THE VIEQUES TIMES

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE ISLA NENA

Vieques To Be Queen Bee Country?

Agriculture secretary Juan Bautista Salas has placed Puerto Rico (or Vieques, depending on point of view) under quarantine as far as bees, honey and beekeeping paraphernalia are concerned.

His Domestic Quarantine Order # 5 reads:

"To prevent the introduction into the island of Vieques of diseases and dangerous pests of Bees (Apis mellifera)...

...In accordance with most recent information the island of Vieques is free from bee diseases and pests...

...the existence of diseases and pests (Bacillus larvae, Streptococcus pluton, etc.) has been confirmed in Puerto Rico...

...Whereas the Dept. of Agriculture intends to sponsor and promote a queen bees production program in Vieques...

...Therefore...the introduction into Vieques of live bees in any of its stages of development, honeycombs, dead bees of any type, bee semen and any material or equipment previously used by apiculturists in their apiaries is hereby prohibited..."

According to the department's director of vegetable sanitation, René Colón, the prohibition includes honey from any place in the world.

"Only Vieques honey may be sold in Vieques."

The agriculture inspectors have the power to confiscate prohibited materials and/or deputize police officers to prosecute smugglers.

Colón, who visited Vieques with Dept. inspectors Nilda Pérez, Evelyn Santiago and Gerald Aime to explain the situation, said there are nine beekeepers in Vieques working some 500 hives for a honey production of about a ton per year. Although there is room for twice as many honey hives he feels the big business break under the quarantine will be the unlimited production of safe, clean queen bees for export which could net their keepers as much as ten dollars each and plenty more where they come from.
Local Youth to Paddle "Hatuey" to Bahamas

Pablo Connelly Pagán, Times part-time ad rep, U.P.R. math student and Vieques waterman, has been selected to represent the university and the island of Vieques in the renewed odyssey of the dugout indian canoe "Hatuey."

The 43-ft. Hatuey was lost at sea during the new world quincentennial activity "Expedition by Canoe from the Amazon to the Caribbean" but eventually washed ashore in Vieques under its own steam. It was salvaged by local fishermen and sold to the Vieques Historical Trust which returned it to the P.R. Ateneo which is now its legal owner.

Ateneo pres. Eduardo Morales Coll contacted the participating nations and it has been agreed that the canoe will be returned to Vieques as a permanent museum piece once the aborted travesty has been completed. Due to existing State Dept. restrictions the university will have the canoe shipped to the Dominican Republic whence Hatuey will once again take to the sea with a Viequense aboard. The crew of scientists and students will then attempt to complete the voyage to the island of San Salvador (where Columbus first landed) via Haiti, Cuba and the Bahamian islands.

The 1,000-plus miles voyage is expected to take about two months during which the local participant is to pay his own expenses, an estimated $2,000. The Vieques Historical and Conservation Trust has pledged $500 and the Vieques Times is guaranteeing the rest but a fund-raising campaign will be launched to more evenly distribute the load.

Contributions may be made to "Canoe Fund" c/o The Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust, Box 1472, Vieques, P.R. 00765.
MBDA ORGANIZES MERCHANTS GROUP

The Vieques Minority Business Development Program has promoted the establishment of a local merchants’ association.

A late February meeting at Club Cerromar, attended by an invited 21 of the estimated 200 island businesspersons, resulted in the election of a board headed by auto parts dealer Orlando Cruz (Pres.), Vieques Gas distributor Jorge Colón (V.P.) and florist “Min” Maldonado (Sec).

The press was not invited but MBDA procurement specialist Héctor Rubén Bermúdez told the Times that his agency will provide legal assistance to get the group incorporated as a non-profit organization.

He explained that MBDA is not in the business of providing loans here but rather to assist local minority businesspersons in the procurement of service/supply contracts with the federal, state and municipal governments and in the private sector. By definition: “Minority business enterprise means a business that is owned or controlled by one or more socially or economically disadvantaged persons. Such disadvantage may arise from cultural, racial, chronic economic circumstances or background or other similar cause.”

The list of persons aided so far includes cabinet maker Orlando Melendez, engineer Mario H. Román and landscaper Jaime Padilla, all of whom have been awarded service contracts on federally-funded municipal projects.
Credit Where Credit’s Due

Ports Authority director José A. Buitrago promised that the Vieques airport cafeteria would be re-opened by the beginning of March. And so it was. And staffed by a pair of very bright and attractive, bi-lingual, island maidens.

Good work, Mr. Buitrago.

And...

Our compliments to the cafeteria personnel manager.

... 

Environmental Quality Control Board director Santos Rohena promised to look into the noise situation on Esperanza Beach. His sound monitors came and listened and got ear aches and issued written warnings to two of the loudest offenders, a small business and a big one. The board also warned that the monitors would be back, unannounced, and that a second warning could bring serious results.

A neighborhood consensus has it that the little guy has cut back somewhat on his volume throttle in token compliance but that the big guy continues to resonate unreservedly.

So the first round was nice and civilized and the earmuffed ringside spectators anxiously await second round action.

Will peace be restored or must romantics continue to shout across their loving cups?

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We all, plants and animals, share in this festival of Love when the positive force rises from the center and awakens every level as it radiates to the celestial energy of life. Stand barefoot on the earth beloved friends and surrender to the initial coalescing of the unified being in which consciousness and reality, feeling and essence, vitality and spirit, are joined in one energy. Enjoy!

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
The Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.
The Rubaiyat...VII

We offer you the words of the immortal Persian bard, Omar Khayyam, as a call to awaken, lest in the languor of the tropic sun, or in the stupor of too many a “Funky Monkey” this Time of times passes you by unaware.

The sorrows of yesterday are buried and gone, it’s spring again, rejoice.

Signed: With Love, Gypsy.
Land Grab -- Grab Bag?

The P.R. Urban Renewal & Housing agency (CRUV) has come under fire from the P.R. Justice Department.

A special prosecutor has filed perjury charges against the owner of a San Juan dental clinic who purchased a quarter of an acre of Vieques beachfront property from CRUV for one dollar. The CRUV investigator who processed the transaction was arrested and charged with criminal negligence. Further charges in other cases are expected to be forthcoming.

On the local scene there have been accusations of favoritism, discrimination, use of undue influence and collusion. Lawsuits against CRUV have been filed in both Commonwealth and Federal courts.

Some knowledge of local history is necessary to grasp the situation.

The Navy owns two-thirds of Vieques. The Commonwealth and/or the Municipal governments own roughly half of the remaining third.

There is very little formally deeded private property on the island and much of that belongs to “snowbird” vacationers and U.S. and foreign speculators.

The rest is “Squatters’ land.” That includes all of Santa Maria and Bravos de Boston and parts of Monte Santo and other neighborhoods. Santa Maria residents include doctors, lawyers, judges, ex-mayors, high-end businessmen and continental vacationers. Squatters’ lots and homes have been sold for upwards of a quarter-million dollars but for the most part they are relatively humble dwellings.

The navy has never taken legal action against squatters (although early Bravos settlers were bulldozed out) but has withdrawn its boundaries and ceded (via sale by G.S.A. to the P.R. Land Administration) hundreds of acres at a clip to the San Juan government with the proviso that all properties thereon be respected. The buyer, then, according to legal experts, buys with the squatters aboard and theoretically is unentitled to evict.

CRUV, however, came along and bought from the land authority and began eviction proceedings against certain, by no means all, nor even the majority, of the occupants. One purchase (600& acres in Santa Maria inhabited by some 50 families) was effected while the land was under injunction by the P.R. Superior Court and is considered by some legal experts to be illegal and in contempt of court. CRUV nevertheless has won a few eviction decisions, managed to have a few homesteaders tear down their buildings and recently won a verdict from a judge which would give CRUV title to a cinder block home built by hand by a “squatter.” By extension CRUV would also become owner of the squatter’s tools, plantings, livestock and anything else on the property at the time of the decision since the ruling would preclude entry to the homesteader.

Many are the cases at hand but the Times is observing most closely two of the most bizarre:

One involves a “squatter” who, as a child, was moved with his family from their expropriated home in Punta Arenas in the early forties and delivered by navy truck to the spot which was arbitrarily decided as their new home and where he is today being charged with being a recent “usurper” in spite of the fact that he has presented military documents dating back to 1945 and a stack of P.R. court documents dating to 1972. (CRUV claims they are acting against persons who “invaded” after 1980.)

The other is a bricklayer and his wife who purchased a lot through legal channels and hand-built a home where they now reside. CRUV officials recently gave (or sold) “legal” title to lot and home to a third party.

VIEQUES ICE CREAM GARDEN

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Pollos del Pais To-Rico
Cocinados al Vapor
TODA CLASE DE MANTECADOS
Steak Sandwiches
Hamburgers al Carbon

Barrio Florida 741-2376
Joven Viequense Remarará "Hatuey" Hasta Las Bahamas

Pablo Connelly Pagán representante de ventas “part-time” del Times, estudiante de matemáticas de la U.P.R. y marinero-playero viequense ha sido escogido para representar la universidad y la Isla de Vieques en la reorganizada odisea de la Canoa Hatuey.

Hatuey, la canoa de 43-pies, se perdió en alta-mar durante la actividad en celebración del quinto centenario del nuevo mundo “Expedición en Canoas del Amazonas al Caribe” pero eventualmente llegó sola a las playas de Vieques. Fue rescatada por unos buzos viequenses y vendido al Fideicomiso de Conservación de Vieques quien se lo entregó al Ateneo de Puerto Rico su dueño actual.

Eduardo Morales Coll, Presidente del Ateneo, ha llegado a un acuerdo con los países participantes para que al terminar la travesía la canoa regrese a Vieques como un artefacto histórico. Debido a restricciones impuestas por el Departamento de Estado la Universidad enviará la canoa a República Dominicana donde “Hatuey” partirá de nuevo al mar con el viequense a bordo. La tripulación de científicos y estudiantes atendrán completar el viaje hasta la isla de San Salvador (primera tierra tocada por Colón) via Haití, Cuba y las Islas Bahamas.

El viaje de más de 1,000 millas tomará unos estimados dos meses y el participante local ha de pagar sus propios gastos, unos estimados $2,000.

El Fideicomiso de Conservación e Historia donará $500 y el Vieques Times garantiza el resto pero se iniciará una campaña para recolectar fondos y así compartir con más equidad los gastos.

Puede enviar su contribución al Fondo de Hatuey, c/o El Fideicomiso de Conservación e Historia, Apartado 1472, Vieques, Puerto Rico, 00765.

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PRUEBA NUESTRAS ALBONDIGAS ADOBADAS
La Abeja Reina --
¿Soberana en Vieques?

El Secretario de Agricultura, Juan Bauzá Salas, ha puesto bajo cuarentena a Puerto Rico (o Vieques, según el punto de vista) con respecto a las abejas, la miel, y los equipos usados por apicultores en sus apiarios.

Su orden de CUARENTENA DOMESTICA NUM. 5 lee así:

"Para evitar la introducción a la Isla de Vieques de las enfermedades y plagas peligrosas de las Abejas (Apis mellifera).

...De acuerdo con la más reciente información, la Isla de Vieques se encuentra libre de enfermedades y plagas peligrosas de las abejas...

...se ha comprobado la existencia en la Isla de Puerto Rico de enfermedades y plagas peligrosas (Bacillus larvae, Streptococcus pluton y otras)... 

...Por cuanto: el Departamento de Agricultura de Puerto Rico se propone auspiciar y promover un programa de producción de abejas reinas en la Isla de Vieques...

...A tales fines se prohíbe la introducción a la Isla de Vieques de abejas vivas en cualquier estado de su ciclo de vida, panales de abejas, abejas muertas de cualquier genero, semen de abejas y cualquier material o equipo que haya sido usado anteriormente por apicultores en sus apiarios..."

Según René Colón, director de sanidad vegetal, la prohibición incluye miel de cualquier parte del mundo.

"En Vieques se podrá vender solamente miel de Vieques."

Los inspectores de agricultura tienen el poder de confiscar materiales prohibidos y/o asignar el poder de prosecución de contrabandistas a policías y otros oficiales civiles.

Colón visitó a Vieques acompañado por Nilda Pérez, Evelyn Santiago y Gerald Aime, inspectores del Departamento, y explicó que en Vieques hay nueve apicultores que trabajan 500 colmenas para una producción anual de aproximadamente una tonelada. Aunque hay lugar para dos veces esto en colmenas él considera que la gran ventaja para negocios bajo la cuarentena sería la producción sin límites de abejas reinas limpias y saludables para la exportación, que podrían traerle a los apicultores hasta diez pesos cada una y con muchas más disponibles en su punto de origen.

El Alboroto Continúa

Monitores de Calidad Ambiental mandado a Vieques por su jefe Santos Rohena citaron violaciones contra dos negocios en la Playa de Esperanza por ruido innecesario en exceso.

Los acusados fueron un pequeño negocio y uno grande. Los dos fueron notificados por escrito que los monitores volverán y que cualquiera que sea nombrado por segunda vez podría sufrir penalidades severas.

Bien. El aviso fue muy civilizado. Ahora, dicen los vecinos, el pequeño ha reducido su volumen un poco pero el grande sigue reverberando sin reservas.

¿Será re-establecida la paz o tendrán los enamorados que seguir gritándose para poder escuchar?... ¡Hay!...Que murmullan...
TRAQUETEOS CON LOS TERRENOS

La CRUV está bajo investigación de parte del Departamento de Justicia.

Un fiscal especial ha presentado cargos de perjuicio en contra de un dueño de una clínica dental de San Juan quien compró de la CRUV un solar en la playa de Monte Santo donde hizo una casa lujosa de veraneo. CRUV le vendió el terreno por un dólar. El investigador de la CRUV quien procesó la transacción fue arrestado, acusado de negligencia criminal. Se esperan más denuncias en el futuro cercano.

Localmente han habido acusaciones de nepotismo, favoritismo, discriminación, influencia indebida y coacción. Demandas contra la CRUV han sido radicadas en los tribunales estatales y federales.

Algun conocimiento de la historia local es necesario para comprender la situación.

La Marina estadounidense es dueña de dos terceras partes de los terrenos en Vieques.

El gobierno de la E.L.A y/o del Municipio son dueños de aproximadamente la mitad del terreno que sobra.

Existe muy poco terreno con título formal y mucho de eso pertenece a vacacionistas continentales y a especuladores norteamericanos y extranjeros.

El resto es “tierra invadida.”

Eso incluye todo Santa María y Bravos de Boston y sectores de Monte Santo y de otros barrios. Residentes de Santa María incluyen médicos, abogados, jueces, ex-alcaldes, comerciantes afluentes y continentales vacacionistas. Algunos solares y edificios de “invasores” han sido vendidos por más de un cuarto de millón de dólares pero en su mayoría son viviendas relativamente humildes.

El Navy nunca ha tomado acciones legales en contra de los invasores (aunque las primeras construcciones en los Bravos fueron tumbadas con bulldozers) sino ha retirado sus colindancias y cedido (por medio de ventas de la G.S.A. a la Administración de Terrenos) cientos de cuerdas a la vez con la condición que todos las propiedades ya clavadas sean respetadas. Eso quiere decir, según expertos legales, que el comprador hace su compra con los invasores ya abordo y por ende no tiene poderes de deshauio.

Sin embargo, llega la CRUV, compra de la Administración y presenta demandas de deshauio en contra de ciertos, no todos ni siquiera la mayoría de los ocupantes. Una compra de algunas 600& cuerdas en una llamada finca en Santa María fue efectuada mientras que la finca quedaba bajo injunction por el Tribunal Superior por lo cual algunos expertos consideran la transacción ilegal por ser en pleno descuento. Sin embargo la CRUV ha ganado dos o tres decisiones y ha logrado forzar a algunos residentes a tumbar sus casas y retirarse. Recientemente la CRUV consiguió una decisión de tribunal que le daría título a una casa de bloques hecha a mano por un “invasor.” Por extensión la CRUV también se quedaría con todos sus herramientas, la sierra, los animales y cualesquier otras pertinencias del “invasor” ya que le es prohibido entrar en la propiedad.

Muchos son los casos a mano, pero el Times se concentra en investigar dos de los más curiosos.

Uno se trata de un “invasor” quien, cuando niño, fue entregado en un camión del Navy, junto a su familia, al sitio arbitrariamente designado como su nuevo hogar cuando fueron expropiados de Punta Arenas en los años 40. Hoy día, la CRUV le acusa de ser un “usurpador” reciente. Eso, no obstante que el acusado ha presentado evidencia documental militar que data desde el 1945 y del tribunal local con fechas desde el 1972. CRUV solamente reclama derechos desde el 1980.

Otro caso es el de un albañil y su esposa, quienes compraron a través de canales legales, un solar donde fabricaron una residencia a mano. Oficiales de la CRUV recientemente dijeron (o vendieron) título al solar y a la casa a otra persona.
MBDA Organiza Nueva Asociación de Comerciantes
El Vieques Minority Business Development Program ha promovido el establecimiento de una asociación de negociantes locales.
A fines de febrero se celebró una reunión en el Club Cerromar a la cual asistieron 21 de los estimados 200 comerciantes locales. Se eligió una junta encabezada por Orlando Cruz, vendedor de piezas de autos (Pres.), Jorge Colón dueño de Vieques Gas (Vice Pres.), y "Min" Maldonado de la Floristería Isla Nena (Sec.)
La Prensa no fue invitada pero Héctor Rubén Bermúdez, Procurement Specialist de la MBDA le informó al Times que su agencia proveerá asistencia legal al grupo para organizarse como corporación sin fines de lucro.
El explicó que la MBDA no prové préstamos pero se dedica localmente a asistir negociantes en procurar contratos de servicio/provisión con el gobierno federal, estatal o municipal, y con el sector privado. Por definición: "Minority business enterprise es un negocio perteneciente o controlado por una o más personas con desventaja social o económica. La desventaja puede surgir de causas culturales, raciales, circunstancias económicas crónicas o otras causas similares."
La lista de personas beneficiadas hasta el momento incluye el ebanista Orlando Meléndez, ingeniero Mario H. Román y el arquitecto de jardines Jaime Padilla...a todos se le han otorgado contratos por servicios en proyectos municipales con fondos federales.

Salen Dos Nuevos Libros Viequenses
Trovador Mon Silva ya está distribuyendo su nuevo libro de décimas CANTO A ISLA NENA. El libro contiene una colección de fotos del autor, su familia, su conjunto musical y algo de su isla. Es disponible en la tienda Publicidad Silva, frente a la Plaza.
El otro, POEMAS VIEQUENSES, por Luis F. Rivera Herrera, se está imprimiendo en Vieques Graphic y debe salir en abril. Está ilustrado por dibujos originales del autor.
POEMAS VIEQUENSES es publicado por el Centro Cultural Yaureibo de Vieques.
Citamos de la introducción: Luis, como tantos de sus compueblanos, ha tenido que emigrar de su querida isla una y otra vez, para encontrarse sólo en el frío impersonal de algún barrio de Brooklyn o de Bronx. A veces su nostalgia se pinta de amargura o de coraje o de indignación pero siempre se enoblece con su amor por la Isla Nena de sus sueños.
En este libro él canta en versos libres que disfrazan una estructura sólida pero sutil que puede engañar al lector desprevenido. Aquí se canta a los pajaritos del aire y a los pecesitos del mar y a la memoria de las guajanas mientras que se condena toda una condición política — la presencia militar en Vieques — tan fuertemente que puede parecer demasiado sencillo. Pero el poeta Luis es también el Luis aficionado de la ciencia y algunas de sus figuras requieren una visión hologramista y algún concepto del espacio curvo aunque el vocabulario básico puede satisfacer al jibarito del ya desaparecido cañaualer y al pescador del prohibido litoral.
The Beachcomber Speaks... Or Mumbles Something

Time to talk telephones. There’s an accountant downtown who shares a building with a fast food shop. He’s swamped with income tax accounts but all contacts must be made in person because he can’t get a phone. He paid his deposit and installation fee months ago before moving in but the word is there’s no trunk line. His neighbors would like to put a couple of kids to work delivering chicken-in-a-basket but they can’t get a phone either. They’re all upset because, after all, this is 1988 and the fact is the building has phone installations dating back at least a decade.

Down the street a way there’s a dentist sharing a building with a hairdresser. —We’re talking City Center, Main Street, mind you. —They don’t have phones, either. They were told the company has run out of numbers for Vieques! Their building is also wired for phones, long time passing.

Our neighborhood has had phones for a couple of years now so you can usually get through when it’s not raining anywhere between here and the Rain Forest. The nearest operator is conveniently located just over the mountains in Caguas on the big island and we’re not on the line. They service us via microwave. Still it works most of the time though you’re apt to pay more for a call to San Juan than to San Francisco. And you’ve got to be careful to schedule important communications around the dominating influence of the “Word of God” according to Oral Roberts, or some such, emanating from the local bible belt radio transmitter which completely overwhelms the audio.

But there’s hope. The P.R. Communications Authority (PRCA), which services Vieques and Culebra and is a separate entity from the P.R. Telephone Company (PRTC) which services San Juan, etc., is planning a multi-million-dollar fiber optics submarine cable to hook us up to Puerto Rico.

When? Maybe next year.

Meanwhile, as Caribbean Business weekly pointed out recently, PRCA continues to do business from its Hato Rey offices. You guessed it. Hato Rey is serviced by the other phone company.

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Six-pack Portage for Profit

Inspired by the recent arrival of the Indian canoe “Hatuey” in Vieques, Orwell Sitwell is canoeing across Vieques’ inland waterway. He says if it goes well he will canoe around the island sometime in the summer. I caught up with him on the shore of Kianf Lagoon, on the first leg of a journey which will take him through every lagoon from the navy base on the western end of the island to Camp Garcia on the eastern end.

“Ory” has a 12-ft. fiberglass canoe with a silver birch-bark design which he bought on sale at Sears & Roebuck two years ago for $697.99. He affectionately calls it “Canoey” and wheels it from one lagoon to another on a small fold-up aluminum dolly, refusing any offer of assistance (“paddle my own canoe” is his motto).

“If one canoe could travel all the way from the rain forests of Ecuador, be lost in a storm, and finally arrive, unmanned on the shores of Vieques, just think what can accomplish.”

“What, actually, do you hope to accomplish?” I asked him.

“Spiritual fulfillment, emotional release, physical exhaustion... and about a million dollars in promo ads.

“High ideals without financial backing just doesn’t cut it anymore. Those days are gone. I wrestled a long time with my conscience, but at last I realized what a splendid advertisement could be made. Picture me sitting in my canoe in the middle of the lagoon holding up a can of Budweiser. The caption could read something like: ‘My canoe may not have a crew, but I do have my brew.’

“It seems a let-down to the true spirit of the Hatuey canoe.’

“Sure. You’d like me to say something like I’ve got no arms or legs but I’m proving that I can paddle it with my tongue, or I want to show how my ancestors from Tea Neck, New Jersey first arrived in Vieques, or that I’m really a cover-up for some secret military maneuver.

But the truth is that Vieques missed the boat when it came time for free advertising. Just picture me, sitting in the middle of the Hatuey canoe, brandishing my can of Budweiser. Lovely maidens frolic in the water around the canoe and flowers bobble on the waves. The caption could read something like: ‘When in Vieques, charter the Indian canoe “Hatuey”, Captain Orwell at the helm and at your service.’ We could sell T-shirts, sun visors, hats and Bud holsters, all with the canoe’s logo.’

“Did you hear that Hatuey may be returned to Vieques?”

“That doesn’t fool me for a minute,” said Ory. “You know the real reason it’s being returned? With the way the new ferry runs, they’re going to have to put the canoe in use for the Vieques-Fajardo run. After all, it has been proven seaworthy. You can be sure the new ferry could never make the return trip to Ecuador and fare as well.”

-- Wendy Price
In San Juan they're calling 1988 a banner year for the burgeoning business of tourism but here in Vieques one hears weeping and gnashing of teeth in several of the would-be smart spots. On the other hand certain entrepreneurs are laughing all the way to the bank.

The Times did an informal survey of operators and tourists alike and came up with the following:

The hotels that have a private campus, or at least a yard, seem to do better than the places that open up onto the street. Something to do with those old varicose veins not faring well by comparison to the beach boys.

Many of the Stateside travel articles touting the bargain basement of the Caribbean have stuck in the craws of those who have had to spring for hundred-dollar dinners at what appear to be hamburger stands.

Loud weekend street crowds may be a turn-on for some adventurous souls but tend to frighten the more conservative tourist.

Honeymooners tend to be leery of bringing their brides to bars lined with military bachelors and Europeans are put off by the paucity of one-plate meals.

So what does Vieques have to offer? Certainly not Las Vegas style show spectacles...or casinos... or elegant ballrooms... nor avant-garde museums or film festivals. For that matter there's not even a single movie house.

The most that Vieques can offer is peace and quiet and beautiful beaches. But the noise level is way out of control and the most accessible beaches are being trashed. So some innkeepers convince their guests to stay on campus or to go out to the navy base if they wish to switch beaches.

Puerto Rican guided tour companies are ferrying over gaggles of tourists who arrive eleventh in the morning, pile into buses, ride out to the Camp Garcia beaches, take some pictures, then break for a piña colada in a plastic traveler which they can sip in the bus on the way back to the ferry landing. Where's the profit there?

The publico drivers say they need that action because the hotels are either providing free transportation to the airport, etc. or renting their own cars in unfair competition.

And what about the Puerto Rican tourists? Well they're certainly used to high prices; they've been patronizing the Hiltons and the Rockefeller resorts for decades. But when they drop three bucks for a drink they expect it to be served by someone dressed like a waiter. A touch of elegance. To kick back in shorts and flip-flops they may as well stay aboard their yachts and drink their Chivas Regal at free port prices.

So what's to be done? For openers someone ought to think about setting up something like a Tourist Board or a Chamber of Commerce which could subsidize trash collection and lobby for saner noise and nuisance control.
The Time
Of the RAM
March 21 - April 19
The head and face are controlled by this sign
whose natives are endowed with much mental
energy and quick wit. Ariens are impulsive,
quick tempered and often go to extremes with
their sharp tongues. The ruling planet of this
masculine, fire sign is MARS. In the spring-
time when a young man’s fancy turns to
thoughts of love (or a young woman’s for that
case) Ariens are wont to rush in where angels
fear to tread...assertive, positive and some-
times aggressive...oh, so impetuous lovers.

A sprig of watercress.
This herbaceous, aquatic plant grows along
the edges of springs and “quebradas”. It is
available year round in Vieques but most
plentiful during the rainy season when the
waters flow in the system of streams that
cover the island. Locals use it primarily in
salads as a source of many vitamins and
minerals: the peppery, aromatic flavor of
watercress attests to the presence of a wealth
of active principles. Medicinally it is an
effective expectorant for bronchial conditions,
combats hemorrhagic gingivitis, and is benefi-
cial for those who suffer from diabetes. The
plant must be fresh to gain full benefit of its
medicinal properties.

Put Miegs of Hingham, Mass. showed up at the Times
office with this curious, blood-veined artifact found in the
water at Blue Beach. At first glance it looked like a
double-whammy bicuspid of some monster shark but
local fishermen believe it to be the air bladder of a large
barracuda. Ms. Miegs is vacationing here at the home of
Liz and Peter Courtney in Bravos de Boston.

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Vieques Times.............741-8508
What with all the big sharks getting their pictures in the papers these days, there was bound to be a gabfest among the divers.

The younger guys went all hot and heavy. Who had seen the biggest shark of the baddest variety and made the narrowest escape in the bravest way — zapping 'em with power heads don't count and anyone caught talking that Tarzan stuff about stabbing them in the soft white underbelly would get laughed off the beach. More believable was the trick of blinding them with fecal matter or putting the buddy system to work.

How's that buddy system technique? Simple. When the shark shows up you draw your dive knife and cut your dive buddy.

Sharks are attracted to blood and it's a case of survival, ain't it?

The stories and the advice to the gullible got hairier and hairier and some of the older guys seemed to drop back and smile ruefully. They all knew some story that would embarrass the bald-faced liar on the beach. Like commercial diver working on the gas drums when a school of porpoises showed up... Or the guy into whose shorts the crab crawled while he worked on the pier pilings... Or the lobster diver who jumped out of his boat onto a grandfather manati and screamed louder than a rock concert about the great white...

Then there was the old salt looking for a lobster he dropped by the ferry landing and along came a German shepherd chasing sticks and snatched his snorkel and mask off and damn nigh scared him to death with all the splashing and scratching.

But the closest call of all was the guy who once put on a Scuba tank to release a spotted eagle ray caught up in his trammel net. The tank valve got hung up and there he was, stuck like a pinned butterfly, when along came a big sea turtle in heat. He knew that randy turtles, male and female, will try to make it with anything approaching the right size, even a sheet of plywood. He had also heard that they can keep up the action for two weeks at a time and he had only one hour of air and wasn't even turned on so he was lapsing into justifiable hysteria when some poachers saved him by hauling the net to steal his catch. He could have resigned himself to die but what had him up so tight was the fear that the honeymoon-hunting turtle might not have been a lady.
Una Linea Netamente Puertorriquena - Vuele con los Suyos

FOR BUSINESS OR FOR PLEASURE
IT'S OUR BUSINESS TO MAKE IT YOUR PLEASURE

OFFICE ISLA GRANDE ST.THOMAS ST. CROIX VIEQUES FAJARDO
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741-5861 723-9882
•OFFICE FROM METROPOLITAN AREA...731-6262...LOCAL CALL.

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FAJARDO-VIEQUES
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306 ...............| 9:45 A.M.         |
310 ...............| 1:00 P.M.         |
312 ...............| 2:30 P.M.         |
314 ...............| 4:00 P.M.         |
316 ...............| 4:30 P.M.         |
318 ...............| 5:30 P.M.         |

ST. CROIX-VIEQUES
902 ...............| 8:30 A.M.*        |
906 ...............| 8:30 P.M.*        |
910 ...............| 1:00 P.M.**       |
912 ...............| 3:00 P.M.**       |

VIEQUES - HUMACAO
7:30 A.M....Regreso: 8:15 A.M.
4:00 P.M. .... Regreso: 5:00 P.M.

Humacao Phone: 850-1300
* Daily Except Sunday
** Sunday Only