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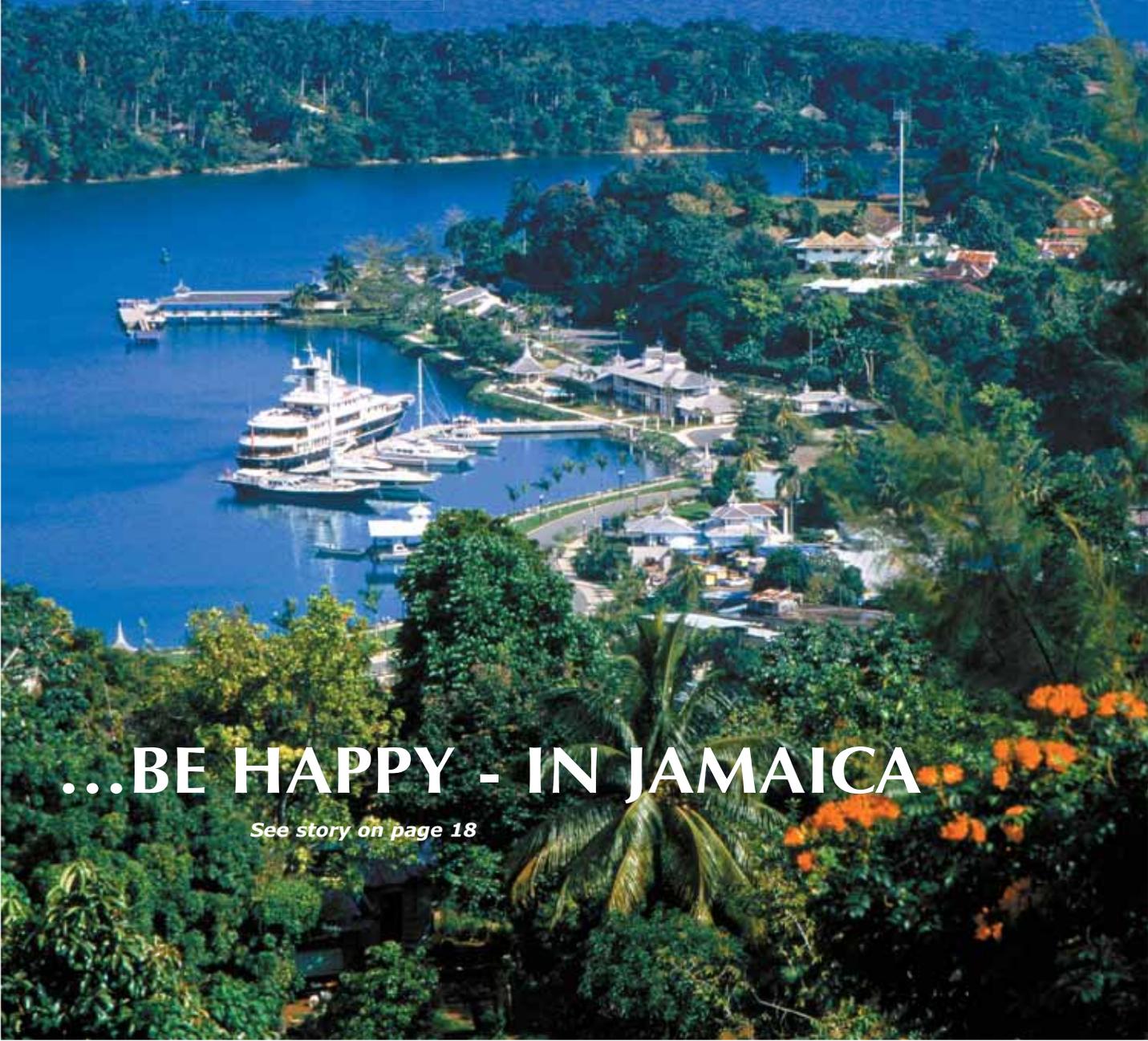
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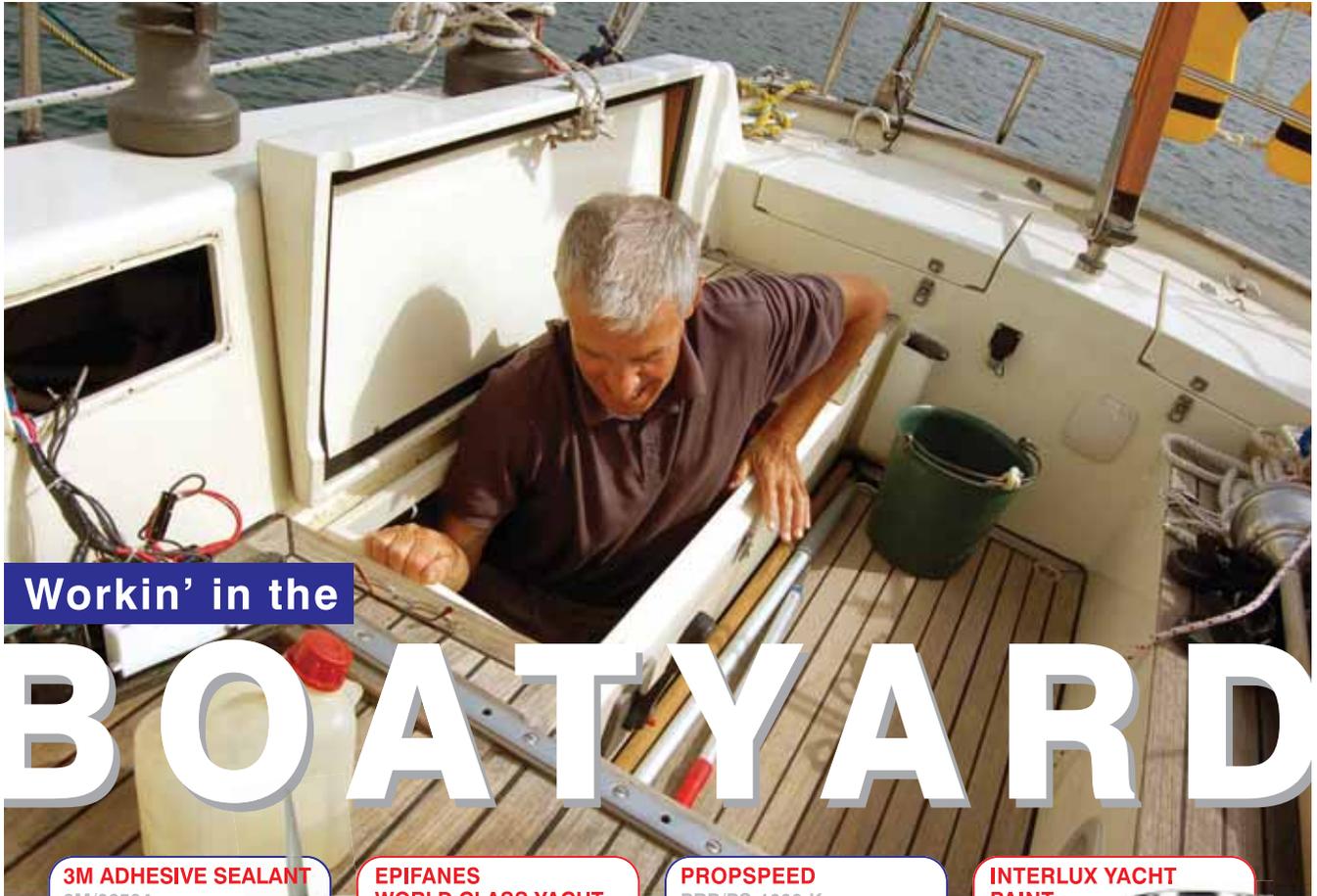
SEPTEMBER 2008 NO. 156

The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore



...BE HAPPY - IN JAMAICA

See story on page 18



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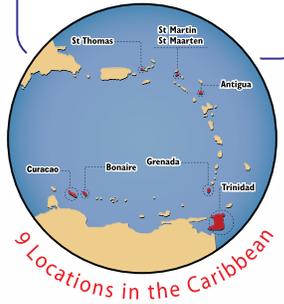
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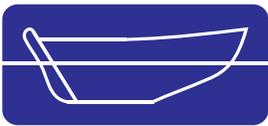
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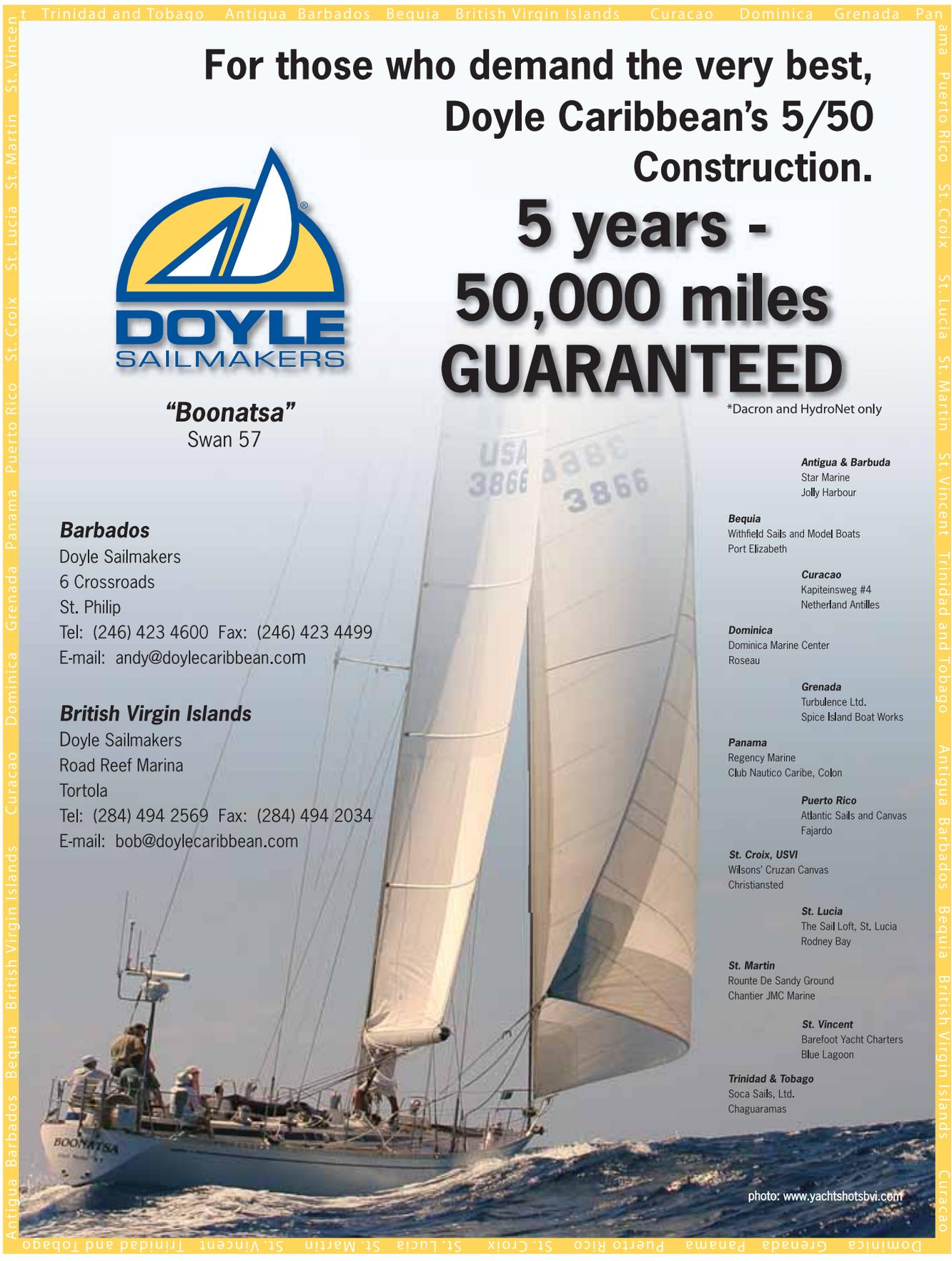
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CARIBBEAN COMPASS

The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

www.caribbeancompass.com

SEPTEMBER 2008 • NUMBER 156



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Caribbean Compass welcomes submissions of short articles, news items, photos and drawings. See Writers' Guidelines at www.caribbeancompass.com. Send submissions to sally@caribbeancompass.com.

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CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Labor Day. Public holiday in USVI
- 5 - 11 Dia di Bonaire sailing races, Bonaire
- 6 Bonaire Day. Public holiday in Bonaire
- 6 - 7 Back to Schools Regatta, BVI. Royal British Virgin Islands Yacht Club (RBVIYC), tel (284) 494-3286, rbviyc@rbviyc.com, www.rbviyc.net
- 8 Virgin of the Valley Festival, Margarita, Venezuela
- 15 FULL MOON
- 17 National Heroes Day. Public holiday in St. Kitts & Nevis
- 19 Independence Day. Public holiday in St. Kitts & Nevis
- 20 International Coastal Clean-Up Day
- 20 Clean-Up Dive, Bonaire
- 24 Our Lady of las Mercedes. Public holiday in Dominican Republic
- 24 Republic Day. Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago
- 28 Soualiga Challenge Kayak Race, St. Barths to St. Maarten. thebrowns@domaccess.com



OCTOBER

- 1 Eid Ul Fitr (Muslim festival). Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago
- 2 Thanksgiving Day. Public holiday in St. Lucia
- 4 - 5 Pete Sheals Match Racing, BVI. RBVIYC
- 4 - 5 Defis Guadeloupe Kayak race. otanton@gmail.com
- 5 - 11 41st Bonaire International Sailing Regatta. www.bonaireregatta.org
- 10 War of 1868 Anniversary. Public holiday in Cuba
- 11 Willy T Virgins Cup Race, BVI. RBVIYC
- 13 Columbus Day. Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI
- 14 FULL MOON
- 18 YSATT Marine Trades Show, Chaguaramas, Trinidad. info@ysatt.org
- 18 St. Maarten Optimist Championship. www.smyc.com
- 18 - 20 Trafalgar Cup Race, BVI. RBVIYC
- 20 USVI Hurricane Thanksgiving Day (Public holiday in USVI if no hurricanes occurred)
- 21 St. Ursula's Day. Public holiday in BVI
- 21 Antillean Day. Public holiday in Netherlands Antilles
- 24 - 26 11th Annual Foxy's Cat Fight multihull regatta, Jost Van Dyke. West End Yacht Club (WEYC), Tortola, BVI, tel (284) 495-1002, fax (284) 495-4184, mvh@surfbvi.com, www.weyc.net
- 25 Thanksgiving Day. Public holiday in Grenada; boat races
- 27 Independence Day. Public holiday in St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Local boat races in Bequia, jsprat@vincysurf.com
- 28 Divali (Hindu festival of lights). Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago
- 30 - Nov 2 St. Lucia Food & Rum Festival, Rodney Bay
- 31 - Nov 2 World Creole Music Festival, Dominica

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.

Cover photo: Cookie Kinkead / Errol Flynn Marina, Port Antonio, Jamaica

Info & Updates

Lower Caribbean Yachting Report

A research team of two individuals, Koen Altena and Erwin Herbert, both fourth-year marketing students from Holland, has compiled a report in English analyzing the Lower Caribbean Yachting Industry. The report features Curaçao as a prime example of an island whose yacht-service industry has developed rapidly over recent years. It also includes Grenada, Trinidad and Venezuela — all of which have benefited from being below the usual hurricane belt. Koen and Erwin say that by conducting research that has widespread applications, their hope is that all of the surrounding islands can benefit from the research.

The team conducted interviews with 152 yacht owners all over the lower Caribbean to find out what they consider valuable aspects of a yachting destination, and to allow yacht owners to give their personal evaluations of the various yachting locations within the lower Caribbean. Interviews were also conducted with boatyard and marina managers, governmental organization representatives, and other persons who possessed relevant information about the yachting industry of the lower Caribbean.

The 90-page report analyzes the characteristics of the average yacht owner who travels in the lower Caribbean, what his wants and needs are, and how much he spends (around US\$2,200 per month according to the results of the interviews). It also includes a competitive analysis of the four destinations studied.

This is the first report of its kind done especially on the yachting industry of the lower Caribbean, and we congratulate Koen and Erwin on their efforts.

For more information contact caribbeanyachts@gmail.com.

Arrests Made in Rio Dulce Attack

Julia Bartlett reports: Swift action by Guatemalan police resulted in arrests days after Guatemala saw its first cruiser fatality due to assault for about eight years.



COURTESY DRYDEN FAMILY

Dan Dryden (at right) was killed during an armed yacht robbery on the Rio Dulce. His wife, Nancy, is reportedly recovering from stab wounds. Guatemalan police have two suspects in custody. According to Roy McNett, editor of the Rio Dulce Chisme-Vindicator, two other men believed to have been involved in the incident were killed recently in a shoreside shooting.

On August 9th, Alaskans Dan and Nancy Dryden were aboard their 42-foot Southern Cross, *Sunday's Child*, anchored about a hundred yards off Monkey Bay Marina in the Rio Dulce between the town of Livingston and Lago Izabal (15.5°N, 88.4°W). The boat was boarded by four men armed with machetes, who tried to rob them. Dan Dryden resisted, and in the resulting struggle he was killed. Nancy was wounded and admitted to hospital with a collapsed lung. After surgery, she is now reportedly out of danger.

On August 11th, three yachts newly arrived in Guatemala, *Dream Odyssey*, *Cdog* and *Mima*, entered the Rio Dulce. They anchored near the hot springs, intending to continue the two miles into Texan Bay the next morning. During the night, *Dream Odyssey* was boarded by five men armed with machetes and one gun. Items of value were removed but the boatowner and his wife were not injured.

The following morning, the skipper of the British yacht *Phalcor* reported on the cruisers' VHF net that at about 2:00AM a group of men had boarded his yacht and tried to rip open a closed hatch. After failing to do so, despite strenuous efforts, the men used bolt cutters to cut the chain securing his portable generator on deck. They left with the generator and a fishing rod. The yachtman was not injured, and the boarding party left some evidence behind.

Two suspects in the death of Dan Dryden were arrested on August 14th. According to the local newspaper *El Periódico*, Carlos Ernesto Lemus Hernandez, 19, and his brother Elfidio Concepcion Lemus Hernandez, 33, both of the village of Esmeralda, a few miles from where the attack occurred, were taken into custody after a search of their home resulted in the discovery of an ice pick and binoculars believed to

have been taken from the Dryden's sailboat. Nancy Dryden has told newspaper reporters that she could identify in a line-up the men who killed her husband.

The US Embassy, relatives and local boaters have rushed to support Nancy, and the Vice-President of Guatemala, Rafael Espado, has taken a personal interest in this incident.

Some months ago when security issues were raised, local businesses and boaters' representatives met with the Guatemalan Navy and Tourist Police. As a result of discussions at that time, three anchorages were designated which the Navy volunteered to patrol. A handout was also designed, warning boaters of the possible dangers of anchoring out and pinpointing the designated "safe" anchorages. The flyer was sent to Livingston to be distributed to new arrivals. Unfortunately, the patrols apparently stopped once the initial pressure was off. If you are in the Rio Dulce, be safe: go into a marina. They are inexpensive, pretty and fun.

For updates from the Dryden family visit <http://danieldrydenfamily.blogspot.com>.

Soufriere Weather Info Returns

The current weather information for Soufriere, St. Lucia, can now be found at its original address: www.smma.org.lc/weather/weather.htm. Browse the rest of the website for information on yacht mooring areas in the Soufriere Marine Management Area and more.



DEREK BERRY

The Soufriere Marine management Area's website is a good source of information about this part of St. Lucia — including, once again, a comprehensive weather report.

Cruisers Raise Funds for Carriacou Kids

John and Melodye Pompa report: Despite the rain (and rain and more rain), the annual Carriacou Children's Education Fund (CCEF) activities held from July 30th through August 2nd were another resounding success. With donations still coming, the amount raised this year has already exceeded EC\$17,000! Through the generosity of all who took part, by contributing items and/or cash or by attending and participating in the activities, the CCEF will be able to continue the projects that have benefited hundreds of children on the island for the past eight years.

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page

CCEF had its beginnings in 1997 when a group of cruisers in Tyrrel Bay gathered together for a potluck barbecue prior to the start of the annual Carriacou Regatta Festival. At that time, there were no more than 15 visiting yachts at anchor. Through word of mouth, the total experience of Carriacou Regatta has spread through the cruising community and the number of yachts continued to increase. There have been as many as 90 visiting yachts anchored in Tyrrel Bay.

In 2000, a group of cruisers discussed a way to demonstrate appreciation to the people of Carriacou for their friendliness and hospitality. That year this group, the forerunner of CCEF, held its first benefit auction. At the time, a number of worthy causes were discussed as the potential recipient of the proceeds of the fundraising, and the group chose the children of Carriacou and their education.

Since that time over EC\$86,000 has been raised to assist children in their schooling, from pre-primary, through primary, secondary and post-secondary levels. Needy children are provided with school uniforms and supplies, hot school lunches ("Meals from Keels"), and full tuition and a book stipend at the Carriacou campus of T.A. Maryshow Community College. In addition, through a matching funds program, CCEF has helped two primary schools upgrade the wiring and purchase air conditioners for their computer labs, and has committed funds to do similar upgrades at the other three primary schools as their needs are identified.



'It's for the kids!' The Harbour Barber was just one of an impressive array of fundraising volunteers and events that helped net over EC\$17,000 at this year's regatta for the Carriacou Children's Educational Fund

The activities in late July and early August are the culmination of the work of many volunteers throughout the year. Cruisers spread the word about Regatta, make items for the craft table or collect items for the auction. Many people who are not able to attend Regatta drop off contributions at the Yacht Club as they pass through Carriacou. Others e-mail financial pledges. Some even contribute the proceeds that they have received from the *Caribbean Compass* for articles published!

A number of local businesses are also involved with CCEF. Donations of goods and services are made for the auction, and some of these same businessmen are among the highest bidders when the gavel comes down.

In addition to the auction, other fundraising activities include a silent auction, the Welcome Barbecue, a domino tournament, a book swap, a craft table with hand-made goods contributed by the many artisans aboard the visiting yachts, a "\$10 and Under" table of those treasures of the bilge that we all have on board, and the "Harbour Barber".

A unique donation CCEF receives is the money contributed by visiting yachts that use the WiFi in Tyrrel Bay. In some bays that yachts frequent, wireless connections can cost up to US\$70 a month. In Tyrrel Bay, free WiFi is provided by some progressive businessmen. All they ask is that the users consider making a contribution to the CCEF. From the level of contributions that we have received, the visiting yachts have shown that they appreciate the service and want to help the children.

Sincere thanks go out to everyone who participated this year and in the past. We look forward to seeing all of you in Carriacou next year to help celebrate when CCEF surpasses the \$100,000 mark!

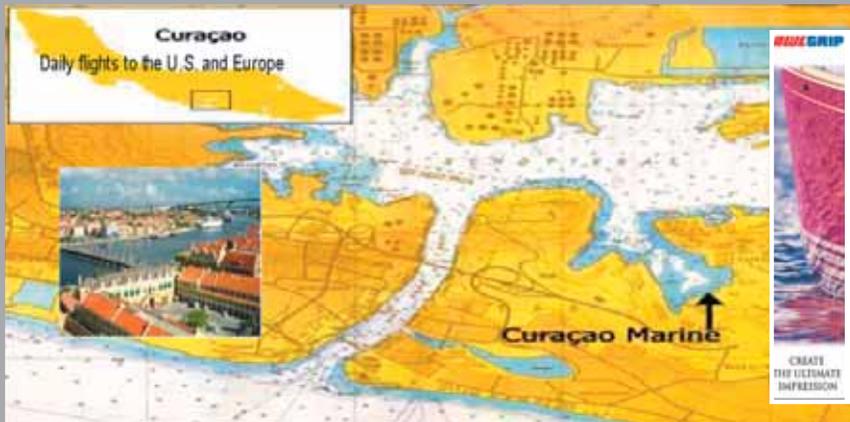
Caribbean Cover Girl!

The \$8,534 *Morning Tide*, a well-known contender on the Caribbean racing circuit for the past three decades, adorns the cover of the August 2008 issue of the US-published *SAIL* magazine (which modestly bills itself as the "world's leading sailing magazine"). Launched in 1969, *Morning Tide* was restored in 2005 by her current owner, Peter Morris, who races her out of Trinidad.

—Continued on next page



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—Continued from previous page

Grenada Hosts British Youth Swing Band

One reason Grenada is popular with cruisers is that there's always something going on, even in the summer. The Sherborne Swing Band from Sherborne School, Dorset, UK, was "on tour" in Grenada during the first week of August. The band, whose members are aged between 13 and 18, gave concerts at True Blue Bay Resort, Le Phare Bleu Resort & Marina, La Source, and The Grenadian at Rex Resorts, with a



Seaside swing in Grenada — summertime entertainment for a good cause

line-up that comprised three trumpets, two trombones, eight saxophones, guitar, bass, percussion and keyboard.

The young musicians organise an overseas trip each year, and a regular visitor to True Blue Bay Resort suggested that they visit Grenada in 2008 to raise funds for the Queen Elizabeth Children's Home. With Russ Fielden from True Blue Bay Resort providing Grenada-based support and assistance, the young musicians stayed at The Grenadian at Rex Resorts and performed five free public concerts and played for the Westmorland School Graduation Party. The Ministry of Culture also arranged for the band to run a workshop at Grenada Boys' Secondary School, which was attended by members of the Royal Grenada Police Force Band and was very well received by all attendees.

Jamie Henderson, the band's leader, said the whole trip was a great hit with the band members. The concerts too were very successful with over EC\$5,000 raised for the Queen Elizabeth Children's Home.

Charitable Writers

Who says cruisers are cheap? The following *Compass* writers have donated the proceeds from recent articles to worthy local causes: Dave Richardson to Bequia's Sunshine School for Children with Special Needs; Clara Decker to the Marine Education and Research (MER) Center; Christopher Price to a private fund for unwed mothers; Jan Brogan to St. Benedict's Infant Hospital in St. Vincent; Chuck Cherry to the Bequia Mission for a schoolchild in need; Jeremy Shaw to the Woburn School in Grenada; John and Melodye Pompa to the Carriacou Children's

Educational Fund; John Rowland to the Bequia Community High School Library; and Danny Donelan to the Carriacou Regatta Festival Committee. Your generosity is appreciated!

Woburn School Says 'Thanks!'

Woburn RC Infant and Pre-Primary School graduation ceremony took place on June 26th, with 28 children graduating and moving on to other schools.

The school would like to thank the *Compass* contributors who have donated their payments to the school. Much essential work had to be undertaken this year, including improving the surface of the yard, purchasing a new photocopier and renewing insurance. The school has some development projects planned for next year, including the purchase and installation of playground equipment.

With just over 100 children aged between three and seven, the school has an



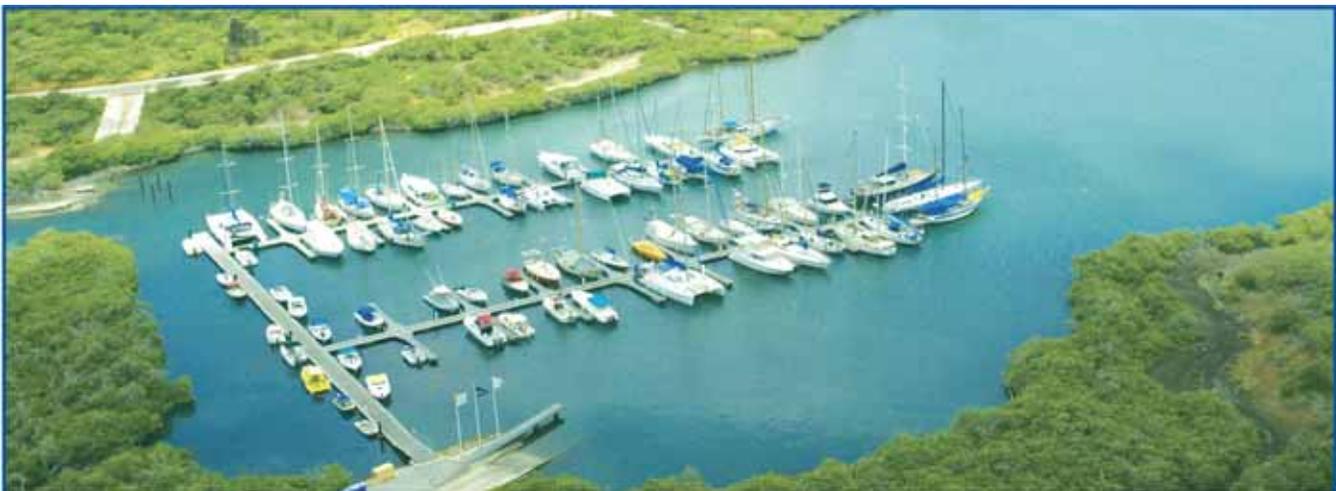
Over the years, many 'cruiser kids' have attended the friendly Woburn Pre-Primary and other Caribbean schools

excellent academic record and most of the staff has been with the school for many years. The school has always welcomed land- or water-based visitors and two "cruiser kids" are registered for the 2008-2009 academic year.

Ooops!

In the article "This is the House That Jack Built" on page 40 of the August issue of *Compass*, the sentence "The next edition of the *Boaters' Directory of Trinidad & Tobago* is scheduled for June 2008 delivery" should have read "...scheduled for January 2009 delivery". We apologize to both *Boaters' Enterprise* and their readers and advertisers for any confusion this error might have caused. See the latest news about the *Boaters' Directory of Trinidad & Tobago* — due out next January! — on page 8.

The map on page 15 of last month's *Compass*, credited to *The Abaconian* newspaper, should have been credited to Derek Lee, who designed it for *The Abaconian*.



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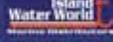


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BUSINESS BRIEFS

14th Boaters' Directory of T&T Underway

Publisher Jack Dausend reports: The 14th edition of the *Boaters' Directory of Trinidad & Tobago* is now being compiled and is targeted for release in January 2009.

This newest edition of the ever-popular and comprehensive directory will include all the information that visiting cruisers and local boatowners alike have come to expect, such as information about services and facilities for the repair and maintenance of recreational yachts (both sailing and power vessels), as well as Customs & Immigration regulations, Carnival and lots of interesting details about Trinidad & Tobago.

Since its first publication in 1995, the *Boaters' Directory of Trinidad & Tobago* has become the indispensable "bible" for boaters in T&T, not only in its handy 5.5" by 8.5" paperback print version but also in the on-line version at www.BoatersEnterprise.com.

Yacht-related businesses in T&T take note: The foreign recreational boaters arriving in the Trinidad & Tobago shores (after being at sea for a period of time) are looking for many services. The 250-page *Boaters' Directory* lists all the services and suppliers by category, brand name and alphabetically — complete with links to their business website and e-mail addresses — using the "yellow pages" concept. If you haven't reserved your advertising space for this 2009 edition as yet, contact JackD@BoatersEnterprise.com or phone (868) 620-0978.

For more information see ad on page 37.

Northern Lights' Caribbean Dealer Conference

Northern Lights Generators and their Caribbean Distributor, Parts & Power Ltd., hosted a Caribbean Dealer Conference on July 29th and 30th at Mariah's By The Sea on Tortola. The conference, entitled Challenge 2010, was attended by Northern Lights Dealers from throughout the Caribbean.

Changes in the power-generation market and challenges anticipated over the next two years were discussed, as were new products, including the new M944T, which will produce 38kw at 1800 rpm in a remarkably compact package. Web-based sales and service tools were announced to speed up reaction time to customer inquiries, and a large part of the conference focused on how to increase customer satisfaction by providing better service overall.



From left to right: Frank Agren from Inboard Diesel Service in Martinique, Dave Cooper from Dockyard Electrics in Trinidad, Flemming Neithorster from Seagull Services in Antigua, and Nathan Price, Vice President Southeast Region

Nathan Price, Vice President Southeast Region, informed the dealers about the recent acquisition of Technicold, which manufactures high-quality marine air-conditioning and refrigeration equipment. Nathan told the gathering: "The Technicold product nicely complements our Northern Lights Marine Generator products because the design and manufacturing process used mirrors our company motto of Reliability, Durability, and Long Life."

For more information on Northern Lights dealers in the Caribbean see ad on page 16.

Summer Special Offer from Errol Flynn Marina

Stay at Errol Flynn Marina at Port Antonio, Jamaica any time between now and November and they'll give you one day's dockage free for every three days you stay with them, which amounts to a 25-percent discount on a four-day stay. (Water and electricity are not included.)

The marina also says that they are the only shipyard and marina in the region where you can get a 40-foot yacht hauled out and re-launched for just US\$100 — or US\$2.50 a foot.

With sufficient space to dock a yacht in excess of 600 feet alongside and a turning basin to match, the only limiting factor for yachts is their restriction of vessels to a draft of ten meters (32 feet) or less. Free, secure high-speed WiFi access (or complimentary internet time in their internet café if you don't have your own laptop) is offered to all marina customers.

Ahead on the calendar for Errol Flynn is the 45th International Marlin Tournament, which runs October 4th through 11th with an estimated 45 to 50 boats expected to take part in the competition — and the onshore partying! And further still down the line, the Marina is hoping to be selected as one of the stopovers on the 2009 Trancarabes Rally, after receiving glowing reports from cruisers from a number of yachts who visited there during this year's event. Marina management and Jamaica Tourist Board members are expected to meet with rally organizers soon to finalize plans. Traditionally the rally departs from Guadeloupe in March and includes stopovers in St. Maarten, the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

For more information on Errol Flynn Marina see ad on page 15.

For more information on the Trancarabes Rally see ad in the Market Place, pages 51 through 53.

Horizon St. Martin Gourmet Sailing Package 2008!

Horizon Yacht Charters (St. Martin) has launched a new Gourmet Sailing package in partnership with the five-star La Samanna Hotel: a seven-night charter that includes an exclusive private dining experience inside the hotel's award-winning wine cellar with your very own chef for the night plus an unforgettable wine tasting experience.

—Continued on next page

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Grenada




—Continued from previous page

Designed for yachtsmen who appreciate the finer things in life, the special package offers the opportunity to enjoy impeccable wines and the ultimate dining experience. The wine cellar, La Cave, is one of the finest in the Caribbean, holding over 14,000 wines covering every category from French Margaux to Californian Cabernets. La Cave is a romantic, candlelit sanctuary for those who wish to dine with a few close friends in a unique atmosphere.

On the sailing side, skippers are available for those who like to have someone on board to help guide them through the islands or for non-sailors who prefer to let someone else take the helm.

To find out more about the package contact horizonsxm@gmail.com. For details on all the Horizon Yacht Charters bases in the Caribbean visit www.horizonyachtcharters.com.

Successful Atlantic Crossing for Mayrik P214

Regular *Compass* readers will recall we wrote back in February 2008 about Saint Martin-based Belgian naval architect Yves Kinard's project to create a small, comfortable and seaworthy motorboat with low fuel consumption that would ultimately be able to cross the Atlantic solo. Well, the 21-foot Mayrik P214 MiniTrawler with Perkins M92B engine successfully made the crossing earlier this summer, taking just 31 days to cover the 4,000 miles from Saint Martin, Netherlands Antilles, via Bermuda and the Azores, to Saint Martin de Ré, close to La Rochelle on the Atlantic coast of France.

The total fuel consumption was only 3,000 litres, representing a modest .75 litres per mile. Economy, seaworthiness and comfort have always been paramount considerations in the boat's design and evolution, and the creators are delighted with the success of the crossing.

The Mayrik P214 will be shown at the La Grand Pavois Boat Show in La Rochelle this month, and marketed in several versions including Trawler, Fishing (pleasure or professional), Aft Cabin and Bermudian, with prices starting from 60,000 euros.



Good things come in small packages. This cutie from St. Martin-based designer Yves Kinard is economical to run

Although the Mayrik P214 is ideal for use in the Caribbean region between the islands, Mayrik Yacht Design believes its main market will be truly international and is currently seeking US- and Europe-based partners to work with them towards full mass production.

For more information visit www.mayrik.com and click on P214 or email info@mayrik.com.

Grenada's Whisper Cove Open for the Season

Whisper Cove Marina and Restaurant on the south coast of Grenada reopened on August 20th. There's room for a very few yachts at the dock, or you can arrive by dinghy or by land. The cozy restaurant serves authentic French cuisine with a Grenadian twist, such as grilled fish of the day with passionfruit crème.

For more information contact lukebd@orange.fr.

YSAT Showcases Chaguaramas Marine Services

The range of marine services and supplies offered in Chaguaramas will be on display at the Yacht Services Association of Trinidad & Tobago (YSAT) 6th annual Marine Trades Show on Saturday October 18th. This dynamic, business-building event brings together marine accessory manufacturers, distributors, suppliers, contractors and buyers through a combination of exhibits, one-on-one meetings and product demonstrations. It is the only show of its type in the southern Caribbean and provides a great networking opportunity for the show's visitors and participants. Entrance to



the event is free and there will be plenty of giveaways and promotional activities.

Trinidad has become a very popular destination for yachtsmen cruising the Caribbean. Apart from its well-known geographic advantage below the critical hurricane belt, Trinidad has a lot to offer the yachting tourist — extensive repair services and supplies that are available in a concentrated area, festivals and cultural attractions, eco-tourism activities, good medical services and a vast range of shopping facilities.

For more information contact info@ysattf.org.



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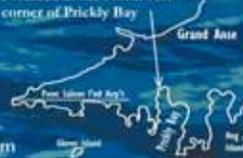
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CARIBBEAN ECO-NEWS

Caribbean Environment Journal Launched

Norman Faria reports: An impressive new regional journal designed to provide background information on the region's environment and sustainable development was recently launched in Barbados.



Editor Nevin Chanderpaul (at left) presents inaugural edition of Caribbean Environment Journal to Barbados Environment Minister Dr. Esther Byer-Suckoo

The Editor in Chief of the quarterly publication is Guyanese Navin Chanderpaul, who is presently advisor in the Guyana President's Office on environmental matters. Mr. Chanderpaul has served within the Caribbean region in positions of Chairman of the CARICOM Task Force on the Environment (1992-1997), Chairman of the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (1995-2000) and Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Caribbean Water Partnership (2004-2006).

At a ceremony held at the Pomarine Hotel and attended by Barbados's Minister of the Environment, Dr. Esther Suckoo-Byer, Chanderpaul pointed to the "harsh realities" of globalization and trade liberalization together with global climate change posing new threats to the physical environment. These challenges affect not only small island states but also low-lying coastal nations such as Guyana.

One of the aims of *Caribbean Environment Journal* is to educate the public on the Barbados Declaration and the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA), which came out of the 1994 United Nations Special Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

"There is a need for a journal which is dedicated to promoting and generating discussion on the issues related to small island and low-lying coastal developing states and their path of sustainable development," noted the Introduction in the Trinidad-published first issue.

The journal has several scholarly articles on climate change and sustainable development, background information on BPOA and a reprint of the UN General Assembly Resolution on the late Guyanese President Dr. Cheddi Jagan's proposal for a New Global Human Order. The launching ceremony was attended by regional technicians, engineers and other stakeholders in environmental work.

For more information contact carenpub@yahoo.com.

Non-native red lionfish, probably released when a home aquarium was washed off a Florida porch by Hurricane Andrew, now range from Bermuda to the Cayman Islands



JOHN WITCHURCH BENNETT

Red Lionfish Invade North Caribbean

The red lionfish (*Pterois volitans*), a native of the Indian and western Pacific Oceans, is now found in the northern Caribbean Sea. Researchers believe lionfish were introduced into the Atlantic Ocean in 1992, when Hurricane Andrew shattered a private aquarium and six of them spilled into Miami's Biscayne Bay. Biologists think the fish released floating sacs of eggs that rode the Gulf Stream north along the US coast, leading to colonization of deep reefs off North Carolina and Bermuda.

Until recently, the lionfish invasion was mostly concentrated on the Bahamas, where it infested shallow waters, reefs and mangrove thickets where baby fish grow. Some spots in the Bahamian archipelago between New Providence and the Berry Islands are reporting a tenfold increase in lionfish over last year. Red lionfish inhabit lagoons and turbid inshore areas and harbors as well as offshore reefs in their native range.

Now this venomous coral reef fish is being found in the northern Caribbean, feasting on native species of fish and crustaceans. A single animal was reported to have eaten 20 smaller fish in just half an hour. Red lionfish are now being found on the coasts of Cuba, Hispaniola and the Cayman Islands. Diving and fish-farming industries are concerned and some governments are urging fishermen to destroy the fish.

"This may very well become the most devastating marine invasion in history," said Mark Hixon, an Oregon State University expert interviewed by Associated Press. "There is probably no way to stop the invasion completely."

Adults can grow as large as 17 inches (43 cm), while

juveniles may be as small as an inch or less. All of the spines on a lionfish are venomous, creating a danger primarily to divers and fishermen if stung. Although there have been no known fatalities caused by lionfish stings, they are reportedly extremely painful.

Grenadines Hold Anti-Litter Workshop

The Sustainable Grenadines (SusGren) Project conducted a two-day workshop on "Caring for Litter" for NGOs, grassroots and governmental organisations in the Grenadines on July 15th and 16th at the Rotary Club center in Bequia, with the hope of educating persons in the Grenadines about litter, its effects and how to deal with it. The workshop, conducted by Joan Ryan of the Solid Waste Management Unit of St. Vincent & the Grenadines, attracted participants from the St. Vincent Grenadine islands of Bequia, Union Island, Canouan and Mayreau, and the Grenada Grenadines of Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

The main focus of the workshop was to formulate strategies to alleviate the problem of littering, developing strategies to change perceptions of littering, outlining the impact of littering on the environment and economy of the Grenadines, and increasing awareness of the ills of littering and the benefits that can be derived by proper litter management and techniques such as recycling.

To combat the problem of littering in the Grenadines, participants were encouraged by SusGren Project Manager, Martin Barribeau, to develop and submit mini-projects based on the action plans developed for the respective islands during the workshop and pledged to assist in securing funding for the implementation of these projects.

—Continued on page 40

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A PERFECT SUMMER YACHT RACE!

by Jerry Stewart

There is always an element of uncertainty associated with an August regatta. Will it rain? Will there be squalls, or excitement of a "tropical" nature? Unsettled weather kept nervous cruisers farther north than they otherwise would have been as Carriacou Regatta Festival 2008 drew near.

It's above all a working boat regatta, and the communities of Windward and Petite Martinique spend the preceding weeks in preparation. We had the opportunity to see five of the six decked sloops in the boatyard in Tyrrel Bay at the same time as they joined the yachts all getting ready for Carriacou's main annual sailing event.

The Carriacou Regatta Committee once again welcomed cruisers to participate in the yacht races, with James Benoit from the Grenada Yacht Club acting as race officer as usual. The yacht division was fortunate to retain support from sponsors Mount Gay Rum, Doyle Sails Barbados, Island Water World and Budget Marine, whose continued help in this low-key event gives them all credit. Additional prizes were supplied by Bogles Round House, Lazy Turtle Pizzeria, Fidel Productions, GG Design and Alexis Supermarkets — local businesses contributing to make this regatta a success.

The Doyle Sails Two-Handed Round Carriacou Race, the regatta's main event for yachts, attracted 25 entries. The attraction of racing with only one's normal cruising crew (children do not count) maintains the popularity of the event. And Carriacou is a very small island. The fleet ranged from Frank Pierce's schooner *Samadhi*, at 55 feet, to the Laser raced by Andy Pell from the yacht *Tixi Lixi*. Last year's Laser champion, Michel Weber (age 14), raced *BM2*, an Yngling, with crew Jason Tuson (also 14) into third place.

Conditions were benign, and a lifting current, rare in these parts, made a mockery of the usually favored routes. Richard Szyjan, from Turbulence Sails in Grenada, came to Carriacou with *Category 5*, which was once a Hobie 33, and sped around the island in an astonishing three hours and 28 minutes in winds that might have peaked at 12 knots.

Cruising Class, for yachts with rating certificates, was split between the Beneteaus and the old IOR yachts. *Tabasco*, a Swan 40 raced by Henry Crallan, battled with Tim Sudell's 44-foot *Saga* and my Hughes 38, *Bloody Mary* — all three being S&S designs from the 1970s. Last year's champion *Windborne*, Roy Hopper's First 38, and *Tulachean II*, Mike and Lucy Murchie's Beneteau 38.5, achieved first and second place, with *Tabasco*'s crew losing a well-deserved third when they found a wind hole that refused to give them up. *Bloody Mary* slipped by to make third, with *Saga* fourth, *Tabasco* escaping from the wind hole to take fifth in front of Richard Watson's Oyster 48, *Sobriyah*.

In Fun Class, where yachts are given a less precise rating based on owner's declaration, Andy Smelt's Spencer 44 *Yellowbird* managed to fight off a strong challenge from *Samadhi* to achieve first place, with Michel Weber bringing *BM2* into third. A late squall gave the slower yachts and the Committee Boat a little excitement, but served only to power up Uwe Gerstmann's Joshua, *Salai*, ensuring his prompt return in time for the CCEF auction (see item on page 6).

This year we had five multihulls. Don Marmo's *Ned Kelly* returned to the island

to take top spot from Eddie's *Boanerges*. Paul and Sally O'Regan's Wharram cat placed third.

In the South Coast Race on August 2nd, competitors again sailed in light winds and a lifting current. The beauty of sailing in perfectly clear water of amazing colours is a feature of the south coast of Carriacou. *Category 5* again finished ahead to win Racing Class. In Cruising Class, *Windborne* maintained first place, *Bloody Mary* second and *Tabasco* a creditable third in conditions that don't suit a Swan.

Fun Class saw *Yellowbird* ahead of *Samadhi*, with Mike Candlin's *Blue Sky* sailing well to grab third place, ahead of regatta regular Dominic Weber's *Sanctus*, a Jeanneau Sun Kiss 47. *Thalia*, Ivan Jefferis's 1880s-vintage gaff cutter, managed to be awarded a rating higher than the national debt of a small country, so sailed majestically into corrected last place with incredible style, tops! and all.

There was no yacht race on the Sunday, giving participants the opportunity to visit the workboat regatta in Hillsborough.

Monday's race offered, if anything, less wind. Lovely conditions for a gentle summer's sail, but a little frustrating for *Windborne* in Cruising Class, as *Bloody Mary* edged into first place ahead of her, with *Tabasco* and *Saga* taking third and fourth respectively. *Category 5* once again dominated the Racing Class, and in Fun Class *Samadhi* deposited *Yellowbird* into second place, with *Sanctus* third and local sailor Nolan Jules sailing *Taliban* into fourth.

All in all, it was a perfect summer regatta. The fun of the yacht races coupled with the excitement of the decked sloops and open boats (see story on page 12) make this a hard event to improve on.



Racing, summer style. *Bloody Mary* in the Two-Handed (kids don't count!) Round Carriacou Race

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EVERY year in early August all of my friends in Grenada get together and make this huge trip to Barbados for Crop Over. Now, I like the jump-up in the streets, lining on the bikini cruise, listening to the Bajan DJs spinning their sounds as much as the other guy. But yet every year, despite the taunts of my friends, I end up jumping on a sailboat heading over to Carriacou.

The only way to explain this is: Carriacou. Carriacou — with its long history of boatbuilding, captains and crews who take the business of winning as seriously as any America's Cup team, parties that go on until the late hours of the night, the street food, the steel bands, the donkey races, the greasy pole, the crowd cheering from the Hillsborough jetty as their village heroes take to the sea, the many heated discussions by the experts on the beach on why Windward will always have the winning boat. This island and its regatta are

just simply alluring and I, for one, will be there every year. Carriacou offers something authentic, something different, something not to forget.

This year was particularly special for me, as I was sailing aboard *Savvy*, a traditional-style sloop built in Petite Martinique for Peter De Savary. The Grenada Board of Tourism asked if Port Louis Marina and Camper & Nicholson's (where I am Sales & Marketing Coordinator) could help entertain press from Canada for the weekend. Of course! So we set sail from Port Louis heading over to Carriacou.

Some background on *Savvy*. She was the first sloop built on Petite Martinique in over 13 years. This tradition had been lost over the last few decades and is only now seeing a major renaissance owing to a number of persons very passionate about boatbuilding history. Take for instance Alexis Andrews, Jeff Stevens and Alwin Enoe. Alexis's new books *Vanishing Ways...*

Something Authentic

by Danny Donelan



...and *Genesis* offer the funniest introduction you will read anywhere and the most beautiful photos of an art form that continues to reinvent itself. Jeff runs day tours on Petit St. Vincent aboard his traditionally built boat *Jambalaya* and is building another sloop on Petite Martinique as we speak. (Jeff, send me an invitation to the christening! I love the parties on Petite Martinique.) Most important are the master boatbuilders such as Alwin Enoe, who continue to do what their forefathers have been doing for so many years.

Sailing up along the west coast of Grenada this time of year is a treat in itself as you gaze over the lush undulating hillside sprinkled with the orange of the flamboyant and immortelle trees and the homes that hang precariously on stilts taller than the homes themselves. The island that captivates me most is Diamond Rock (also known as Kick 'em Jenny). Sailing toward this granite fortress of a rock on your left, with Isle de Ronde on your right, one cannot help but just stop talking (which, by the way, with me is not too often), lean back and just enjoy how varied and beautiful this little piece of Paradise actually is.

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page

Our first stop was Sandy Island off Carriacou. I mean, after all of the hard work sailing up here, you have to at least stop for a swim and a cold drink before the night's activities. Just to set the stage for those of you who have never been to Sandy Island, it is, as its name suggests, a sandbar in the middle of the sea with a few trees all full of pelicans, some makeshift ponds constructed out of discarded conch shells, and the most beautiful white sand you will see anywhere.

Enough relaxing for now: time to head off to dinner. Tonight the Board of Tourism and the two Dexters (Leggard and Lendore) from the Carriacou Regatta Committee are taking us over to Bogles Round House for an excellent meal. Bogles Round House is a story in itself. It was constructed by Kim and Sue Russell, who sailed to Grenada in 1990 from South America with their three young children. They stopped here to clear Customs and never left. From all accounts they were a rather interesting set and set about to build an unusual house with no straight edges. One of the quirkiest buildings, it resembles an egg from the outside and everything on the inside has a story as all of the materials have been recycled. So we all sat in this eclectic building and I must thank Roxanne (Grenada's Chef of the Year) for one of the best meals I have had in a long time and definitely one of the best chocolate desserts anywhere in the world. Ohhh, as your fork cuts the chocolate, the hot chocolate sauce just streams out onto your plate.

Day Two. At some point during the night, I put my foot on the deck to stop the hammock from swinging the opposite direction from the boat. I awake, check out the stragglers sleeping on the beach after last night's party, and jump into the sea. Then I start cooking breakfast for the other sleepy-heads waking up. Bacon, eggs, avocados, sardines, mangoes and lime-juice, and we are good to go. Today is the trial race for the island sloops, so off we go from Hillsborough heading to Windward. Unfortunately the weather and the captain, who has a wedding to attend in Petite Martinique, have other plans for us.

So we dodge a few small squalls (mostly rain) and head over for the wedding. I have never in my life crashed a wedding before, but I have also never felt so welcomed by complete strangers. Quite unusual, the weddings on this island. Everyone gets together and contributes a little something to the fête. The party starts at 9:00AM, only to stop so everyone can go to the church for the formalities, then it's back to the fête and the Heinekens are flowing like water. I have never seen so many cases of Heinekens in my life: it's like everyone on the island has their personal stockpile. At about 9:00PM I'd had enough but the other guests were still there partying like crazy on the beach.

Day Three is the Round the Island Race, so we head over to Windward for the start. Going into the channel at Windward you encounter the most lovely sight. I'm always amazed at this spot on Carriacou, with its beautiful traditional wooden homes on the beach bunched together with the backdrop the Grenadine islands and some of the clearest, bluest waters.

This is the only regatta where there is no countdown to the start. The rule is: just try be as close to the committee boat as possible, once it arrives, because when they shoot that gun the race is off. So everyone is making tight tacks around the committee boat and then, BANG, the gun fires and six sloops are competing



At the open boat races in Hillsborough

quite closely at the start. When we hit the downwind leg, the spinnakers are shot out. Passing by Hillsborough then Sandy Island we head for the upwind leg. This is where the seas get a bit harsher but *Savvy* is handling them well. The race is won by Cyril Compton's *Margeto*, with *Glacier* and *Maristella* taking second and third place respectively.

After a long day we pass Windward and head over to Hillsborough for the night's activities. One of the comments I have to make about Carriacou Regatta and the organizing committee is that there is always something happening on the island, and they are always fun events. Tonight we are heading out to look for some street food and take in a bit of the Ms. Aquaval Queen Show.

The Jupa is the spot on the island where all of the regatta events concentrate. With a number of bars all within a few feet of each other right on the beach, this is the spot where the DJs are blasting all of the new soca and calypso songs for Grenada Carnival, which is the following week. It's the spot where you will hear the news of the day and who beat whom. (*Passion* was victorious in today's special Long Open Boats race.) It's also the spot where you get the best street food on the island. On either side of the street the steel-drum barbecues and makeshift bars are plying their trade while the soca reverberates through your soul. The Queen Show is equally exciting as Ms. Grenada, Ms. Carriacou, Ms. Petite Martinique, Ms. Union Island, Ms. St. Lucia and Ms. Bequia strut their stuff on stage for a very appreciative audience. Ms. Barbados, Marsha Whittaker, was named Queen.

Sunday reaches, and it's our last day. Breakfast at Snagg's Beach Bar, which is the quaintest spot on the beach in Hillsborough overlooking the racing. Today it's the smaller workboats on the beach and the kids in the Optimists. The crowds have gathered and are talking animatedly about who the winner will be. All races start from the beach with the racers pushing or carrying their boats into the water then setting off on the course. Ballast includes crew and sandbags which you can see crew throwing over the side to lighten the

load at many points during the day. "Carriacou Cigarettes" (very fast speedboats built in Carriacou) can be seen with sunshades up, zooming by, taking spectators out to shout encouragement to their racing friends.

This is a festival for everyone — racers and landlubbers alike. Donkey races, lime-and-spoon (running down the road without letting the lime fall out of the spoon), tug-o-war and greasy pole are some of the activities happening on land while the racers are out on the water. The greasy pole provides quite a lot of laughs as the contestants walk precariously along a pole covered in grease, the object to get to the end and pull off a flag. Fortunately for the contestants, the pole is extended over the water.

Once again the races end with all enjoying themselves at the Jupa, discussing the day's racing while the soca belts out of the oversized speakers and the street vendors light up their barbecues. This is the sort of festival where you realize, after four days of sailing, partying and meeting some really interesting people, that sometimes it's more fulfilling to be in a place that feels real, a place that has an authentic culture and fun people who are out to enjoy themselves. All of this, and you have the beauty of Grenada and the Grenadines and their people as the backdrop to one cool place to be in August.

Sloops and Boats Overall Winners

Large Decked Sloops

- 1) *Glacier*, Kenrick Patrice, Carriacou
- 2) *Margeto*, Cyril Compton, Carriacou
- 3) *Maristella*, Michael Bethel, Carriacou

Small Decked Sloops

- 1) *Run Away*, Javid McLawrence, Carriacou
- 2) *Small Pin*, Hope McLawrence, Carriacou

Long Open Boats A

- 1) *Hurricane*, Benson Patrice, Carriacou
- 2) *Passion*, Matthew Joseph, Carriacou

Long Open Boats B

- 1) *Limbo*, Allick Daniel, Bequia
- 2) *Ace*, D. Joseph, Carriacou

Stern Boats

- 1) *Outrage*, Emmanuel Bethel, Petite Martinique
- 2) *Ghost*, Cosmos Bethel, Petite Martinique

Small Open Boats A

- 1) *Pimp*, Verol Compton, Carriacou
- 2) *Ark Royal*, Roy Delisle, Petite Martinique
- 3) *Devine*, Delacey Leslie, Bequia

Small Open Boats B

- 1) *Now 4 Now*, Clayton DeRoche, Petite Martinique
- 2) *Solo*, Adrian Bethel, Petite Martinique
- 3) *Parasite*, Gerald Bethel, Petite Martinique

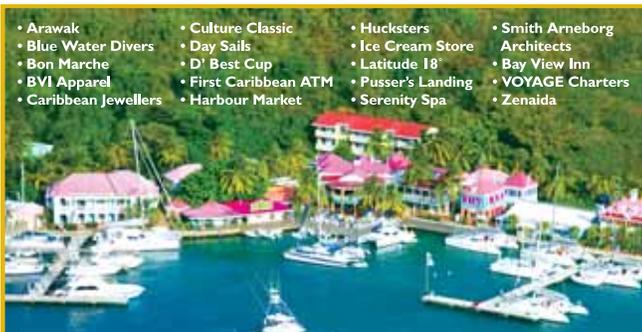
Small Open Boats C

- 1) *Bad Feelings*, Samuel Forde, Mayreau
- 2) *D-Shark*, Hudson Williams, Canouan
- 3) *I'm Alive*, Adolphus Forde, Mayreau

Small Open Boats D

- 1) *Swift*, Martin Alexander, Grenada
- 2) *Endeavor*, Jahvid George, Grenada
- 3) *Classic*, C. Bernadine, Grenada

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REGATTA NEWS

Team T&T Tops Dinghy Champs

Teams from six different Caribbean islands, comprising some 40 young sailors, competed in the Caribbean Dinghy Championship regatta, held in Antigua on July 19th and 20th. The event was hosted by the Antigua Yacht Club. The Caribbean Dinghy Championship, sanctioned by the Caribbean Sailing Association, is held in a different country every year. Trinidad & Tobago took home the Caribbean Dinghy Championships' trophy for 2008, for the first

time since the start of the event in 1985. Support by the Sports Company of Trinidad & Tobago during the past two years enabled the Trinidad & Tobago Sailing Association to appoint specialist race coaches for the Optimist and Laser class.

The best class results came from ten-year-old Myles Kaufmann who won seven out of the nine races in the Optimist 11-years-and-under class, taking home first prize. Trinidad & Tobago's 18-year-old Andrew Lewis won the Laser Standard class, holding Antigua's Sean Malone at bay by three points. Alistair Affoo, 17, also of T&T, had some stiff competition in the Laser Radial class, which was won by Nicolas Rendu from Martinique. A battle for second place between Alistair and Ray Potter from Antigua took place on Sunday when both sailors were tied at 19 points with one race remaining. In the deciding race of the Championships, Alistair managed to beat Ray in a one-on-one fight, finishing first in the final race of the event. Trinidad & Tobago will defend their title next year,

when the Caribbean Dinghy Championships will be held in Martinique.

For more information on youth sailing in Trinidad & Tobago visit www.ttsailing.org.

Records Fall in Two July Fishing Events

Derek Quetel reeled in a tournament record-setting 54.11-pound kingfish at the 20TH ANNIVERSARY BASTILLE DAY KINGFISH TOURNAMENT in St Thomas, USVI, held on July 13th.

As Carol Bareuther reports, Quetel was fishing aboard the 27-foot Rambo, 4 KIT 2. It was mid-morning when the whopper hit on a ballyhoo-rigged line. "It just blasted out of nowhere," he says. "I was captaining at the time. I asked my friend to grab the wheel, and then I turned, grabbed my rod and hooked up. I had him in the boat in about 15 to 20 minutes." After that, Quetel says, "We didn't see any more. That was the last fish of the day for us."

Quetel pocketed US\$2,000 in cash for his Largest Kingfish, sponsored by N.E.M. (West Indies) Insurance Limited, managed in the USVI by Red Hook Agencies, Inc. and also a weekend for two at Divi Carina Bay Beach Resort & Casino, with airline tickets compliments of Seaborne Airlines.

With 12 fish (187.14-pounds) caught total, five (124.89-pounds) of them kingfish, Quetel also won Best Boat and Best Captain, and was awarded \$1,000 cash for each title, from Offshore Marine and Yanmar.

Meanwhile, Stéphane Legendre reports from Guadeloupe that the GUADELOUPE LAND ROVER FISHING FESTIVAL 2008, OCEAN YACHTS EDITION, dates were changed from November to July — and it seemed to have been the right decision!

This year's catches had nothing in common with last year's. A 122-pound tuna was landed on the first day and a 489-pound blue marlin (validated by the International Fishing Association) on the second day of the four-day competition. The island's previous blue marlin record of 409 pound was finally broken after six years.

It took *Gustavia II's* Guadeloupean crew an hour and ten minutes to hoist the blue marlin on board after a great fight and for Franck Nouy, the owner of *Gustavia II*, only ten minutes to become the owner of a beautiful, four-wheel-drive Land Rover Defender G4.

Sixteen boats joined this year's tournament, which ran from July 15th through 19th. Boats came from Antigua, Saint Lucia, Martinique and Guadeloupe. The festival was hosted by Marina Bas du Fort.

—Continued on next page



Team T&T with the Caribbean Dinghy Championship Trophy. From left to right: Andrew Lewis, Alistair Affoo, Jordan Rousseau, Myles Kaufmann, Mark Peters, Joseph Moraine and coach Philip de Gannes

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NORTH SIDE SPORT FISHING CLUB

—Continued from previous page

The Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were full fishing days, and the Saturday was dedicated to an all-day party and relaxation at Gosier Islet beach.

Although the change from November to July brought a great catch, the BVI hosts an international tournament at the same time, so next year's event will be held from May 5th through 9th, hoping for equally excellent fishing and increased participation.

For more information on the Guadeloupe Fishing Festival 2009 contact Jean Marie Rosemont at (590 690) 554 662 or visit www.fishing-festival.com.

Women's Keelboat Champs Set for November

The Women's Caribbean One-Design Keelboat Championship 2008 is scheduled for November 1st and 2nd in St. Maarten. The regatta, organized by the Sint Maarten Yacht Club, will be sailed on a one-design fleet of identical Sun Fast 20 boats from Lagoon Sailboat Rentals. The regatta will either be sailed in a two-pool format, which will result in a final of a Gold Fleet and a Silver Fleet, or in a one-fleet rotation of boats.

Teams are expected from Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Antigua, the British Virgin Islands and possibly farther afield, as well as from St. Maarten.

The regatta will be open to up to 18 teams. Each team may only race with not less than three and not more than four women per team on the boat. Teams should wear co-ordinated coloured shirts or outfits, which have the function of identifying the teams during sailing to the committee and spectators. For this reason, the shirts should be distinct colours. The regatta will not provide for these shirts or outfits.

Registration, welcoming party and the skippers' briefing will be on Friday October 31st at 6:00PM, at the Sint Maarten Yacht Club. Prizes will be awarded after the racing on Sunday November 2nd at the Sint Maarten Yacht Club.

For more information contact director@bigboatseries.com.

Nix to Enter Golden Rock Regatta

The organizers of the Golden Rock Regatta, now in its fourth year, announced the entry of the 60-foot racing sloop *Nix*.

The regatta starts from Great Bay, St. Maarten, on November 10th with a pursuit race to Gustavia,

St. Barths. This will be followed on the second day with a race to Frigate Bay, St. Kitts. After an overnight there, the fleet continues to St. Kitts: "The Golden Rock". Here the fleet will stay two days and sail two windward/leeward races before the grand finale race from St. Kitts back to Oyster Pond in St. Martin.

The regatta is a feature on many Dutch sailing enthusiasts' calendars and now growing in popularity with US-based sailors. Local sailors are also showing interest and are already looking at their schedules to take the time off to race.

This regatta has featured on the popular European TV Sailing Channel and in many prominent sailing magazines and publications.

Race organizer Jules Hermesen reported that he has received 15 entries already, with a number of teams forming in the USA and interest from Germany and Belgium.

For more information contact local organizer [Bea Hootsmans at bea@goldenrockregatta.com](mailto:Bea.Hootsmans@bea@goldenrockregatta.com).

'Spice Girls' Prepare for Caribbean

July 25th saw the Class 40 *Concise* hold the first trial for its all-female crew for the forthcoming Spice Race from England to the Caribbean. The hopeful "Spice Girls", Carrie Biggs, Jamie Harris and Eleanor Littlejohn, took *Concise* up the Solent before performing a series of spinnaker jibes back towards their home base in the Hamble.

The Spice Race starts on November 15th from the Royal Squadron line in Cowes, before the 4,321-mile run to Port Louis Marina, St. George's, Grenada. Competitors will cross the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay and then head south along the Atlantic coasts of France, Spain and Portugal. After passing the Strait of Gibraltar the yachts will head for the Canary Islands and leave La Palma to starboard, then search for the tradewinds. Crossing the Atlantic, they'll leave Barbados to port.

The organizers are seeking to hold "an event within an event" with several National Ladies' Teams racing against each other offshore for the first time. Currently there are teams from England and Holland showing interest, with a chance of additional competitors from the United States, France and Ireland.

Meanwhile, interest in the main event for Class 40 and IRC yachts continues to build, with enquiries coming from countries including China, Norway, South Africa, Germany, France and the UK.

—Continued on next page

Front row from left to right: Tamika Amey, Alvin Turbe, winning angler Derek Quetel, Steve Turbe, Ernest Quetel, Jr. Back row: The winning total catch's 125 pounds of kingfish!



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As well as boats wanting to race, there have been enquiries from people who want to charter boats and individuals looking for crew positions, both paid and paying.

For more information on the Spice Race visit www.spicerace.com or contact Tony Lawson at Lawson@longdene.co.uk.

Aruba Heineken Beach Cat Regatta

The Aruba Heineken Catamaran Regatta 2008 will take place from the 13th to the 23rd of November. Approximately 50 catamaran teams are expected to compete. The Dutchmen Eduard van Zanen and Mischa Heemskerk claimed the title in 2007 after a tough competition. They will compete again this year to defend their title.

The program will be one day longer this year, to make nine days in all, so that the mainly European contestants will have more time to acclimatize.

A total of 12 races will be spread over five competition days. These races vary from short to (semi) long-distance races along the beautiful Aruban coast and through the challenging lagoon.

The organization is expecting participants from the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the UK. This year local teams from Aruba will participate, and probably some from the United States as well.

It is now possible to register on the new website www.arubaregatta.nl. For more information contact Edwin Lodder at info@arubaregatta.nl.

Transatlantic Maxi Yacht Cup 2008

Originally conceived in 2007 as a biennial event, the Transatlantic Maxi Yacht Cup will take place in 2008 based on the success of the inaugural event held last fall, and early inquiries suggest a number of boats are already making plans to challenge for the title.

Organized by the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda (YCCS), the starting gun for the 2008 Transatlantic Maxi Yacht Cup will sound on Monday, November 24, in Santa Cruz de Tenerife (the largest of the seven Canary Islands off the northwest coast of Africa), setting the Maxis racing across the North Atlantic Ocean. It should take them roughly two weeks to reach the finish line off the island of Sint Maarten in the Netherlands Antilles.

Two Maxis which have submitted their 2008 entry forms are *Sojana*, the 115-foot Farr-designed Bermudian ketch owned by Peter Harrison (GBR), and *Bossanova*, the *Simonis 67* belonging to YCCS member Pietro Motta (ITA). *Sojana* is familiar with victory in

Caribbean waters having won the St. Barth Bucket (2007) as well as the St. Martin Heineken Regatta (2008, 2007). She will be looking to improve on her second-place real time finish behind *Nariida*, the Wally owned by Morten Bergesen (NOR), who took line honors in the 2007 inaugural event.

The Transatlantic Maxi Yacht Cup is promoted by the International Maxi Association (IMA), with YCCS organizing the regatta in collaboration with the Real Club Náutico de Tenerife for the start and the Sint Maarten Yacht Club for the finish. It is open to monohull Maxi yachts with a minimum overall length of 18 metres (59 feet) that are in compliance with the IMA's five division regulations (Racing, Cruising, Wally,

Spirit of Tradition and Mini Maxi).

The Notice of Race can be found at www.yccs.it/portal/regatta.php?eventId=142&target=noticeofrace.

Kayak Race Series Coming

The Caribbean Mini-Tour of 2008 consists of two kayak races. The Soudalga Challenge, a well-established 25-kilometre race from St. Barths to St. Maarten across the open water of the St Barths channel, will be held on September 28th, followed by the Defis Guadeloupe on October 4th and 5th, which will have a new course this year, starting at Desirade Island and finishing in St. François on the south coast of Guadeloupe.

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Open-water kayak racing is an up-and-coming sport. The Caribbean Mini-Tour 2008 includes a St Barths-to-St Maarten leg, plus a new course from Desirade to Guadeloupe

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The races have been planned to slot in immediately after the US Championships, to allow paddlers to compete in San Francisco, come down to the Caribbean, and then continue to the Mayor's Cup in New York later in October.

Interest for 2008 has been high, with committed paddlers from the Caribbean region, the USA, France, South America and Sweden showing interest.

For more information contact Stuart Knaggs at thebrowns@domaccess.com or Olivier Tanton at otanton@gmail.com.

Third Superyacht Cup Antigua

The third Superyacht Cup Antigua will be held from December 9th through 12th, in Nelson's Dockyard, English Harbour, Antigua. The event is timed to follow on from the Antigua Yacht Charter Show, December 4th through 9th.

This year, ten to 12 yachts are expected to take part, and already confirmed is the recently launched P2, the 38-metre (125-foot) sloop designed by Philippe Briand and built by Perini Navi. Last year's winner, *Sojana*, the 35-metre ketch owned by Peter Harrison, will be back to defend her title.

For more information visit www.thesuperyachtcup.com.

Calling All Tall Ships!

West Indies Events and the St. Maarten-St. Martin Classic Yacht Regatta Foundation are inviting all Tall Ships to come to St. Maarten in January 2009. A special course for those vessels has been added in the fourth classic regatta, which will be held during the third week of January. The Tall Ships will not have to pay a fee to participate in the St. Maarten-St. Martin Classic Yacht Regatta.

The fourth Invitational St. Maarten-St. Martin Classic Yacht Regatta 2009 kicks off on Thursday January 22nd with a skippers' briefing and official opening ceremony. Sailing starts the next day, racing from Great Bay to Marigot where the yachts will be the guests of Fort Louis Marina.

Saturday will be the special Tall Ships Day when all classics and the Tall Ships will start at Marigot



Tall ships like *Caledonia* will be a special attraction at the St. Maarten-St. Martin Classic Yacht regatta in January

and sail towards the finish line in Great Bay. Organizers received the authorization from the Sint Maarten Port Authorities to dock the Tall Ships at the Pointe Blanche cruise ship pier so that passengers can disembark and an onboard VIP reception can be held that Saturday evening after the race. The general public will have the opportunity to visit the ships on Sunday morning while they are in Great Bay.

The regular schooners, vintage, spirit of tradition and classic yachts in the regatta will set sail again that Sunday morning for the last regatta day, towards Anguilla and return to the finish in Great Bay in the afternoon.

A promotional version of the 2008 regatta documentary has been published at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ad-ID92BtCw.

For more information visit www.ClassicRegatta.com.

International Rolex Regatta 2009

The 36th running of the International Rolex Regatta is sure to build on its past successes, which this year included the addition of IRC racing and joining with the BVI Spring Regatta to offer the inaugural Virgin Islands Race Week.

With next year's racing scheduled for Friday, March 27 through Sunday, March 29, the International Rolex Regatta is one of the most popular of several Caribbean sailing events that, when strung together, can keep a hardcore, fun-loving racer occupied in the islands for the better part of two months. While it is part of the US-IRC Gulf Stream Series, the event also hosts classes for CSA (or "Caribbean Rule") racing as well as one-designs, beach cats and large multihulls.

"We've proudly hosted this regatta since 1974," says William Newbold, Commodore of St. Thomas Yacht Club. "Over three days, the finest yachtsmen and yachtswomen from around the Caribbean, United States, and Europe join in world-class racing in a spectacular environment, which includes the warm, clear waters surrounding our club. It's an adventurous way to get a jump on their summer sailing season."

For more information visit www.rolexcupregatta.com.



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ME and the missus, Yvonne, aboard *Chaser II*, and our friends Chris and Tony on *Waylander* cruised the Greater Antilles this past winter. We made our way via the south coast of the Dominican Republic to Ile-à-Vache, Haiti and then to Jamaica before arriving at this year's westernmost destination, Cuba.

We had sailed to the Greater Antilles direct from Venezuela on our 44-foot Hunter Legend Deck Saloon. During the three-day crossing from Isla Blanquilla to Casa de Campo Marina in the Dominican Republic we encountered some bad weather, and our thoughts at that time had already turned to our return trip to Venezuela. Would it be easiest to hop down the island chain, or sail east to Puerto Rico then across to Blanquilla, or maybe even go east to the Dominican Republic and then across to Curaçao or Bonaire?

Any of these routes involved working against the wind and current. No way did we want to encounter the weather we'd had coming north, so we again made every effort to get a correct forecast, erring on the side of caution. Yes, we're sailors and some would say we shouldn't concern ourselves about a storm or two. Ordeal or adventure: it's a state of mind. Maybe, but Yvonne and I are here to enjoy our sailing experiences not to punish ourselves and our home. We have all the adventure we need.

On our way to Cuba we had stopped in the Errol Flynn Marina in Port Antonio on the eastern end of Jamaica. In the greenest part of Jamaica, it is beautiful. (Ironically, like Trinidad, Venezuela and Haiti, Jamaica had been on a list we were once given of places to avoid.) At that time we could only stay a couple of days, so our route south had to include a return visit.

Many years ago, the film star and yachtsman Errol Flynn was captivated by the Port Antonio area and reportedly commented that it was more beautiful than



Above: Only 300 metres from the marina, Tony dinghies over a pretty reef in Port Antonio

Below: The main channel entrance



any woman he had seen (and legend has it he made efforts to see a few). The actor once owned a hotel in Port Antonio and his widow still resides here on a 2000-acre ranch that she manages herself. As a tribute to the swashbuckling icon who starred in movies such as "Captain Blood", "In the Wake of the Bounty" and "The Sea Hawk", the owners of the marina at Port Antonio changed its name during a refurbishment to Errol Flynn Marina.

The entrance to the bay is absolutely stunning; the colours of the reef, the water, the vegetation and the mountains are breathtaking. As you turn the corner, the marina appears with Navy Island on one side and a small deserted beach on the other. It is totally protected from the wind and waves.

Errol Flynn Marina is a 32-slip yacht complex that accommodates vessels up to 350 feet LOA with a maximum depth of 17 feet. It also boasts single and three-phase power and shore storage and is an official port of entry with 24-hour Customs and Immigration. Boat repairs and maintenance are available at the full-service boatyard, which features a 100-ton boatlift, the only one of its kind in this part of the Caribbean. The marina also has free WiFi — something that's often not mentioned.

We were surprised that the marina is not continually full, but slips were available on both our visits.

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For those who prefer, the anchorage is superb, and for a small fee the amenities of the marina (swimming pool, laundry, etcetera) are available. George, the dockmaster, and Dale, the marina manager, personally welcome all new arrivals and are on hand whenever you need assistance.

Within the marina area you can walk along to the small, underutilized cruise ship dock. The little beach by the dock is beautiful and there is a lovely bar and restaurant alongside. The landscaping is gorgeous.

About a hundred yards across the water is Navy Island, Errol Flynn's former Paradise. Here once was a beautiful hotel, pool, bar and restaurant with white sandy beaches overlooking the Caribbean. Now all the buildings are derelict, the gardens overgrown, and beaches difficult to access.

Although there have been rumours of plans to make the whole area, not just Navy Island, more commercialized, like many other resort areas in Jamaica, many people would like to see it remain as it is. For the moment, this really is a jewel in the Caribbean.

Outside the marina gates is a lovely, picture-postcard Caribbean town, with maybe a touch of Olde England. There are bright colours, mostly well-tended houses and shops, street vendors and markets, good bars and quaint eateries. It's safe to walk the streets, day or night, and the local people always have time for a chat.

Time went very quickly here, and it is somewhere we could have stayed longer. We did a lot of walking



Above: Outside the marina gates is a picture-postcard Caribbean town



Left: A well-sheltered, nicely landscaped marina with free WiFi, no less — we were pleased to get a slip here both times we visited

around the town, the beaches and the fort. We traveled by car to some of the local sights of the Port Antonio area, seeing some attractive bays that may not quite be suitable for an overnight anchorage. On the beach we sampled some local barbecued jerk chicken that was amazing — or should I say a-blazing? Boy, it's hot stuff! We got the guy to put some of his homemade jerk sauce in a pot to take away. We have it on board in a glass jar and it doesn't seem to have eaten through the glass yet.

Tony and Sharon, whose yacht *Hoofbeats* was also in the marina, suggested we all go on a river-rafting trip. Yvonne and I had been rafting in Venezuela, but that was in white water — fast, brilliant, but over very quickly. Here the river trip is more relaxed. In fact, there are times when the river is too high and the water running too fast and the rafting has to be cancelled.

What a great, relaxing day we all had! Our trip was a very leisurely drift down the river with two passengers per raft together with the "driver". It's pretty much a full day out, with maybe an hour's drive by taxi there and the same home again. The river trip itself is about three hours, with a lunch stop on the riverbank.

The lunch was superb: nothing fancy or touristy. A girl on the shore prepared and barbecued chicken and fish, and served it with rice and beans, for anyone passing. She had a couple of tables and benches and a cold-box for beers. The prices were good, too, even though I believe we passengers paid for our "chauffeurs" meals and drinks.

—Continued on next page

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After lunch we plunged into the river for a cool-down and a swim — no swimsuits necessary here. No, you don't go naked: just go in the clothes you're wearing. They dry in minutes and meanwhile help keep you cool back on the raft.



A superb lunch was prepared on the riverbank: nothing fancy or touristy

and set off.

Our decision was to steer slightly south of east. That way, if the weather forecast was wrong and the conditions not suitable after a day or so, we could turn north to the Dominican Republic and wait there until things improved.

and pieces that we might find hard to get elsewhere. The meat market was good, too — they had some great ribs and sausage. But our fridge and freezer were still full of wine and lobster, so we had to frantically eat shellfish and drink wine for the next few days to accommodate some of these beautiful porkies. The cruising life is tough, aye!

Just across the road from our anchorage in Spanish Waters was a small beach with beautifully clear water. There is also a sunken tugboat, which makes for interesting snorkeling and diving. The crews of *Waylander* and *Hoofbeats*, who accompanied us, are certified PADI open water divers. Yvonne and I weren't yet, so we decided to take a try-out dive with the others. It would count towards our course if we decided to continue. Our weather window to move on would open in three or four days time, so we just had time to do the course. It was a hard three days, diving in the mornings and taking classes in the afternoon plus getting the boat ready for sailing off, but we did it. Downtown Diving was the dive school, right on the beach: our instructor was excellent and the price was good.

We wanted to arrive back in Venezuela by the beginning of June. Yvonne had to fly back to Spain by the 10th to take part in the Moors and Christians Fiesta (it's like a smaller version of Trinidad Carnival), to see our son and then go on to the UK to see her father and our daughter.

I don't know why we bother planning anything. We should have learnt by now, because we always end up doing something else. Our "plan" had been to visit the islands of Bonaire, Las Aves, Los Roques and Tortuga on our way back to Puerto La Cruz. But then some people we met in the anchorage who are regular travelers back and forth suggested that it is far better when going east to coast-hop along the Venezuelan mainland, avoiding strong currents and headwinds.

So we headed southeast from Curaçao to Ensa Cata. After spending the night there, we were up early the next morning to sail to Marina Caraballeda. Our next overnight stop was Carenero, then Islas Piritu only 20 miles west of Puerto La Cruz. Coast-hopping worked for us. We had some of the best sailing we had in a long time pretty much all the way from Curaçao along the Venezuelan coast to Puerto La Cruz. With calm seas and sunshine we made seven to eight knots over the ground under sail. Plus we stayed upright — in a monohull. All the overnight stops were good anchorages, some in beautifully clear waters with some gorgeous coral and beautiful fish. The snorkelling was excellent in Ensa Cata — we'll go there again if passing that way.

We still plan to cruise the outer Venezuelan islands; maybe we'll visit them heading westwards and then return to Puerto La Cruz, coast hopping again.

Now, back in Puerto La Cruz, we have traveled more than 3,500 miles since our departure from here last November. We had some great times in amazing places. Did I mention the fishing? We had some good dorado, lots of barracuda, wahoo and a great marlin! And we had good company on this trip, making it even more enjoyable.

That's what we're here for.

You can read more about Phil and Yvonne's travels on Chaser II at blog.mailasail.com/chaser2.

Bring a hat or some shade: there is none on the raft and very little breeze. You might also need some bug spray if you're prone to attack.

This eastern part of Jamaica really is precious: probably one of the most attractive areas — if not the most attractive — we've been to in the Caribbean so far. We really didn't want to leave, but with the thought of our easterly trip ahead, leave we must.

We were constantly watching the weather on the internet and also talking to weather guru Chris Parker on the radio. A weather window opened which looked good for the next few days. It predicted ten knots of wind and calmish seas — when it's on the nose we don't want any more. So, we said our good-byes to the marina staff and newly acquired friends in the marina

As it turned out, 36 hours out of Jamaica, the sea was still kind, there were only ten knots of wind and there was little current against us. Our GRIB files were showing that these conditions would stay for the next few days, so we hung a right and headed direct to Curaçao.

After four days and nearly 600 miles we arrived in Curaçao, having had an unbelievably comfortable motorsail all the way, averaging just over 150 miles per day. Yes, we had to motor to help us point, but we enjoyed the trip.

We stayed in Curaçao for a week or so to see some sights, do a bit of retail therapy and visit the chandlers. I managed to get the new blades for my wind genny after a bird attack, and gathered a few other bits



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The island of St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands has a large mangrove lagoon at its southeast end. No motorized boats are allowed in the lagoon except during a hurricane, because it is a wildlife and marine sanctuary. We found this out while exploring in our dinghy one day and being turned back at the entrance to the lagoon.

Most of the area is very shallow and we wanted to look it over to see if we could get our boat in there in case of a storm. So how could we check it out? Maybe by kayak. We have an inflatable kayak, but it looked like it might be difficult to find a place where we could go ashore to inflate and launch it. Then we learned of a venture called Virgin Islands Ecotours (www.viecotours.com). They run kayak, snorkeling and hiking tours in the mangroves from a small establishment near the entrance to the lagoon — a perfect solution.

We made a reservation for a tour, docked our dinghy at the Yacht Haven Grande dinghy dock, and caught a safari bus to the Mangrove Lagoon Eco Center.

Our friendly tour guide, Frank Galdo, was extremely knowledgeable about the mangroves and life forms therein. As he explained, the lagoon contains the red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), so called because the roots are red, especially when wet. The trees grow pods that are self-propagating — when one drops off the tree, the top has tiny leaves ready to unfold and the bottom has a root ready to grab a toehold as soon as it touches bottom. The pod can float until this happens and, in this manner, the red mangrove has spread from Africa to many tropical waters of the Earth.



We beached the kayaks on a little spit of sand on one of the mangrove islands, Cas Cay, donned masks and fins and took a snorkel tour. The bottom was sandy rather than muddy as is so often the case in mangroves, so visibility was good. We saw lots of fish, especially around the remains of an old wreck. The most numerous were snappers and parrotfish, as well as angelfish and damselfish. Most were small, but we saw one angelfish as big as a platter. Frank pointed out a spiny lobster and also an octopus. The octopus was so well camouflaged that I couldn't see him even when Frank pointed to him. I spotted some movement on one rock as I swam past, like something retracting into the rock to avoid detection. Exactly the color of the rock, but with an eye giving himself away, he opened his jaw to reveal a double line of jagged teeth — it was an eel.

Overhead we saw a frigate bird soaring, watching for a seagull to snatch a fish that he could steal. Frigate birds have no oil on their skin or feathers to protect them in the water; they will drown. So they dive at another bird with a catch, hoping he will drop it. Then the frigate bird will try to snatch it before it falls into the water; if it does make it to the water, he tries to quickly scoop it up without getting wet.

Back at the beach, Frank passed around mini-Snickers bars and water. He walked us a short distance along a path in the mangroves and pointed out a tree the locals call The Poor Man's Lover because the leaves are shaped like hearts. The tree bears a beautiful yellow blossom with a deep red center which lasts only a short time, then is replaced by a small, black pod filled with seeds that falls to the ground to germinate and sprout another tree. At the shoreline was another plant called lady's slipper, one small leaf of which provides enough Vitamin C for about 90 percent of a person's required daily amount. Sailors once used it to prevent scurvy.

Then we retraced our steps to the kayaks, pulled them back into the water, boarded and started back to base. Frank gave us leave to head back without any stops or lectures and encouraged bumper kayaks, splashing, and general good fun. It was an interesting and enjoyable excursion. We had a good time and learned a lot to boot.

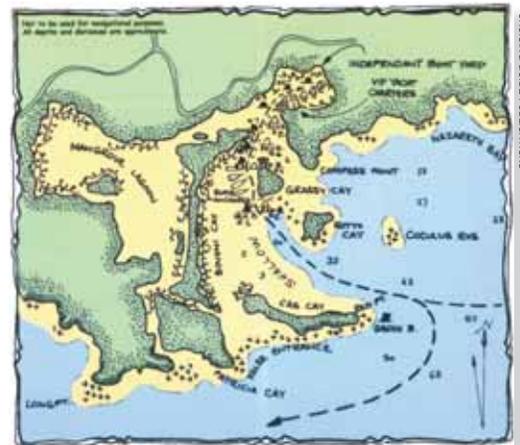
And, yes, we can get our boat into the mangroves in the event of a hurricane.



Main photo: A kayak tour is a wonder-filled way to explore the mangroves

As the mangrove puts down roots, sediment and debris are captured until eventually land is formed. Tiny fish hatchlings and other aquatic creatures find protection among the roots. We saw silversides and a tiny inch-and-half-long barracuda. Birds take refuge in the higher branches, safe from land predators. The filtering system of the roots also prevents the soil run-off and wastes from reaching the coral reef.

We saw seagrass and various other plants, and some starfish. One plant that grows on the bottom forms round, green balls on the end of a short stalk. These are called (non-scientifically) sailor's eye. A most interesting creature that inhabits the lagoon is the upside-down jellyfish (*Cassiopea xamachana*). It has very short tentacles that attach to the bottom to anchor it. Then it grows algae that other creatures feed on.



According to Nancy & Simon Scott's Cruising Guide to the Virgin Islands, yachts drawing up to six feet have access to the Lagoon, the best hurricane shelter on St. Thomas

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by Bernie Katchor

Above: A rural billboard heralds the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution: unity, firmness, victory

Below: Our floating home, anchored near the lighthouse at Cayo Jutias

OUR first cruise in Cuba was along the south coast in May and June 2007 (see "Cuba: Fair Winds and Friendly Faces", *Compass*, September 2007). While there, we Australians were issued with USA visas at the "enormous" USA embassy in Havana. Then we sailed our 1978-vintage Endeavour 43 ketch, *Australia 31*, up to Maine for the summer.

After hurricane season, Cuba and her wonderful people enticed my wife Yvonne and me to return. We had an enjoyable sail back to Cuba's north coast, where we stopped in one of the many well-sheltered anchorages about 60 miles from Havana. There, out of sight of the Guardia Frontera, we enjoyed ourselves for a week before entering Cuba officially. Cuba only allows visiting yachts two months before they have to exit, but we had friends from Australia arriving to join us in over two months time — hence our hiding. We have since learned that a boat only has to exit for 24 hours to obtain another two months' stay.

—Continued on next page



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TOHATSU

—Continued from previous page

The first day at anchor, the crew of one of the local lobster boats threw six grand lobsters on our deck and then anchored nearby. Every lobster in Cuba belongs to the government, as do the lobster boats. These carry approximately ten *marineros*, many of whom dive for the lobster, which is exported or used in the island's vast tourist-resort business.

Cubans are not supposed to board foreign vessels, but we encouraged some of the fishermen to come over in their dinghy. They spend a month on these dilapidated 30- to 50-foot ferrocement boats. The reinforcing, which expands as it rusts, causes the concrete to pop off the hulls.



From the thrift stores in the US and from friends, we had collected a forward cabin full of clothing, as well as 1946 Chevy parts and other goods sent by Miami Cubans for their families. We handed out little dresses and shorts for the fishermen's children, gifts totally beyond their ability to buy on the equivalent of US\$15 a month they earn.

A second group of fishermen came over with a slab of spotted eagle ray and some turtle meat. We were aghast that such beautiful sea creatures were killed, but the Cubans pointed out they could not eat lobster every day for a month. We soon discovered that the ray has a heavy-textured, non-fishy flavour, while turtle tastes of wild chicken.

Privately owned boats owned before the Revolution

in 1959 are allowed to fish, providing the owner pays certain taxes. So a 17-footer with a single-cylinder Chinese diesel would often come pop-popping by and offer us fish — and the captain almost became belligerent when Yvonne offered him a gift in return.

Thus, although we did not fish during the week before we cleared in, our freezer steadily filled. We sailed the 60 miles to Marina Hemingway, which is about 15 miles to the west of Havana. Small foreign craft are not allowed into Havana harbour itself unless a strong northerly makes the entrance to Hemingway untenable.

Calling the marina on VHF channel 72, we were directed to the "checking in wharf". Many yachters become frustrated with Cuba's check-in processes, but we find it enjoyable to meet all the delightful people



Above: We met this horse-cart driver in La Esperanza

Left: A habanera watches from her balcony as Cuba slowly changes

who step aboard after removing their boots (tell that to the USA coastguard). First came an elderly doctor who sat with us drinking tea after asking questions about our health and completing the paperwork in triplicate after we loaned (then gave) him a pen. The rest of the officials waited patiently on the wharf. The vet was next. He asked about rats and any vermin, then invited us to his house. The three Customs officers followed and, after they asked permission for it to do so, a sniffing dog then spent 20 minutes gallivanting about our boat. One of the officers, who made me follow him every minute as he "searched" our boat, even pulled out some drawers and looked inside. The port master followed. Then port officials, after giving us a receipt, held our flares, which were returned as we checked out of the Marina. The total cost of entry, including the second month's Immigration extension, was US\$125.

We had all sorts of goods for Cubans living in Havana and, in one case, enjoyed the sight of a whole family admiring new parts for their immobilised 1946 Chevrolet. We stayed a week to accept everyone's hospitality and see the wonders of the old city. It saddened me that our new Cuban friends were not allowed closer than 100 yards to our boat so we could not return their generous hospitality.

However, they love their country and their families are very close. Although they all complained about their predicament of low salaries and rigid government controls (the same as you and I complain about our governments), I asked many people whether, if they could escape as a family tomorrow, they would leave.

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Only one family of the dozen I asked this question said yes. The others hope things will change. We were told of one recent change: Raul Castro, Fidel's brother, now allows Cubans to stay at the resort hotels. "At a hundred and twenty dollars a night, this means if I

same journey. My friend got out with me and told me never to talk again in a Cuban taxi. The next taxi took us the seven miles at five pesos a person.

The prices at resorts, hotels and tourist-oriented restaurants are generally the same as in the USA. Most tourists, including hundreds from the USA, are



Above: Who needs DJs? As in most of Cuba, ureal live musicians play everywhere in Camaguey

work for seven months I will earn enough to stay one night," one Cuban said, laughing.

Cuba has one currency for the Cubans (pesos), and another currency for tourists and all luxury items: the CUC or Cuban convertible. Twenty-four Cuban pesos equal one CUC. Sadly, "luxury items" include toothpaste, soap and many items of clothing. A Cuban earning 300 Cuban pesos a month has to eat before converting any of his pesos to CUC to buy clothes or toiletries. Thus, these items are virtually unobtainable to the locals unless they go outside the system illegally to make money, as most do.

To our delight, as we bought local pesos, an eight-inch pizza cooked in a converted 55-gallon drum on a street corner cost the equivalent of 20 cents. An ice cream, also made on a street corner with a little gas engine driving the compressor, cost one cent.

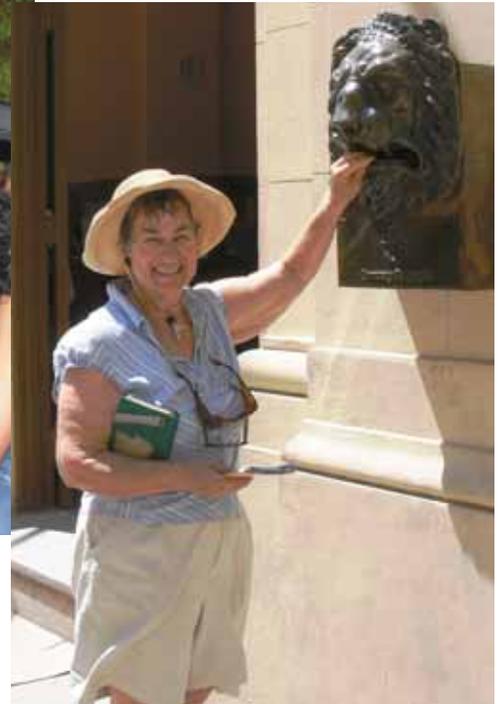
There are even Cuban-only taxis, in which a ride costs five local pesos. When one of our friends hailed a Cuban-only shared taxi, the driver heard I was foreign and put me out, telling me he could be jailed for carrying me. He informed me that I should take a tourist taxi, which costs 10 CUC (48 times the cost) for the

sequestered in all-inclusive resorts, never meeting any Cubans except the staff. Again this was good for us, as when we stopped by a resort's bar for a beer, no barman would accept our money, saying it was included.

In the USA, a dentist quoted me US\$4,500 for a new bridge. In the excellent Cuban government dental clinic, the first dentist who saw me said repair was impossible. But then a delightful elderly professor (watched by five students) fixed my broken teeth with posts and cemented the bridge back in. It took two hours and cost US\$25.

When it came time to leave Havana and Hemingway Marina, we took *Australia 31* back to the check-in wharf. We checked out for the most western port of entry and intermediate ports. Boats have to check in and out of every port, so although we knew we would not get as far as Maria La Gorda we put this as our destination and on our list named every bay in between so we could visit them if we so desired. Again, Customs searched our boat and the officers were most upset when I asked if they were looking for Cubans when a drawer was pulled out. A long explanation in rapid Spanish that I did not understand made me realize irreverent Australian humour was uncalled for.

We headed for Cayo Paraiso and wound our way in to anchor when Guardia Frontera aboard a fast cigarette boat came along and told us it was a forbidden anchorage. They said we must move about ten miles. Apparently two dinghies had been stolen from visiting yachts anchored there and ended up in Florida.



Right: Yvonne posts a letter in Old Havana

We explored the village of La Esperanza where we met Sandra, a delightful, buxom female. (Cubans often complain about the lack of food, but we did not see skinny ones.) She cooked us an evening meal on three occasions and we gave her clothing and eyeglasses in return.

Cuba has unlimited sheltered anchorages. Walking the beaches and enjoying our favourite pastime, bird watching, were rewarding as was exploring far up mangrove creeks in the dinghy.

Soon it was time to sail to Varadero to collect our first guests. Sailing overnight to Varadero we found that the coastline east of Havana was wall-to-wall towns.

—Continued on next page



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As we sailed only four miles offshore, the path was easy to follow. We decided to check in at Gaviota Marina as it is 12 miles northeast and to windward of the marina at Varadero. Formalities here were repeated: Customs, port authorities and Immigration.

Our American guests all flew in (via Mexico, as Mr. Bush needs the Miami Cuban votes) and more formalities occurred as they were searched by Customs and added to the crew list by Immigration. It is easy to have US guests aboard in Cuba: passports are never stamped — you are just issued a visa on a separate document. Passengers' names are removed from the crew list and their luggage searched as they leave. As we had six such comings and goings, we made good friends of the delightful authorities. Paperwork is Cuba. It takes three receipts to buy diesel, but at far less than USA prices it is worth the effort.

Each time we sailed with our guests eastward from Gaviota Marina in sheltered waters. Yvonne and I really enjoyed showing them how we have spent and enjoyed the last 15 years cruising. Highlights were actually having Cuban fishermen aboard to a rum party. We had stocked up with ten litres of local rum. The bar we bought from had a great barrel of it and every night after work Cubans of all shapes, sexes and ages cycled or walked up with a container and rum was measured into it in 100ml lots for about ten cents. As we bought sixty 100ml lots — six litres for US\$8 — there was a long laughing line of locals waiting. Cubans have to wait days for buses, hours for bread or rice, and never seem to complain.

Lobster and fish were showered upon us although they were easy to catch. One guest hauled in a fish over ten pounds every ten minutes as we sailed. Any large fish along Cuba's north coast can have ciguatera, whereas the south coast does not have this problem. Any fish we caught weighing over four pounds were returned to the ocean.

The Guardia Frontera officials were rowed out to us on commandeered fishing boats and checked our papers as we progressed eastward. The north coast, as compared to the south of Cuba, where we cruised last year, seemed to have more officials and we were not allowed to visit many towns on the mainland. To explore some towns, we used the excuse that we needed food, but at one town this excuse was rejected. Disappointed, we went the five miles back to Australia 31. Four hours later, three young men arrived, pad-

variety of vegetables from their garden.

Recently Cuban people have been allowed to grow vegetables to sell at the new markets, independent of the usual government-controlled system. Up until now, Cubans had little incentive to grow food at the pittance paid by the government, thus most of the fertile land was left lying unproductive. In the country-

the legal allowing of private farms.

Every shop is owned by the government — full stop. In one shop, we saw a woman with a sewing machine, along with a bookkeeper to take the money for her work. Such are the inefficiencies of communism. Both get a salary of about US\$15 a month. Medical care is free and of a good standard, however. Each month



Above: The Cuban fishermen we encountered were friendly and generous

Below: At La Esperanza, privately owned fishing boats are kept closed inside this 'cage' at night



dling a vessel very common in Cuba. Two large inner tubes were cut and had the ends sewn to keep the air in. A wooden frame with two sets of rowlocks was tied to the long inflated tubes. We often saw these craft miles out at sea. These lads brought us an enormous

side, we saw and bought from many private vegetable farms. In the towns, one has to buy what is available. On one day the market will have potatoes and beans, the next a great variety of fruits and veggies. It depends who comes to sell. Food is more readily available since

some food is subsidized, but not enough to last a person the whole month. For example, five eggs are allowed per person each month, but any extra are purchased at about five times the subsidized price.

Because we had to base at Varadero to meet our arriving groups of friends, we did not get far along the north coast. Our highlight was a week traveling by car, intensely bird watching with two friends who are professional ornithologists and a Cuban ornithologist who is the author of a book on the birds of Cuba. We saw 101 of Cuba's 300 birds, including many of the endemics.

Cuba is a true delight with friendly people. It is the safest country we have ever been in. As we sailed north again to avoid the 2008 hurricane season, we both agreed to return for a third visit in November. We plan to sail farther east along the northern coast — slowly, very slowly, enjoying the hundreds of islands.

See more of the adventures of Bernie and Yvonne on Australia 31 at www.berniekatchor.com.

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My wife Yvonne and I aboard *Chaser II* and our friends Chris and Tony on *Waylander* toured Cuba for a few weeks recently. Arriving from Jamaica, we cleared in at the south coast port of Cienfuegos (see our story in last month's *Compass*).

A lot has been written about Cuba during the past months, but we all have different experiences and interpret foreign cultures differently. So this is my summary of our visit, which I hope will be of interest to those planning to visit Cuba.

Cienfuegos

Cienfuegos is the town where we based ourselves. It is central to the areas we wanted to visit by car and a safe place to leave the boat. The marina staff was helpful, and there is a small shop for basic supplies, as well as a bar. Taxis can be called from the main road nearby. Within a short walk there are several bars and restaurants, ranging from the elegant to the roadside fast-food-type diner. The old Club Náutico (yacht club) and the amazingly ornate Palacio de Valle are within walking distance from the marina. Both of these remarkable buildings are open to the public to either walk round or dine. The prices for such decadence are quite average — as is the food.

Ask around and you find out the best *paladares* (private homes where meals can be bought). In town there is a fruit and vegetable market, which also sells fresh meat. It has a small bar inside that sells juice and gorgeous *chorizo* (sausage) rolls for a few cents. You pay in National Pesos here, so prices are good. Nearby there are bakeries and supermarkets. Note that some bakers aren't allowed to sell to non-Cubans, i.e. those without a ration book.

We found you can buy most supplies here if you look around. Our outdated guidebooks suggested that toilet rolls, soap, cooking oil and some other items would be impossible to find, so we stocked up, but all the shops were overflowing with the stuff. Che Guevara hats, T-shirts mugs, books, paintings, photos, you name it, are everywhere.

The Countryside

Cuba is a large country. The size of England, it has mountains, plains and some lovely villages. There are many rivers, caves and green fields growing tobacco, sugar and potatoes. It's all enhanced by the turn-of-the-20th-century style of transport ranging from oxcarts to tipper lorries used as buses. It was great to be able to travel by car or on foot safely: the roads were often empty, there was no rush, no hassle and no traffic jams. The few people we saw on the roadside all waved.

Havana

A special mention has to be made of Havana. We stayed in Old Havana, the historical area, again in a *casa particular* (private homes where rooms can be rented). Our apartment was in what looked like an old tenement building with a side door to the dirty staircase. Kids were playing baseball in the street, using a piece of wood for a bat and a bottle top as a ball: what skill they had with it, too! Despite the scruffy surroundings, we could walk the busy streets at night safely. It was great to be able to walk down the street listening for which bar had the best live music, and then pop in to enjoy a daiquiri and some first-rate salsa, meringue or son music.

We found a great Chinese restaurant in a grubby back street in Havana. A waiter standing outside beckoned us in and up a gloomy staircase. It looked decidedly dodgy, but we decided to take a look. Upstairs it was beautiful and the place was buzzing with local people. We had one of the best meals in Cuba there, not authentically Chinese (in fact, a bit more Cuban) but excellent quality, price and atmosphere.

Old Havana's buildings, cars, markets, harbour and fort are all worth special visits. Hotels such as the Inglaterra, with a piano player in the corner, are great places to pop in for a cocktail. El Bodeguita del Medio, one of Ernest Hemingway's favorite bars is worth a visit, if only for a beer. Tony loved the menu here!

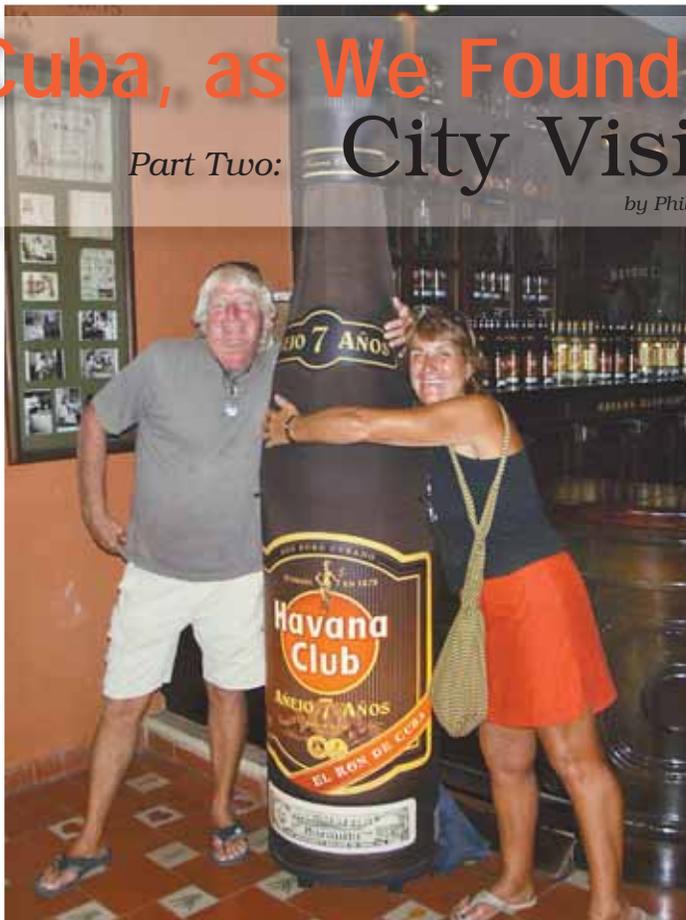
The people were lovely; we never had any problems whatsoever. There is little crime. Wherever we were, *habaneros* wanted to chat, unlike on many other Caribbean islands where people are more reserved. One or two would ask for a dollar after having greeted and welcomed us, but that happened in all the larger

towns. All our hosts at the *casas particulares* were exceptionally friendly and willing to talk about their life and problems living within Cuba, and what their hopes are for the future. Most if not all we spoke to thought change was on the way. I think believing that with a change of US government and a new leader within Cuba, negotiations for lifting the blockade could take place, still leaving the country independent.

—Continued on next page

Cuba, as We Found It Part Two: City Visits

by Phil Chapman



We love Havana... Club! Here we are with a new acquaintance at the Rum Museum. The people of Havana are lovely, too — we never had any problems whatsoever

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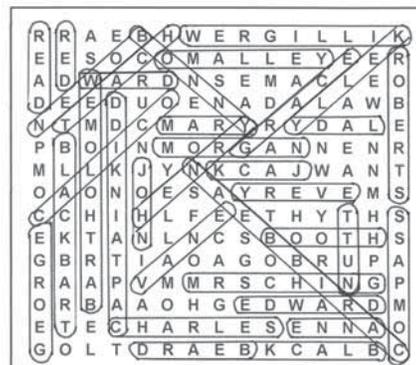
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PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN Solution



—Continued from previous page

Poverty, Health and Education

Cubans have little cash: 10 to 20 CUCs per month doesn't go far, even with the government subsidies of electricity, water, rent and basic foodstuffs. However, even if you have money there is little to buy, so lack of

to Raul Castro, even the prostitutes have degrees, though he didn't say what in.

US Visas

One surprise that is interesting to many European cruisers is the possibility of obtaining a United States visa in Havana. Europeans can fly into US territory on

booth where the young American girl behind the counter made polite conversation with us while typing on the computer. She asked where we were going next and why we wanted a visa, we told her we live on a boat and will be cruising the Caribbean during the next few years and would like to visit some US islands. That



Inside the Museum of the Revolution in Old Havana. This was the Presidential Palace from 1920 until 1959, and Tiffany & Company of New York was responsible for much of the Palace's décor. In contrast, exhibits in some other rooms now feature blood-stained and bullet-ridden uniforms from revolutionary battles

money isn't the controlling aspect of poverty.

In many ways I found these people quite rich. In some parts, they lived in beautiful countryside in pretty coloured houses with well-tended gardens. Our host in one of the guesthouses had chickens and pigs in the garden; he grew his own pineapples, mangoes, grapefruits, coconuts and vegetables. He even grew, dried and roasted his own coffee beans — absolutely beautiful.

Most people were smartly dressed, although some would argue that they go without food to have nice clothes. Also, as in many Communist countries where everyone is "equal", some are "more equal" than others. Many frequently ate in the same restaurants that we did, which was great, but people who can pay 10 CUCs for a single meal are obviously not earning the standard 15 CUCs a month.

There were hospitals and clinics everywhere, and all free. They looked like my recollection of an English doctor's surgery or worse, i.e. scruffy, but they are available. The stock of drugs and medicine is limited because of the blockade.

All the children go to school in their uniforms, very proud, smart and clean. Many young Cubans speak at least one other language, usually English. According

our "visa waiver" type passports, but we can't go in by boat using the same passport without a visa. If we do, (I was told by the US Immigration), even in a medical or weather emergency, we would be fined a minimum of US\$500 per person if we announced our arrival and a minimum of US\$5,000 if we didn't.

We heard through an internet source that we could obtain a US visa in Havana at the US embassy that doesn't officially exist, but hides inside a Swiss embassy that doesn't seem to exist either. We found the building behind about a hundred Cuban flags in the centre of Havana. There was a security guard every 20 metres around the perimeter.

We asked one guard where we could obtain a US visa, he made a phone call to his office, and they gave us a fax number where we should send all our information. We did this that same morning, then telephoned to see if they received it. They had, and gave us an appointment for the following day at 9:00am.

The security staff were aware of our appointment and directed us to the entrance. We had the usual searches and shown through the waiting room for our interview. We were called to a booth to pay US\$130 (non-refundable) then told to wait. We were then called to another

was our interview; she said that's fine, your ten-year visa will be ready for you to collect tomorrow, have a nice day. Which we did, a proper US visa, amusingly (we thought) stamped 'Issued in Havana'. It does expire on April 1st, but I think that's just a coincidence! So another good reason to go to Havana.

Trinidad

This is a very charming and ancient but very touristy town. There are many *casas particulares*, so many in fact that they have now closed the list for new applicants for this work. Our hosts here told us that they cannot close their house now for a rest or for restoration because their licence to operate would be given to somebody else.

Our house in Trinidad was particularly beautiful, though in desperate need of some TLC. It dated back, we were told, about 300 years and had been in the same family for the past 150 years. The elderly owner showed us some photos of her grandparents who were certainly well-to-do people of the day, being a lawyer and official photographer. This lovely old lady has seen many changes in her lifetime, having been reasonably well off at one time. The consequences of the US blockade moved them down into a struggling family.

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page

This, they told us, changed enormously when the Russians moved in and they were again able to buy the things they needed to have a little comfort. However, she said, this didn't last and when the Soviet Union broke up they were back to an even more desperate way of life. The owner's daughters and granddaughters now help in running the establishment.

I suppose as so-called capitalists we grow up with a different viewpoint. We see an opportunity and we invest or work hard in order to make a buck. But even



Above: The lush Cuban countryside around Piñar del Rio

Left: At last — it's lobster time!

Below: A typical scene. In Cuba, transportation includes the iconic old American cars — and just about anything else on wheels



if they had the money to do so, Cuban people are not permitted to invest in any moneymaking scheme, which breeds lethargy and lack of interest in work. This though is only my naïve opinion and observations obtained during the past weeks visiting and talking to the Cuban people we met.

Heading Back East

We cleared out of Cienfuegos and made our way back east. One of our anchorages, Cayo Breton (the "lobster capital", our guide book said) has a large fishermen's storage facility, but it is now closed.

We only met one fishing boat. We dinged over to have a chat with the crew and ask if they had a lobster or two to trade. They did, but said we mustn't tell anyone because the lobsters all belong to Fidel, so we won't mention it. We had a long chat with these guys — such a good crowd. They were in need of a few T-shirts and asked if we had any caps. We told them we had some soap and cooking oil, but they said no thanks, they had plenty of that. (So had we.) They loved our rum, though, judging by the partying going on aboard their boat all evening. One of them fell off their boat, twice!

Our freezers and tummies full, we settled down for the night to be rested for an early departure.

Cuba is a lovely country. We saw some beautiful sights and had some memorable times. But would we go back again? Personally, the answer would probably be no. I don't know why, but it just doesn't grab me like Venezuela, Trinidad or Jamaica for example.

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ACROSS

- 2) SLOW
- 4) MANS
- 5) DEAD
- 7) DOWN
- 8) LIFT
- 11) FLAT
- 12) HEADED
- 14) EYE
- 15) DOORS
- 18) SHEAVE
- 19) CHEST
- 21) WOOD KNEES
- 23) WATER
- 25) RISING
- 26) CALM
- 27) PAY
- 29) DEADEN
- 30) SET
- 32) WEIGHT

DOWN

- 1) END
- 3) WOOD
- 4) MONTHS
- 6) EFFECTS
- 9) FREIGHT
- 10) MENS
- 13) ANGLE
- 16) RECKONING
- 17) DEADLY
- 20) HEAD
- 21) WORKS
- 22) SHARES
- 24) ROPES
- 28) MEN
- 31) TO

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Best climate of the Caribbean

by Arlene Walrond

To me, travelling in Venezuela is an adventure. Be it a *por puesto* ride to the market or a bus trip to a scenic site, there are tales to tell.

The things I have observed over the years just waiting for the *lancha* to take me across the canal next to the Aqua Vi marina's hotel in Puerto La Cruz would amaze or maybe amuse you. The actual trip takes a minute or less, depending on the cargo. Apart from humans, that can include bicycles, sno-cone or hot-dog carts, and sometimes even animals. Rush hours or Sunday afternoons when people are returning from the beach provide the most interesting and entertaining moments. One thing I can say about the women in Venezuela is that they are not embarrassed about showing off their bodies, no matter what shape they're in. Some of them walk from the beach (which is about a mile from the canal) in their bathing suits, leaving little to the imagination. Whether the exposed flesh is enhanced by silicone or marred by cellulitis, it attracts the eye.

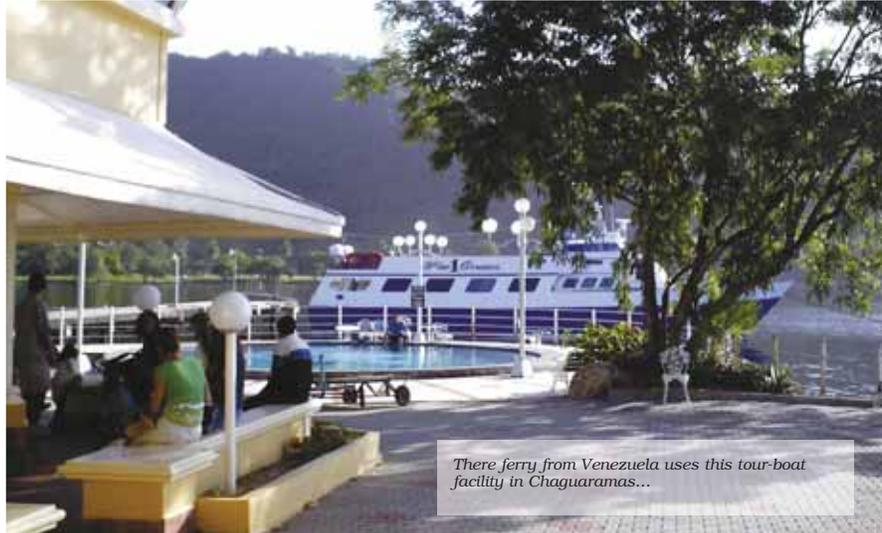
Long-distance travel beats all, though. Six years ago, my first bus ride from Puerto La Cruz eastward to the port town of Guiria to catch the ferry to Trinidad was an experience in itself. It was my first time on a long-distance bus and I had no idea what it would be like. The first clue that it would be different was that passengers were boarding with pillows and blankets. I didn't know then that we were looking at a seven- to eight-hour trip in an ice box on wheels. Most of the Venezuelan buses that I've travelled on were made in Brazil, so I'm not sure who should be given credit for the great air-conditioning systems in them. Needless to say I was unprepared for the coldness. Not long after take-off my hands and feet became numb and lifeless — but there is a God.

The bus left the terminal at 12:30AM and about three hours later it broke down. What a relief! It's the only time I have ever been happy for something like that to happen. It didn't matter that we were stranded in the middle of nowhere, not a building in sight. All passengers were asked to disembark as the driver and his companion tried to ascertain what the problem was. After their inspection the driver made a call, after which the passengers were told to retrieve their luggage.

Standing on the side of a narrow shoulderless highway in the dark can be scary, but at least I was no longer frozen. The bus driver announced that another bus would be along shortly.

—Continued on next page

ADVENTURES IN VENEZUELAN TRANSPORT



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Half an hour passed, and nothing. By then some passengers began flagging down passing vehicles. An hour later only a few of us remained, including a guy in a military uniform whose presence dispelled any fears I might have felt being in a strange place at



...where one passenger just couldn't resist a dip in the pool and a shower!

that ungodly hour. (Over the years, I've discovered that my confidence in that uniform was greatly misplaced. I can recount incidents here to substantiate that statement but it might not be in my best interest to do so.)

Anyway, another bus finally came along and we continued on our way, arriving at Guiria in mid-morning. The first thing I did was to freshen up in the bathroom at the bus station, which wasn't very clean with water barely trickling from the tap. The next time I made the trip I used a different bus company whose facilities are a lot better. The only problem there was that I had to

walk past a raging doberman on a long leash to get to the bathroom!

My first visit to Guiria was like going back in time. It reminded me of a typical rural town in Trinidad back in the Sixties when I was growing up. The population was small and the people were friendly and helpful. The pace was slow and laid back and I got the impression that crime wasn't an issue. I remember chatting with an old Syrian man who told me he had relatives in Trinidad. He was sitting half asleep outside his store, the door wide open when we approached. There wasn't much to steal back then anyway; the few stores that existed were sparsely stocked. I walked through the only appliance store which boasted a single item of each type, e.g. one stove, one fridge, etcetera. There was no washing machine. Six years later, this same store is so overflowing with goods there's hardly room to walk about, and there are other appliance stores as well.

Guiria today is a bustling town. A lot of development has taken place over the last two years. There's also been a massive influx of people, but progress isn't always a good thing. I liked the old Guiria better. Native Guirians that I've come in contact with over the years now tell me, "Be careful, hold on to your purse."

On two occasions subsequent to my first trip, the journey was interrupted a couple of hours' distance from Guiria by protesting villagers who blocked the road to call attention to some plight or the other, forcing passengers to walk long distances with heavy bags to find alternative transport. So, to avoid a harrowing bus trip, I travelled by plane a few times. It cost a lot more, but the time factor in getting from one destination to the next was an incentive — until I came to the realization that planes have a habit of falling out of the sky in Venezuela. It's not my intention to trivialize the matter, but since 2004 I've been taking notice and hardly a month goes by without an accident involving a plane or helicopter resulting in the loss of lives. So far for this year (May 2008) nearly a hundred people have died in plane crashes here, so I'm a bit wary.

The last time I made the trip to Guiria I found another way to beat the stress and inconvenience of that overnight bus ride. It put a dent in my purse, but

sometimes we have to make sacrifices for peace of mind. I left Puerto La Cruz early one day by *por puesto* route taxi (there's no bus until after noon) and rode to the town of Carúpano, which is roughly halfway to Guiria. I had lunch and a bathroom break there, then got in another *por puesto*. There were no incidents along the way and I arrived in Guiria by late afternoon. I checked into a hotel and had a very restful night. The next morning I got my name on the list at the office that handles the ferry bookings and paid my departure tax, after which I explored a bit taking in the most recent changes. I returned to my hotel room and watched TV until it was time to get ready to leave.

One of the things that have changed for the worse in Guiria are the facilities, or rather lack thereof, for passengers awaiting the ferry. Six years ago there was a roofed area (albeit no seats) that provided shelter from the elements. Some years later, a new berthing area was assigned to the ferry and for a while chairs were provided for patrons at the Guardia Nacional compound close by. I don't know what happened to change that, but now the only shelter is a large tree, with gas and oil pipelines for seats. A small tent is provided for the check-in procedure, but that would be inadequate if rain should fall.

Now compare that with the posh facilities at Pier 1 in Chaguaramas on the Trinidad end: clean bathrooms and proper seats in a beautiful setting. I know that these facilities were not created especially for the ferry passengers, but they're there and are well appreciated. So much so that last November (2007) while I was taking some photos with this article in mind, I observed one passenger circling the swimming pool. Then he took a seat close by and sat staring at the water. Finally, the water proved irresistible, for next thing I know he's swimming in the pool. I couldn't resist taking a shot of him.

The most unusual travelling experience I've had so far is that one morning in Trinidad I got to Chaguaramas just as the ferry was about to pull out. Everything was finalized and I was told there was no way I could get on board. Since the ferry operates only on Wednesdays I was in a fix. Noticing my distress, a man gave me a contact number for someone who liaises with boats going to Venezuela. When I made the call and heard that my prospective ride was a fishing boat I had doubts, but he assured me that another woman would be on board as well as a male passenger who had missed the ferry, too. It turned out to be a pleasant trip with very kind and courteous people.



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All who go to sea should contemplate safety as a primary issue.

If you overhear someone saying they "got wrecked", you first probably think they overdid it on rum, especially if they are sitting in a bar. Many years ago at Chief's Bar in Crown Bay, St. Thomas, I heard a seasoned yachting spin a story about surviving a shipwreck. The older man caught most of the patrons' watery-eyed attention, and attracted a bellyful of free drinks. He told of a freighter plowing into his sloop in the South Atlantic while crossing from Cape Town to Rio. His chorus line was: "Got to my grab bag just as Davy Jones grabbed my ankles". He hailed the crowd and waddled off to what looked like a pristine Catalina. In the following days his yarn transcended to all rot — free-drink bait — but I never forgot the necessity of an always-handly grab bag.

In the northern islands, after hurricanes such as Hugo, Marilyn, Georges and Lenny, I met many de-boat storm refugees. In the Grenadines, I've met a few sailors who had more than one boat sink beneath them. The story "It Ain't Over..." by Ruth Chesman in the April and May 1999 issues of *Compass* told of a true woman-overboard calamity in the Windwards. I'm glad I can't tell a personal sinking or overboard story. Fear, more than common sense, has kept me and the *Sea Cow* afloat. I always have my deck harness securely hooked on, and my grab bag ready.

No sailor has the intention of becoming a first-hand authority on surviving a shipwreck, but you must always be prepared just in case, even when island-hopping or day-sailing in the Caribbean. Disasters don't make appointments so, as they said in the Seventies, "have your shit together".

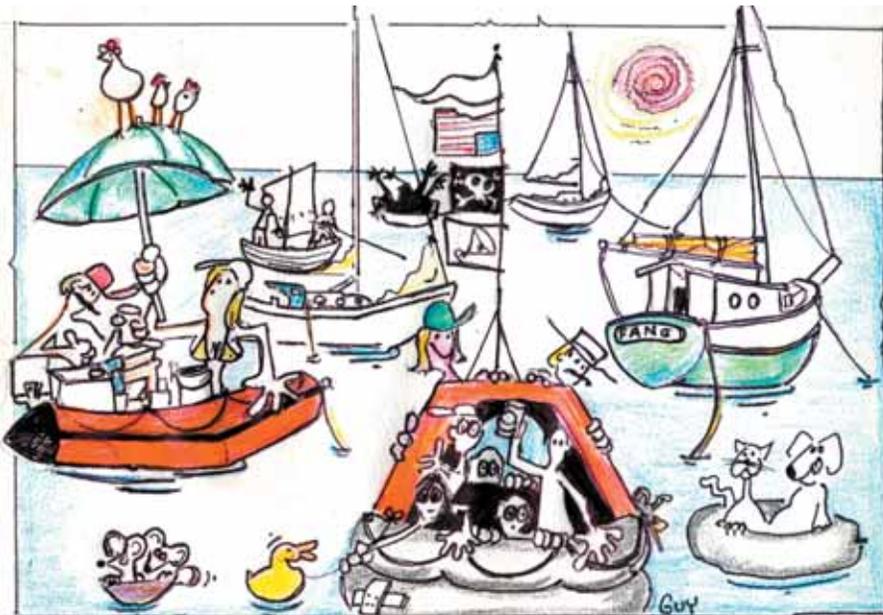
Every situation is different with winds, currents, and location: think about everything before deciding to leave the site of your shipwreck. And have your survival kit ready.

Organize a grab bag containing survival essentials. First, make sure you can alert others. Check your EPIRB. Radios and cell phones (fully charged and/or with spare batteries) are useful if you believe someone will be listening, and flares if you think someone's watching. The smallest and easiest signaling devices to carry are a signaling mirror and a whistle. You'll want to be able to tell rescuers exactly where you are, so include a handheld GPS and a compass.

Pack some food, MREs (meals ready to eat) if possible, plus lightweight clothes, hats, spare sunglasses, a slicker, a small first-aid kit and some sunblock. Some

AFTER THE BOAT SINKS...

by Ralph Trout



Do a lifeboat drill. Then sit there for a while and imagine how this would be for several hours or days

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lifeboat survivors swear that having hand-line fishing gear was the key to their survival. If you use a dinghy as a liferaft, a piece of suitable cloth can be used as a shade, rain catcher and makeshift sail.

Close to your dink, liferaft or hatch, store extra jugs of water to take with you if you have to abandon ship. The minimum water necessary to stay healthy is one liter a day, but you can survive on less than five ounces a day.

Better to have all of the above organized and not need it, than to be floating for days, castigating yourself for procrastination.

Put passports and ships' papers in a waterproof pouch that can be grabbed at the last minute. If you have time before abandoning ship, throw in the paper chart and ship's log, too.

Also if you have the time and space to include them, a wetsuit would be a great way to fight hypothermia, and fins, masks and snorkels might be useful.

Take some time and think of everything you might need in a liferaft or dinghy that takes up little space. Those wind-up flashlights and radios might be handy. A couple of books might help pass the time. But be realistic when packing your grab bag: if it includes everything including the kitchen sink, you won't be able to lift it. It might even sink the liferaft.

Then do a lifeboat drill. You might not want to actually deploy an inflatable liferaft, but pretend the boat is sinking fast and see how quickly you can collect your grab bag, water and other stuff and get into the dinghy. While you're in the dinghy, sit there for a while and imagine how this would be for several hours or days, and maybe rethink what you want (or don't want) to have with you.

Take some more time and contemplate all the other possible bad-luck scenarios that could possibly end better with a bit of planning: dismasting, engine failure, dead battery, man overboard.

I am definitely a worst-case scenario guy. When the *Cow's* engine failed on the leeward side of the Eastern Caribbean island chain, way west of Dominica, my friend Florida Nick asked who would come to help us. "Hondurans," I replied. (Was he expecting Sea Tow?) Fortunately, before we met any new friends from Roatan, we got the engine going again.

The *Cow's* Perkins only stopped once again, just outside Trinidad's Boca, and proved that having signaling equipment isn't everything. Many boats passed

by us and never indicated that they saw my flares; the coast guard didn't respond to my radio call. Several days later at a bar, a tugboat captain said he had heard my distress call but didn't respond since he thought I'd probably get her running. (I did.)

That same tug captain told his own tale of a rescue at sea, west of Jamaica. He was going to Kingston from Honduras when he was radio-hailed by a small sailboat. The woman screamed that her husband had been knocked overboard by the swinging boom a few hours before. The tug went to the sailboat and put two crewmen aboard. Both boats searched the area and finally found the man. The husband was so grateful, and fearful of another similar event, that he gave the tug captain his sailboat and he and his wife flew home.

So you've got to ask yourself: were you able to transmit a distress signal? Did anyone hear it? Did they reply? Can you signal visually for help if you see a boat or plane? Do you know your exact location? It is very hard to find a raft in the open sea without knowing reasonable coordinates or seeing a signal.

Bad weather delays searches. In the open ocean, having the patience and ability (rain catcher, fishing gear...) to wait for rescue might be the only solution.

If nobody knows your situation, you can see land nearby, and the prevailing current is in your favor, you might want to try to swim or paddle ashore (got a paddle?). If you can sail and steer your liferaft, go for it. But don't swim if rescuers know your whereabouts or you have any doubts about getting to shore: save your energy.

Drowning after a shipwreck or sinking is the number-one worry. Everyone's natural endurance is reduced by the stress of an actual sinking. After the wreck, real peril comes from exposure to the sun and salt, and hypothermia from cold water and the wind. Body heat loss is 25 times greater in water than in air.

In the liferaft, force yourself to relax and use less energy. You will need less food and water. Water is an absolute necessity, so don't let the first rainfall pass unprepared to catch the cure for dehydration. Digestion requires water. If your water supply is low, try not to eat. Your body needs water more than food. Most cast-away sailors would trade anything for a desalinating reverse osmosis hand pump (money extremely well spent) that can filter up to three liters an hour.

—Continued on next page

PRODUCT POSTINGS

Eco-Friendly Oil Clean-Up Kit

The environmentally friendly Oil Clean-Up Kit from Clean Water Solutions Inc. makes keeping your boat



simple, achievable reality. Just a small amount of Clean Water Microbial Powder and Blue Surfactant mixed with water will lift oil residue and pollutants from any surface and kills odors, while the Kit's Razor Sponge easily wipes away oil and grime. Fast, efficient, and low-cost, the Kit is perfect for cleaning and deodorizing heads, bilges, catch basins, septic tanks, porous surfaces and even laundry!

The key to Clean Water Solutions' eco-friendly products are naturally-occurring Archaea microbes in the Oil Clean-Up Kit that "eat" hydrocarbons from diesel fuel and gasoline, grease, lubricants, vegetable oils and sewage. Best of all, these microbes convert the dangerous hydrocarbons into beneficial, non-hazardous fatty acids that provide food for fish and plant life.

For more information visit www.cwsius.com.

No Sweat!

Gone are the days of noisy, maintenance-intensive dehumidifiers that eat up space and power. Now

boatowners can protect their investment from moisture and mold with the new, award-winning DryBoat from Delta "T" Systems. The innovative marine dehumidifier system is one-third the size of traditional compressor/condenser type units and uses a fraction of the power. Its small, solid-state heat pump provides an unmatched level of reliability and efficiency.

Winner of the 2008 Innovation Award for Interior Parts



given at the Marine Aftermarket Accessories Trade Show, the powerful DryBoat reduces humidity in spaces up to 39.6 cubic metres. Innovation Award judge Charles Doane, who is *SAIL* magazine's editor-at-large, said, "This device employs technology that promises to revolutionize interior climate control in boats."

For more information visit www.deltatsystems.com.

New Twist for Cleaner, Safer Boating

As one of the world's leading designers and manufacturers of marine toilets, Jabsco continues to search for new ways to improve its products and functionality. The new "Twist 'n' Lock" manual toilet range does just that by addressing the issues of syphonic flooding and waste backflow. In their installation instructions, Jabsco have always promoted the use of sea cocks, vented loops and the correct positioning of holding tanks. However, modern boat design tends to work against these basic principles, with sea cocks hidden from view and even holding tanks installed above, rather than below the toilet.

The new Jabsco "Twist 'n' Lock" design uses a remodelled piston in the pump-out assembly. At the

end of normal pumping out, at the bottom of the pump stroke, the user simply turns the handle through 90 degrees, which locks the piston down onto the base outlet valve keeping it securely shut. Turning the handle to the normal operating position opens the lock again. It is a simple and intuitive solution, meaning skippers can sleep easy in the knowledge that even in a big seaway, with a less than perfectly installed unit, no water, or worse, waste, will find its way into the cabin.

The "Twist 'n' Lock" system is being installed on all Jabsco Manual Toilets, both Compact and Regular Bowl sizes and at no addition to the retail price.

For more information visit www.jabsconews.com.

More Energy-Saving LED Lights

Two new LED lights from Hella marine get a mention this month: Their stylish LED Oblong Courtesy and Step Lamps are important contributors to safety on board, and consuming a miniscule 0.5 watts, Hella Marine's unique Multivolt LED technology versions provide consistent illumination across a range of input voltages from ten to 33 DC. Designed and manufactured in New Zealand, these lamps are extremely shock- and vibration-resistant with no bulbs or filaments to break. Ideal for illuminating storage areas, companionways, deck fittings, signs and switches, classy Oblong Courtesy Lamps are available in amber, red, blue, green and white.

Hella has also recently announced its new compact, reliable power-saving LED Navigation Lamps. Easily seen from two nautical miles away, the lamps offer all the energy-saving and dependability benefits of Hella Marine LED technology. Their NavILED lamps draw less than two watts each, ten percent of the power of a comparable incandescent bulb. They are a complete "fit and forget" electronic device, fully sealed to protect against the harmful effects of salt-water corrosion. Hella Marine multivolt circuitry ensures consistent illumination from eight to 28 volts DC, even under low battery voltages and high charging loads.

Quality marine cable is pre-wired with each lamp, providing time-saving, waterproof installations. NavILED lamps are certified for recreational and commercial vessels under IMO COLREG, USCG, RINA (I) and ABYC A-16 standards. Advanced lens and optic designs ensure highly accurate cut-offs and clear visibility. Intended for sail and powerboats, the innovative lamps even take into account vertical visibility when a sailboat is heeling.

For more information on Hella marine products visit www.hellamarine.com.

—Continued from previous page...after the boat sinks Drinking seawater is a good conversation topic while sipping a sundowner in the bar, but it is dangerous and can lead to serious health problems like kidney failure (as does drifting for months without water). Dr. Bombard, the eminent saltwater-consumption researcher, survived 63 days drifting without any supplies of food or water. His research found he could survive (not really hale and hearty) on tiny amounts of saltwater a day.

Salt water removes your skin's natural oils and sunburns increase dehydration. Avoid sunstroke by keeping your head covered and stay as motionless as possible. Always wear light clothing, and try to dry it before sunset.

Tom Hanks' "Forest Gump" character supposedly coined the expression "shit happens", and his "Castaway" character had to live through it. Lifejackets are mandatory equipment on all boats and live up to their name as the best personal flotation device. No matter the boat or the situation — even going for an afternoon's fishing or a quick sightsee — always look for the PFDs. If "shit happens" too fast, grab anything that will keep you afloat.

You certainly don't want to lose at the shipwrecked sailor game. Here are some of the winners. The losers for the most part remain largely unknown. Be prepared!

Father and Son, Two-Time Survivors

The book *Survive the Savage Sea* tells the firsthand story of the Robertson family. In 1971 they bought *Lucette*, a 43-foot wooden schooner, to sail around the world. The family sailed across the Atlantic to the Caribbean, and through the Panama Canal to the Galapagos Islands. But several days after leaving the Galapagos, attacked by a pod of orca whales, *Lucette* sank. The Robertson family was alone on the Pacific Ocean, outside the shipping lanes. It was more than a month before they were missed. They drifted 16 days in their liferaft with their dinghy in tow, with not nearly enough food or water. On the 17th day, the raft sank, and they piled into their nine-foot dinghy for 22 more days until rescued by a Japanese fishing trawler. The six of them miraculously survived in the dinghy with less than ten inches of freeboard by catching fish and turtles for nourishment.

This English Family Robertson adventure is even more notable since the father had previously survived the Japanese sinking his Royal Navy ship during WWII; and the son, as a Royal Naval Cadet on his first ship, later survived another sinking in the Pacific.

Most Resilient

For decades, a Chinese seaman named Poon Lim held the world's shipwreck survivor record. (According to the *Guinness Book of Records*, the record for drifting at sea is held by two Kiribati fishermen, from the atoll of Nikunau, who drifted for 177 days in 1992 before coming ashore on the eastern end of Samoa.) Poon Lim floated alone in a liferaft on the South Atlantic for 133 days when he was 25 years old. His ship, a British merchant, quickly sank after it was torpedoed off Cape Town, South Africa, in November of 1942. He luckily found a wooden eight-foot square raft with some cans of biscuits, a jug of water, flares, and a flashlight lashed to it. He rationed himself to a few swallows of water and two biscuits twice a day. He missed rescue three times. Once a freighter passed nearby, a US Navy patrol plane actually buzzed his raft, but he was ignored. His third time wasn't a charm as a German sub (maybe the one that sank his ship) saw him, but submerged and left him to drift.

Poon Lim forgot about rescue and fought to keep himself alive until he found land. To keep his strength up, he swam twice a day when the sea was calm. He converted the cloth of his life jacket to a rain catchment. To catch fish, he used the line that held his supplies, made a fishhook from a flashlight part, and first baited it with a piece of biscuit. The fish he caught were eaten raw and the remains used as bait to catch the next fish. He trapped seagulls, using fish as bait, and ate them. He also caught small sharks for survival food. He scratched a calendar of days adrift on his raft. After 132 days he was rescued at the mouth of the Amazon River in Brazil!

His feat made him an international celebrity. He had only lost 20 pounds and after a month recuperating in a Brazilian hospital he went to New York City and was given permanent US residency. Poon Lim was awarded the British Empire Medal and the Royal Navy included his survival techniques in their training manuals.

His tale is told by Ruthanne Lum McCunn in the 1985 book *Sole Survivor: A Story of Record Endurance at Sea*.

Another Whale

Maurice and Maralyn Bailey were sailing in the Pacific on their 40-foot yacht, *Auralyn*. Mr. Bailey was a 42-year-old printer and his wife was a 33-year-old tax clerk. As they describe in their book *117 Days Adrift*, all went well until a sperm whale's tail smashed their boat. They collected what they could take with them into the liferaft: totaling 33 cans of food, contain-

ers for collecting rain, a knife, and a handful of safety pins, which enabled them to catch small fish.

For 117 days, the nine-foot raft was their home. Their supplies lasted only ten days. The raft cover was their only way of collecting rain. Big turtles were grabbed by a flipper and, with some difficulty, wrestled aboard the raft and consumed. Seven ships crossed within miles without sighting their raft. For a long time, no one knew they were missing; they were only expected in Tahiti after a month-long voyage. As they drifted they planned a new sailboat and another voyage. Each lost about 40 pounds before being rescued by a Korean fishing boat 1,500 miles from the site of their shipwreck.

Best True Shipwreck Novel

Adrift was written by Steven Callahan, an American, who drifted in the North Atlantic for 76 days and 1,800 miles in a covered liferaft. Callahan wrote his novel after staying alive by eating barnacles and fish, and distilling seawater with a solar still. Callahan was better equipped than most shipwreck survivors.

Six days after departing the Canary Islands, bound for the Caribbean, Callahan felt a serious thud followed by a torrent of water into his boat's hull. The boat had been hit, probably by a whale or a barely afloat container. In minutes he launched the well-prepared raft he later named *Rubber Ducky*. He spared dorado and credited that with keeping him alive. *Sea Survival* was the one book he saved from the shipwreck.

Callahan saw a few ships pass, but no one saw his raft. On his 43rd day, as he was fishing, a dorado rammed the spear into an inflated tube of his raft. The fish that fed him almost killed him. But in the end the dorado caused his rescue. Callahan's raft had formed its own floating eco-system. Its barnacles provided food for the dorado. Fishermen off the tiny island of Marie Galante, east of Guadeloupe, saw frigate birds in the distance. These birds meant fish were nearby so they motored in that direction. They did not see the *Rubber Ducky* until they got close.

Callahan is quoted: "It's not about the destination, it's about the journey; adventure is available to anyone." It took him another six weeks of hospital rehabilitation to regain his full strength.

Thanks, but no thanks to the opportunity to write a first-person story about survival at sea after a sinking, I'd rather read another's account. But then again, I'd rather be around to write about the adventure if I had it.



SEPTEMBER 2008

♈ ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)

Your love life could be sailing into rough weather with a possible "on the rocks" situation in the last half of the month. Reef the sails early and try to see the humor in things.

♉ TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)

This will be a very prolific time; you'll be finding creative courses to make your business or financial situation a success. Aspects are good for inspiration and insight.

♊ GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)

September will be a slog to windward with petty business problems and difficulties in creative decision-making. You may feel overwhelmed, but your crew and boat-buddies will be there for you.

♋ CANCER (22 Jun - 23 Jul)

There will be a general ebb tide in your love life, accompanied by squalls of arguments. Power through it: avoidance, one of Cancer's most renowned traits, will only serve to prolong the discomfort.

♌ LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)

You'll have the time and energy, so this would be a good month to concentrate on making progress in the projects demanding attention on board.

♍ VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)

This will be a good month for progress with any marine-related business. Your creativity will increase the flow of business ideas. Make use of this.

♎ LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)

You will be kept very busy with the ups and downs in the sea of love until the 21st, when it either clears up or goes on the rocks.

♏ SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)

Spend this time clearing the decks, as love should take all your time after the 24th.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)

Winds will be a bit weak and fluky this month, especially in any business or creative ventures.

♑ CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)

Your love life will take all your energies, especially from the 7th to the 24th with a constant to and fro of emotions.

♒ AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)

The very aspects that humbug Capricorn will bring fair weather in your love life. Enjoy it.

♓ PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)

Any business or creative projects you take on will just bring you frustration and aggravation. You'll be stuck in business irons for several weeks but the creativity will clear up after the 23rd.

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Island Poets

Adrift

Nestled in the genny bag
Watching the new day begin
The sun rises between my knees.

The dark band of scruffy clouds
Scatters left and right
From the explosive light
Which brightens a towering cumulus out west
So white its shadow cast upon the sea
Suggests a sandy beach where none can be.

The French-blue sky is streaked
With pink and yellow
The band of clouds splits apart
Where the orange ball will start.

Ahead, and south, a squall line threatens
Then begins to dissipate as if intimidated
By the sight.

No wind.

The sea is calm,
Its form a series of long one-foot swells.
The sun has become a white burning disk.

I turn my back
To face the cool blues of the western sky,
And there, to the north, is the glint of metal
Of an approaching ship.

— Cornelia Haden Brewer

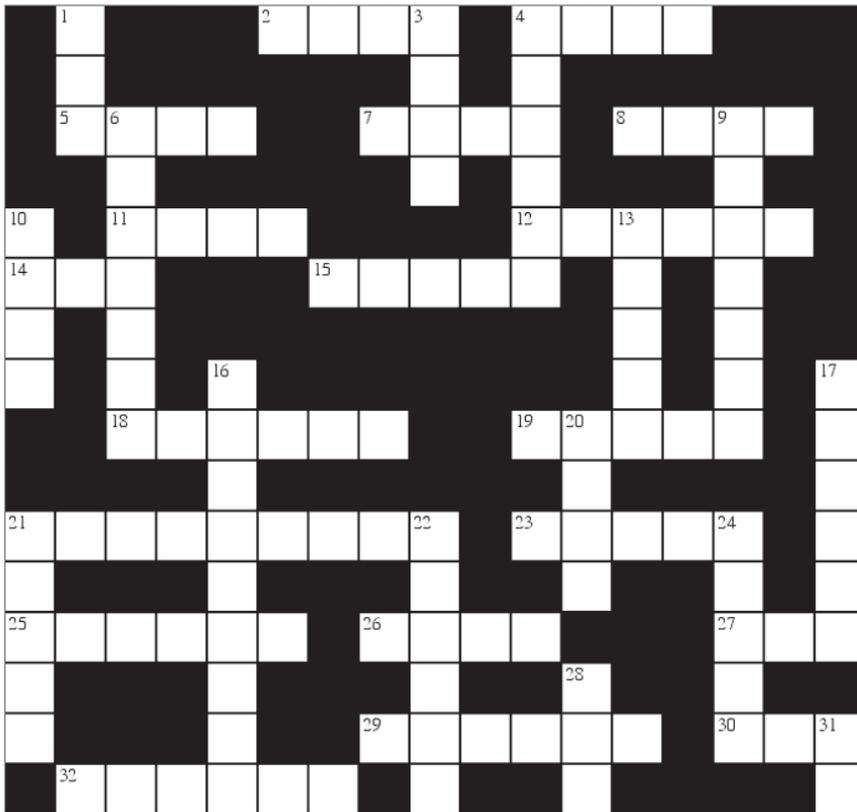


parlumps marooned



Parlumps suddenly realizes he should
have buried the shells after breakfast
instead of taking a nap next to them.

Compass Cruising Crossword



'DEAD' IN THE WATER

ACROSS

- 2) 5 Across ____: making as little progress as possible
- 4) "Fifteen 28 Down on a 5 Across ____ 19 Across": pirate chantey
- 5) Not alive
- 7) 5 Across ____ wind: sailing with the breeze astern
- 8) 5 Across ____: hoisting of inert body
- 11) 5 Across ____: completely level
- 12) 5 Across ____: sailed back to homeport with no cargo or passengers
- 14) 5 Across ____: block with hole to allow lines to pass through
- 15) 5 Across ____: these are fitted to outside of quarterdeck to keep sea out
- 18) 5 Across ____: aperture in heel of topmast for tackle pendant
- 19) Pirate's booty holder?
- 21) 5 Across ____: timbers that connect keel with stem and stern posts (2 words)
- 23) 5 Across ____: sea under stern counter when ship is underway
- 25) 5 Across ____: part of ship between keel and floor timbers towards stern posts
- 26) 5 Across ____: Total cessation of wind
- 27) 5 Across ____: slang for death benefit
- 29) To muffle noise
- 30) 5 Across ____ against: adamantly opposed to
- 32) 5 Across ____: heavy cargo

Down

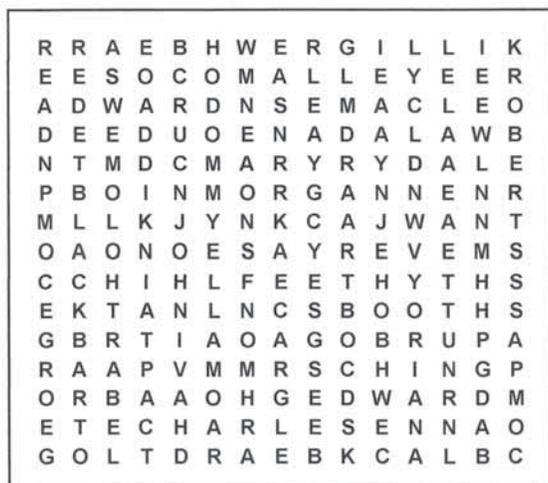
- 1) 5 Across ____: point where no further progress can be made
- 3) 5 Across ____: timber on upper side of keel
- 4) 5 Across ____: slang for winter
- 6) Katabatic, coriolis and lee-bow are types of these
- 9) 5 Across ____: payment due for goods not shipped
- 10) 5 Across ____ 6 Down: deceased sailors' possessions auctioned before the mast
- 13) 5 Across ____: area open to attack
- 16) 5 Across ____: navigation without use of stars
- 17) Fatal
- 20) 5 Across ____: rough block of wood used as anchor buoy
- 21) 5 Across ____: all of ship above waterline when fully laden
- 22) 5 Across ____: allowance given to officers of ship
- 24) 5 Across ____: those that do not run through any block
- 28) 5 Across ____: sail-tie or gasket ends left dangling under the yard when sails are furled
- 31) 5 Across ____ weather: straight into the wind

Crossword Solution on page 28

Pirates Of The Caribbean

Word Search Puzzle by Pauline Dolinski

They say that the pen is mightier than the sword, but all you puzzle pirates might want to use pencil — unless you're very brave and bold!



ANNE	COMPASS	LADY MARY
BARTHOLOMEW BEARD	EDWARD EVERY	MORGAN MRS.CHING
BLACK BART	GEORGE GRACE	NUTT O'MALLEY
BLACKBEARD		
BONNY	HENRY	READ
BOOTH		RED
BOWEN	JACK JOHN	ROBERTS
CALICO		TEACH
CAPTAIN KIDD	KELLY	VANE
CARIBBEAN	KILLIGREW	WARD
CHARLES		

Word Search Puzzle solution on page 26

Aunt Josephina had grown so tired of hearing her son Ernie complain about having nothing to do when the school holidays came around that she agreed to let his cousin Trevor from St. Lucia stay with them whenever he could make it. Well, you couldn't really blame Ernie for being bored, because they did live way over on the wild Atlantic coast of Barbados, far from the busy beaches and energetic life of Bridgetown. His father, Uncle Solly, was retired and he liked the quiet life of keeping his two superior goats, a mild cow and his dear old pony, Matilda, on their little property high above Sweet Bottom. But Uncle Solly was also tired of having to drive the two restless boys about the island so he bought Ernie a pushbike, second-hand of course, and that meant that he had to buy Trevor a second-hand bike as well. Now, most young people wouldn't be seen dead on an old-fashioned bike so Uncle Solly got the bikes very cheap. Nyna, Ernie's little sister, immediately begged for a bike too, but Aunt Josephina put her foot down.

"No way!" she said with her don't-argue-with-me voice. "Bad enough to have Ernie getting into mischief, but not my daughter." It was no use appealing to her dad either, because what Aunt Josephina said was always final.

"Oh, brother!" laughed Trevor when he saw the two old-fashioned bikes. "I wouldn't be seen dead on one of these at home!" But Ernie told him to shut up and be thankful for small mercies (or words to that effect). And that is how Trevor and Ernie almost lost their biking privileges for all time.

It happened like this. Every morning after breakfast, Trevor and Ernie would take a couple of sandwiches and a plastic bottle of water and some juice (they weren't allowed money) in a small backpack and ride off to explore the nearby beaches. They didn't go very far at first, usually stopping at a cove somewhere nearby and swimming in the cool, salt water, then running and playing on the sand. But this became too tame for Trevor and he convinced Ernie to venture inland. This is how they found themselves outside the racecar circuit.

"Gosh," smiled Ernie, "Dad always promised to take me to see the racecars but he never got around to it." And he sat on his bike and sighed, "Come on then," urged Trevor, "let's find a way inside!"

Ernie didn't need persuading and the two boys cycled off around the chainlink fence until they came to the big entry gates that, surprise, surprise, stood wide open. Trevor and Ernie pedaled through, seeing no one — they didn't know that the race committee was having a meeting in the hall by the stands. What they did see was a sleek, green sports car. They had no eyes to see the other cars parked behind the stands so Trevor and Ernie dropped their bikes and ran down the path to inspect this wondrous machine.

"When I grow up, the first thing I'm going to get is a sports car just like this!" gushed Trevor, running his hands along the side of the car from its aerodynamic windfoil to its low-slung nose.

"Look Trevor, someone's left the keys in the ignition!" whispered Ernie in awe.

Trevor, being a boy with more bravado than sense, immediately whipped open the door, climbed in behind the steering wheel, pulled the seatbelt tight about him and pretended to drive, his throat uttering the low "thrum-thrums" of a sports car engine.

TREVOR, ERNIE AND THE RACECAR

by Lee Kessell

"Trevor, Trevor, get out before you're caught!" begged Ernie. But Trevor, his eyes unfocused, bleated back, "Jump in, Ernie!"

And with that Trevor turned the key in the ignition and a great roar issued from the chrome exhaust pipe. Trevor slung the lever into first gear and Ernie had no choice but to throw himself into the passenger seat and slam the door before the door slammed him into pie meat.

Trevor's dad had given his son some driving lessons at home so Trevor did know something about cars, but the power of this car almost bucked him off the track. He changed gear with a horrible grinding noise and zigzagged madly all over the racing surface. Nor did he really know where he was going because once on the circuit he had a choice of all sorts of side roads into pits, smaller circuits and inspection areas. Trevor was jolted by the rough surface of the track as well, not realizing that a smooth surface would send the cars all skidding into each other when they accelerated or took the turns, especially if it rained. So Trevor had his hands full just keeping the car on the wide track in front of him. As for Ernie, the first thing he had done was to look down and grab for his seatbelt fastening it tight, but when he looked up the breath caught in his throat and his eyes bulged with fright because everything was coming up in front of him so fast.

By now, the race committee members had come pouring out of the hall and were running in all directions around the circuit, waving their arms and shouting. But Trevor saw and heard none of this. All he

wanted to do now was to slow down. He threw the car into the gears; one after the other, hoping the machine would slow down by itself. He was too frightened to touch the brakes, thinking that would catapult them through the windscreen, and too panic-stricken to turn off the ignition. At last, after two full laps, Ernie managed to croak, "Trevor, try turning off the ignition and then use the brakes!"

Needless to say, Trevor eventually managed to get the car to slow down and he even steered it back to where he had found it. When the doors were yanked open and angry faces looked inside, Trevor was just sitting there, paralyzed with shock. Although Ernie managed to get out of the car by himself, his legs buckled as soon as his feet hit the ground. Trevor had to be released from his seatbelt and pulled roughly from the car and then the two boys were frog-marched to the office. The owner of the car stayed behind with some friends to inspect the car for damage.

And what a to-do followed! Uncle Solly had been phoned to come at once, but he wisely told his wife that the two boys had got into a harmless prank and needed to be taken home, that's all. The boys waited, shaking with fright, until Uncle Solly arrived. He was told all the details and warned that if the boys did it again the police would be involved. Fortunately the racecar suffered no damage or else the consequences would have been far worse.

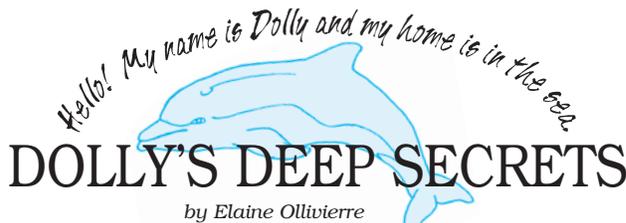
Swimming in the cool, salt water, then running and playing on the sand became too tame...

At last Uncle Solly was allowed to tie the bikes onto the roof rack of his car and take the boys home. He drove in silence all the way to the top of the steep coral road high above the angry Atlantic, which was worse punishment for the boys than the biggest lecture. Here Uncle Solly stopped the car and turning to the boys said, "Best not to upset Aunt Josephina, boys. I won't tell her the seriousness of your narrow escape this time, but let this be a warning — any more trouble and you're grounded for good."

Trevor and Ernie breathed a deep sigh of relief and as Uncle Solly drove through the gate to the farmyard they had to agree that the sneers of those two superior goats were well deserved.

THE END

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Do you remember why scientific names are important? They help to identify individual organisms even when there may be more than one local name. For example, the fish called 'rock hind' in Bequia is often called 'oualioua' (walawa) in Carriacou but its scientific name of *Epinephelus adscensionus* lets us know that we're all talking about the same fish!

What language is used for scientific names? They are written in Latin (and sometimes Greek). Latin was the language used by all scientists for scientific writing at the time when Linnaeus was compiling his lists of species. So we continue to use it today.

When Linnaeus first formulated his classification system, he divided the world into three kingdoms: animals, plants and minerals. However, the mineral kingdom was soon abandoned so that the Linnaean system dealt only with living things. As science and technology progressed over the centuries, other different kinds of organisms were discovered so now, we usually use five kingdoms called **animalia**, **plantae**, **fungi**, **monera** and **protista**. **What are these?**

We can usually recognize animals and plants but, scientifically, they are described as follows. Animals in the **animalia** kingdom are organisms made of many cells. They can move around and they eat and then digest their food. Plants in the **plantae** kingdom are also multi-cellular but they cannot move around and they make their own food by photosynthesis. Organisms like mushrooms are multi-cellular and grow like a plant but they have no chlorophyll (which is the substance

which makes a plant green) so they cannot photosynthesize. So mushrooms, toadstools, moulds, yeasts, etcetera, cannot fit in to the plantae kingdom and have their own: **fungi**.

The development of the microscope enabled scientists to see the very, very tiny creatures which make up the **protista** and the **monera** kingdoms. Both are made up of single-celled organisms but the algae and protozoans in the protista kingdom are larger and have a different kind of cell nucleus than the bacteria of the monera kingdom. It is sometimes very difficult to distinguish between organisms in the fungi, protista and monera kingdoms. Some scientists have even split the monera kingdom into two to help with the classification of these microscopic organisms. They put true bacteria (**eubacteria**) in one kingdom and bacteria-like organisms which live in extreme conditions in deep ocean hydrothermal vents (**archaeobacteria**) in another.

As more and more species are discovered, their classification becomes more complicated. Linnaeus's classification with its seven taxonomic levels (kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, species) has had to be extended to include 'sub' levels and 'super' levels. But, the end of the taxonomic chain for each living organism on earth is still its scientific name.

WORD PUZZLE

Unscramble these words from the text and insert in the box. Find the special word written vertically.

- D R O W L
- A R T I S T O P
- T A L E N A P
- M O D G I N K
- A N A I L A I M
- E M A N O R
- U F I N G
- M E S S T Y

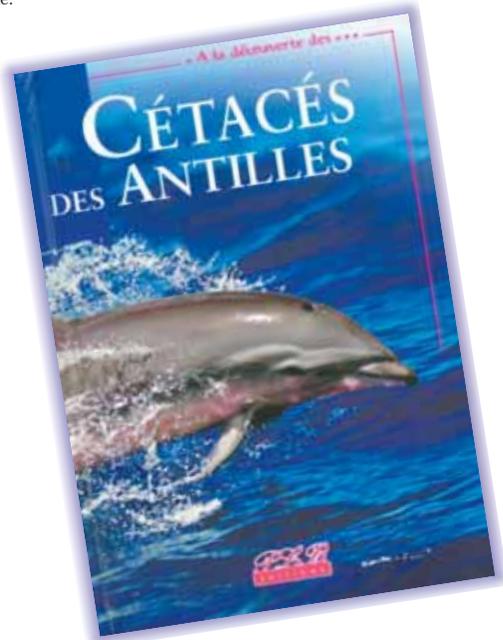
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Answer on page 42

NEW GUIDE TO CETACEANS OF THE ANTILLES

A la découverte des Cétacés des Antilles, PLB Editions ©2008. Hard cover, 64 pages, color photos and illustrations. ISBN 978-2-35365-004-0.

A new reference guide to the cetaceans of the Caribbean has recently been published in French. It is one of the "A la découverte..." series from PLB Editions. PLB Editions is a Guadeloupe-based publishing company that produces field guides to the trees, flowers, birds and fish of the Antilles, as well as children's books and books in Creole.



Good guides already exist to the whales and dolphins of the world, but this is the first that we are aware of specifically devoted to the cetaceans found in the Antilles. For the purpose of this book, the Antilles include the island chain running from Cuba to Grenada, plus the Bahamas and the islands of Providencia and San Andres off Nicaragua.

Whalewatching is a growing business in the region, with trips offered out of Antigua, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guadeloupe, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Turks & Caicos. It's also a thrill to see whales or dolphins from the deck of a private or charter yacht.

But do you know what they are? The great whales commonly seen in this area are the humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*, or baleine à bosse in French) and the sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*, or cachalot in French). A thoroughly illustrated chapter is devoted to each. There are also chapters on each of the numerous dolphin species found in these waters.

This handy guide will be primarily of interest to French-speakers, but even if your French is rusty, the abundant, clear photos and illustrations will be useful in identification. The publishers hope to release editions of the book in English and Spanish in the near future.

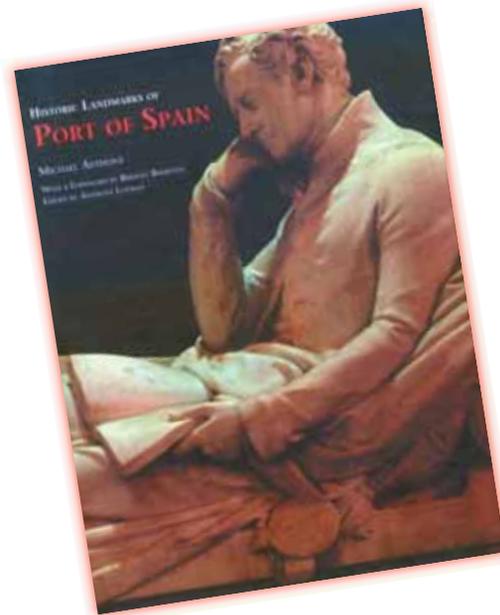
Available in Guadeloupe at the Musée Balen ka Souflé à Bouillante, and at other outlets in Guadeloupe and Martinique. For more information contact evastropic@wanadoo.fr.

Portrait of Port of Spain

Historic Landmarks of Port of Spain, by Michael Anthony, Macmillan Caribbean © 2008. Hard cover or paperback, 102 pages, color photos throughout. ISBN 978-0-333-97555-8.

Trinidadian novelist and historian Michael Anthony introduces us to the colorful, crowded and sometimes crazy history of the capital city of Trinidad & Tobago by writing about its most notable buildings, parks, cemeteries and public squares. His text is well illustrated with photos and maps.

This seaside city boasts some lovely examples of traditional Caribbean architecture, such as the former private residence that is now Jenny's restaurant and the



exquisite Simpson House, as well as a few modern buildings that reflect both taste and a sense of place and culture. Unfortunately, it also has some discordantly severe specimens, such as the Colonial Life Building and the Treasury Building, that seem more reminiscent of Soviet Russia than emblematic of the country that made Carnival the premier Caribbean art form. Most visitors will have seen the ornate, European-influenced, early 20th century "Magnificent Seven" buildings laid out along the Queen's Park Savannah, and these are given due attention. The full selection of examples shows Port of Spain and its history as they are — the good, the bad and the ugly.

Each building or site acts as a focal point for the author's description of a different aspect of Port of Spain's history, and the sum of the parts is a well-rounded picture of a unique Caribbean town.

We only wish that the book's cover, which shows a statue of a rather bored-looking Sir Ralph Woodford (British governor from 1813 to 1828), had instead depicted something as lively as Port of Spain itself.

Available at bookstores in Trinidad or at www.Macmillan-caribbean.com.

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ISLAND STORY

The Condition, by Jennifer Haigh. HarperCollins, © 2008. Hardcover, ISBN 978-0-06-075578-2.

Imaginary islands in fiction tend to be one of two types: a truly fantastic place, without specific geology or position, where something extraordinary, good or bad, can happen or a place grounded in reality, often a mix of existent known islands, where things more common to our general experience happen. As examples, consider William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* or Herman Melville's *Omoo*. In Golding's allegorical novel, extraordinary adventures beset a group of boys stranded on an imaginary island after a plane crash; in Melville's story, on the other hand, the hero escapes from Typee, an island based on the Marquesas, and moves on to Tahiti and elsewhere. However conceived, there is about islands in literature a certain magical quality and we have only to recall Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to see that change and transformation can occur on an imaginary island, far from civilization, so-called, and organized society.

St. Raphael, the Caribbean island in Jennifer Haigh's new novel *The Condition*, fits more or less in the second group. Haigh's two previous novels are *Baker Towers* (2005) and the PEN/Hemingway Award-winning *Mrs. Kimble* (2003). St. Raphael is described as being in the Leewards and yet a hurricane strikes nearby St. Lucia. In fact, St. Raphael resembles St. Lucia in most respects, with a French patois, inclusive resorts on a north coast, nude beaches, reef and wall diving, a cruise ship terminal, drug running, and so on.

Not that it really matters. What does matter is that it is an island that facilitates change — change in the novel's major character. Gwen McKotche suffers from a rare genetic disorder, Turner's Syndrome, which is caused by a missing or defective X chromosome in females. It occurs in about one of 2,500 live female births. Its main symptoms are short stature and infertility—ovaries do not develop. There is no cure for the problem although growth-hormone injections and estrogen can modify some of the symptoms. The girl ages intellectually and emotionally but remains physically arrested at age 12, before puberty. As a result, Gwen has suffered all her adult life for being something of a freak, and her immediate family has suffered to various degrees with and because of her disorder. However, it is on St. Raphael, at age 34, that Gwen comes into her own and finds acceptance for who she is, as she is. And to some extent, at that point, the story line leaves medical boundaries and ascends into unbounded transformation.

One of the few activities Gwen does is scuba diving and it is to dive that she travels to St. Raphael. Once installed in "Pleasures," a resort catering to singles, she suffers the usual humiliations that come with her condition. But in the water, "She was gliding like a spirit who'd escaped its container. She had no body. It was the freest feeling she had ever known." On the boat she meets Rico, the dive master, and new possibilities unfold. In meeting him, she meets herself and for the first time experiences a "wild random joy." While Rico, a native islander, is in many ways a stock character (the handsome, glib boat operator to whom the vacation girls give their room keys), he is also a sort of Prospero.

The novel is not about Gwen alone, however, even though it is written around her. Gwen's family members — father, mother, older brother, and younger brother — each get equal attention. It is really a multilayered story about a dysfunctional New England family, a domestic psychodrama that takes place over some 25 years. Both parents and both siblings also have conditions that could be considered as aberrant as Turner's, outside what the mother considers "the natural order of things." The family members are all sympathetically and deeply imagined, and have their own points-of-view. The narrative is languorously and skillfully told, meticulously researched, and profoundly moving.

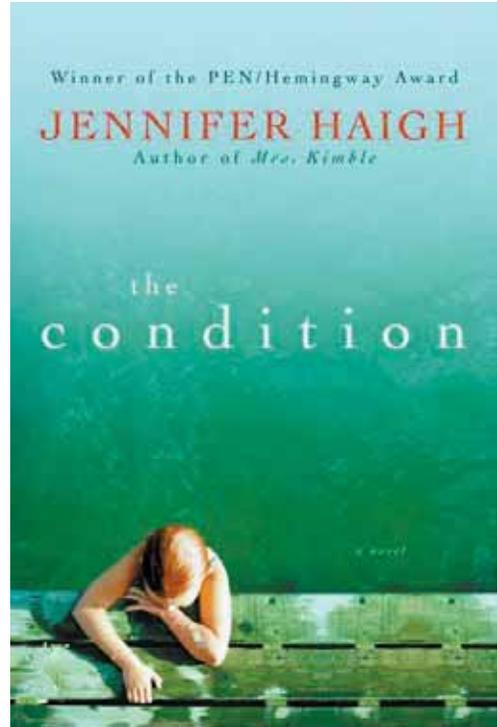
It is the youngest son, Scott, who is sent by the mother to St. Raphael to find out what has happened to Gwen and bring her "back to civilization" — back to the USA,

back to her job as a curator in a Pittsburgh anthropological museum, back to her suffocating family, back to a pretty miserable, bleak, and solitary life. In Scott's search for Gwen, we see a different view of St. Raphael and its locals, and we see how the island affects him.

The Condition is a novel of reversals — characters go one way only to go another and then still another. While Gwen does escape the continent and find a new life on St. Raphael with Rico, the other family members are changed only to remain, in the end, no different. The novel is arguably less about Gwen than about her mother, Paulette — selfish, neurotic, partly educated and partly vacant, all controlling.

Be that as it may, we are not at all unhappy with Gwen's island fate and the healing hope of love, the power of transformation. Nor are we unhappy to see the cultural assumptions each character embodies challenged. Not just beauty or ugliness, the "normal" or the "deviant," but all things human, we come to see in this compelling, insightful novel, are in the eye of the beholder.

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Whodunnit — and Who are the Redlegs?

Trouble Tree, by John Hill Porter. Macmillan Caribbean, ©2008. 320 pages. ISBN 978-4050-7105-5.

Trouble Tree is a murder mystery that cleverly links a NYPD arson detective with his father's roots in Barbados. In the opening scene a mysterious lanky stranger shoots the detective, Ben Cumberbatch, in the head. Although Ben goes temporarily into a coma, the wound is not fatal. However, it requires extensive therapy for Ben to recall any events in the near past. As part of his therapy he starts writing his family history, and the reader begins to discover Ben's troubled family tree. "Trouble tree doan bear no blossom" is the Bajan proverb that lends the book its name.

Ben and his father, Nate, are descendants of Bajan "redlegs", a combination of English debtors, Scottish poor and Irish political prisoners who were sent to the colonies as "indentured servants", virtual slaves to the plantation owners of the 17th and 18th Centuries. They worked on the plantations for at least seven years. They were desperately poor and became inbred, since they looked down upon marrying blacks as much as their masters looked down on them. Ben's grandmother Dora fathered Nate with a black man so that Nate wouldn't suffer the genetic fate of his two half-siblings. Unfortunately the reader never gets to know Nate, since he dies while Ben is in the coma. Nate is portrayed as a responsible father and fun-loving gigolo before his life was cut short, the victim of a vicious attack in Brooklyn.

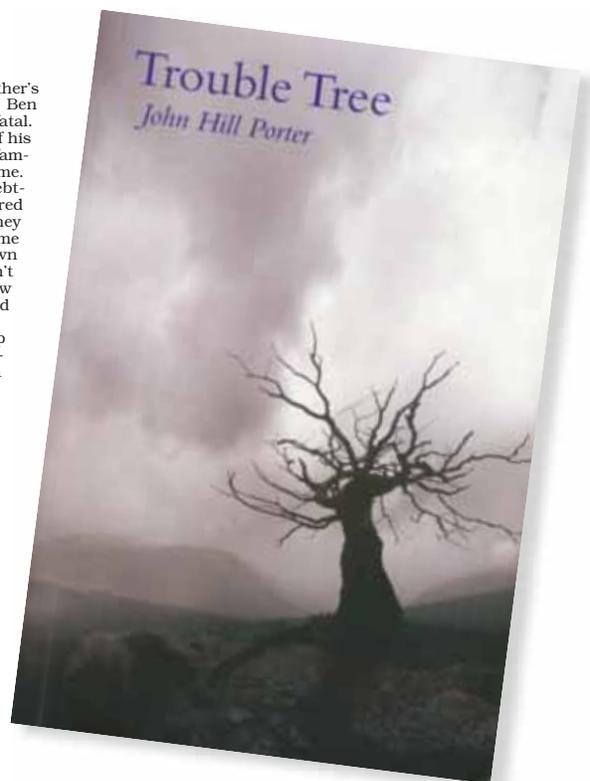
All is not well in Barbados, either, as Ben's uncle is murdered and the murder is covered up by the local Police Chief, Ollie Shorter. In an amazing coincidence, Ben and Ollie were childhood friends — Ben had visited his Grandmother Dora for three consecutive summers as a youth — and Ollie's sister Annie had been Ben's first love. Annie comes back into Ben's life in an unexpected way, giving the novel a tasteful and sexy twist to the menacing conspiracy that Ben is trying to uncover.

Murder and (in another coincidence) arson are eventually linked back to a mysterious group of wealthy power brokers who rule the island. Ben pays a heavy price to try and uncover the murderers through expert sleuthing and a forensic lab in New York City. My only problem with the original mystery was that it was a little too obvious. A clumsy clue was dropped early on that killed the suspense for me. However, as the novel progresses, and as Ben tries to regain memories of the night he was shot, his personal ties to Ollie and Annie compromise his objectivity. The ending is satisfying, though bittersweet, and Ben joins the ranks of Sam Spade (as played by Humphrey Bogart) as a hero.

My second problem with the book had to do with one of its villains, a man whose homosexual past was the cause of such psychological problems that he became a homicidal nut. I'm personally tired of that stereotype, even though the author took some pains to describe the misery that anti-gay prejudice in the Caribbean can cause. Recognizing prejudice is one thing, but enforcing negative stereotypes only clutters the mind that the prejudice is somehow warranted.

Given these faults, the novel is lucidly written, particularly the early chapters about young Ben in Barbados. As he works in his Grandma Dora's garden every day to earn his keep, he learns the value of hard labor, family ties, and money and class differences in the West Indies. The "redlegs" today have offspring in St. Vincent (Dorsetshire Hill), Bequia (Mount Pleasant), Grenada (Mount Moritz), and in Carriacou, the irony being that in those islands many are among the most well-to-do of local families through dint of their work ethic and maritime skills. But *Trouble Tree* has a universal West Indian core, which redeems its minor flaws. I couldn't put it down — a fascinating and edifying read.

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He also stated that the workshop will assist in building a network throughout the Grenadines as plans are underway for the annual International Coastal Cleanup scheduled for September 20th.



Litter is everybody's concern. While the Grenadines tackled the problem with a workshop for community awareness and education (above), in Venezuela (below) a massive beach clean-up was organized on Isla La Tortuga



Venezuelan Eco-Group on the Move

The Venezuelan environmental group Fundación La Tortuga (FLT) has stepped up its activities to keep their country's Caribbean coastline clean and green.

On July 18th, nine youngsters from the Don Bosco Children's Home in Puerto La Cruz celebrated Children's Day by joining FLT members in an educational environmental survey of their coastal surroundings and collecting litter from Lecheria Beach in the process.

From the 24th through the 27th of July, the group held a coastal clean-up netting nearly a ton of debris. More than 50 volunteers, who camped out in tents for three nights, removed trash and other contaminants from beaches on the north side of Isla La Tortuga, the second-largest island in the country.

Throughout 2008, FLT has undertaken various scientific expeditions aimed at monitoring, listing and collecting data on the natural resources of Isla La Tortuga. Assisted by researchers from the Oceanographic Institute of Venezuela, the University of Sucre State and the Sea Turtle Working Group of Nueva Esparta, the subjects studied so far have included birds, sea turtles, vegetation, corals, phytoplankton, cetaceans, algae and sponges.

A recent FLT-assisted avian study by professor Gedio Marin of the University of Oriente listed the 37 species of seabirds, endemics and migratory visitors found on Isla Tortuga, 11 of which are protected. FLT notes that while birdwatching is a valuable component of tourism, overdevelopment, deforestation and littering are threats to these birds.

For more information visit www.fundacionlatortuga.org.

Jost van Dyke Wildlife Surveyed

During a recent environmental survey, researchers Jean Pierre Baclé and Kevel Lindsay of the Island Resources Foundation recorded three species of bats and five species of frogs on the British Virgin Island of Jost van Dyke.

The species of bats recorded were the Cave Bat (*Brachyphylla cavernarum*), the Jamaican Fruit Bat (*Artibeus jamaicensis*) and Pallas' Mastiff Bat (*Molossus molossus*). The five species of frogs identified were the Antillean Frog (*Eleutherodactylus antillensis*), the Mute Frog (*E. lentus*), Schwartz's Eleutherodactylus (*E. Schwartzi*), Cochranes's Eleutherodactylus (*E. Cochranes*) and the White-lipped Frog (*Leptodactylus albilabris*).

Other interesting findings were the presence of two species of harmless endemic snake — the Virgin Islands Tree Boa (*Epicrates monensis grantii*) and the Virgin Islands Worm Snake (*Typhlops richardi*). Three species of rare plants — Jost van Dyke's Indian Mallow *Bastardiopsis eggertii*, the Ramgoat Cherry (*Malpighia woodburyana*) and Cockspar (*Erythrina eggertii*) — were also identified. The latter two plants were observed on Jost van Dyke for the first time.

These findings are an initial output of an environmental project on Jost van Dyke that focuses on advancing environmental protection and sustainable development on that island. The project started in April and is expected to be completed in December 2009. The project is being coordinated by the Jost van Dykes (BVI) Preservation Society (JVDPS), a local, non-profit corporation dedicated to the preservation of the island of Jost van Dyke i.e. its land, the surrounding sea, its living creatures and its culture. Funding for the project comes from the Overseas Territories Environmental Programme (OTEP) and is disbursed through the Governor's Office.

—Continued on next page



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—Continued from previous page

Research on the natural and historical environment of Jost van Dyke will continue over the next six months, after which an environmental profile of Jost van Dyke will be prepared.

Community input will be sought throughout the project and the community will be kept up to date on the progress of the project. Several of the Jost van Dyke residents who were present at a community meeting held on May 6th to introduce the project, voiced their support for the project and for any efforts to conserve the natural environment of Jost van Dyke. District Officer Carmen Blyden fully supports the initiative, noting that at present the children of Jost van Dyke study the natural environment of the neighboring islands of Tortola and Anegada. In her words, "a project such as this gives us our own identity".

For more information on the project visit www.judgreen.org. For more information on the Jost van Dykes Preservation Society visit www.jvdps.org.

Bonaire Tracks Sea Turtles

Among its other efforts, Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) provides a unique service — e-mail updates of the current whereabouts of sea turtles that

In the last several years STCB has tracked a total of six turtles to the waters off Nicaragua and Honduras.

Another female loggerhead, named "Greggy Girl", was fitted with a satellite transmitter on the 1st of August, after she had laid her eggs on a beach at Klein Bonaire. With Greggy Girl, STCB achieved the goal of deploying two transmitters on turtles in 2008.

Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire exists to ensure the protection and recovery of Bonaire's sea turtle populations throughout their range. Founded in 1992, the STCB is a Bonaire-based, non-governmental and non-profit organization, part of the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network.

For more information visit www.bonaireturtles.org.

St. Lucia Marina Resort Joins Green Link

Discovery at Marigot Bay on the west coast of St. Lucia has joined the Leading Green Link programme.

Through Leading Green Link, Discovery at Marigot Bay now enables travellers to make their reservations carbon-neutral when booking online at www.discoverystlucia.com. Each time they do so, The Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd. makes a contribution to Sustainable Travel International (STI), a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting responsible travel through programmes that allow consumers to contrib-

the Leading Green Initiative," said Discovery's Manager, Carl Beviere. "And we are pleased to note that our room rates have not been inflated to support this programme, so there is no cost whatsoever to our guests."

Successfully launched last year, the Leading Green initiative is an innovative carbon-offset effort designed to enable and encourage guests to make conscious decisions and contributions towards environmentally friendly travel.

This is not the first time Discovery has undertaken environmentally conscious initiatives. In July 2007, the hotel launched the Caribbean's first solar-powered ferry, the *Sunshine Express*, which won an *Islands* magazine Blue Award. In addition, all grey water is cleaned and filtered and used for irrigation, nothing goes into the waters of Marigot Bay. Discovery is working together with the rest of the local community to renourish the sand on nearby Labas Beach, and to stop future erosion by building protective reefs and regulating boat activity.

For more information on the Leading Green Initiative visit www.lhwgreen.com.

Research Cruise Postponed

A cruise of the Grenadines aimed at completing a marine habitat map of that area has been postponed owing to the injury of three participants in a speed-boat accident.

As reported in last month's *Compass*, the Grenadines "MarSIS" (Marine Resource and Space-use Information System) is an on-going research project led by Kim Baldwin, a PhD student of the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies of the University of West Indies together with the Sustainable Grenadines Project based in Union Island. Kim has been working with local marine-resource users of the Grenadines to map the various marine resources as well as identify areas of importance for conservation as well as for the livelihoods of the Grenadine communities.

The researchers had intended to spend the month of August aboard a catamaran from The Moorings, exploring and mapping the little-known deeper areas of the Grenada Bank by either scuba diving or using a drop-camera to collect data.

Unfortunately, on the fourth day of the cruise, after refilling gas and scuba tanks in Admiralty Bay, Bequia, in preparation for data collection in Balliceau and Battowia the next day, the SVG Fisheries Division pirogue in which Kim and her colleagues Sophia Punnett and Eustaces "Santa" Vincent were travelling crashed into the rocks off Moonhole on their way back to the catamaran anchored in Friendship Bay. All three suffered injuries, which resulted in cancellation of the August cruise.

All are recovering. Kim, whose shoulder was broken, says, "The doctors say I need six to nine months before they will allow me to get back on a boat and diving and be able to use my arm in a physically demanding capacity. I do want to reassure everyone that the research will definitely continue and we are tentatively planning for a June 2009 survey, since the lobster surveys need to occur during closed season."

For more information on the Sustainable Grenadines Project visit <http://cermes.cavehill.uwi.edu/susgrenadinesIndex.html>.



Turtle tracks from 2003 and 2004. A Bonaire-based conservation group uses satellite technology to learn more about our fellow voyagers

are being tracked by satellite. In July, using this free service, we had the opportunity to follow "Wiske", a female loggerhead turtle, as she swam from Bonaire toward Nicaragua at a rate of between 80 and 100 kilometres a day.

ute to the well-being of the places they visit. "By participating in this programme, we enable our guests to help increase climate-friendly travel through the donation of funds to offset the carbon emissions generated during their entire stay at Discovery, via

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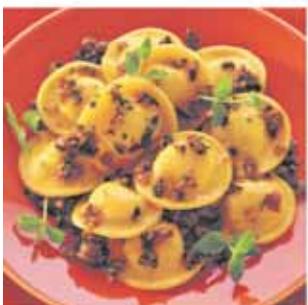
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Dolly's Answer

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Special word: LINNAEUS

THE SCIENCE OF MAKING YOGURT

by Devi Sharp

Making yogurt is not an art — it is a science. I make this yogurt every week aboard *Arctic Tern*, and the cost is about 50 cents (US) per pint. Best of all, I always have yogurt for breakfast and recipes.

I feel obliged to extol the virtues of yogurt, so here is my list: yogurt is high in protein and calcium, low in calories, and has those wonderful bacteria that help our gut stay healthy.

Select containers with tight fitting lids. I like the Ziploc brand plastic containers with screw-on lids. Wash the containers and let them air dry or dry them with a clean towel.



Above: A warm yacht engine makes a nifty yogurt incubator

Below: Or you can use an insulated bag to keep your culture happy



In a saucepan, combine the appropriate quantities of water and powdered milk to fit your container(s) and mix thoroughly. I usually use powdered skimmed milk, but the few times I have made it with whole milk it did not taste much different. Instead of powdered, you can use fresh or long-life milk, but you still must follow through on heating it.

Heat the milk (with frequent stirring) in the saucepan to just near boiling (180°F). Heating the milk kills any undesirable bacteria that might be present and also changes the properties of the milk protein so that it gives the yogurt a firmer body and texture. Use a plastic or Teflon spoon or stainless whisk to stir. (Avoid wooden spoons because they tend to hold bacteria that might interfere with the bacteria in the yogurt.)

Allow the milk to cool slightly. When it reaches 110°F to 115°F, add starter. Starter can be yogurt that you have saved from your last homemade batch or a good quality, unflavored and unsweetened commercial yogurt. Add about a quarter of a Cup of starter for every three Cups of milk. Mix well but gently. Do not incorporate too much air. If too much air is mixed in, the starter culture will grow slowly.

Pour milk into clean container(s) and cover with lid(s). Incubate the filled containers at about 110°F. Do not stir the yogurt during this period. I put the containers in a small, insulated "thermo" bag in the sun, or place the containers directly on *Arctic Tern's* main engine if it is hot.

Maintain the 110°F temperature until the milk coagulates with a firm custard-like consistency (three to eight hours). Check by gently tilting the container, then refrigerate. It will keep for two to three weeks in the refrigerator.

I know that my incubation temperature is not exactly at 110°F, and while the yogurt may not be perfect it is always good. Remember to use a thermometer and clean utensils — that is the science part.

Devi is currently making yogurt aboard the sailing vessel *Arctic Tern* in Venezuela.

STAR FRUIT

Have you seen the yellow, waxy, multi-sided, Star Trek-looking fruit in the market? West Indians call it star fruit, five fingers, or carambola. There are two varieties of star fruit, sour and sweet. The fruits with narrow "fingers" or ribs are less sweet than the fruits with thick fingers.

The fruit starts out green, and goes to yellow as it ripens; it can be eaten in both stages. In Trinidad I learned to make Five-Fingers Chow with the slightly ripe fruit. The ripe fruit makes a delicious and refreshing juice, and in Grenada at Pappy's in Concord I tried tasty five-fingers wine. Ripe sweet five fingers are great eaten just picked and washed and the green or slightly ripe ones make excellent chow. They can also be stewed with cloves and raisins. Star fruit, cooked or raw, are a great accompaniment for seafood. Sliced crosswise into the five-pointed star shapes that give the fruit one of its names, this is a pretty and tasty addition to any fruit salad.

The star fruit is believed to have originated in Sri Lanka or Ceylon and was cultivated for centuries in Southeast Asia before Spanish explorers brought trees to the Caribbean and the Americas.



Star fruit juice will clean brass and silver! It will also remove rust stains from white clothes. West Indians use the five-finger fruit widely for many medicinal purposes. The juice will help reduce a fever and quench the associated thirst. Boiled fruit will relieve diarrhoea or a hangover. A salve made by continuously boiling the fruit to almost nothing is reportedly good for eye infections. Eating the ripe fruit is said to reduce haemorrhoids. A poultice of crushed leaves will fight ringworm. The powdered seeds are said to have a sedative effect and are useful in fighting children's colic.

One average star fruit has about ten calories. The fruit is high in carbohydrates, calcium, phosphorus, Vitamin C, and amino acids.

Star Fruit Bread

- 4 medium star fruit
- 1/2 Cup sugar*
- 3/4 Cup milk
- 1 egg
- 1 Cup whole-wheat flour
- 1 Cup white bakers flour**
- 3/4 teaspoon salt

- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon powdered ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 Cup currants or raisins

Wash, de-seed and mince star fruit. Combine the fruit, sugar, milk, and egg in a large bowl. In another bowl mix the remaining ingredients. Slowly add the dry ingredients to the fruit combination and mix until all the flour is moist. Add a little extra flour if fruit is very juicy. Don't over-blend. Pour into greased bread pans and bake at 350°F for 45 minutes.

- * Increase amount of sugar if you have a sweet tooth or if star fruit is not sweet.
- ** Use up to a half Cup more flour if fruit is very juicy.

Star Chicken

- 1 chicken, cut into serving pieces
 - 1/4 Cup olive oil
 - 2 Tablespoons honey
 - 1/4 Cup fresh limejuice
 - 2 Tablespoons lime zest (grated lime peel)
 - 1 large sweet onion, sliced paper thin
 - 1 Tablespoon fresh ginger, minced
 - 1/2 hot pepper, seeded and minced
 - salt to taste
 - 4 star fruit, sliced in quarter-inch stars
 - 1/2 Cup raw almonds (cashews or peanuts may be substituted)
 - 1 bunch chadon benne, chopped fine
- Combine chicken, oil, honey, limejuice and zest, onions, ginger, pepper and salt in a large bowl, preferably one with a tight cover. Cover and refrigerate for a day or two, stirring occasionally. Put chicken mixture in a baking dish and cover with the nuts. Arrange star fruit slices over the top. Cover with foil

and bake at 375°F for about half an hour. Then uncover and bake for another 20 minutes. Add chadon bene just before serving.

FOR THE FARMERS:

Growing a tree from seed is difficult since the seeds become infertile within a few days after removing them from the fruit, so have your potting soil ready! Choose nice fat seeds to plant, water carefully, and they should sprout in a week to ten days. Grafted trees can also be purchased at garden shops or nurseries. A star fruit tree is perfect for a home garden as they seldom grow more than 15 to 20 feet tall. If planting more than one, keep them at least 20 feet apart. Make certain the area you plant is well drained, as standing water is this tree's biggest enemy. However, star fruit must be watered regularly during the dry season to produce a juicy crop. Run a hose for a half an hour every week during a dry spell. If necessary, spray the tree with a pesticide-miticide and foliar fertilizer once a month, and sprinkle about a half-cup of blue 12-12-17-2 every month around the base.



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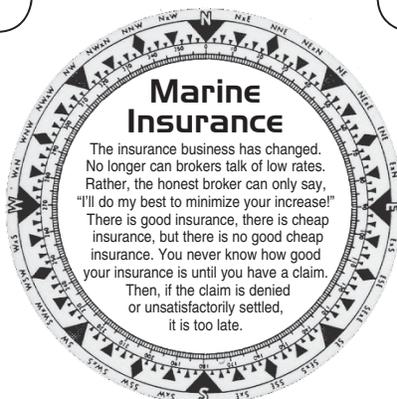
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CANDY IS DANDY...

by Ross Mavis



"You'll catch more flies with sugar than you can with vinegar," was the advice Nana always would give when talking about dealing with people. And, you know, she was right. Most of us respond to sweet talk better than to harsh or bitter comments. Many of us like sweetness in our lives — and in our diets.

Very few people are born without a sweet tooth. The sweetness of sugar is quite seducing. Many centuries ago, sugar was called "white gold" due to its scarcity and expense at a time when only the rich could afford the substance. The ancient Persians and Arabians cultivated sugar in the 4th century B.C. and it was some 500 years later that it became known to the Western World. Rock-hard cakes or loaves of crystallized coarse sugar then ranged in colour from off-white to light brown. If you were to use any in your tea or coffee, it was necessary to chisel off a chunk or grind it into a powder.

Today refined sugar is white and very pure. It is primarily made from sugar cane and sugar beets. Many types of sugar can be found in most of the foods we eat daily. Check the content labels on the foods you buy at the supermarket. You'll see regular sugar (sucrose); fruit sugars (dextrose, fructose and levulose); milk sugar (lactose) and maltose (malt sugar).

I have both fond and painful memories of sugar in my childhood. A fond one involves penny candies. A favorite was the small chocolate-covered bears called "teddies". Under the chocolate exterior lurked hard, red, cinnamon candy. Teddies would last almost forever in your mouth if you could discipline yourself to follow mother's instructions and not crunch them. Two of these candies could be had for one penny, giving almost a morning's worth of sucking. Horehound nuggets, jaw-breakers and all-day suckers kept many kids out of their parents' hair and out of trouble for hours on end.

The pursuit of sugary treats also has less enjoyable flashbacks, like the time I ignored Mum's advice to keep clear of the pan of hot toffee she had left to cool on the counter. It was near-paralytic shock I experienced when my inquisitive finger, sneaking over the counter edge, found its way into the pan of molten sugary lava. Less painful but as vivid in my memory was when two childhood friends and I were caught stealing jelly powders from our basement storeroom. It was easy to spot the guilty culprits, for our mouths and hands were bright yellow and orange from fingers dipped into boxes of this sweet dessert mix. This must have been the inspiration for shoplifting dye markers!



Sugar does more than just sweeten our food. It helps preserve some items such as candied fruit and citrus peel. It also stabilizes egg whites in meringue, gives a golden-brown colour to baked goods and helps make dough light and tender.

What is sold in North America as "brown sugar" is not raw or unrefined sugar, as some people think. Molasses is added to white sugar to produce either a light or dark brown product. In the Caribbean, raw or unrefined cane sugar is widely available.

I believe everyone needs some sweetness in his or her life. If the only way you can get it is from sugar, then God love you and we'll pass the sugar. Sugar is not the white villain that it has been portrayed to be. (And don't be fooled into thinking that honey or maple sugar is lower in calories because of being a so-called natural product.) Like other things, if used in moderation, sugar can be a simple but wonderful pleasure.

If you are looking for a fun way to spend a rainy afternoon with the kids below deck, why not make some candy? Let kids help with the initial measuring out of ingredients and, of course, sampling the end results. Keep some tasks for yourself. Hot and dangerous stovetop cooking, and melted sugar mixes that are akin to molten lava, must be handled carefully by an adult.

Most candy making requires the use of a good candy thermometer. However, here's an easy recipe that does not need one.

Dark Chocolate Fudge

- 2 cups miniature marshmallows (or large marshmallows cut into small pieces)
- 1 pound (450 g) semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 11 oz (300 ml) tin sweetened condensed milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons (7 ml) vanilla extract

Combine marshmallows, chocolate chips and condensed milk in a large saucepan and cook over low heat for about 8 minutes, stirring often. When contents are melted and smooth, stir in vanilla and pour into a greased 8-inch (19 cm) square cake pan. Score lightly with a knife and cool until nicely firm. Cut into squares.

Remember, boiling syrup is extremely hot and very dangerous. Keep young children clear when boiling liquids on the stove or working with boiling liquids in the galley.



Dear Compass,

WHEW: eSeaClear! (*Caribbean Compass*, August 2008.) Sounds like the Grenada online one-page clearance form meets APIS, although fortunately without requirements and the timing restrictions of APIS. The downside is that all the technological and process issues are the same.

There are many cruising yachts and probably even more bareboat charter yachts that do not have computers on board, and some of those who do have computers do not have wireless capability. So, even if an anchorage does have wireless internet (free wireless is scarce and many fee-based services are quite costly, if used only to access eSeaClear), many yachts will have to find an internet café at a cost of EC\$5 to EC\$10 per visit. That doesn't sound like much but it adds up when you consider a visit for clearing in and clearing out of each country. And what if the internet goes down? Not an uncommon occurrence in many of these islands.

Am I reading this correctly to understand that there will be computers in the Customs offices for use by yachtsmen to update their eSeaClear notification? In the dusty commercial Customs offices of Hillsborough, Carriacou, and Glanville (Prince Rupert Bay), Dominica? And in the already crowded office at Rodney Bay? It seems to me that allowing people to update their notification at the Customs office will take even longer than completing the paperwork by hand.

In the many years we have been clearing in and out of these countries, it rarely takes more than five minutes to fill in the forms. This is a two-time occurrence per visit (once upon entry, once when leaving) and is not a big deal if the Customs and Immigration personnel are at their stations. The Grenada one-page form does nothing to alleviate this problem. We usually spend more time than that waiting in line for an available officer, either because there are others ahead of us or because the officer is at lunch or watching cricket on TV, or the office isn't even open!

And what about the varying processes these countries use — different forms for all countries and even different steps for clearing in and out within the same country?

And when I clear out, how do I get from eSeaClear a paper copy to take to my next port, especially if that country is not yet online with eSeaClear and how do I keep track of which ports are accepting eSeaClear notification and which are not?

And what about a piece of paper to show Customs or the Coast Guard, if they come around checking papers?

I hope none of the OECS members spent any money contributing to this system and installing equipment because I doubt that many yachts will make use of it. I don't know anyone who uses the Grenada online one-page form — it's just not worth the extra effort, particularly because it is designed for 8 x 14" paper, which very few yachts carry on board. eSeaClear is no different — of no "intrinsic" value to the yachtsman. "Clear Customs faster and more efficiently so you can start enjoying your visit sooner?" This is not apparent to me in the description given. Most probably the megayachts will use eSeaClear, and we all know that the island chain is gearing up for what they believe will be a huge influx of megayachts.

It seems to me that resources could have been better spent in streamlining and standardizing the processes already in place, rather than adding a technologically elegant but useless-in-practice solution.

**Sign me,
Concerned Long-Time Cruiser**

We asked Caribbean Marine Association President, Keats Compton, who along with the Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council announced eSeaClear in last month's Compass, for clarification, which follows.

CC

Dear Compass,

It appears that our "Concerned Long-Time Cruiser" may have misread the intent of the eSeaClear facility (www.eSeaClear.com) that the CMA/CCLEC partnership is attempting to deliver to our valued yachting customers, so we need to clarify the situation.

First and foremost, use of the system is voluntary (i.e. completely optional), and doesn't replace the paper form, should cruisers prefer to use it.

St. Lucia is one of two pilot locations (BVI is the other) designed to solicit feedback from users, which will be incorporated into enhancements or improvements by the developers for product roll-out. This is totally unlike APIS, which was imposed — or attempted to be — on the industry. We do not compare eSeaClear to APIS, as the former is driven and owned by Customs, the latter by the border control brigades!

Secondly, the use of the internet is designed to facilitate voyage-data entry from whatever source chosen by cruisers, *prior to departure* — it has been assumed that a significant number of yachtsmen are able to access the internet from a land-based computer. Alternatively, computers will be available at ports of arrival, and the document will be printed there and then, with the copy retained by the captain, for presentation at the next port, wherever that may be, as happens now. Unlike the paper clearance, both entry and departure details are entered at the same time, on the same screen — a one-time occurrence, not two, as alleged by our writer — surely this is time saved! In filling the entry on-line, the problem of Customs being out to lunch, or cricket or other diversion will not prevent the Customs from accessing the data, should a cruiser use a cell-phone to alert the Officer on his or her return.

Our writer also needs to think "data" as opposed to "forms". The individual countries can decide on what shape a printed form should take, never mind what appears on the screen, which will be the same at all locations. Additionally, our cruisers only need to create a new voyage notification where crew data hasn't changed — you can't use your carbon-paper clearance once your return journey has been processed.

As more countries adopt eSeaClear, we will notify the trade through the usual channels, including *Compass*.

Computer-based clearance is obligatory at the port of Marin (Martinique), *inside of the Customs office*, using an unfamiliar French keyboard. We hope to persuade them to adopt eSeaClear, but Martinicans coming to St. Lucia are able to use the facility from the comfort of their homes, and are thrilled at the prospect.

The OECS hasn't spent any money on this, and the reach of eSeaClear will ultimately spread beyond the OECS countries. We sincerely hope that the concerns expressed are not an argument for the exclusion of computers from the yachting domain, which would surely be a retrograde step.

More feedback is welcome.

**Keats Compton, President
CMA**

Dear Caribbean Compass,

I was visiting the Tobago Cays Marine Park in the St. Vincent Grenadines on Saturday, July 5th. As I was cruising around in the park, I saw a tour operator's large catamaran from St. Vincent with more than 50 guests onboard touring all over within the central part of the TCMP boundaries before they came into shore at Salt Whistle Bay, Mayreau.

What really got my attention when I arrived in Salt Whistle Bay was the fact that this charter boat was refusing to pay the park rangers the day-use fees for coming in and using the park.

Upon further investigation, I realised that it was the captain (who is also one of the tour company's owners) who was refusing to pay, as well as allowing several of his crewmembers to laugh and carry on acting rude to the two park rangers who were politely trying to do their job.

Eventually after much ado, which involved yelling and other rude behaviour from the crew of the tour catamaran, as well as a long cell phone call to the TCMP head office, the captain/owner refused to pay their park fees on the grounds that they were not snorkelling in the park and that there were Vincentians onboard.

From my discussion with a guest that was on their charter, there was a mix of both local Vincentians who now live abroad and tourists aboard this Carnival weekend party cruise. Also when I talked with the rangers they stated that this was not the first time this tour operator has refused to pay!

I think it is completely outrageous that one of the largest tour operators in St. Vincent & the Grenadines can profit off of the utilisation of the Tobago Cays Marine Park and dare give grief to the park rangers by refusing to pay the stated day use fees — as well as set such a bad example to their guests, other tourists and local tour operators alike.

I am not sure what the owner's rationale is. Maybe it is because he and some of his guests are Vincentian that he doesn't think they should have to pay, or maybe it was the excuse that they didn't snorkel on Horseshoe Reef?

—Continued on page 55

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MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2008

Crossing the channels between Caribbean islands with a favorable tide will make your passage faster and more comfortable. The table below, courtesy Don Street, author of *Street's Guides* and compiler of *Imray-Iolaire* charts, which shows the time of the meridian passage (or zenith) of the moon for this and next month, will help you calculate the tides.

Water, Don explains, generally tries to run toward the moon. The tide starts running to the east soon after moonrise, continues to run east until about an hour after the moon reaches its zenith (see TIME below) and then runs westward. From just after the moon's setting to just after its nadir, the tide runs eastward; and from just after its nadir to soon after its rising, the tide runs westward. Times given are local.

Note: the maximum tide is 3 or 4 days after the new and full moons.

For more information, see "Tides and Currents" on the back of all *Imray Iolaire* charts. Fair tides!

September 2008		October 2008	
DATE	TIME	DATE	TIME
1	1313 (new)	21	0452
2	1357	22	0554
3	1441	23	0655
4	1527	24	0753
5	1614	25	0846
6	1703	26	0936
7	1724	27	1022
8	1845	28	1107
9	1936	29	1151
10	2026	30	1234
11	2114	1	0549
12	2201	2	0643
13	2247	3	0733
14	2333	4	0820
15	0000 (full)	5	0904
16	0019	6	0947
17	0107	7	1030
18	0157	8	1115
19	0252	9	1201 (new)
20	0350	10	1249
		11	1338

WHAT'S ON MY MIND

A Fool's Paradise?

by Jim McConn

Having logged over 30,000 miles in our 31-foot Southern Cross, the *Spanish Stroll*, we have finally arrived in Paradise. Or have we?

Five years into a boat ride that appears to have evolved into a circumnavigation, Barb and I are in the Caribbean. The word itself has always conjured up visions of beautiful white beaches shaded by coconut trees on pristine little islands. With water the color of a Bombay gin bottle, the soft sounds of steel drums and us lounging in hammocks, it also seemed as far away as the moon.

A very peaceful but long 65-day passage from South Africa brought us to Tobago. We'd had plenty of time to study the Doyle guide and were ready for the great food, pan music and rum shacks.



Although the McConn's have only visited Tobago, Trinidad and Margarita so far — a small portion (at the lower right-hand corner of this map) of the Eastern Caribbean — their complaints are typical of those heard in other parts of the region

Making landfall at Scarborough, we checked in and spent a week cleaning up and replenishing the *Spanish Stroll*. Scarborough was, as expected, a big town and a bit rough around the edges, but nothing could have dampened our spirits at that time. When ready to see more of the island and checking in with Customs, as instructed, we were surprised to be told we would need to return and get permission before moving again.



'We pulled into Castara Bay... Continuing on through the night would be insane'

Okay, not having to bring the boat to Customs the second time, we could take the bus or a cab. It would give us a chance to see the interior of the island! We pulled the anchor and sailed the ten miles to Store Bay at the east end. The blaring rap music from shore in place of the steel drums we'd so looked forward to was another sign that things were not going to be as expected. No problem, we can't expect people to play the same music forever just in case we might drop by and want to hear it.

The local people, who on first impression didn't seem very friendly, turned out to be just a bit reserved. If we took the initiative by starting a conversation they were not only friendly, but also quite helpful. Just the normal process of getting familiar. We also became friends with several couples on boats.

—Continued on next page

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Things were looking up until we returned to Scarborough by bus and requested permission to sail to Charlottesville. We were asked how long it would take us. Although located at the northeast corner of the island, only 22 miles away, we were expecting a tough beat straight into the Trades. Having read in the Doyle guide about the many beautiful bays along the way, with good anchorages and great food waiting on shore, we planned to break it into short hops. Considering the time it takes to get to know the people in a new place and that we had been issued a three-month cruising permit, I thought one month was reasonable but only asked for one week.

Our request was out of the question. The senior official said with disgust, "You just want to stop and find bars to drink beer!" Stunned, we asked what a reasonable time-frame might be. He responded "one day", adding that one stop of one to two hours would be reasonable but that we would have to explain any delay on our arrival in Charlottesville. We wouldn't be able to visit any of the places we'd read about.

Back at the boat we learned that some of our new friends had checked out the same day but with a different official and in the absence of the "big shot" were given five days to make the same trip. Others intended to "just do it anyway". We were determined to reach Charlottesville, but as guests in their country we would follow the "rules".

Leaving at the same time as one of the other boats, we found making headway as difficult as expected. We continued on as they turned into Courland Bay where the anchorage and restaurants of Plymouth awaited them. Hours later and only a few miles up the coast we pulled into Castara Bay. We'd had it. Continuing on through the night would be insane. After sleeping, but without getting off the boat, we continued on in the morning.



At Portlamar, yachts flew their flags at half-mast after a cruiser succumbed to injuries inflicted by a speeding local boat

Arriving in Charlottesville we pumped up the dinghy and headed for shore to check in. With chips on all four shoulders we were prepared for the worst. The friendly welcome we received from the officials was nearly as unexpected as the negative one at Scarborough. The local people were charming, although at times I felt as though I must have FREE BEER written on my forehead! We made many friends during our two-week stay. Our mask carved from a calabash by Maurice and our CD of songs played and sung by Squeezy are two new treasured souvenirs added to our collection.

Continuing on to Trinidad we once again followed instructions, sailing past all the beautiful bays along the north shore of Tobago.

Arriving in Chaguaramas and dropping the hook among at least a hundred boats already at anchor, we could not believe the recklessness of the local skiffs. Launched one after another from a huge dry-storage facility, they would roar through the anchorage at full speed. These were not only the local fishermen but also expensive boats with big outboard motors and whole families on board. As the boats in the anchorage were continuously rocked we wondered where the authorities could be. Were there no laws? When the Coast Guard finally arrived it was in grand style. Half a dozen of them in an open boat with THREE 200-horsepower outboard motors! Roaring full speed through the anchorage they passed our boat, knocking us on our beam ends and completely swamping our dinghy. They would do this every couple of days when coming in for fuel. I must admit this insane behavior was infectious and I was soon speeding around in our dinghy as fast as the little eight-horsepower outboard would push us, and wishing we had a nine-point-eight.

We quickly learned that Chaguaramas is a massive boatyard/storage facility. Just south of the hurricane zone, hundreds of yachts are hauled there annually to sit out the dangerous season. When the owners return five or six months later, their boats are all polished or painted and ready to go. Although not a good cruising destination, every service was available so we decided to take advantage and have some upholstery and canvas work done. No bargain, but the work was done well and very quickly. Hauling the boat out of the water, we escaped the speeding skiffs and were able to polish the oil sludge from the hull sides. Our new cruiser friends from Tobago were there and we did manage to have a good time.

As soon as the boat went back in the water we were on our way. After two months in Tobago and Trinidad our nerves were shot. We couldn't wait to get to Isla Margarita, Venezuela. Once again reading the Doyle guide, it sounded wonderful and with a name like "Margarita" we thought it had to be good.

In Trinidad we'd been continuously warned of crime. We were advised to stay at least 30 miles offshore when traveling to avoid pirates. It seemed a bit paranoid but this longer route would take us by Los Testigos islands. Like most other boats, we sailed overnight with our lights off and radar on. In Los Testigos, we relaxed for the allowed two days. The officials were very friendly and we had fun with our horrible Spanish.

Arriving in Isla Margarita, we joined another hundred boats already at anchor off the large city of Portlamar. Our daughter and son-in-law planned to fly in and spend a week with us, and it looked like the perfect place. We were so glad they hadn't come to Trinidad as originally planned.

—Continued on next page



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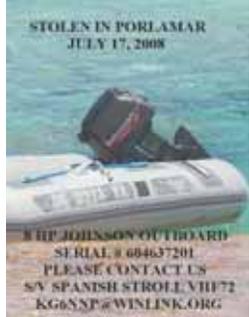
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—Continued from previous page

Once again, though, we were shocked as the local boats started roaring at full speed through the anchorage. The skills were more traditional and made of wood, but they were going just as fast and coming even closer than those in Trinidad.

The morning of our third day at Isla Margarita we found our outboard motor had been stolen from our dinghy. Having been warned, we'd locked both the dinghy and motor to the yacht's stern rail. The lock had been cut. Not satisfied with our motor, they had also taken our oars, leaving us with no way to reach shore.

Calling a more locally experienced acquaintance on the VHF radio for advice on how to contact the police triggered an exchange between the long-timers in the anchorage. The gist? One, it was our fault our lock had been cut and our motor stolen because we hadn't lifted the dinghy out of the water, and two, we could report it to the police but there was "zero chance" of our getting it back.



The topic suddenly changed: a cruising couple in their dinghy had just been run down by one of the speeding local boats. He (the cruiser) was killed. The following day as all the yachts lowered their flags to half mast, dozens of local skiffs, rather than slowing down a bit, terrorized the anchorage. Charging, often two or three at once, full speed at a yacht they would turn only at the last second missing by inches. They were delighted if they could throw water into our dinghies and some made a sport of trying to reach out and touch them as they sped by. This went on from morning till night as the operators grew more daring (intoxicated?) and the police boat sat tied to the dock, never moving.

Still dealing with our relatively petty problems, a fellow cruiser generously offered to loan us a pair of oars and we cautiously headed for shore. Halfway in, we realized the thieves had

also taken our shoes. With bare feet we found the police and reported our theft. Next we contacted our daughter and, in spite of months of planning, told her not to come to Isla Margarita.

We were told that the day of terror had been a holiday and the local people always go crazy on holidays. What special day had stirred up so much insanity? Children's Day!

To our dismay we have found that virtually everyone here has been a victim. One couple we met had gone to shore for a pot-luck. Returning to their boat, they found their liferaft and fenders were missing. The nice guy who brought us the oars had recently been pistol-whipped, tied up and then had the gun held to his head as his boat was ransacked. Outboard motor season is open year round.

The attitudes held and comments made by many of the cruisers here are also disturbing. We are shocked by the tendency of some cruisers to blame the victims: thieves cut our lock and stole our property and it's our fault because we failed to suspend it from the mast top. Come on, this thinking is as archaic as blaming the woman for her rape because of the clothes she was wearing.

Most yachts travel in tandem with lights off while staying far from shore. Making landfall they anchor in large groups, everyone trying to get in the center, then stow all loose gear below and lift their dinghies out of the water before locking themselves in for the night. Their slogan? "Lift It and Lock It or Lose It". Then they tell us "it's this way everywhere".

In the past five years we have visited 20 countries. To our knowledge, it's not this way anywhere else. Every place else we've visited, cruisers — even singlehanders, including females — roam freely. When cruisers lift their dinghies it's usually to keep the bottom clean. Many sleep in their cockpits under the stars.

Our best defense is our windlass. Fortunately, we cruisers have the option of taking our homes and money and leaving. The world is full of really great places.

Editor's note: Although Jim and Barb have admittedly only visited three out of the hundreds of islands in the Caribbean, the unwelcoming attitude of a few Customs officials, boats speeding in crowded anchorages, and dinghy theft are three perennial complaints about Caribbean cruising. We've asked the Caribbean Safety & Security Net and the Yacht Services Association of Trinidad & Tobago (YSATT) to comment. Their responses follow:

Dear Compass,

There have been eight crime reports from yachts in Porlamar since the beginning of this year and, while that looks like a crime spree, the increase is due more to cruisers willing to report incidents to the Security Net than a crime spree itself.

For whatever reason, there has been extreme reluctance among those who spend time in Porlamar to get the word out — they believe it tarnishes the reputation of Margarita. However, I have been told many times by many people who have been to Porlamar that what is reported to the Security Net is "just the tip of the iceberg". They do, however, cover the "lock it and lift it or lose it" on the VHF net on a regular basis. (Spanish Water, Curaçao, is another anchorage where one must lift the dinghy out of the water in addition to locking up.)

Since the Security Net began, Porlamar has had more reports than any other single anchorage, in spite of the reluctance of some cruisers to report. While one may attribute these large numbers to a greater number of visiting yachts (i.e. more "yacht days" than any other anchorage), if that logic were valid, we would see an increase in reports for the south coast of Grenada, especially during hurricane season, as well as an increase from Rodney Bay, St. Lucia, particularly during the ARC arrival. While those two locations do see some increase, it is in no way proportionate to what has been the ongoing and consistent case in Porlamar for the past 11 years.

With regard to the speeding local boats both in Porlamar and in Chaguaramas, one should also add Rodney Bay to that list, as well as include the tourists on jet skis. The tragic death of the man in Porlamar (he wasn't killed on impact, but died of injuries while on the operating table) was an accident waiting to happen. Every weekend the Porlamar anchorage becomes a racetrack for local teenagers, apparently in their fathers' boats. There have been injuries in Chaguaramas due to speeding local boats but thankfully no deaths — yet.

The authorities in St. Lucia have been ignoring the high-speed watercraft problem for years. Our yacht was hit last year in Rodney Bay by an out-of-control jet-ski. Unfortunately, we were only one of several who were hit this past season. A friend of ours narrowly escaped being run over by a jet-ski while cleaning his anchor rode. There have already been injuries and hospital visits and stitches to close wounds. Do we need to wait for a death to make an issue of it?

There has been little done by local authorities to deal with these problems. The Porlamar police put a night patrol boat in the water after the liferaft was stolen, but reports coming back to me indicate it was very conspicuous for three or four days and then no longer seen. As far as the death of the cruiser is concerned, there is apparently a continuing investigation but that is targeted to the specific incident, not speeding boats in general.

Until local authorities take responsibility for criminal activity and dangerous behavior affecting the tourists who visit their anchorages, these sorts of incidents are going to continue, and may well escalate, as evidenced by the increase in speeding in Porlamar during the several days following the incident.

Melodye Pompa
S/Y Second Millennium
for the Caribbean Safety and Security Net
SSB 8104.0 at 1215 UTC
www.safetyandsecuritynet.com

Dear Compass,

YSATT knows only too well the situation with the boats speeding in Chaguaramas Bay and we continue to alert the relevant authorities whenever it is brought to our attention. Unfortunately, there are no laws pertaining directly to the leisure marine industry and specifically to "no wake" zones. The leisure marine industry, which includes yachting, currently gets lumped under "Shipping." With regard to the problems that this specific cruiser had with Customs in Tobago, we did contact the Communications Unit of Customs & Excise and they have forwarded this response:

"The Customs and Excise Division is currently investigating allegations concerning the negative attitudes of certain Customs Officers highlighted in the letters of complaint. The Division has also embarked on a Customer Service training programme as we seek to improve the overall service of the Division. The Customs and Excise Division remains committed to facilitating legitimate trade to support the economic growth and development of Trinidad and Tobago."

Regards,
Gina Hatt-Carvalho, Manager
Yacht Services Association of Trinidad & Tobago



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ALL ASHORE...

An Encounter in an E-Mail Café in Venezuela

by Bernie Katchor

Here Yvonne and I are, two ancient gringos. We have driven our dinghy ashore and locked it to the dock with a chain that goes through the outboard and gas tank, and then into a large padlock. "Everyone is a thief in Venezuela," everyone tells us. (We wonder if the people who tell us this are thieves themselves.) We march to an internet café whose location is explained to Yvonne, who actually understands Spanish. (After seven years in Spanish-speaking countries I speak seven Spanish words, but I know the essential hand motions.)

Spanish keyboards are arranged differently, but in our notebook we have written how to get an @ sign and other essentials that are necessary to do e-mail in Venezuela. At the "all computers full but only one dollar an hour" internet café, many of the youngsters around us seemed to be chatting in English. We acknowledged them, then concentrated on our e-mails pouring in.

Our children tell us in the e-mails we just opened, "You are in a dangerous country. You are far too old for this stupidity. You will get diarrhoea, cysts in your liver, robbed, raped or even killed. Get out now! All your sensible friends are rocking in chairs, walking dogs, reading newspapers, and doing that which is the maximum any person of your age should do. Especially note: all your friends delight in baby-sitting and are there to wipe noses and change diapers of grandchildren. What is wrong with you?"

"Did you know the Australian government, who are much wiser than you two are, actually forbids Australians travel to where you are right now? Why, they may even arrest you there and then you can never come home. After all, you have been gone for 15 years now. Come home. I speak for the whole family; we have discussed the matter at length. Your loving daughter."

*You have been gone
for 15 years now.
Come home*

Wow! What an e-mail! And one on a similar vein is waiting for us every time we find a café to view e-mails, at whatever port we sail into.

Our sailing travels are rewarding, peaceful, exhilarating and enjoyable, as well as exasperating. Is that not what sailing is about? Surely, if you want things to be like they are at home you must stay there and patiently wait to die, fiddling your time away.

Sailing gives us sights and experiences to wonder at, be it deserted islands or magnificent snow-capped mountains that can be seen from our sailboat. There are wonderful sailing canoes hewn from a tree, or dilapidated concrete fishing boats with a tribe of *marineros* grinning as they hand over lobster. Then there are leaping dolphins at play and the green flash at sunset. Off the sailboat for a day, we travel on old buses and hang onto trucks; we even travel on donkeys and most often on foot to see the sights unavailable from the boat. Racing up a dirt track with 350 switchbacks to see spectacular mountain views and colourfully dressed indigenous peoples working or playing in the fields was one unforgettable land experience.

All these experiences we never believed we would actually have, and we pinch ourselves every time we sail into a new experience to ensure it is really happening and we have not ascended to wherever it is old Australians go. And perhaps best of all, the people we meet are curious about us and many look upon us with the reverence people in these "dangerous" lands give elders.

"Look what my mum wrote. Oh, Christ!" The desperate cry comes from a teenager reading her e-mails at a computer nearby. It startles us out of our concentration on composing a delicate but firm reply to our worrying babies of 35 and 40 years old.

She begins to read aloud and other kids gather to see if this mum is as paranoid as theirs. "My child, you are too much worry and your father says come home immediately as your money must have run out and it is so dangerous over there, you do not realize how dangerous..." Here the reader stopped as everyone was laughing.

"Come over here," I cried as I joined the merriment. "Read what my children say." One came and read aloud our latest e-mail. After the laughter died and the amazement — no, the respect — expressed about the fact that we had been traveling for 15 years, others read out their similar e-mails.

After laughing at the many e-mails from loved ones, we all abandoned the café and headed off together for a drink. Seated in a little Venezuelan beer house with our six-cent home-brewed beers, we continued laughing about the reaction of people left behind to our collective adventure. I summed it up after about the third beer: "These people at home feel safe at home, saying that the evil you know is better than the one you do not."

As our grand, one-dollar feast arrived, many questions came from the dozen kids, aged from 17 to 27, gathered at our long table. One asked our opinion: "What can I tell my parents? I am taking a job here for a year at ten US dollars per week. They cannot understand why, and tell me if I really loved them I would come home and get a real job."

Others had similar problems with dotting parents. After many such conversations, all of which were followed by laughter and comments, one child turned to me: "You're old — tell us what to say to old parents like you that worry so much they actually spoil our travel enjoyment."

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page
"Cheeky bastard," I reply. "I am only 67 years young!"
"Wow, my father is 41," one said. Another's father was 53 and a third's 50 or thereabouts, as far as he could remember. "How come you are so old and travel?"
"Why shouldn't I travel?" was my reply. "Now, what to tell your parents? Tell them about all the wonderful friends from all nations you travel with, to assure them you are safe with this crowd. Tell them a friend has a special pump to remove all matter from drinking water so you can never get cysts or diarrhoea. Tell them all sorts of lies to make them feel better, because they really believe you are in danger. Newspapers only tell of the violence in Venezuela, not about the wonderful town and beaches where we now are — 500 miles from Caracas. Always rebut their examples of how endangered you are. Then, and this is important, invite them to come and travel with you, but as you travel."

"No! No!" they cried in unison. "Our parents would spoil our travels." "Mine would make me shower every day," one young boy ventured.

"Don't worry, people who write the sort of amazing e-mails that we have just read will never travel as we do," I told them. "so you are safe when you invite them to 'rough it'. They will always have something that, for the moment (and forever I might add), will prevent them from joining you. So be brave, and insist they come on over to see how wonderful and safe it is. Most of them will never come."

"Even if they do, they may do a day tour at Angel Falls and then cross Venezuela off their list, becoming an authority on Venezuela after returning home. We all know there are better, more peaceful waterfalls where you can be alone to wonder and not crowded in with complaining tourists. We, too, all know of trails and islands where there is nothing — and that is the beauty of it all."

"Never fear. Really insist your parents come. I guarantee they will not come to travel as you do," I concluded, lifting my home-brew beer high and calling, "Salud." Yvonne added, "But if on the off chance they do arrive — having agreed to travel as you do, on your terms, with no complaints — you will all really learn to respect and not ridicule each other, as you and your parents do at this moment."

A long time ago, Yvonne and I went to Africa. Her parents, who were as old as we are now, showed an interest. We wrote a list of conditions and they agreed. Yvonne's mother, at 93 years, still talks about that trip. Twenty-three hours on a bus with a box of chickens on her lap, having to get off the bus and pee alongside everybody else, climbing Kilimanjaro — new experiences she would never had moving from one five-star hotel to another. Now Yvonne's mother understands more than our children do why we travel as we do. How is that for good advice?

There was a silence as all this sunk in.

"Fifteen years... amazing," one young traveler murmured. "I have been gone for two months and I thought that a long time to travel. I was starting to feel obligated to go home to do 'real' stuff, even though with the little I have spent so far I could continue for another six months."

"The only advantage of being old," I continued, enjoying myself, "is that you have time. But this is your time and it is yours to spend how you want to spend it, not how others feel you must."

"But they get so upset and are so worried; it makes me so sad. How would you feel if your parents said that you obviously must really hate them to want to remain in South America? I do not hate my parents." The young girl was emotional and wiped tears from her eyes. "But I do not want to go home yet," she added as she looked to us for an answer.

"Write your parents," I suggested, "challenging them for saying you must hate them — that's an absurd statement. Tell them you have not finished your travels and if you came home you could not afford to return to complete your South American journey. Then say you do miss them very much and if they would buy you a 14-day return fare you would love to come to visit. (Do not get a longer timed fare if you really want to continue travelling.) And give them an alternative, for example, that if your mother came here you would gladly spend a week or so at a dreadful beach resort just to be with her. Otherwise it is travel on your terms. How does that sound?" I concluded.

"When my head clears, I'll e-mail my mother," she said.

"So will I," a couple of others agreed.

The six-cent beers were going down fast, lubricating my thoughts. "We would love all your e-mail addresses and will give you ours. We send a newsletter out every once in a while. And let us know when you change your e-mail address — you youngsters change e-mails more often than you change your underpants. We really want to hear from you in 20 years time to see how you are handling your kids. We'll be 87 by then, but we'll still want to know."

"It's time for us oldies to find our dinghy and return to our beloved home and hit the sack. We have a young guy calling in his canoe at six tomorrow morning to take us bird watching. We will bid you all goodnight and we hope we have helped you. Above all, love your parents for what they are. It is harder to change the older you get. Look at us. We will still be travelling at 80, I bet, but will you all? Goodnight and good luck."

Even though our bones creak too much, the young people we meet on our travels keep us young in thought and are an inspiration. Travel really is the people you meet, although the scenery isn't too bad either.

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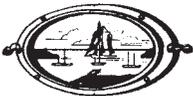
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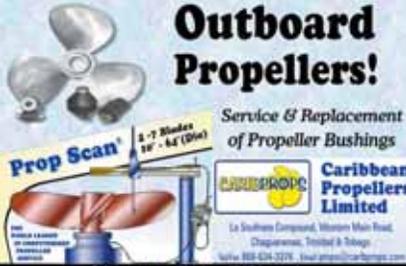


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...Readers' Forum

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But last I checked, Salt Whistle Bay was within the park boundaries and I did see all of their guests were swimming in the water and enjoying the beauty that the TCMP is renowned for. Maybe they don't agree with the fee system or the laws and regulations which have now finally been put in place to manage the park.

What I want to know is why does this company refuse to pay, when all of the other Grenadines water-taxis, dive operators and day tour companies which are locally owned and operated pay their fees and respect the park rangers?

Despite the fact that the TCMP still has a long way to go in terms of a perfectly managed and run marine park, I can say from my experiences there that it is finally getting off the ground in terms of management, education, enforcement and stopping illegal activities, increased fish abundances and decreases in litter. We have all been asking for years for proper marine management and enforcement within the TCMP and rangers are just doing their job! Please support them, follow the laws and report violators!

A Supporter of the Tobago Cays Marine Park

Dear Supporter of TCMP,

We can see why there might be some confusion. The official TCMP website (www.tobagocays.com) says, "The entry fee only applies for access to the protection zone (i.e. the Tobago Cays themselves). Visitors to Mayreau and local residents of that island are not required to pay the entry fee." The island of Mayreau is technically within the greater park boundaries, but not in the protection zone.

For clarification, we spoke to the TCMP's Education Coordinator, Lesroy Noel, who explained to us that "access to the protection zone" means just that: access. It is not limited to anchoring or overnighting, but also includes cruising through on sightseeing tours.

The TCMP website lists the park's various fees, and there is provision for a very reasonable reduced fee for local excursions, presumably to encourage Vincentians (a surprising number of whom have never been there) to visit their only National Park.

Compass attempted to contact the owner/skipper of the tour company in question, but he was out of the country up until press time.

It has been a long and hard fight to get the Tobago Cays Marine Park where it is today: an increasingly healthy marine resource protected by competent and concerned Vincentians. We urge everyone to support it and respect those who are protecting it.

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