with law enforcement officials to ensure that all laws are observed, that boaters observe marine rules and regulations, and that all dock staff are adequately trained. Junior Cuffie has worked in the yachting industry for five years and is an avid sailor. Speaking about his appointment, he said: "The job of Harbour Master is a very important one in the development of the Port Louis Marina. We have to maintain the highest standards here if we are to get the world's best yachts. I intend to work with the Port Louis team to ensure that we become one of the best marinas in the world." Richard Hallam, Head of Development and Operations for Savvy Grenada, the investors and constructors behind the Port Louis project, warmly endorsed the appointment. "We at Savvy Grenada are happy to have Junior on our team. We have tried as far as possible to employ talented Grenadians to fill key positions and we will continue to hire competent Grenadians. This project is very much about the development of this country, so the people of Grenada must be involved in its success." For more information visit www.portlouisgrenada.com.

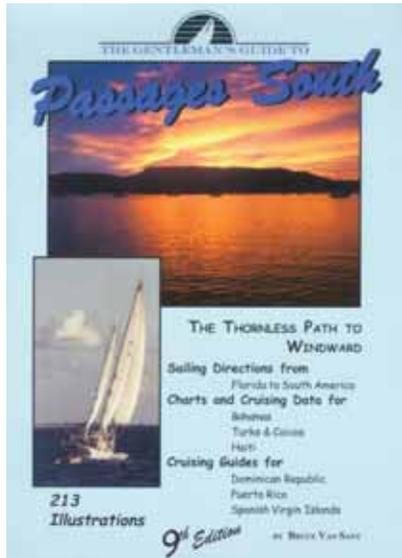
Sunsail BVI Gets Danish Royal Approval

Sunsail yacht charters recently hosted a group of visitors from Denmark that included Prince Henrik Consort of Denmark, husband of the Queen of Denmark Margrethe II. The Prince was sailing with members of his family and a journalist who will be writing articles helping to promote the British Virgin Islands for various Danish magazines and newspapers.

Nic Parrott, General Manager of Sunsail, said: "We are delighted and honored that Prince Henrik and his family chose Sunsail Tortola for their holiday."

TIME-TESTED ADVICE

The Gentleman's Guide to Passages South: The Thornless Path to Windward, 9th Edition. by Bruce Van Sant. ©2006. Cruising Guide Publications. Soft cover, spiral bound, 330 pages, black-and-white photos and sketch charts. ISBN 0-944428-79-7. US\$29.95.



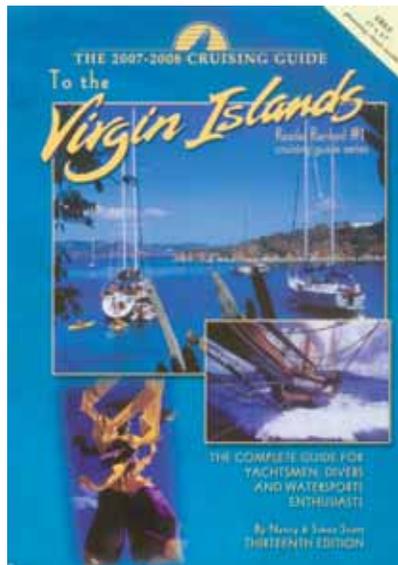
'Passages South' provides sailing directions for easier windward passage-making from Florida to Venezuela; charts and cruising data for the Bahamas, Turks & Caicos and Haiti; and cruising guides for the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and the Spanish Virgin Islands. The sketch charts, navigation information and cruising data for the Bahamas, Turks & Caicos and Haiti have been completely updated, and new shore-side maps and information for the Dominican Republic have been included. Sailing directions are given for trawler yachts as well as sailboats.

According to Van Sant, the first principles of cruising are safety, comfort and pleasure. With some 70,000 sea miles and nearly 30 years of experience sailing to, from and within the Caribbean, Van Sant has figured out how to make island-hopping safe, comfortable and pleasurable — in his word, thornless — and shares his time-tested methods clearly and concisely. Understanding tropical weather and weather reports, the effect of islands on the behavior of the tradewinds, knowing when to sail at night and strategic route planning are some of the key components of a thornless passage that Van Sant knowledgeably discusses.

A big ocean-racing yacht fully crewed by gung-ho 20-year-olds might not mind bashing to weather for days and nights on end. But Van Sant recognizes that there is a major cruising demographic, including "undermanned small boats with sexagenarians at the helm", who prefer not to push the risk and comfort curves. If this sounds like you, Van Sant will be a good friend and mentor.

The 2007 - 2008 Cruising Guide to the Virgin Islands, 13th Edition. by Nancy and Simon Scott. ©2006. Cruising Guide Publications. Soft cover, spiral bound, 344 pages, color photos and sketch charts throughout. ISBN 0-944428-75-4. US\$29.95.

The authors have set themselves a big task: to write "a complete guide for yachtsmen, divers and watersports enthusiasts" in one of the busiest marine-tourism areas in the world. The fact that this book is in its 13th edition over a 25-year span testifies to their success in accomplishing it. Navigational and anchoring information is augmented with abundant sketch charts, GPS coordinates and aerial photographs. Once you get to your anchorage you are steered to marine facilities, sightseeing highlights, dive sites, live music venues, art galleries, shops, restaurants and more. Advertising is included, adding to the guide's overall utility. An Island Directory section provides telephone, fax, e-mail and website information for a variety of businesses. There's even a chapter on real estate, if you decide it's time to swallow the anchor.



And as the ads on TV say, "But wait; there's more!" A free color planning chart of the Virgin Islands from Virgin Gorda to St. Thomas is included with each book, and regular Virgin Islands information updates are available at www.cruisingguides.com.

This comprehensive little tome will be of great use to both the novice bareboater (bravo for the anchoring instructions on page 58!) and the curmudgeonly old salt (who will want to know where to avoid as much as where to go) when visiting the Virgin Islands.

Both books are available at bookstores and chandleries or from www.cruisingguides.com.

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Chadon Bene

Have you seen the small bundles of dark green leaves sold by some vegetable vendors and wondered what they were or how they tasted? I first encountered these leaves in the main market in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Shopping at the big city market is an experience to remember. I saw many unusual vegetables and spices. A vendor took the time to crumble a piece of this green leaf. The pungent smell was unusual, but definitely cookable. Immediately the aroma made my mouth water as it said emphatically "Pesto!"

The vendor said it was called chadon bene. It took me awhile to get the name and the spelling correct. Like me, you probably thought this favorite kitchen herb was spelled "shadow benny" or "chado bene". The East Indian word for this green leaf is *dhania*. Trinidadians might call it *bandhania*.

However you say or spell the name of this great-tasting leaf, it is one of the most used plants in Trinidad and throughout the world. Chadon bene is actually part of the carrot family and is more commonly known as cilantro, Chinese parsley or coriander.

Is chadon bene a spice or an herb? Specifically, "coriander" names the entire plant, or the seeds alone. The leaves are called chadon bene by some, cilantro by others. The leaves and the seeds have two distinctly different tastes, hence the different names for the same plant. The seeds' name, coriander, comes from the Greek word *koros*, which means "bugs", because they thought it smelled buggy! The entire plant — leaves, seeds and roots — is edible. The older plants usually have the stronger flavor. Trinidad grows the most potent variety in the world.

Scientists believe chadon bene was first native to Mediterranean Europe. Because of its unique flavor it has been cultivated for thousands of years and in many countries. The Israelites chose it as one of the bitter herbs eaten at the Passover. In ancient Egypt, it was widely cultivated for its seeds, which were mixed into bread. The Romans brought the flavorful green to England, where it was served by Tudor kings in a highly spiced drink (called *hippocras*) that was served at weddings.

Throughout the world, chadon bene/coriander is regarded as a drug. It is thought to be an aphrodisiac. If a large quantity is eaten, it acts as a narcotic. The seeds, when crushed, flavor liquor, meats, chewing gum and even cigarettes. The seeds are a common remedy for gas pains and are chewed to ease the pains of birth labor. Morocco and Romania presently are the main producers of coriander seeds.

Other than taste, chadon bene has slight food value. A quarter Cup of the leaves has only four calories, with virtually no fat, fiber, cholesterol or carbohydrates, and only one milligram of vitamin C.

In Trinidad, chadon bene leaves are used in seasoning pickles, barbecue sauce, curries, and chutneys. In Mexico and Central America it is used in dishes ranging from salsas and salads to burritos and meat dishes.

Fresh chadon bene will keep extremely well if wrapped in paper towels and then put in a plastic bag before storing in the fridge. Another method of keeping this herb fresh is to place it in a cup of water, uncovered, in the refrigerator.

Shirley's Green Sauce

Twelve leaves chadon bene

- 1 head garlic
- 1 full-grown stalk celery
- 2 leaves Spanish thyme
- 1/4 Cup vinegar

Mince all together in a blender and store in a bottle. Add to almost any cooked dish.

Chadon Bene Oyster Stew

- 1 Cup white wine
- 1/4 pound butter
- 1/2 Cup chopped chives
- 1 Cup oyster juice (water poured off fresh oysters)
- 1 quart water
- 1 quart cream or milk

- 1/2 Cup chadon bene
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 4 dozen large fresh oysters (use more if small)
- Cooked rice

Boil wine in a large frying pan until only about 2 Tablespoons remain. Add butter and lightly cook the chives. Add the oyster juice, water and cream (or milk); simmer as you blend in the chadon bene. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add the oysters to the soup and cook for five minutes. Serve in bowls with cooked rice. Serves six. For variation, add a variety of garden vegetables to your taste.



Chadon Bene Barbecue Sauce

- 2 heads garlic
- 3 Cups chadon bene
- 1 Cup parsley
- 1/2 Cup lemon juice
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Wrap garlic in foil and bake in 400°F oven for 45 minutes. Cool and squeeze the garlic into a food processor, blender, or whisk by hand. Add the remaining ingredients and blend. It is best to marinate chicken, lamb, fish or pork in this sauce overnight. While grilling, keep applying this sauce. You can also use this sauce over pasta, rice or grilled vegetables.

Chadon Pesto

- 1 Cup chadon bene leaves
- 1/2 Cup parsley
- 1/2 Cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 Cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 Cup almonds
- 1/4 Cup olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 1/2 Cup of any one of the following: pine nuts, fried pepperoni, chopped olives, chopped mushrooms

Puree the chadon bene, garlic and parsley in a blender or food processor until smooth. Add the Parmesan, almonds, oils and salt and puree to a smooth paste. Stir into hot pasta and serve.

BOAT GROWN

Chadon bene is a hardy plant easily grown in small pots on any boat, especially in full sun. The easiest way to get chadon bene growing is to cut the root from stalks from the market. Plant the roots in wet soil and keep wet. You can trim the leaves with scissors and the plant will continue producing.

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WHACHA GONNA DO WITH ALL THAT...

TARO?

by Mary Heckrotte

Meander about any Caribbean market and you'll surely find your roots. In fact, you'll see a mind-boggling assortment of roots and tubers — some round, some long, some fuzzy, some rough — that are all staples in the island diet. You couldn't find vegetables more suited for a centuries-old Caribbean tradition. Hiding under the ground, these vegetables will still be here after droughts and even hurricanes have passed.

The main ones are yams, yucca (a.k.a. cassava) and taro. Collectively, they're just called "roots" or "ground provisions", and if you try to get any more specific than that, you're sure to get confused. I've been asking and reading about these roots and tubers for years, and the more I learn, the more befuddled I get. So I've decided that I'm just going to tell you what I *think* might be true about one kind of root, the one most often called taro. (We've already done an article on yucca and we'll do one on yams soon.)



HECKROTTE

Take a look at this picture of taro. Now if you go to a market and pick up an object that looks exactly like this, it might not be called taro at all. Talk to the vendor and she could tell you you're holding a cocoyam, dasheen, malanga, yautia, yam or eddoe. And that's only if your vendor is speaking mostly English. All bets are off as to what other names she might use in Dutch, French or Spanish — and it's sure to be something different when you change countries or even islands. If we use the Latin name, *Colocasi esculenta* (which your vendor isn't apt to know), we've narrowed it down to only two hundred or so varieties — but we won't let that little detail bother us. (Some varieties of taro are grown strictly as ornamentals, however, and these are NOT edible. We just have to trust that our market vendors do not go around digging up their neighbor's landscaping.) For agreement's sake, let's all call this root "taro" and go from there. Just remember that if you find a recipe that calls for one of those other names, you can use it just the same.

The identifying characteristic of the root you're looking for is pinkish-white flesh with a ring of color at its base. The root ranges from finger-banana-size to big-cucumber-size. It is somewhat pear-shaped and will have a hairy brown skin with horizontal rings. It will have sort of a top-knot at one end and shaggy rootlets at the other end — unless it has been trimmed. When you cut open a taro root, you'll find the inside smooth, with a texture something like a jacama or water chestnut. It might be white, slightly grayish, or even speckled, depending on the variety. You'll want to choose roots that are rock-hard, heavy for their size, and without soft or moldy spots or cracks. Prick the skin with your fingernail and test the flesh for freshness; it should be juicy and crisp. Back at the boat, store your taro in a cool (yeah, right!), well-ventilated place and use them within a few days.

Before it is dug from the ground and brought to market, taro root sports huge, heart-shaped green leaves, frequently called elephant ears because that's about the size and shape of them. There is likely to be a stack of them where you're buying the taro roots and the market vendor might call them dasheen. When eaten raw, these leaves will make your mouth burn and itch and your throat feel like it has permanently closed for business. Taro, especially the leaves, contains an insoluble crystal called calcium oxalate. Fortunately, cooking leaches out these crystals. The cooked leaves taste a lot like spinach, mustard or turnip greens. They are the base for callaloo, the traditional Caribbean soup famous especially in Trinidad. Indeed, some market vendors will just call the leaves callaloo.

The whole taro plant is one of the most important in all the tropics and has been cultivated for so long that its origination is unknown. One of the most traditional foods of the South Pacific is poi — one of those ethnic dishes that seems to require an acquired taste to appreciate. Poi is made from cooked, pounded then fermented taro. And in China, there are written records of this dish from as early as the Han Dynasty. In fact, the name dasheen is thought to have come from "de Chine." Additionally, across Africa and all over the Caribbean Basin and surrounding Central and South American countries, taro is an everyday food. Now Europeans and North Americans are catching on, too.

To prepare the root for cooking, wash it, brush it, and then peel it. Raw taro is quite harsh on your hands so it is best to wear gloves, or oil your hands first. (If your hands come in contact enough to cause skin irritation, rinse them several times in a solution of baking soda or salt dissolved in cold water. Afterwards, apply an anti-itch cream.) Cut the roots into the desired size or prick them with a fork if cooking whole. Put the root in a pot with plenty of water and boil until the center is soft — about 40 to 90 minutes, depending on the size. To help rid the root of the calcium oxalate and reduce the chance of irritation to the mouth, change the water several times. When cooked, rinse the roots under cold running water until they are just cool enough to handle. If you boiled the roots with the peels on, you can now easily remove them.

—Continued on next page

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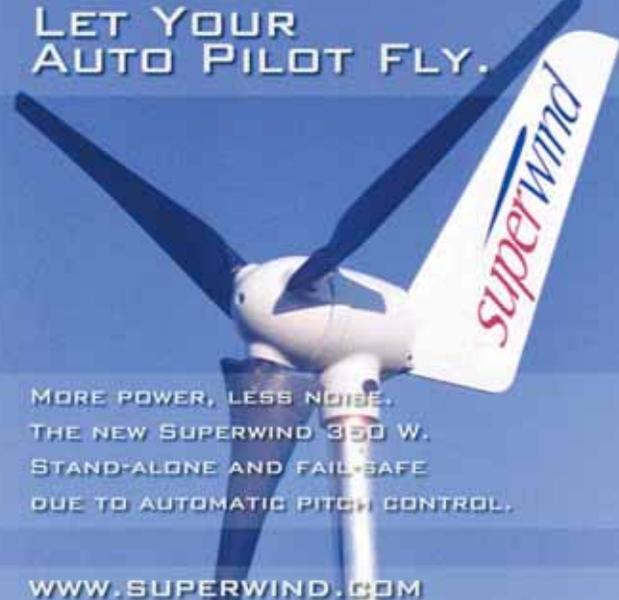
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Both taro root and taro leaves are a rich source of vitamins and minerals and the root is an especially good source of fiber. Even when cooked, both contain oxalic acid which should be avoided altogether by people who have kidney problems, gout, or rheumatoid arthritis.

The taro root is quite starchy and has an earthy, chestnut-like flavor. It is used mostly like a potato and is sometimes called the "potato of the tropics". You can substitute it for potatoes in most recipes, but always use it hot, because the texture turns rather rubbery when it is cold. Taro serves as a natural thickener in soups and stews, becoming custard-like as it cooks. It can be roasted, pureed, fried, or dried and ground into flour, but it definitely must be cooked. Like potatoes, taro is especially nice with a rich cream sauce.

Two kinds of taro leaves make their way to market, some with green stems, the most common, and some with purple stems, usually a little more expensive. The leaves are one and a half to two feet long, though the young, tenderest ones will be smaller. You'll need a pound of leaves to make a Cup full when cooked. Store the leaves in a perforated bag in your refrigerator until you are ready to use them; they'll keep a few days. Strip off the stems and pinch off the leaf tips and discard. Wash the leaves by submerging them completely in water to remove any grit. Chop the leaves into bite-size pieces, or as your recipe states, and cook them for at least 45 minutes to avoid the irritation to your mouth caused by the calcium oxalate. Some people may still note a bit of irritation to the mouth. If so, rinse your mouth several times with a mixture of cold water, baking soda and salt.

You can substitute cooked taro leaves for many recipes calling for cooked spinach — and vice versa, of course. You can also use taro leaves as a substitute for banana leaves to wrap fish for baking — it imparts a delicious flavor.

The good news about both taro root and taro leaves is their versatility. Using the roots as a substitute for potatoes and the leaves instead of spinach, you'll find many recipes to try. And if the market lady is confused when you ask for taro root, she most likely knows it by another name. If you can't find taro, just use one of the other roots, such as yams or cassava. See? Life is easy when you get back to your roots.

Taro Burgers

- 1 pound taro root, peeled, boiled, puréed and kept hot
- 1 Tablespoon butter
- 1/2 Cup milk (approximately)
- 1 onion, minced
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded, minced
- 3 Tablespoons parsley, minced
- 1 egg, beaten
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1/2 Cup flour
- 1/2 Cup fine dry bread crumbs
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil



In a medium mixing bowl, mix hot taro purée with butter and milk to the consistency of mashed potatoes. Add onion, jalapeño, parsley, egg, salt and pepper, and flour. Stir well, then shape into burger-size patties. Put olive oil in a skillet over medium heat and brown the patties on each side. Drain on paper towels. Serve hot as a side dish or make a sandwich with hamburger "fixings." Makes 4 servings.

Caribbean Taro Patties

- 1 pound taro roots
- 2 Tablespoons mint leaves, minced
- 1 Tablespoon cumin
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 firm ripe mango, chopped
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil

In a large pot, boil the taro roots in their skin for about 40 minutes or until they are fork tender. Drain and cool just enough to squeeze the peels off and grate the flesh. Mix with mint leaves, cumin, egg, and mango. Make into little cakes. Heat oil in a skillet over medium-high heat and fry patties until browned on each side. Drain on paper towels. Serve hot. Makes 4 servings.

Baked Taro Leaf Casserole

- 2 to 3 Tablespoons butter or olive oil
- 2 green onions, sliced thinly
- 2 Tablespoons minced parsley
- 1 pound taro leaves, washed, drained, stemmed, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon prepared mustard
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 Cup grated cheddar or gruyère cheese

Heat butter or olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Sauté green onion and parsley until transparent. Add prepared taro leaves, salt and pepper. Stir 5 to 10 minutes. Stir in prepared mustard and then put this mixture in a greased casserole dish. Beat together the eggs and cheese and pour over the leaves. Bake at 350°F for about 30 minutes or until the top is golden. Makes 4 servings.

Taro Chips (with variations)

Prick whole taro roots with a fork and blanch in salted, boiling water for just a few minutes. Drain. Chill for a few hours. Peel then slice very thinly on a mandolin. Alternatively, you can peel and slice the raw taro root and simply cook the chips longer. Fry the chips in deep hot oil over medium-high heat until golden brown. Drain on paper towels and add salt, seasoned salt, and/or chili powder. For a sweet treat, sprinkle the chips with a little cinnamon-sugar. Taro root makes a harder and nuttier "potato chip."

Chicken with Taro Leaves

- 1 1/2 pounds taro leaves, washed, stems removed, chopped
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 1/2 pounds skinned chicken pieces (thighs, legs, breasts)
- 2 onions, chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 Tablespoons minced fresh ginger root
- 2 chicken bouillon cubes
- 1 1/2 Cups water
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 3 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1/4 Cup cold water
- 1 Cup unsweetened coconut cream (not Coco Lopez!)



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Boil taro leaves in a large, heavy pot of salted water for 30 to 40 minutes. Drain in a colander and set aside. Heat olive oil in same pot over medium high heat. Brown chicken pieces on all sides, then remove them to a plate and set aside. In the same pot, sauté onion, garlic, and ginger in the hot oil. Return the chicken to the pot and add bouillon cubes, water and pepper. Reduce heat to low. Cover pot and simmer about 20 minutes or until chicken is tender. Add prepared taro leaves and simmer for an additional 15 minutes. Mix cornstarch into 1/4 Cup cold water. Stir into pot until slightly thickened. Stir in coconut cream and heat through. Serve with rice. Makes 4 to 6 servings.



HECROBITE

Trinidad Callaloo

(Recipe adapted from Naparima Girls' High School Diamond Jubilee Cookbook)

- 12 taro leaves, washed, stemmed, chopped
- 1/4 pound ham bone
- 1/4 pound salt pork, soaked then drained
- 2 Cups coconut milk
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 2 live blue crabs
- 8 okras, sliced in rounds
- 2 sprigs thyme
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 chives, chopped
- 1 Cup boiling water
- 1 Tablespoon butter

Put all the ingredients except the butter into a large saucepot. Bring to boil over high heat, then reduce heat to simmer until all ingredients are tender, about 20 to 30 minutes. Stir in the butter and serve hot with rice. Makes 4 servings.

Cream of Taro Root Soup

- 4 Cups peeled taro root cut into 1-inch cubes
- 4 stalks celery, sliced
- 3 medium onions, chopped
- 3 medium carrots, diced
- 4 chicken bouillon cubes
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 3 Cups water
- 1 (13.5 ounces) can evaporated milk

In a large soup pot, cook taro root in boiling water for 30 minutes, changing water at least once. Drain and return to pot. Add celery, onions, carrots, bouillon cubes, pepper, and 3 Cups water. Bring to boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer until all vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes. Add milk and heat through but do not boil. Serve hot. Makes 4 servings.

Taro Loaf

(Recipe adapted from Naparima Girls' High School Diamond Jubilee Cookbook)

- 3 Tablespoons flour
- 3 Tablespoons butter
- 1 Cup milk
- 1 1/2 Cup cheese, grated
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 blade chives, chopped
- 2 Tablespoons catsup
- 1 pound taro leaves, stemmed, chopped, cooked until tender
- 2 Tablespoons butter

In a small saucepan over medium heat, make a cheese sauce by melting butter then stirring in flour. Stir in milk and continue to stir until mixture thickens. Stir in cheese, remove from heat, and set aside while cheese melts.

In a skillet, sauté ground beef with onions and chives until beef is browned. Stir in catsup. Set aside. Stir prepared taro leaves into cheese sauce. Spray bottom and sides of a casserole dish with non-stick spray. Put in a layer of cheese mixture then a layer of meat. Continue layers, ending with cheese. Dot top of casserole with butter and bake at 350°F for 30 minutes. Slice. Makes 4 servings.

Taro Root with Cream Sauce

(Recipe adapted from Naparima Girls' High School Diamond Jubilee Cookbook)

- 1 pound taro root
- 4 Tablespoons butter, divided
- 2 Tablespoons flour
- 1 Cup milk
- 1 onion, minced
- few drops of lime juice
- dash of Angostura Bitters
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Prick unpeeled taro roots with a fork and boil in a large saucepan with water to cover until fork tender, about 30 to 40 minutes. Drain, rinse with cold water until just cool enough to handle. Squeeze out the pulp. Put in a serving dish and mash with a fork.

In the meantime, in a small saucepan make a thin white sauce by melting 2 Tablespoons butter, stirring in flour, then adding milk. Stir sauce until thickened, then set aside. In a small skillet over medium heat, melt 2 Tablespoons butter and sauté onion until transparent. Add lime juice, salt and pepper and cook for 2 minutes. Add bitters and white sauce. Pour over mashed taro. Makes 4 servings.

Taro and Coconut Cake

- 2 Cups hot taro purée
- 1/4 Cup melted butter
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 Cup grated coconut
- 1/2 Cup sugar
- 1 Cup milk
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- Whipped topping

Mix hot taro purée and butter. Stir in eggs, coconut, and sugar. Mix well. Add nutmeg, cinnamon, and vanilla. Beat with an electric mixer on high for 1 minute. Pour into a buttered 8-inch cake pan and bake in preheated oven at 350°F for 45 to 60 minutes or until cake is firm in the middle. Cool in pan on a rack. Serve with whipped topping. Makes 9 servings.

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Dear Compass,

I am replying to Kent Gomez's letter in the February *Compass*, in which he insulted the Cruisin' Canucks while claiming that Venezuela is a "modern democracy".

The Canucks are Canadian citizens. *Ladyhawk* is not their boat, and they do not spend all their time onboard. They travel extensively inland, writing about their experiences, and their appraisal of Venezuela is spot on.

Do not blame the US press, Mr. Gomez, for adverse comments concerning your hero: it is self-generated. Thomas Jefferson once said, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be. The people cannot be safe without information. When the press is free and every man can read, all is safe." Surely Mr. Gomez, that cannot be your democratic explanation as to why press publications, radio, and TV channels here in Venezuela are being forced to close. The US is Venezuela's largest trading partner, so there has to be something wrong with your ideology when your hero insults any nation that opposes his point of view.

Mr. Gomez's claim that the "savior" of this country is "highly regarded throughout the rest of the world" has to be THE joke of the century. There are 18 other nations in Latin America, only three of which have sided to a certain extent with you-know-who. (That's an acceptance level of less than 17 percent.) Of those, only one employs the same draconian measures that are now being forced upon the Venezuelan people.

To give Mr. Gomez some credit, I will say that his statement "a New World is emerging" here is absolutely correct. Unfortunately, it appears that he did not study history in school: it is just a make-over of the Old World, with corruption, dictatorship, and the suppression of human rights.

It is obvious to me Mr. Gomez that you do not live in a rancho here, so you cannot experience the deprivation in which 70 percent of the population lives. The citizens are just pawns in a world chess game of ideological thoughts and are easily sacrificed. Look around: what do you see, a booming economy? No, you see poverty and the disintegration of law and order. Well, matey, if that is the road you want to walk along, it's your call. It is known here as the La Bonita Revolucio Autopista!

**Peter Phillips
Puerto La Cruz
Venezuela**

[Editor's note: A number of readers have responded to Mr. Gomez's comments. We now consider the topic of Venezuelan politics closed, unless the letter relates that topic directly to yachting or inland travel by visitors.]

Dear Compass,

I read with interest Mike Beaumont's "A Solution for Security" in the March issue of *CC*. I am sure that many cruisers are considering how to make themselves secure.

Mike suggested making a security grille of stainless steel tubing to replace the companionway doors at night. This would allow air to enter the boat but prevent unauthorized entry.

In doing this, however, remember the entrance you are defending against assault is likely to also be your emergency exit. What kind of emergency, you might wonder? Well, I have known of quite a few boats that have sunk on a dock or at anchor for a variety of reasons, with very little warning to the deep sleeper. Drunks on speedboats have occasionally knifed into yachts at high speed, which (unless you were a *very* deep sleeper) is liable to wake you up, but not leave you a whole lot of time to vacate. There is always the danger of a fire caused by electrical wiring, equipment failure, or a gas explosion (though it has to be said the exit part might be solved in the gas explosion).

There are also freak accidents. A man was asleep

one night when his boat was sideswiped by a departing superyacht. As the superyacht's lifelines became tangled in the yacht's rigging, breaking its mast, an emergency smoke flare became detached from the superyacht and set itself off on top of the yacht, covering it inside and out with thick, acrid smoke.

I would not consider a snake swimming aboard and making itself free in the main salon to be an emergency, but some would, and this has happened.

Then there are freak accidents that have not yet happened yet but might — like a strong wind detaching a wasp nest and depositing it right into your hatch.

So, as you construct a system to deter would-be "tiefs", keep in mind how you are going to exit in an emergency, and do the extra work to make this easy. Finding a key and inserting it in a padlock would be hard or impossible in many situations.

**Sleep tight!
Chris Doyle
Ti Kanot**

Dear Compass,

Upon reading the March issue and the letter from Laura Sargent, I really have to wonder what people do to keep themselves from going crazy. Flashing strobe lights for anchor lights annoy Laura.... Okay, well I have spoken to the higher authority and the Green Flash is officially cancelled, as are all navigation buoys that flash to attract attention. REALLY....

Anchor lights are there to attract attention and the better other sailors can see them, the less likely there will be things that go bump in the night. Sorry Laura, but you are barking up the wrong strobe here. Of course strobes are to attract attention, and it is one result of the collective "we" always looking for ways to make boating safer.

If the lights really bother you, then look the other way. But please when you are anchored in a designated spot or not — you can flash me any time.

**Cheers,
Derrick Harvey
Aldebaran II (the boat with the flashing anchor light)**

Dear Captain Betty Karl,

Sorry, but I can't resist pointing out that I couldn't find the word "captain" anywhere in your article in the March issue, and believe that omission may be a clue to your crew problems. A vessel and an aircraft may be the last places in our democratic egalitarian modern world that a single person, the Captain, is held responsible for all that happens, and for good reason: there is the potential for dangerous, even life-threatening situations where there is no time for democratic action or discussion.

I have found that if a crewman is dexterous enough to hang on to a lee shroud with one hand and with the other unzip his fly, he can be trained to be useful enough for the length of the voyage — if instructions in a voice of authority are applied. I have found clearly worded, simple and emphatic instructions during the first few hours new crewmembers are on board usually will give good clues as to whether they are wannabe captains or wannabe passengers.

Sailing with serviceable crew is usually a matter of quickly determining two things: one, if they have had enough time on a boat to not be a hazard to themselves (you are responsible for their safety); and two, if they are trainable to the way you want things done. If they don't obviously meet those two requirements, leave them on the dock.

If the intention is to meet glib internet correspondents, you seem to have the better system.

**Captain David Barton
S/V Nugget II**

Dear Compass,

This is in response to a number of articles that have appeared recently in the *Compass*.

It is hard to believe that a single-handed sailor could spend four days on a passage and still be standing 24-hour watches as required by national and international rules (see US Coast Guard Navigation Rules, Part B, Section I, Rule 5, etcetera). Simply make shorter passages! When a shorter passage doesn't fit your schedule, change your schedule. Are you in the main traffic passageway? Can you imagine letting your airplane pilot or chauffeur nap at the wheel? On several occasions while on passage I have encountered small unlit fishing boats essentially "in the middle of the ocean". Have you ever seen the newspaper pictures of freighters arriving in port with a sailboat mast hanging from the stored anchor, unbeknownst to the captains or crews?

There is no need for a yacht with crew limitations to anchor in front of other boats. There are a great number of harbors in the Caribbean with large, open anchorages. An extension cord with a switch could add windlass control in the cockpit, increasing handling ability. Ask a neighbor to help.

Additionally, many simple tasks can help prepare for emergencies: make a passage-making checklist; have an EPIRB with correct data (update at www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov; 121.5/243 MHz EPIRBs are banned...)

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...as of 1/1/2007); have bungs at each through-hull; bilge pumps ready; liferaft secured (remember, bowline knots cannot be readily untied under tension); conveniently located abandon-ship bag with VHF radio; proper lighting on; handy knives and flashlights in the cockpit and in your pocket; preset emergency frequencies in your radios; life jacket and safety harness ready; and do hourly written log sheets underway (when is the power going to fail?). The list is much longer, but uncomplicated. Why not pretend you do not have all that safety gear and see how you would change your preparedness. My race crew would practice at anchor doing tasks wearing blindfolds; it greatly improved their knowledge of the boat and ability to work in the dark.

Did you read about the single-hander who sold his house and business in 2006 to go sailing and, after being rescued not long ago off the South American coast, just wanted to get another boat and ignore paying the published cost of US\$200,000 for the Chilean Navy and US\$50,000 for the local fishing boat per day (lost fishing time) to save him? What's next, climbing Mount Everest solo with your back to the mountain for a better view? So many people want to "just jump into it", forgetting how many people (including volunteers) are tired of being lifeguards. After 37 years of USCG Auxiliary volunteer service, my experience suggests many rescues could have been easily prevented. Single-handers have a harder job to stay safe, but no less responsibility to do so. Take steps to keep others from having to save you from yourself.

I.M. Goestrighing
USA

Hello Compass!

I read Leigh von Bertouch's letter in the April issue of *Compass* about the unjust "cricket tax", and wholeheartedly agree with him. I am English and don't have to pay it, but am told my Norwegian wife should pay it.

In fact, only Antigua has actually tried to force her to pay up — so we left after a few days. St. Lucia and Dominica didn't seem to mind at all. However, we have now chosen to avoid the remaining CARICOM countries, spending our tourist dollars in the French and Dutch islands. We are currently on St. Martin.

By the way, Leigh, we'd love to hear from you at nano@mailasail.com.

Yours,
Nigel Anderson
Yacht Nano

Hello Compass,

Julia Bartlett's article about Luperon in your April 2007 issue gave a flavor of Luperon, but here are some specifics.

I spent the 2005 hurricane season in Luperon, and talked to people from the 2006 season, so I don't claim to know everything about Luperon.

- Good:
- A very protected harbor; the best-protected in the northeastern Caribbean.
 - A very beautiful country, with green mountains and lakes.
 - Generally nice people.
 - A very Spanish-intensive experience.
- Bad:
- Can't day-sail out of Luperon harbor and along the coast; the officials won't let you. You're only allowed to check out and go to another major port: no cruising.
 - The harbor is polluted, so no swimming. Probably shouldn't fish or run a watermaker either.
 - No cruising boatyards anywhere on the north coast. Maybe in an emergency you could rent a crane for a large amount of money.
 - Extremely hard to ship parts into the country; they get lost or delayed for months or you have to take a two-day trip to the capital to ransom them out of Customs.
 - No marine store in Luperon (there used to be one, but they couldn't get parts into the country).
 - Official fees are no longer cheap: for a single-hander in 2005, it cost US\$240 for entry/exit and four and a half months in harbor. Cruisers are starting to vote with their feet: I've heard the number of boats staying there is declining. The officials are nice these days, but fees are high.

• Food and drink are no longer extremely cheap, as apparently they were five or ten years ago. Prices are moderate.

• Some theft occurs, mostly of anchors: every season, someone comes through the harbor and cuts rope rods on second anchors to steal the rode and anchor.

• The transient cruisers are fine, but some of the permanently "stuck" boaters have formed cliques and developed grudges with each other.

The bottom line: most people (myself included) come out of Luperon thinking of it as an interesting once-in-a-lifetime visit, but are glad to get out.

Thanks,
Bill Dietrich
S/V Magnolia (1973 Gulfstar 44 ketch motor-sailer)

Dear Compass,

We were going to anchor at the Tobago Cays recently, but our windlass stopped working. We decided to go to Clifton on Union Island instead, as we were not happy about anchoring in the Cays at night, having no windlass, in case we dragged. There are just the two of us.

We were approached in Clifton Harbour by the usual boat boys renting moorings. We did a deal for five days for EC\$200 (a fool and his money are soon parted) and tied up to a mooring off the harbour between the two reefs. I was not happy with this, but was told that all the moorings in the harbour were full and we would be moved the next morning as soon as a mooring was vacated. That was the last we saw of our boat boy.

We decided that the mooring was probably okay, as there was plenty of demand for them and if bigger boats than ours used them, then the chance of their parting was probably remote.

I dived down and discovered that there was no chain, just a rope tied to a big metal block on the bottom. Alarm bells sounded, but not loud enough to make us move. The wind was constantly 15 to 25 knots. I set the anchor alarm for the minimum that would not sound with the boat's swing: 0.03 nm.

The alarm sounded at 2330 hours, just as we were going to bed. We rushed on deck not knowing what was happening; the night was completely black with no references whatsoever. We were adrift — and heading for the reef. Luckily, I had left the key in the ignition and the engine battery on, not something I often do.

Just as I started the engine I felt a sickening thud from below. We were on the reef. I applied full power and got off. It was so dark we could not see without the aid of our very powerful lamp, and the only way I could tell we were in deep water was to stay alongside the other boats using engine power and bowthruster. It was the most frightening time I've ever had. The other boats around us did not seem to recognize that we had a problem.

Eventually we got out by using the chartplotter to find the entrance to the reef and with my wife on the bow with our powerful lamp. We found our way out to the main anchorage and picked up a vacant buoy there. There we passed a sleepless night on anchor watch.

In the morning I examined our bow — to find all of the mooring still attached to us including the rope, about 50 meters of it, and the float. The rope had also wound itself around our bowthruster and I had to get into my scuba gear and cut it free. Luckily it only needed a fuse replacement.

We departed ASAP having learnt our lesson: always dive on rented moorings, and if any alarm bells sound, listen to them!

Regards,
Gerry and Denise
Saotirse

Dear Compass,

I wrote to you several years ago after a strange time in Deshaies, Guadeloupe, when the yacht that we then worked on, *Holga*, was involved in a "salvage" operation. We later found out from a local working with the Antigua tourist board that we had been the victims of a well-known ring and we understand that the police officer involved was sacked. They now keep a close eye on things there and there has been no trouble lately.

We have again been involved in some salvage, but this is a good news story!

We were motorsailing to Antigua from St. Maarten to meet a charter commitment, towing our dinghy on a long line astern. It was a foul night: 24 knots on the nose with a very rough short sea. No moon and persistent nasty squalls.

It was around 2:00AM, when north of St. Kitts the dinghy's towing U-bolt pulled through the bow of the dinghy and we were left with a long piece of rope — no dinghy. On arrival at Falmouth Harbour, Antigua, we went to Nicholson's, enquiring for a rental dinghy for the charter in 24 hours time, to be greeted with, "I gather you have lost your dinghy?" This was rather a surprise, but Afsaneh of Nicholson's had just received an e-mail from Luc Gaborit, captain of the charter catamaran *Motu*, who had found the dinghy floating south of Nevis as he was on passage from St. Maarten to Guadeloupe. In very rough seas (though by now daylight) he, Fred Avtzou and the crew had managed to secure the frolicking dinghy and tow it to Pointe-a-Pitre.

Having completed our charter and now en route to St. Lucia for another, we picked up the straying dinghy in Pointe-a-Pitre where it was intact with all the kit aboard — even the spare petrol tank, still full!

The bow is now repaired and a new U-bolt strongly attached. We plan to meet up with Luc to raise a glass to gentlemen of the sea.

So not all our experiences are bad, and I hope that you find room in *Compass* to credit this captain and crew for their thoughtfulness and honesty.

Best Regards,
Bridget Mackwood
S/Y Aurora 67

PS There are several *Auroras* sailing in the Caribbean (including a catamaran, an Island Packet, and a cruise ship), so we identify ours with its length to avoid confusion.

—Continued on next page



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1989	35' Hallberg - Rassy	US\$ 124,000
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1980	36' Biscay 36	£ \$ 21,500
1977	37' Gin Fizz	EUR 42,500
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1978	40' Atlantic 40	US\$ 70,000
2001	40' Sun Odyssey 40	US\$ 130,000
1985	40' Offshore 40 (REDUCED!!!)	US\$ 149,000
1992	45' Fortuna	US\$ 150,000
1991	50' Celestial Pilothouse	US\$ 268,000
1987	51' Beneteau Idylle 15.5	US\$ 160,000
1995	53' Super Maramu (REDUCED!!!)	US\$ 329,000
1982	53' Hatteras Luxury Cruiser	US\$ 254,000
1994	55' Oyster 55	US\$ 776,000
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MULTIHULLS		
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Dear Compass Readers,

My wife and I are in our third season cruising the Caribbean aboard our sloop. Having sailed from Florida to Trinidad, our 5,000 mile journey has taken us through 17 countries, some of them several times. A recent stop at Jolly Harbour, Antigua, to check in with Immigration has to be one of the worst experiences of our travels.

In spite of my smiling face and usual greeting of "Good morning, how are you today? We've just arrived and would like to check in", the young woman and young man behind the counter gave me nothing but an attitude and a feeling that they really didn't want to be bothered with me, or their job.

During the next hour, while the young woman ate her breakfast, the young man interrogated my wife and me like criminals. Without due cause, we were belittled and disrespected — not only as visitors, but as human beings. I was actually yelled at like an elementary school teacher would berate a student for not pressing hard enough on the form for it to transfer to the sixth page. I say this because while the Immigration officer was only eight feet away, he did not make eye contact with me and had not actually looked at the form yet; he was only assuming that I was not pressing enough.

In the end I was made to grovel for permission to enter Antigua, the way only a government official with a little authority and no respect for it can make a person grovel.

I feel that an individual who behaves in this manner is grossly unqualified for his or her position to represent their country and its businesses. I would be quite interested to hear from other *Compass* readers if they have had a similar experience with Immigration in Jolly Harbour, or if perhaps this was just an isolated incident.

Fearing repercussions, which we were threatened with, Name and Boat Name Withheld by Request

Dear Compass Readers,

We asked John Duffy, President of the Antigua & Barbuda Marine Association, for a response, which follows. CC

Dear Compass,

Thank you for sending me a copy of the complaint from a visitor to Jolly Harbour. I will be forwarding the letter to the Hon. Harold Lovell, Minister of Tourism, and the Director General of Tourism, Lorraine Headley, together with the Marine Liaison Officer, Nigel Benjamin.

Firstly, on behalf of the Antigua & Barbuda Marine Association, please extend our sincere apologies to your correspondents for the disrespectful way in which they were treated at Jolly Harbour. There is no justification for what they had to suffer.

Unfortunately, and hopefully rarely, one has to face unfriendly officials wherever one goes. It happened to me last month when entering the United States, where I was kept waiting in an office for over an hour and nearly missed my connecting flight. That being said, there is no excuse for this type of behaviour, particularly in an island which relies on tourism.

The government of Antigua & Barbuda is very keen to see that first-class service is given to visitors, but occasionally they are let down by their staff.

It would be useful to know on which day this occurred in order that the staff on duty can be reminded of the courtesies visitors are entitled to when arriving on the island.

In general, I have always heard good reports of the Immigration staff at Jolly Harbour, more so than some of the other Ports of Entry, and I am disappointed to

hear that their good reputation has been marred by this incident. I have no doubt that the recent Cricket World Cup and the CARICOM visa has put a lot of pressure on the Immigration staff and, maybe, staff who are not used to dealing with yacht entry were temporarily stationed in Jolly Harbour.

As I have said, regardless of the reason, there is no excuse for the manner in which your correspondents were treated and if they are still in Antigua please put them in touch with me because I am sure Ministry Officials would wish to extend their personal apologies.

Yours sincerely,

John J. Duffy, President
Antigua & Barbuda Marine Association

Dear Compass,

I read so many stories and letters in *Compass* that now I must give my opinion of the so-called "cruisers" in the Caribbean.

I am an independent journalist and writer from Austria. I've been sailing for around 30 years, and have logged more than 60,000 nautical miles, first on stinky powerboats and on charter boats of all types and sizes; then I lived seven years on my sailing vessel *Key of Life*, a S&S 38-foot mahogany sloop; and then seven years on a Cascaruda 45 steel motorsailer ketch; and now we've lived more than seven years on our second *Key of Life*, a 40-foot ferrotocon sloop (Ingrid design) underway in the Caribbean between Florida, the Bahamas, Cuba, and the Lesser Antilles to Venezuela. I am 57 years old and have taught sailing and navigation, so I think I know something about seamanship.

Many years ago, I always criticized the bareboaters for their way of operating their boats. Even if they had a license, they were inexperienced because they are only once a year on holiday on the boat. But now I must apologize to all the bareboaters, because what I have seen in the Caribbean is indescribable. There are so-called "cruisers" who are mostly sailing their own boats, but most of them have no idea what to do and I wonder how they came so far without hurting themselves!

Consider the "cruisers' nets" on the VHF radio, heard all morning from George Town in the Bahamas to Porlamar in Venezuela. I only listened to the net a few times, then I stopped because it is really painful when the so-called "cruisers" talk more about Mexican Train dominoes and bridge lessons than dragging anchors or stolen dinghies. Sometimes it is very helpful to get a weather report on the net — thanks for that, and the people who broadcast it.

Normally I prefer to listen to the weather on the SSB, but now it is very difficult in most anchorages because dozens of "pacers" are running, sending e-mails, or you are surrounded by running generators and engines from early in the morning to late night and you are not able to receive a clear signal.

I think people who need all this and like the useless talk about things that have nothing to do with cruising are better off staying in their condominiums.

Flags are another issue. Sometimes you see yachts flying no flag at all, or flying a flag from a sailing association, but not a courtesy ensign or even a national flag. This is a disgrace for all cruisers and offends the countries they sail in. Flags and the boat's name and hailing port written legibly on the hull are identification, like a license plate on a car. Many times I've seen boats run into and damage other boats in stormy weather, because their anchor is dragging, and then run away. But if you don't see a name, home harbor or not even a national flag, how can you report such an incident?

—Continued on next page



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—Continued from previous page

And I meet a lot of people on boats who are not able to find any destination without GPS, because they have no seamanship skills and no idea of navigation. And I don't talk about a sextant — they are not able to use a hand-bearing compass, not to mention a tide table, and they don't even try to learn.

I think if somebody has his boat in the yard for eight months, then stays three months in a marina, he is not a cruiser — he takes a holiday on his boat.

If the time comes when I no longer have the ability to navigate and handle my boat and I become dangerous to other cruisers, I will show some consideration and stop cruising, even though this will be very painful to me. I am responsible for the safety of my wife and partner and I cannot put anybody in peril. Some of the so-called "cruisers" should think about it, too!

All the best to the real cruisers and fair winds, even if the wind will be always against the direction we want to go!

Skipper Erich Beyer
S/Y Key of Life

Dear Compass,

Work continues here at Carenero, Venezuela, aboard the *Mermaid* — well, at least under the



Here's John with a friend at Carenero. Speaking of the sailing Smith family, in February John's brother Bruce and his wife, en route from Panama to the Dominican Republic, rescued two Haitians whose boat had caught fire and sunk

Mermaid. I recently tore out six planks and eight frames, replacing frames with the mangrove cut in Harvey Vale before the corner of the bay was razed for the new Carriacou Marina complex. Will get planking next week and finish off. Outta here soon, but not sure of direction or destination.

John Smith
Mermaid of Carriacou

Dear Compass,

Sailing in Caribbean put me in the hands of some boat mechanics, as we all know boats always break. Although I had some bad experiences, I would like to share my good ones with your readers.

In Rodney Bay Marina, St. Lucia, Bruden, a very nice guy, found the fridge's electronic control box eaten away by water. I bought a replacement unit, which he installed within a few minutes. He said he wanted to be paid later, after the fridge ran for a day or two. Amazing!

In Rodney Bay, Jon and Vincent from Regis Electronic fixed my Auto Helm very quickly and charged a fair price.

Curtis Edmond, also in Rodney Bay, works on engines diligently, handles all parts very carefully and keeps them extremely clean; it is a pleasure to see him work. And yet his per-hour charge is a small fraction of the price that a boat cleaner wanted!

Best regards,

Art Zawodny
Sailing a 35-foot Baba

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*'All aboard! Please take a seat and make yourselves comfortable...'
Captured in Portlamar by Angelika Gruener*

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VACANCY MARINA MANAGER

A statutory organization engaged in industrial and maritime development, which is committed to Jamaica's economic growth and development, wishes to recruit a Manager for its Marina.

JOB SUMMARY:

- Management of a Blue-Flag Yacht facility accommodating cruising sailboats, fishing vessels, commercial & mega yacht vessels up to 350 feet.
- Ensure the needs of elite boating clientele are addressed, as it pertains to yachting accommodation while in port.
- Management of all aspects of marina operations within budgetary guidelines in an efficient, cost effective and creative manner, following established policies and procedures.
- Oversee all operations of the marina including property and equipment maintenance, vessel launching and towing, fuel sales, boatyard operations and lease administration.
- Liaise and maintain relationship with officials and potential clientele in the tourism, marina and boating fields.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

- Tertiary level education in Business Management or equivalent qualification.
- Five (5) years previous marina management experience.
- Successful completion of Basic Deck Course, along with experience in boat handling.
- Experience in property management.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Working knowledge of general accounting, and understanding of financial statements.
- Up-to-date knowledge of Marina and yachting activities locally and internationally.
- Knowledge of how to operate a wide variety of maintenance and repair equipment used at Marina.
- Computer literacy.
- Demonstrated leadership and motivational skills.

REMUNERATION:

The compensation package for this position is commensurate with the responsibilities.

Written applications together with a detailed resume should be submitted or emailed no later than June 23 2007 to:
applications@mail.infochan.com

or
"Marina Manager"
P.O. Box 474
KINGSTON, JAMAICA

CALENDAR

MAY

- 1 May Day/Labour Day. Public holiday in many places.
1 Festival of the Sea, St. Barts.
2 FULL MOON
3 West Marine Atlantic Cup sets sail from Tortola, BVI, to Bermuda. www.carib1500.com
4 - 13 St. Lucia Jazz Festival. http://stluciazjazz.org
5 Ascension Day. Public holiday in Netherlands Antilles and Guadeloupe.
5 World Environment Day
6 - 7 On-board circus, St Pierre, Martinique. www.vollierspectacle.com
6 - 23 Carib canoe *Gil-Gil's* Leeward Island Expedition. dreadeye@surfbvi.com
7 - 8 Traditional Boats Rendezvous, St. Pierre, Martinique. fradon.rubel@wanadoo.fr
8 Armistice Day. Public holiday in French West Indies.
10 ARC Europe rally sets sail from Jolly Harbour, Antigua, to Portugal. www.worldcruising.com
11 - 13 Anguilla Regatta. www.caribbeanracing.com
12 - 13 BVI Dinghy Championships, Tortola. Royal British Virgin Islands Yacht Club (RBVYC), tel (284) 494-3286, fax (284) 494-6117. www.rbviyc.net
13 - 18 Angostura Tobago Sail Week, Crown Point, Tobago. www.sailweek.com
14 Mother's Day. Public holiday in Puerto Rico.
16 - 20 Around Guadeloupe Race. Triskell Association. www.triskellcup.com
17 - 19 Le Combat de Coques Regatta, Martinique. Club Nautique du Marin (CNM), club-nautique-du-marin@wanadoo.fr
17 - 19 3rd Annual Bonaire Jazz & Salsa Festival. www.bonairenet.com
20 Independence Day. Public holiday in Cuba.
22 Emancipation Day. Public holiday in Martinique.
24 - 28 Canouan Regatta. Canouan Sailing Club, (784) 458-8197
25 Ascension Day. Public holiday in St. Barts and Bonaire.
25 - 26 20th Curaçao Jazz Festival. www.curaçao-actief.com
25 - 27 33rd Foxy's Wooden Boat Regatta, Jost Van Dyke. West End Yacht Club tel (284) 495 1002, fax (284) 495-4184, mvh@surfbvi.com. www.weyc.net
25 - 27 7th BVI Music Festival. www.bvimusicfest.net
26 - 27 Transcatal Race, Martinique to St. Lucia. Yacht Club de la Martinique (YCM), tel (596) 63 26 76, fax (596) 63 94 48, ycmq@wanadoo.fr
27 Anguilla Day. Public holiday in Anguilla.
28 Whit Monday. Public holiday in many places.
29 Memorial Day. Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI.
30 Indian Arrival Day. Public holiday in Trinidad.
31 15th Anniversary of the Hemingway International Yacht Club of Cuba
31 - 4 June 41st Antigua & Barbuda Sports Fishing Tournament. www.antiguanice.com/fish
TBA 4th King of the Caribbean Freestyle Windsurfing Competition, Bonaire. www.infobonaire.com
TBA 57th Annual Ernest Hemingway Fishing Tournament, Havana, Cuba. CNIH
TBA Second Annual Captain Oliver's Carib Beer Regatta, Saint Martin. www.ccregatta.com

JUNE

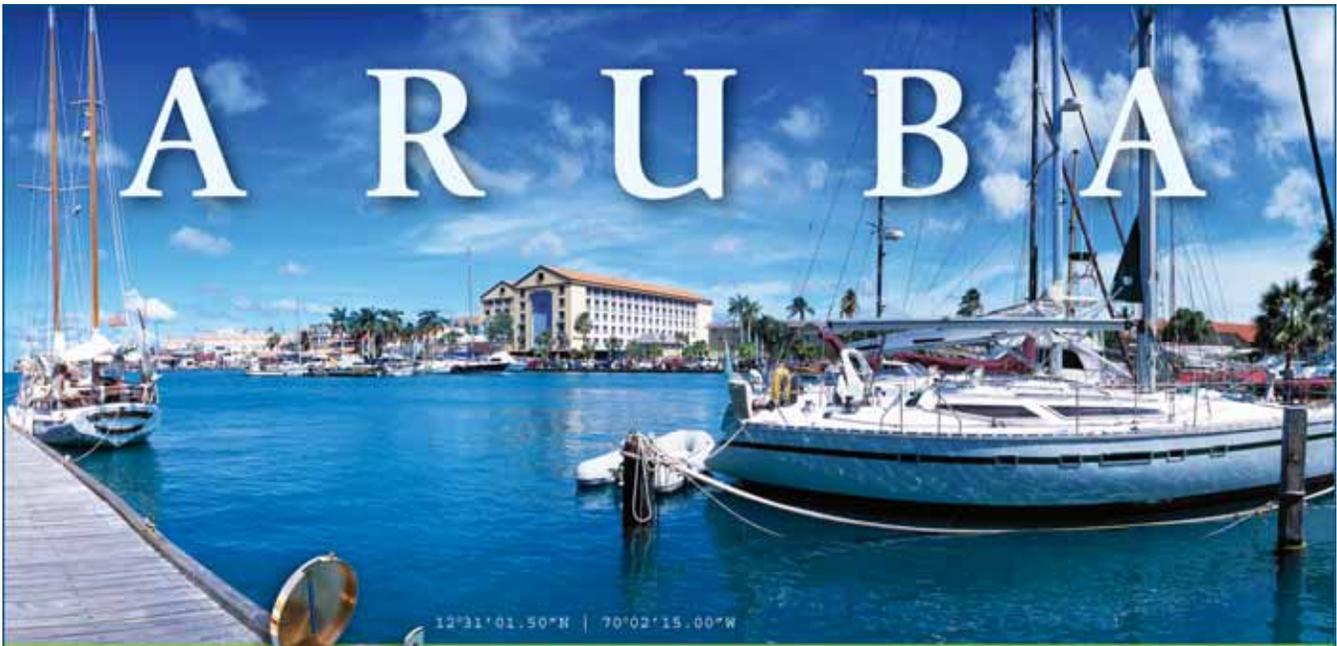
- 1 FULL MOON
6 - 12 Provo Mariners' Week, Turks & Caicos. www.maritimeheritage.tc/
7 Corpus Christi. Public holiday in many places
8 - 17 Morgan's Run 2007 rally from Cartagena, Colombia to Old Providence and San Andres. Lee@DestinationCartagena.com
9 - 10 IC24 Worlds, BVI. RBVYC
12 Queen's Birthday. Public holiday in some islands.
15 - 18 Les Saintes Regatta, Guadeloupe.
15 - 7 July 2nd La Route des Tepeuys rally from Martinique to Puerto la Cruz. www.transcaribbes.com
16 - 17 Caribbean One Design Keelboat Championships, St. Maarten. www.tropicalsailloft.com
16 - 23 Bonaire Dive Festival. www.diveintoadventurebonaire.com
18 Fathers' Day. Public holiday in Puerto Rico.
19 Labour Day. Public holiday in Trinidad.
21 Summer Solstice
21 - 24 15th annual Scotiabank Caribbean International Optimist Regatta, St. Thomas, USVI. STYC, www.styc.net
21 - 24 10th Annual St. Kitts Music Festival. www.stkittsmusicfestival.net
21 - 1 July HIHO Caribbean Passage rally, BVI. www.go-hiho.com
22 - 24 Fishermen's Festival, Charlottesville, Tobago.
23 - 24 Financial Services Challenge Race, BVI. RBVYC
23 - 24 Summer Sailstice, worldwide. www.summersailstice.com
24 Battle of Carabobo Day. Public holiday in Venezuela.
28 - 8 July HIHO Windsurf Regatta, BVI. www.go-hiho.com
29 Fisherman's Birthday. Boat and dinghy races in many fishing communities.
29 - 30 16th Firecracker 500 Race & Chili Cook-Off, Tortola. WEYC
29 - 10 July Vincy Mas (St. Vincent Carnival). www.svgtourism.com
30 FULL MOON ("blue moon": the second full moon this month)
30 Green Island Weekend. Antigua Yacht Club (AYC), tel/fax (268) 460-1799, yachtclub@candw.ag, www.antiguyachtclub.com
TBA Mount Gay/Boatyard Regatta, Barbados.
TBA 20th Annual Aruba Hi-Winds Amateur World Windsurfing Challenge.
TBA Bequia Carnival. www.bequiatourism.com
TBA 11th Angola Construction Sailing Competition, Bonaire.

All information was correct to the best of our knowledge at the time this issue of Compass went to press — but plans change, so please contact event organizers directly for confirmation.

If you would like a nautical or tourism event listed FREE in our calendar, please send the name and date(s) of the event and the name and contact information of the organizing body to:

- sally@caribbeancompass.com, or
- fax (784) 457-3410

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MAY

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