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— See story on page 20
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New Immigration Fee in Margarita

A new Immigration fee of 360BsF (currently approximately US$80 at the official exchange rate) has been implemented in Porlamar, Isla Margarita, a port of entry for Venezuela.

For current Venezuelan international and national clear-in and clear-out charges, plus more information on Isla Margarita, visit www.wifiguy.co.cc/info.html.

Yacht Sector Mainly Spared by Last Hurricane of 2010

In a burst of late hurricane season activity, Invest91, an area of disturbed weather which developed to the southeast of the Eastern Caribbean during the last week of October, was designated Tropical Storm Tomas on October 29th. Although seven of the last ten years have had named storms in November, it is unusual for late-season storms to develop so far south.

After taking a sharp northward track during the night, Tomas tracked just south of Barbados during the early morning hours of October 30th as an intense Tropical Storm with gusts to hurricane force. Fortunately for yachts anchored or moored in Carlisle Bay, the island’s main anchorage, the strongest winds were from the east.

Nevertheless, a local day charter catamaran was destroyed on the rocks at the entrance to the Careenage, a four-tender Pajot cat on a mooring in Carlisle Bay capsized, and a handful of smaller vessels either ran aground or went ashore.

Later that morning, the system became a Category 1 hurricane and moved through the channel between the Windward Islands of St. Vincent and St. Lucia at approximately 4:00 AM. The southern part of St. Lucia, including severely hit Soufriere and Vieux Fort, was within the strongest, northern eyewall of Tomas, while the northern part of St. Vincent received the southern and leading/trailing eyewalls.

(See the following news item regarding the effect of Hurricane Tomas on the northern part of St. Lucia.) The southern and western parts of St. Vincent, where a number of yacht charter bases and anchorages are located, avoided hurricane force winds owing to the protective effect of the interior mountains. The leeward coast of St. Vincent, however, received rare onshore westerly winds as the storm passed to the north, causing at least one charter catamaran anchored at Cumberland Bay to end up on the beach.

The Grenadines received Tropical Storm force winds, high in the north and minimal towards the south of the chain. There were anxious moments in Bequia’s popular anchorage of Admiralty Bay, but only one boat went ashore. Tomas then proceeded into the Caribbean Sea, causing flooding in Curaçao, then took a sharp right-hand turn, and grazed the western tip of Haiti, the southeastern Bahamas and the Turks & Caicos Islands before fizzling out in the Atlantic.

In becoming the 19th named storm of the season, Tomas made 2010 the third busiest year on record, tied with 1887 and 1995. The only years that were more active were 1933, with 21 storms, and 2005, with 28 storms.

Saint Lucia Says, “Welcome Atlantic Rally for Cruisers!”

Saint Lucia’s Director of Yachting, Cuthbert Didier, is pleased to report that the island’s yachting facilities remain strong following the passage of Hurricane Tomas in October, and ready to welcome the 233 yachts from 26 nations participating in the 25th Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC). “Our yachting berths both in Rodney Bay and Marigot Bay are not only state-of-the-art, they are resilient, and yachtsmen and women can rest assured that the solid infrastructure and legendary hospitality for which Saint Lucia is known await them,” he says.

Organized by the World Cruising Club, the annual ARC is the largest trans-ocean sailing event in the world and regularly attracts more than 200 boats of many different types and lengths. The journey takes between two to three weeks and covers more than 2,700 nautical miles. The fleet departed from the Canary Islands on November 21st and the fastest boats are expected to arrive in Rodney Bay during the first week in December. A full schedule of activities welcomes the sailors in St. Lucia and extends into the Christmas holidays. St. Lucia marked the ARC’s start on November 21st with a simultaneous flotilla sail of 50 boats of all shapes and sizes from the capital, Castries, to Rodney Bay.

—Continued on next page
Located on the north side of the island, Rodney Bay Marina sustained no damage thanks to the mountains and hills that surround its lagoon location. Several boats from the outer bay came into the marina for shelter, and it was almost at full occupancy for the duration of the hurricane. The marina experienced 45-mile-per-hour winds, and no damage was sustained to any boats because of the storm.

Eight miles down St. Lucia’s west coast, “Marigot Bay’s reputation as the Eastern Caribbean’s best natural hurricane hole was strengthened by its resilience to Hurricane Tomas,” reported Bob Hathaway, manager of The Marina at Marigot Bay. “The marina was packed with yachts seeking shelter and no damage was sustained despite gusts of up to 92 miles per hour during the passage of the eye of the storm,” asserted Hathaway.

Decade Sentence for Grenada Yacht Crime
Nelson Noel, a 22-year-old unemployed man of Belmont, St. George’s, Grenada, pleaded guilty to robbery with violence on October 5th. Noel was one of two men who robbed the Norwegian catamaran S/Y Mary Jean in April 2009, while the yacht was anchored near the mangroves in Mt. Hartman Bay. Cruiser Nils Tarberg was ashore when the men boarded the boat, tied up Nils’ wife, Alvhild Skorpen, and stole a number of valuable articles. Noel was sentenced to ten years’ imprisonment by Justice Lyle St. Paul, having acknowledged that he had five previous convictions, all for stealing.

Eight Bells
Norma Peters. Nearly everyone who visited Bequia by yacht during the 1980s and ’90s will remember Norma Peters, who worked at the famous Frangipani Hotel from 1974 to 2003 and ran the Frangipani Yacht Services. In the days before internet and cell phones, “the Frangi” provided indispensable mail, tax, VHF radio and telephone service for both charter and private yachts, and Norma always provided a sympathetic ear and a joke when communications became a challenge. Norma was a friend to countless sailors visiting Admiralty Bay over the years. She was born on July 23rd, 1938, and died on October 22nd, 2010, leaving four sons, one daughter, nine grandchildren and many friends.

Rodney Nicholson.
Rodney Nicholson and his family arrived in English Harbour, Antigua in 1949 aboard the schooner Mollyhawk, and helped create the yacht charter industry in the Caribbean. He was the founder of the Nicholson Charter Yacht Show, now the Antigua Charter Yacht Meeting, which is having its 50th event next year. Rodney was born on December 19th, 1927 and died on November 7th, 2010. A tribute to his memory will be held on December 8th from 2:30 to 3:30pm at the Admiral’s Inn, Nelson’s Dockyard, English Harbour, Antigua.

New Work at Grenada’s Underwater Art Park
October saw the unveiling of the latest installation at Grenada’s Underwater Sculpture Park. The Park showcases Grenada’s history, folklore and culture through sculpture in a unique underwater setting. Since its founding in 2006 by sculptor Jason deCaires Taylor, the park has captivated the imaginations of visitors from around the world and has become one of the ‘must see’ attractions on the island. Coral and other marine life growing on the sculptures make them ever-evolving works of art. The new installation, 14 sculptures in all, is based on Amerindian art, culture and spiritual worship and is the work of local craftsman Troy Lewis. Howard Clarke, owner of Grenada Seafaris Powerboat Eco-Tours and the sponsor of Troy’s work, explains that the sculptures are influenced by the petroglyphs (stone carvings) made by the early Amerindian tribes, some of which may still be seen in the Duquesne and Pearls regions of Grenada.

St. Lucia bound! The start in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria of the 2,700-mile transatlantic ARC 2010. This year marks the 25th running of the world’s most popular passage-making event

St. Lucia bound! The start in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria of the 2,700-mile transatlantic ARC 2010. This year marks the 25th running of the world’s most popular passage-making event
Created predominantly from reinforced concrete, one of the largest new pieces takes the form of a Zemi (a stone-carved idol believed to have supernatural power) and measures some three feet in height. It is thought the Amerindians created these stone carvings to represent their belief in many gods controlling the sun and moon as well as plant and animal life.

Meanwhile, Jason deCaires Taylor has expanded the underwater sculpture park concept to Mexico, where the world’s largest underwater collection of contemporary sculpture in history, ‘The Silent Evolution’, consists of 400 permanent life-size sculptures of humans forming a monumental artificial reef in the National Marine Park of Cancún.

—Continued from previous page

Howard Clarke and Troy Lewis display a sculpture inspired by indigenous Amerindian art. Once placed underwater, the artwork will attract corals and other sea life, and ‘grow’.
A SWELL DAY AT STORE BAY

by J. Wynner

The usually placid sea at Store Bay, Tobago, is at its worst come December, and last year was no exception. The ground swells just kept rolling in, forcing the beach to be locked down for the entire last week of 2009. Nearby Sandy Point was not as rough. These photos, taken over a period of four days, capture both the fury and the beauty of nature during this time. If you look beyond the swells, you will see how calm the water remained in the open bay. However, the waves with their frothy blast, some churning the sand at water’s edge, others mounting the rocky shoreline, tell another story... one of disappointment for picnickers, sea- and sunbathers. Yachts anchored off in deeper water were okay.

As Eli Fuller explains on his Adventure Antigua blog, ground swells in the Caribbean are generally generated by storms far away. We can have no wind and beautifully sunny skies, yet with huge waves pounding the shores. This is especially the case in the winter, when huge cold fronts push off the East Coast of North America. Whenever we see super-cold, nasty conditions on the East Coast we can usually expect ground swells hitting the Caribbean a few days later. Eli recommends checking www.windguru.cz/int/ for wind and wave predictions.

Above: At Crown Point, Store Bay, in late December 2009
Left: The swell was kicking up, but the anchorage remained tenable
Below: Crown Point back to normal, New Year’s Day 2010
BUSINESS BRIEFS

Chaguaramas Personnel Highlight Customer Service

Ruth Lund reports: On September 21st and 28th two Customer Awareness Sessions were presented by the Chaguaramas Business Community in Trinidad. With the use of an excellent video, a Power Point presentation and role-playing, 47 participants from 14 Chaguaramas companies took a fresh look at the importance of good customer service and how to achieve it. Attendees included staff members from technical and manufacturing services and retail stores, and there was a large contingent from the hospitality sector. The sessions were very interactive, with participants speaking up about customer service issues and challenges that affected them. Feedback was extremely positive.

New Tobago Agent for Budget Marine Trinidad

Daniella Rodriguez Jacelon of Tobago Marine Supplies is now the Tobago Agent for Budget Marine Trinidad. Daniella is no stranger to the T&T boating scene and has been involved in the marketing and organization of a number of fishing tournaments and sailing regattas in Tobago. The fast ferry and regular flights between the islands facilitate easy transfer of goods between Trinidad and Tobago. While a number of Tobagonians make regular personal visits to the Trinidad store in Chaguaramas, Budget Marine’s new Tobago Agent will actively seek out potential customers and make the ordering and receiving of products in the sister isle a smooth and painless experience.

Daniella can be contacted at (868) 367-1242 Tobago_marine@yahoo.com. For more information on Budget Marine see ad on page 2.

St. Lucia’s Marigot Beach Club Welcomes You!

Marigot Beach Club, St. Lucia is home to Doolittle’s Restaurant and Sea Shell Restaurant. The 1967 musical film “Doctor Doolittle”, starring Rex Harrison, was filmed in Marigot Bay, which was once described by James A. Michener as “the most beautiful bay in the Caribbean”. The eponymous Doolittle’s Restaurant located here seats 80 persons and has faithfully served yachtsmen and women for 30 years with arguably the best fusion of French/Caribbean international cuisines in the region. Only fresh produce and herbs are used daily and have been hand selected by Executive Chef Wayne Williams. Doolittle’s serves breakfast, lunch and dinner with nightly specials to complement an extensive à la carte menu, with an exception on Saturdays’ barbecue night.

Happy hours from 5:00 to 7:00PM are generous with two for the price of one on beers, house wines and house spirits including the cocktail of the night. Enjoy live entertainment (including crab racing) on a regular basis in the winter season, Doolittle’s Restaurant gets lively and fun after dinner with dancing to sweet Caribbean music. There are three full-size pool tables and a foosball table to further your enjoyment.

Just opening is the new Sea Shell Restaurant. Seating 40 persons, the name implies it will be the only completely seafood restaurant in St. Lucia. Entering Marigot Bay, look to your port side and see Marigot Beach Club. You may anchor free in the outer bay or pick up moorings in the inner bay. Marigot Beach Club’s free ferry (Liquid Sunshine) or their dinghy will pick you up — just call on VHF channel 16. Come enjoy the beach, freshwater swimming pool, beach chairs, water sports, business centre and free WiFi at Doolittle’s — proprietor David Shimeld will be there to welcome you. If you need a night ashore or when landlubbers are visiting, delightful shore side accommodations are also available.

For more information see ad on page 39.

Turtle T-Shirts at Art Fabrik, Grenada

In the boutique of Art Fabrik on Young Street in St. George’s, Grenada you can find locally printed Turtle T-Shirts. The turtle was chosen as a symbol of the importance of protecting fragile marine life. The designs are by Lisa Nolte of Art Fabrik and by Sandra Pesig of Fidel Productions in Carriacou. Both artists are sailors that landed here and stayed.

—Continued on next page
The students from St Vincent were Greg Allan and Seymour Browne, who received Royal Yachting Association (RYA) qualifications, in particular the RYA Yachtmaster Offshore and Yachtmaster Ocean Certificates of Competence, are recognized around the world. Grenada Bluewater Sailing recently held its third combined Coastal Skipper and Yachtmaster course. Alex Johnstone, the principal, started off with the ten-day Theory Course, added on the First Aid and SRC VHF day courses, and then held a four-day Yachtmaster examiner. Philip Martinson flew in as the external Yachtmaster examiner, and after two days of examination all students passed. The students from St Vincent were Greg Allan and Seymour Browne, who received Royal Yachting Association (RYA) qualifications, in particular the RYA Yachtmaster Offshore and Yachtmaster Ocean Certificates of Competence, are recognized around the world. Grenada Bluewater Sailing recently held its third combined Coastal Skipper and Yachtmaster course. Alex Johnstone, the principal, started off with the ten-day Theory Course, added on the First Aid and SRC VHF day courses, and then held a four-day Yachtmaster examiner. Philip Martinson flew in as the external Yachtmaster examiner, and after two days of examination all students passed.

**New PR Head at St. Lucia's Marigot Bay Marina**

From November 12th, Ursia Girard took up the responsibility for Marketing & Public Relations for The Marina at Marigot Bay, St. Lucia, from outgoing Marketing & PR head, Hannah Forde. We wish them both all the best in their new endeavors. Ursia can be reached at Ursia@marigotbay.com.

**Yachtmaster Summer School in Grenada**

Royal Yachting Association (RYA) qualifications, in particular the RYA Yachtmaster Offshore and Yachtmaster Ocean Certificates of Competence, are recognized around the world. Grenada Bluewater Sailing recently held its third combined Coastal Skipper and Yachtmaster course. Alex Johnstone, the principal, started off with the ten-day Theory Course, added on the First Aid and SRC VHF day courses, and then held a four-day Yachtmaster examiner. Philip Martinson flew in as the external Yachtmaster examiner, and after two days of examination all students passed.

**The Fig Tree Restaurant Opens in Bequia**

Located next to Mac's Pizza on the Belmont Walkway on the south shore of Admiralty Bay, The Fig Tree is now open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. If you loved Cheryl Johnson's Sweety Bird Café behind the Bequia Bookshop, you'll love her unique boutique.

**Get Fat!**

Captain Fatty Goodlander announces that both the print and Kindle editions of his new book, Red Sea Run: Two Sailors in a Sea of Trouble, have been released and are currently available on Amazon.com. With one-day shipping, you can have the book in your hands within 48 hours. Of course, if you're a Kindle owner, it will take less than 60 seconds.

If you can't easily buy a print copy and don't have a Kindle either, you can download a free Kindle READER (piece of software) to your Windows PC, and (once you've signed up with Amazon) buy the book through that interface.

**Antigua Ready for Bumper Charter Show**

With 125 yachts registered by early November, dedicated berths in Falmouth and English Harbour marinas are already fully booked by yachts attending the 49th Antigua Charter Yacht Show to be held between December 6th and 11th. With such a formidable entry list of world class-charter yachts already registered, professional charter brokers from yacht charter houses worldwide and some of the biggest names in yachting journalism will be jetting in.

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---Continued from previous page---

Ulo’s design is a print of her hand-painted batik artwork “The Green Sea Turtle”. Its message printed below is: “Protect the planet, it’s our home”. The T-shirts are 100-percent cotton. Sizes run from children’s small through adults’ XL.

The T-shirts from Fidel Productions have different designs: turtles, dolphins, whales and whimsical local scenes, also on 100-percent cotton T-shirts for women, men and children. You can also “upcycle” your old keys at Art Fabrik! Do you have a box in a drawer or a ziplock bag in the bilge, overflowing with keys that don’t fit any of your locks? Those keys that each tell a long story of their life, and they will find a new home and feel important again. Art Fabrik will use them in their art pieces and functional artwear made in Grenada, Drop off your keys in their arty, unique boutique. Art Fabrik has also produced a video for the worldwide campaign for climate change solutions; go to 250.org or www.youtube.com/artfabrik1 to see it. It was a fun and exciting event that put an international spotlight on Grenada.

Art Fabrik says, “Merry Christmas to our loyal customers and our Compass friends!”

For more information visit ad in Market Place section, pages 50 through 53.

**The spectacular Red Sea Run: Two Sailors in a Sea of Trouble**

Ann Marie Martin, Janetta Miller, Paul Deeth, Alounah Franklyn, Sarah Sebastian and Postus Issac (not shown)

The spectacular Mattisse Falcon, at 289 feet, is the largest entry to date and is joined by a further six yachts exceeding 200 feet in length. With an almost equal proportion of both motor and sailing yachts varying in size from 42 to almost 300 feet, the agents and brokers will need every minute of the six-day show to view and assess each entry in detail. To maintain the highest of professional standards and security and to enable the entrants to best showcase their yachts, this is an invitational-only event.

By showcasing such a world-class event at the start of the new season, the organizers encourage many yachts to choose to make Antigua their homeport throughout the rest of the season and enjoy events such as the Superyacht Cup, the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta and Antigua Sailing Week.

For more information visit www.antiguayachtshow.com.
In the aftermath of Hurricane Tomas, as concerned St. Lucia residents remained glued to their transistor radios to keep informed of the latest developments, one memorable announcement that was broadcast was that a local boating tour vessel would become a transportation option for a fraction of the usual cost of their tours. Whether the destruction was witnessed firsthand or footage and photos were seen, the damage left as a result of the hurricane was unanimously described as “the worst in St. Lucia’s history.” Hurricane Tomas, on Saturday October 30th through Sunday October 31st, cut a path of destruction across St. Lucia, resulting in the disruption of the road network. The impassible roadways left communities across St. Lucia cut off from the rest of the island. Two of the major ones that were inaccessible were the southern towns of scenic, touristic Soufriere (home of the Pitons and the world’s only drive-in volcano) and industrial Vieux Fort, where Hewanorra International Airport is located; as they were among the communities hardest hit by the natural disaster. Getting from the north of the island to the south was virtually impossible by land; the only feasible way was by sea!

That was when St. Lucian Wave Riders, a boating operation here, sailed in, providing an alternative option of accessing Soufriere and Vieux Fort. So what convinced the management to get the company involved in the recovery process? The decision was made when the management of St. Lucian Wave Riders heard concerned callers on local radio stations enquiring about friends and family who could not be reached via the telephone.

“We put our focus in getting people to see their families in the areas of Soufriere and Vieux Fort to see what help they can give down there. Our objective was not one of making money on this at all, but one of transportation of people, trying to get to and from the villages,” Janice Suite, General Manager of St. Lucian Wave Riders explained.

The boat, Flying Ray, which is the vessel that was providing the service, has a capacity of up to 100 passengers, which is convenient for transporting a large group on a single trip.

Prior to the hurricane the regular schedule for Flying Ray included a twice-a-week Martintique Splendor Tour (US$230), which sails to Port-de-France where patrons have an opportunity to enjoy shopping and beaches. There is also the Circumnavigate St. Lucia Tour (US$175), which goes around the island making a stop at a waterfall in Canaries on the west coast, continuing down to the Pitons for lunch and then visiting an opportunity to enjoy shopping and beaches. There is also the Circumnavigate St. Lucia Tour (US$175), which goes around the island making a stop at a waterfall in Canaries on the west coast, continuing down to the Pitons for lunch and then visiting an opportunity to enjoy shopping and beaches. There is also the Circumnavigate St. Lucia Tour (US$175), which goes around the island making a stop at a waterfall in Canaries on the west coast, continuing down to the Pitons for lunch and then visiting an opportunity to enjoy shopping and beaches.

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After Hurricane Tomas, other boat and airplane companies provided similar transportation services but St. Lucia Wave Riders were highlighted for their combination of affordability, efficiency and responding expeditiously during St. Lucia’s recovery period. — SP
New Environmental Alliance Launched

Dawn Marie Roper of Panos Caribbean reports: Karipanou (Our Caribbean) is the newest alliance formed to support environmental sustainability in the Caribbean. Karipanou was created to engage more Caribbean people in the governance and management of the natural resources in the region. "Karipanou" is derived from the Haitian Creole words "Karayib", meaning "Caribbean", and "pa nou" meaning "ours". The Karipanou alliance was launched in Montego Bay, Jamaica on October 8th. Three organizations comprise the new alliance: the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) from Trinidad & Tobago, Panos Caribbean, which is head-quartered in Haiti; and the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) from the University of the West Indies in Cave Hill, Barbados. The three organizations found that they have a shared vision and values about what they want to see happening in Caribbean natural resources management. Nicole Leostat, Executive Director of CANARI, noted that Karipanou is moving away from the limitations of short-term project-driven interventions. It will facilitate a more "programmatic" and long-term approach to participatory natural resource governance in the Caribbean. She said, "CANARI has particular strengths in facilitating participatory processes that connect people from all sectors and across countries. We help them to share ideas and listen to each other with respect, and ultimately build consensus on complex decisions about how natural resources should be managed."

Karipanou focuses on the relationships between natural resources, various stakeholders, poverty and adaptation to climate change. The alliance has already been working. The first activity began in Dominica. Fisherfolk from the Soufriere Scott's Head Marine Reserve have organized themselves to find a balance between overfishing and making a living. CERMES is documenting the lessons from the fisherfolk’s efforts to manage their resources in Dominica. The fishermen also need support to implement a new management plan. Karipanou will be supporting the Dominican fishermen in their efforts. Representatives of the Karipanou alliance were in Dominica in July to validate the research findings from the Soufriere Scott's Head Marine Reserve.

Lionfish Spread to Venezuela

Fundación La Tortuga reports: Lionfish (Pterois volitans) are venomous coral reef fish from the Indian and western Pacific Oceans. Various hypotheses have been put forward about their appearance in the Atlantic, related to the escape of six specimens from an aquarium in Florida, and to the discharge of ships' ballast waters which can transfer larvae of marine species from one continent to the other.

Since 1992, this fish has been observed in diverse coastal areas of Caribbean countries including Cuba, Panama, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico, Haiti, Colombia, Aruba, Curacao, and recently Venezuela. This has raised environmental concern, as its venom is highly toxic to humans and it preys on many other species of fish.

On September 19th, Venezuelan biologists captured and identified the first specimen ever found in the waters of Mochima National Park, at six metres deep on the patch reef of Morro Pelota island, in front of the popular Puinare Beach. This represents the most eastern extent in the southern Caribbean where this species has been observed.

According to data supplied by Ana Teresa Herrera Reveles and Maria Fernanda Gonzalez from the Central Venezuela University, and Jose Gregorio Nunez, Alan Martinez and Luis Alejandro Ariza from the Oceanographic Institute of Venezuela at Oriente University, the fish specimen was captured during the development of a scientific project led by professors Baumar Marin and Maria Josefa Hernandez. The specimen is apparently young, with a total length of 7.5cm, body height of 2cm, dorsal fin projections of 2cm and 10.5cm pectoral fins. It has been preserved in the Laboratory of Ichthyoplankton of the Oceanographic Institute of Venezuela.

Turtles Tagged in Tobago Cays Marine Park

Research and tagging of the sea turtles of the Tobago Cays Marine Park was carried out in October, with the sea turtles being measured, weighed and tagged by the park rangers who are working together with WIDECAST, the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network. This is the first time that sea turtles in this park, located in the heart of the Grenadines, have been the subject of such intense research.

WIDECAST representative Emma Doyle said, "Most of the turtles tagged so far are Green turtles, and we've found a smaller number of hawksbill turtles. The Tobago Cays Marine Park is an important feeding area for sea turtles. As visitors to the park will know from snorkeling among them, turtles can be seen in the park feeding on its protected sea grass and coral reefs."

Turtles travel great distances across the Caribbean Sea and beyond, visiting specific feeding, mating and nesting areas. Being highly migratory animals, the park's sea turtles might travel from as far afield as Central America, the Dutch Antilles or Puerto Rico especially to feed in the Tobago Cays Marine Park.

With metal tags on their flippers now showing individual identification numbers for each turtle, and in some cases the turtles have been named after local friends and supporters, WIDECAST scientists in more than 40 countries across the Caribbean, South and Central America will be on the lookout for the newly tagged turtles as they travel to feed and nest in other countries.

The public can report sightings of tagged turtles to the park's Marine Biologist, Orlando Harvey (see contact information below). He commented, "Sea turtles are in danger of extinction and they face many survival challenges over their lifetimes."

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- Reinforced efficiency as two sets of batteries can be loaded at one time.
Tobago Cays Marine Park Rangers and WIDECAST personnel weighed and tagged sea turtles in the park, including this large Green turtle. Identifying tags help researchers study growth rates, migration patterns and more.

Ms. Doyle explained. “We’re on the lookout for an increasingly seen disease in turtles, called fibropapilloma, which causes dangerous tumors in their flesh.” She adds, “We’ve found turtles with shark-bite marks, which are completely natural, but we’ve also found turtles with propeller injuries and with shell damage from collisions with boats. Visitors and boat vendors need to go slowly and respect the five-knot speed limit in the park to help avoid hitting turtles.”

With follow-up work in future, the rangers will be able to track how well the turtles are growing over time and maybe even help solve the mystery of how long turtles really live.

For more information about sea turtles and the Flag Marina” designation, one of only three awarded to Caribbean marinas for the current year. The marina’s Blue Flag programme is monitored by Errol Flynn Marina’s Administrative Manager Christine Downer. The Blue Flag Campaign is an international voluntary certification scheme for beaches and marinas. It has proven to be an effective environmental tool to enhance the health, safety and environmental quality of beaches and marinas and has become a worldwide symbol for beach and marina environmental quality.

‘Green’ E-Mails? Check Facts Before Forwarding!

Sally Erdle reports: Sometimes we feel we’ve done a good deed by forwarding an environmentally oriented e-mail to everyone on our mailing list. But have we really? I’ve received, recently for the eighth time, one with the subject line “World Shame!” containing photos of numerous Costa Rican citizens allegedly poaching sea turtle eggs on a beach. It comes headed by various expressions of moral outrage and the plea “please distribute widely”.

Curious about the original source of an e-mail that has stimulated so many people to pass it on, I checked it out at my favorite myth-buster website, www.snopes.com. According to Snopes’ detectives, the photos are real, but the description of the activities portrayed is inaccurate: “These photographs do show the collection of olive ridley sea turtle eggs in the coastal town of Ostional, Costa Rica, but those who are gathering them are not ‘poachers’. They are engaged in a government-sponsored conservation activity, collecting a relatively small portion of eggs...” Snopes adds that, “A Sea Turtle Conservancy representative noted that the activity pictured is controversial but legal (Ostional is the only part of Costa Rica where sea turtle egg gathering is allowed), and that investigation to determine its overall effect on the olive ridley population is ongoing.”

If we want to point our fingers at other people and cry “shame!” we can surely pick more deserving targets, and we need to check our information before spreading half-truths — the click of a mouse makes it too easy to unwittingly bear false witness. Before passing on any mass circulated e-mail, see www.snopes.com/inboxer/inboxer.asp (they either verify or debunk scores of widely e-mailed stuff — happily, passing on any mass circulated e-mail, see www.snopes.com/inboxer/inboxer.asp (they either verify or debunk scores of widely e-mailed stuff — happily, nine-year-old Penny Brown is NOT missing; unfortunately, papaya leaves don’t cure dengue fever, and your hands will not become flammable from using hand sanitizer).

And a last tip: if an e-mail really is really worth forwarding, put your list of contacts in the Bcc field. That way you are not generating lists of active e-mail accounts that could possibly be found and used by spammers. Ever wonder why you get so much junk mail?

Villagers in Ostional, Costa Rica have been portrayed as poachers while carrying out a government sanctioned, if controversial, activity.

Tobago Cays Marine Park contact Olando Harvey on (784) 485-8191 or info@tobagocays.org. Also see www.widecast.org.

Errol Flynn Marina is Blue Flag Again

Dale Westin reports: For the fourth time, Jamaica’s Errol Flynn Marina has been awarded the coveted ‘Blue Flag’ designation by the international Blue Flag Programme, run by the World Wildlifefund’s (WWF) Marine Programme, for high environmental standards at the marina.

Errol Flynn Marina has been awarded the coveted “Blue Flag” designation for the fourth time. The marina’s Blue Flag programme is monitored by Errol Flynn Marina’s Administrative Manager Christine Downer. The Blue Flag Campaign is an international voluntary certification scheme for beaches and marinas. It has proven to be an effective environmental tool to enhance the health, safety and environmental quality of beaches and marinas and has become a worldwide symbol for beach and marina environmental quality.

‘Green’ E-Mails? Check Facts Before Forwarding!

Sally Erdle reports: Sometimes we feel we’ve done a good deed by forwarding an environmentally oriented e-mail to everyone on our mailing list. But have we really? I’ve received, recently for the eighth time, one with the subject line “World Shame!” containing photos of numerous Costa Rican citizens allegedly poaching sea turtle eggs on a beach. It comes headed by various expressions of moral outrage and the plea “please distribute widely”.

Curious about the original source of an e-mail that has stimulated so many people to pass it on, I checked it out at my favorite myth-buster website, www.snopes.com. According to Snopes’ detectives, the photos are real, but the description of the activities portrayed is inaccurate: “These photographs do show the collection of olive ridley sea turtle eggs in the coastal town of Ostional, Costa Rica, but those who are gathering them are not ‘poachers’. ... [they] are engaged in a government-sponsored conservation activity, collecting a relatively small portion of eggs...” Snopes adds that, “A Sea Turtle Conservancy representative noted that the activity pictured is controversial but legal (Ostional is the only part of Costa Rica where sea turtle egg gathering is allowed), and that investigation to determine its overall effect on the olive ridley population is ongoing.”

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www.partsandpower.com
When I arrived in the Caribbean 42 years ago, scuba diving was a popular pastime. Dive shop operators tell me many more people on yachts were diving then than they are today. Since then, the overall trend in the yachting industry has been up. I have not seen an equal growth in the diving business.

About 16 years ago, some island governments started requiring that all diving be done with a local dive shop. The banning of independent diving spread. About half of the English-speaking Eastern Caribbean islands now ban independent diving. Most recently, Grenada banned independent diving in their new marine parks, which cover most of the good dive sites in the country. Roatan has done the same. What is this ban doing to the tourism industry?

Enthusiasm Rot

I used to be a very enthusiastic diver, and I started when you could dive anywhere. I dove about half the time on my own and half the time with dive shops. Only a limited number of really good dive sites are easily accessible by dinghy, and for the rest it is much easier to go in a dive shop’s boat. I still carry dive tanks aboard, but I have not been diving for pleasure for a few years. Part of this is because of my advancing age, but the enthusiasm rot started long ago, as a result of increased regulation. There are many places I could still dive, but you need enthusiasm to dive, and when that enthusiasm goes, it goes. I still snorkel; it is a lot easier and there are few restrictions.

The desire to spend an hour or so underwater is not innate. PADI and other dive organizations have done a good job getting people to try this unusual but wonderful pursuit. Once you have tried it, you study the physics, mechanics, and physiology of diving, and practise a lot of diving skills, learning how to deal with situations that can arise underwater. When you pass your exams, diving on your own with a buddy for safety for the first time is akin to a neophyte airplane pilot’s first solo flight. It is a rite of passage. And diving with just a buddy is a very different experience from diving with a group. You have only your buddy to look out for, you are in charge, and you can go at your own pace, sometimes taking enough time to closely examine any tiny little thing that catches your eye.

Dive Bans versus Yachting

The first island nation I remember banning independent diving was Dominica, though I think St. Kitts & Nevis had already done so. At that time Dominicans felt threatened by divers whom they thought were plundering their reefs for black coral and other things. Dominica does not have the attraction of white beaches; her tourism depends on having an environment that is more pristine than that in the other islands. The decision to ban independent diving as a protective measure seemed justified at the time, and Dominica has managed a successful low-volume dive industry ever since.

St. Lucia went next. I asked, but heard of no particular problems. The ban on independent diving started in the Soufriere Marine Management Area (SMMA) and soon was the law for the whole island. In St. Lucia this ban had a very definite effect. At about the time independent diving was banned, St. Lucia had some seven yacht-charter companies; now it has only four. How can a diving ban affect chartering? St. Lucia competes with other Caribbean areas. If you are a sailor who likes diving, why come to St. Lucia when you can go to the Virgin Islands and get excellent sailing along with superb diving in well-run national parks that encourage independent diving?

I have had great dives on my own and I have had great dives with dive shops. But my few bad dives have all been with dive shops, and I will describe one to illustrate the difference. We dove on a wreck in Anse Cochon, St. Lucia. I went down quickly and found myself alongside a magnificent wreck. It was covered with all kinds of tunicates, sponges, and other creatures, rather different from the communities you normally see on a reef. I was hanging motionless, examining some of these, when the other divers came down. Within a few moments many in the group had stirred up the mud with their fins and visibility was nil — nothing left to see but brown fog. It was one of those places where being in a group with some inexperienced divers just does not work.

---Continued on next page---
To make tourism successful, all the threads need to be pulling. St. Lucia would now have a far more vibrant diving industry if independent diving had not been banned. Every year some 200 boats come over on the ARC; the combined crew list equals more than a thousand people. A good percentage of these are excellent candidates to learn how to dive, and I believe many more of them could be persuaded to spend time underwater. But what is the point of becoming a certified diver if you are not allowed to dive independently?

My enthusiasm for diving took a plunge when Saba banned independent diving. Saba is unusual in that the mooring area and the diving area are all together, and the place to get ashore is some two miles — a long dinghy ride — away. One year, another single-handed sailor and I did a few dives that were easy to reach from our boats. The diving was wonderful and I determined to do more diving on my next visit. I also planned to go with the dive shops on some of the more difficult dives that are in the deep water. However, independent diving was banned, my enthusiasm died, and I left my boat in St. Martin and took a plane to Saba, not doing any diving while there.

Some Revealing Figures

Now is that just me, or is the diving enthusiasm of others affected the same way? It so happens I was back in Saba some years after the ban was put in place and asked the marine park manager if he had a record of boat arrivals. Accompanying me was Garvis Hassel, my taxi driver. The figures were revealing. They showed a steady increase in boat visitors up to the time of the ban, whereupon there was a 30 percent drop in arrivals. From this lower level the increase resumed at about the same rate. Banning independent diving in this case had a clear marked effect. Even the park manager was surprised — no one had thought of monitoring the effects of the ban. With the figures he had not been aware of the problem. He said, “The park regulations are hurting my business.” This is something that is not often considered: diving regulations don’t just affect the marine park and the yachting industry; far more people suffer when business is stifled.

I wanted more figures to be sure of my argument, and my prediction was that there would be more growth in the diving industry in islands that do not restrict independent diving. I tried to get data from PADI, but they refused to release this information, so the only other thing I could do is look at the state of diving today. I included Bonaire because it is a marine life center outside of the Eastern Caribbean that has a top quality marine park and encourages independent diving. The only readily available figure is the number of dive shops in each island, which I got from government websites that list diving facilities. Where that was not available, I looked for other websites for the same information. These figures may not be exact, but they should be pretty close. The results are shown in the box. The average number of dive shops on islands that allow independent diving is 14, compared with five on islands that ban it. There are so many variables that it is hard to draw any meaningful conclusions. However, the fact that the British and US Virgin Islands together have around the same number of dive shops as St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Kitts & Nevis, Saba, and Statia combined, tells me that these latter islands could have a far bigger diving industry than they have today.

Rationales for Restrictions

So why ban independent diving? The two main reasons given are economic and environmental. Let us start with the economic. The reasoning goes like this: if everyone is required to dive with a dive shop, all the independent divers will be driven into the dive shops, the dive shops will make more money, and that will be good for the diving industry. I don’t think it works that way.

In general, any time you restrict an activity you discourage it. This is why the yachting industry is always fighting to ease regulations; we know how damaging they can be. In the case of the diving industry, the idea that regulations will bring in more divers is faulty. It would work if you started with a captive clientele of divers who need to dive, but there is no captive clientele: divers are free to go wherever they want, and if they are serious about diving, they will go to places where they are not restricted. Rather than gain the independent divers who were probably diving with a shop about half the time, you lose most of that group completely. More seriously, as diving becomes restricted throughout the area, you start losing divers altogether. Why do you go through all the training when you can do afterwards take a guided tour? I think that these regulations are discouraging diving as a sport, and new divers are not being recruited, at least not those on visiting yachts.

What would be the effect of the ban if we followed the lead of the diving industry and said: if you want to sail in the Caribbean you cannot come on your own yacht, you have to charter? In the short term, the charters could do okay. However, everyone else who benefits from the current industry would be gone — all the boatyards, chandleries, marine mechanics, sailmakers, marinas, and more. The Caribbean would be dropped as a destination in yachting terms, and all the publicity that keeps us a popular sailing area would disappear, and there would be no regattas to bring in the crowds. In the long run, even the charter industry would shrink.

So what about the environmental arguments? The idea, as I have heard it formulated, is this: “It is in the dive shops’ interest to have a healthy marine environment, so if we make everyone go with a dive shop they can control all the diving and keep the environment in good shape.”

I am not an anti-regulation free-market diehard; I favor regulations that do protect the environment and ban spearfishing for visitors because, having spearfished myself, I know the effect it has on fish populations, especially on those easy-to-shoot “big eyes”. But there is no evidence that independent diving hurts Caribbean reefs. Diving is not a free-for-all: you have to train, and the training emphasizes diving in an environmentally sound way. Divers are willing to pay user fees, and in surveys they prefer to pay higher user fees for better-conceived reefs. The idea that reefs are better protected when people go with dive shops is not supported by any studies that I know of.

Divers suffer some of the same mistrust from officials that has affected yachting regulations over the years. It is unfortuante because it does affect the economy. Where there are problems caused by divers, they can usually be solved by controlling access to particular dive sites. In most cases damage can be averted by having a diver pay for an orientation course that allows park rangers or local dive shops to assess a diver’s abilities and let him or her know what they expect. Such a system works well in Bonaire.

The bottom line is that the most successful Caribbean marine parks, the ones that win major awards and are rated as our gold standard, including those in Bonaire and the Virgin Islands, allow and encourage independent diving.

This is not to say diving does not need any controls. Really heavy traffic on one particular reef can cause stress. Honaire has been dealing with this problem for years. They run a highly successful park at diving volumes far higher than those in the Eastern Caribbean. The latest data I could find were for 2008, when some 42,000 divers visited Bonaire, many of whom dove twice a day every day they were there. With fewer than 20 dive shops, most of the diving is independent; most reefs are accessible from shore and clearly marked. Honaire keeps “off limit” dive sites where no one but park officials can go, so that they can monitor the effects of diving. At these volumes it is not surprising that if a reef becomes too popular they do sometimes have to give it a break and take that site out of the system for a couple of years.

There is no reason that those who have opted for a blanket ban could not have their cake and eat it too. Just open some of the easily accessible dive sites to independent divers. These can be carefully monitored. Then restrict most other sites.

Our hard corals have taken a considerable beating over the last 15 years. This has happened on a global scale and is not associated with diving activity. Luckily, it need not impact negatively on the diving industry. The reef structures are still providing habitat for fish and other sea creatures, and as long as those are plentiful there will be diving. For this reason I am fully supportive of the idea of marine parks that create marine reserves and are not a free-for-all. I think an easing of diving regulations would help the diving industry, and that the current regulations stifle the synergistic benefit between yachting and diving.
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**RED CAP SEASON 2011**

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A record number of 20 Sunfish sailors raced for the title of Curaçao Youth Sailor 2010.

Ard van Aanholt: Curaçao’s Sunfish Youth Champ 2010

During the weekend of October 23rd and 24th, a record number of 20 young sailors fought for the title of Youth Sunfish Sailor of Curaçao. A high level of competition ran through all six races, with the 2010 title going to Ard van Aanholt. With four first places and two thirds, 16-year-old Ard showed remarkable tactics and talent for reading the wind shifts. The championship counts as a qualifier for the Sunfish Youth Worlds, being held in Curaçao next June. Eugene Hendrikx, who in September at age 16 amazed everybody by grabbing the Curaçao Sunfish title amongst the adults, finished second. The 2009 champion, Kevin van Otterdijk, captured the bronze. The first girl over the line was Alexandra Siebels. Odile van Aanholt and Kristie van der Woude, both 12 years old, were the best in the Sunfish double class. Ard van Aanholt looks back at an impressive 2010 sailing season. In June he placed third in the Sunfish Open Worlds in Italy; in July he finished 15th in the Laser Radial at the ISAF Youth Worlds in Turkey; by the end of July he claimed bronze in the Sunfish class standing. The three sailors from Anguilla did well between Ilian Halbertsma and Nathan Smith. Ilian held the edge. A battle royal also developed from either. Giving Alec a run for his money was Saskia the edge. A battle royal also developed for overall performance. Sailors from Anguilla and Tortola joined those from St. Maarten. Simpson Bay Lagoon held a stiff breeze with many shifts. From the first race it was obvious the champion- ship was not to be a walk in the park for any of the sailors. Battling for top spot were local sailor Rhone Findlay and first-timer to the event, Sam Morrell from Puerto Rico. And now, gold in Curaçao. Congrats from all junior sailors across the region — you set a great example!

For more information about Youth Sailing Curaçao visit www.yasco.org.

Young sailors from Anguilla, Tortola and Sint Maarten celebrate their participation in the SOL Optimist Regatta 2010 on the deck of the Sint Maarten Yacht Club.

Tortola. They took turns finishing first, and dominated every race except one. Hot in pursuit was Alec Scaranbelli, the only competitor able to steal a win from either. Giving Alec a run for his money was Saskia Looser, who placed top girl. Bodine Beentjes, sailing her first SOL Championship, seemed at one point to give Saskia a real threat, beating Saskia in the first two races. But mixed results after her initial burst gave Saskia the edge. A battle royal also developed between Ilian Halbertsma and Nathan Smith. Ilian held the edge in the overall standing and Nathan took the class standing. The three sailors from Anguilla did well for their first off-island regatta and the St. Maarten youth look forward to future competitions. At the end of the day, Sam and Rhone tied on points; the tie-breaker placed Sam in first. At prizegiving, the SMYC Commodore presented trophies, and every competitor received a goody bag along with a photo of them racing — a great souvenir of a memorable day. The Sportmanship Award went to Bart van Vliet who did utmost to help and encour- age a fellow sailor who was having a tough day of it. SOL the longsos duration was thanked by master of ceremonies Robbie Fenon for their support. When Robbie asked the young sailors, “Why would SOL spon- sor you Opti racers when you don’t use fuel but wind?” the immediate response from young Bart van Vliet, “Because we’re AWESOME!” brought the house down. For more information visit www.smyc.com.

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North South Wines. J/24. Early entries include Paul King's First 40.7, Mountgayrumroundbarbadosrace.com. Barth's and Antigua, and then, who knows, perhaps another challenge to race to Spain!

—Continued from previous page

...fell into trade, but her supposed fall from grace was caught by her new owner, Lou Kennedy, and immortalized in the book The Last Schoonerman (see review in the March 2007 issue of Compass). Apparently this rogue loved to race, trade and drink Mount Gay Rum — our kind of sailor! In 1935, the Sea Fox set the record of 10 hours, 20 minutes, in the first schooner race round the island of Barbados, and Elena plans to break it in 2011. In 2009, the new Elena of London, an exact replica of the 1911 Elena, was launched, having been built using copies of the original drawings from the Herreshoff museum. The new Elena intends to start her commemorative "centennial tour" by breaking the Sea Fox’s record here in Barbados on January 21st. Elena also plans to compete in several of the Caribbean regattas, including those in St. Barth’s and Antigua, and then, who knows, perhaps another challenge to race to Spain!


For more information visit www.schoonerelena.com.

Design, Monohull Open and Multihull Open. Other classes may be included according to entries. The clockwise race will result in boats sailing some 70 miles. About a hundred years ago, names like Vanderbelt, Plant and Pratt of the New York Yacht Club represented the wealth and power of the New World — and its ambition to challenge the Old World out on the water. This challenge and the designs of the magnificent racing schooners come to life with yachts crewed by up to 40 hands.

In the trials to select their challenger, American yachtsmen set about designing, building and racing yachts such as Elena, Sea Fox, Westward and Atlantic. The original Elena raced against the Sea Fox for a chance to represent the NYYC. She won, and went on to win many more times, but her defining moment of glory came in 1938 when, under the ownership of William B. Bell, she beat all comers, including the schooner Atlantic, in the King’s Cup. This transatlantic race from New York to Santander, Spain was for a trophy donated by the King of Spain himself.

And the Sea Fox? She headed to Barbados and fell into trade, but her supposed fall from grace was caught by her new owner, Lou Kennedy, and immortalized in the book The Last Schoonerman (see review in the March 2007 issue of Compass).

Meticulously built to the original 1910 design, Elena cuts through the waves with grace of bygone times. She’ll be in Barbados next month in a race around the island of Barbados.
Act Now to Enter Budget Marine Match Racing Cup

The Budget Marine Match Racing Cup, taking place March 1st 2011, will once again highlight the skills and abilities of professional skippers from around the world. This third edition is the pre-event to the 31st St. Maarten Heineken Regatta. In the past teams from Poland, USVI, the United States and Russia have participated. Peter Holmberg of the USVI won this race the first two years; many wonder if he will take home first place for a third time. Budget Marine, the title sponsor, is offering US$10,000 in prize money this year.

The Budget Marine Match Racing Cup will use identical Jeanneau SunFast 20s for the race, owned and operated by Lagoon Sailboat Rentals in St. Maarten. With room for eight teams, and places up for grabs, those who wish to participate must send in their sailing CVs to the regatta office at regatta@heinekenregatta.com. Once selected, teams will be notified immediately, and the entry fee is minimal. Applications are being accepted from all sailors, male or female, who think they have what it takes to compete. An ISAF ID is appreciated when sending your information. Organizers are pleased to say there has never been a lack of interest in this race, so be sure to send in your information now; the deadline is January 7th 2011. The Notice of Race for this event will be posted at www.heinekenregatta.com. For more information contact director@heinekenregatta.com.

Mount Gay Rum Barbados Regatta 2011 Feeder Race

Regatta sailors are not normally noted for their fashion sense, but one universally prized and eternally hip fashion necessity is the Mount Gay Rum Red Cap. Often, it is only rewarded to race winners at regattas, but in Mount Gay Rum’s home island of Barbados, the Cap has been and will continue to be given to all sailors who compete in the Mount Gay Rum Barbados Regatta. So mark your calendars for May 12th through 15th, 2011 so you can earn your own Cap while enjoying the great racing and phenomenal landside activities the island of Barbados has to offer. Reinforcing the regatta’s reputation as one for hardened sailors and free-spirited cruisers alike, it has in recent years seen an increase in its Cruising Class numbers.

The class uses separate courses and a system of staggered starts, which help to reduce stress about conflicts and contacts between boats — something most cruisers happily avoid!

The 2011 Mount Gay Rum Barbados Regatta will be preceded by an inaugural Feeder Race, in which participating yachts from the Windward Islands and beyond can cruise/race over to Barbados as a fleet the weekend prior to the Regatta. Organized in conjunction with the St. Lucia Yacht Club, the race will start from Rodney Bay and finish at Port St. Charles, Barbados. The yachts will beat to windward for many different and unique prizes, and then enjoy the hospitality of the island before the main-event Regatta where they can earn their Red Caps. The organizers look forward to greeting new sailors to the Mount Gay Rum Barbados Regatta 2011 through this Feeder Race!

For more information contact the Barbados Sailing Association at sailbarbados@gmail.com.

... and May’s Main Barbados Event!

Barbados is hosting the 26th annual Mount Gay Rum Barbados Regatta 2011, from May 12th through 15th. With visible near-shore racing in sapphire blue waters, action around the buoys is tight and fast in the racing classes, yet cool and comfortable on the cruising courses. The venerable host of the regatta, the Barbados Yacht Club, looks forward to sharing club privileges with the regatta sailors and their families, along with some great beach games, caramarades, and a rum drink or two!

The Regatta organizers are looking forward to an increase from last year’s numbers — the largest fleet to date. Barbados is home to the largest J/24 fleet in the Southern Caribbean, creating an infant one-design class which improves as more visiting J/24s come to compete in the Regatta. The Cruising B class continues to increase in size as well, as cruising yachts from around the region learn about the sheer fun the Regatta has to offer. The beat to windward to get there just makes everything that much more enjoyable!

The notice of race can be accessed at www.sailbarbados.com.

For more information contact the Barbados Sailing Association at sailbarbados@gmail.com.
The Caribbean is meant for cruising. An area larger than the Mediterranean, with temperatures, warm waters and a wealth of culturally and geographically different destinations to choose from, it's hard to beat.

For the past 15 years, Caribbean Compass has published first-hand articles from sailors plying the Caribbean sea from Barbados to Belize, and thanks principally to this direct input from the real-life cruising community we're proud to have been voted the "boating publication [that] is the most trusted source of information about yachting" by a 2010 Marinas of the Caribbean website poll. "Sailors — and powerboaters, too — tend to write articles for Compass about places they like. (And they write letters about what they don't like!) According to a rough count of feature-length articles published in Compass over the years, the six countries written about most often were Venezuela, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Grenada, the French islands (Martinique, Guadeloupe and St. Barth's) and Panama. Obviously, these countries scored high partly because they are large and/or contain numerous islands, and thus offer multiple cruising destinations.

The next four countries most written about were Dominica, Cuba, Colombia and St. Lucia, followed closely by the Dutch ABC's, Puerto Rico (including the "Spanish Virgins") and St. Kitts/Nevis. Also in the mid-range were all the Virgin Islands (we set aside the national label here and counted both the US Virgin Islands and the British Virgin Islands together), and Antigua & Barbuda.

Feeling rather left out until recently were Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Guatemala, as well as Montserrat. Surprisingly, for an island with so much boating activity, St. Maarten/St. Martin came at the bottom of the list.

We asked a selection of seasoned cruising sailors to comment on these findings vis-a-vis their own experience, and to share with us their favorite places among both the well known and the "best-kept secret" destinations.

**The St. Martin/St. Maarten Mystery**

While Ellen Sanpere, who with her husband Tony lived aboard the 51-foot Beneteau Europe since 1998 and recently moved ashore in St Croix, doesn't seem shocked about St. Martin/St. Maarten being left out — "It's too commercial, crowded, expensive and noisy... kind of like St. Thomas on Euros" — others are perplexed:

"It is strange you say that St. Maarten is not in the top," comments Eddy Huybs of the sloop Helena, "because that is one of my favorites. I've sailed seven times to St. Maarten, sometimes twice a year, from Venezuela up. But maybe St. Maarten is not a place to write about; what can you write? It's only partying and working on your boat, the food is incredible! Both Roy and I loved it there and it seems like such a normal stop along the Caribbean trail. Not only can you get parts and services for the boat, the food is incredible! Both the French and Dutch sides have some of the best places to eat in the Caribbean. We often talked with the crews of Voyageur C and Daniell Story about doing a 'Gourmands of the Caribbean' list, but the entries from St. Martin alone filled up the ticket. We also love to catch movies in St. Martin. It's easy to park the dinghy and walk to the theater there at night, which is quite a novelty while traveling by boat."

Michelle Fleming aboard the 40-foot Island Packet Bonanza adds, "I am very surprised that St. Martin/St. Maarten is in the bottom of the most-covered destinations. Roy and I loved it there and it seems like such a normal stop along the Caribbean trail. Not only can you get parts and services for the boat, the food is incredible! Both the French and Dutch sides have some of the best places to eat in the Caribbean. We often talked with the crews of Voyageur C and Daniell Story about doing a 'Gourmands of the Caribbean' list, but the entries from St. Martin alone filled up the ticket. We also love to catch movies in St. Martin. It's easy to park the dinghy and walk to the theater there at night, which is quite a novelty while traveling by boat."

**Continued on next page**
Other ‘Best-Kept Secrets’

Regarding the other less-covered destinations, Ellen Sanpere writes: “Tony and I loved the season we spent in Guatemala’s Rio Dulce — good cruising community, safe hurricane haven, lots of Mayan ruins to explore, some yacht services, abundant and inexpensive fresh produce, meat and shrimp. But once you’re that far west, it’s a pain to beat upwind to get back to the rest of the islands.”

She adds, “Montserrat got a bum deal with that volcano — we went there in 2006 and loved it. That said, we stayed only two nights because [after volcanic activity that year] there were no services, the island was distressed, and we didn’t feel we should burden it for more than that. We did the taxi tour and had lunch. The anchorage was a little rolly and we felt the presence of an imminent eruption.

“You didn’t even mention Honduras’ Bay Islands, Mexico or Belize. We enjoyed the Bay Islands and Isla Mujeres, but again it’s a lousy beat back to St. Croix.”

Eddy Huybs writes, “In 2004, I was in Jamaica, Cuba and Mexico. You could compare Jamaica with Trinidad: similar culture, similar people, similar crime problem. Two years ago we were in the Dominican Republic. We stayed four weeks in Boca Chica on the south coast; it’s easy from there to take the bus to Santo Domingo, which is a nice city to visit with great history. There was not much cruising going on in the DR because you had to pay in every port so cruising became expensive. [Editor’s note: see http://dominicanrepubliccruisingguide.com for current regulations.] We stayed on anchor, but watch your stuff.”

Liesbet Collaert notes that, “The Dominican Republic has a lot to see and do, but mostly overland. Not sure why more people don’t submit their experiences at the many different sights. Maybe most cruisers are too scared to travel a big landmass by themselves. When we were in the Dominican Republic, Mark and I wanted to visit Haiti overland, but that was strongly discouraged and, to be honest, from the moment we briefly stepped over the border, we felt a change in energy and atmosphere. Visiting Haiti over the water might be different.”

Michelle Fleming says, “Last season Roy and I cruised the south coast of the DR. We encountered fewer than ten cruising boats along the way, but the place was fantastic. While we were grateful to have Mr. Virgintino’s on-line cruising guide, we found out that rules were always changing and some information needed updating. The biggest problem in the DR is the constant paying of fees and having to deal with authorities. How much to pay and to whom became wearing on us. We’d be much more confident saying ‘no’ to certain requests a second time around!

“We also managed a trip to Ile à Vache, Haiti — post earthquake. It was amazing. We brought some food and supplies and got quite an insight into how the donation system works in Haiti. The anchorage is very safe both from both the weather and from a personal safety perspective. As Rose from the Hotel Port Morgan told me, ‘Michelle, there are no problems at Ile à Vache; you are safe and welcome here always!’”

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Michelle’s favorite places among those written about least often? “For me it is a tie between Port Antonio, Jamaica and Grand Cayman. These two places do feel like outposts, but we still ran into cruising boats along the way. The Port Authority of Jamaica operates Port Antonio’s anchorage and Errol Flynn Marina; the authorities are friendly and professional and the whole area is very secure. It’s fun to shop in the market and take some of the local tours to the nearby mountains for hiking and river touring. This small town is a great place to get a full taste of Jamaica in a low-key way. Then skip Ocho Rios and enjoy anchoring by the Montego Bay Yacht Club. Their old-time hospitality and reasonable fees for using their facilities make cruisers feel right at home.

“Grand Cayman is a place for a little R and R. It’s expensive, so provision before you arrive. Check in at the port in Georgetown and then head around the north end of the island into the North Sound, where you can anchor in flat calm in ten feet of water behind one of the best reefs in the Caribbean. Swim with the stingrays and enjoy some of the clearest waters outside of the Bahamas. Anchor over by Rum Point and snorkel on giant coral heads just off the dock. Head around to Kaibo for the Tuesday night all-you-can-eat buffet with live music. Now you are perfectly poised to make the overnight broad reach straight north to Santiago, Cuba or the resort at Cayo Largo, Cuba. Sweet!”

“I vote for the Rio Dulce, Guatemala, as my favorite least-written-about destination,” declares sailing author Julia Bartlett. “It has a safe hurricane hole, three haulout facilities, the world’s second largest barrier reef, islands for cruising and diving, plus a large lake for hurricane season sailing/shakedown sail. Add to that the inexpensive living and marinas, interesting shore trips, good security in Fronteras (where most of the boats are) and an on-line cruiser magazine with useful links (www.riodulcechisme.com). The downside is that it is time consuming to get to and from the Eastern Caribbean, and not all boat parts are available. But there are cheap flights available to Miami for boat-type shopping, and shipping services for large items.”

Cruising the Middle Range

Regarding islands in the mid-coverage range, circumnavigator Ann Westergard, who has both cruised and worked on private yachts in the Caribbean, says, “Doug and I spent so much time in the Virgins we really know our way around, which helps, especially if you’re trying to accomplish ‘stateside’ stuff. I’d like to like Dominica and St. Lucia more, but we’re too much of a spectacle there — too needed, for our wallets. Looking forward to Colombia. I guess I’m starting to favor places that are big enough for us to blend into.”

Michael Rosner of the Morgan 41 Out Island Panda says Ann has something to look forward to: “Edie and I have been south of the 12th latitude since 2005. The most wonderful city I have ever visited down here is Cartagena, Colombia, and I have not seen in the Caribbean anything that compares to its architecture and charm. Security is wonderful and it is the only city I feel comfortable wandering around at night.”

Regarding some other mid-range destinations, Ellen Sanpere says, “Not sure what’s the attraction of St. Lucia — we didn’t get past one very loud night there before leaving in a hurry. The ARC lands here, though, and that’s where many newbies arrive and fall in love with the Caribbean. Their very scary ordeal of crossing is over and the place seems like Paradise for sure. We skipped St. Kitts, Nevis, Saba and Statia, mostly because we had little cruising info that made them attractive enough to slow down our boat. I’ve never been in love with Puerto Rico, but it has its usefulness: air connections to the US, Old San Juan and Puerto del Rey. As Venezuela is no longer safe, several cruisers we know are spending hurricane season in the ABCs instead.” (Devi Sharp concurs: “Curaçao is a cheap and easy place to spend hurricane season.”)

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“The U.S. is where Tony and I chose to swallow the anchor — it’s great for US citizens, can’t recommend it to others. St. Thomas has great racing, and St. John is okay to visit, but the cruising community there is not my party crowd. The BVI has too many tourists, hareboats, etcetera. We go there for racing and don’t spend much time there otherwise.

“Cuba has to be our favorite less-traveled country,” Ellen says. “Although we spent only two months there, we met some wonderful people (non-cruisers), heard lots of music, saw gorgeous sights both natural and man-made. It’s uncrowded [wonder how much longer that will last?] and we had many excellent adventures.”

Still in, mid-coverage range, “Our favorite less-traveled Caribbean island is Barbuda,” says Liesbet Collaert, “for its space, peace and quiet, remote beaches and relaxed atmosphere. Also, it reminds us of the Bahamas, our all-time favorite so far. If importing our dog, Darwin, into Antigua would be cheaper, I’m sure we would spend a lot of time there as well, because of the different places to anchor and go.”

Best-Covered Destinations, and Why
Aside from offering numerous cruising opportunities, why do some destinations get so much ink?

Liesbet explains: “I think Grenada, Venezuela and T&T’s popularity [in print] has to do with the amount of time cruisers spend there. These are the popular places to spend a hurricane season, so people have plenty of time to explore and submerge themselves in the culture and sights — and write about them.

“Also, everybody likes St. Vincent & the Grenadines (SVG) for obvious reasons [e.g. a lot of different and comfortable anchorages]. Panama must be popular for its unique offshore islands. (As far as the French islands go, I think they are ‘popular’ because you put them in one category. I think Martinique is the one that stands out because of the many sailing and anchoring possibilities.) I think the popular countries are the places most long-term Caribbean cruisers spend time. That way they get to know them and love them, and therefore write about them.”

Ellen Sampedro supports that view: “Venezuela, Trinidad & Tobago, and Grenada are where many cruisers spend the hurricane season and get their boat work done. They spend a lot of time here and have to write about their surroundings because it’s so different, there are a lot of other cruisers there making news, the locals are neat, and they’ve caught up with things and have time to write.

“In the past,” she adds, “Venezuela was one of our favorite places to visit, thanks to the people, yacht services, land-based travel opportunities, music, volunteer opportunities, food, rum... Now, Venezuela has had so many security issues that some cruisers feel they need to relate their great experience there and maybe drum up business for their new friends.

“In SVG, we always enjoyed our stops in Union Island and Bequia. Bequia is a favorite place to visit on the beaten track: pretty island, laid back, some services, okay anchorage, Rasta produce market. In the French islands there is a great cruiser hangout in St. Anne, Martinique; Les Saintes is unique; and St. Barth’s is, well, St. Barth’s, Panama, of course is all about the canal — leaving the Caribbean (or the Pacific) and starting on a whole new chapter.

“Our favorite people are in Trinidad. We like the yacht services, diversity, culture, natural wonders, things to do and see and eat and hear.”

Devitt Sharp says, “Trinidad is my number one on our list of favorite well-traveled places. The island is small enough to get around, there are buses to take you to places including great hikes, the folks are really friendly and the crime rate is relatively low. We usually anchor where I can swim and enjoy a great breeze (Hog Island).

“I also really like Trinidad a lot — I love the Trinis. Jesse James [taxi service] always makes it feel like you are coming home, the food is excellent, the music is great. I enjoy anchoring at TTSA (the Trinidad & Tobago Sailing Association) — it is very sociable, international and inexpensive. There is a lot not to like, but you know what those things are.

For those who don’t know what’s not to like in T&T, Eddy Huybs shares his experience: ‘I’ve been three times to Tobago and four times to Trinidad, and I have made myself a holy promise never to go back there — the Customs and Immigration of
Parts of Venezuela get special praise. Devi Sharp writes: “What is our favorite less-traveled Caribbean destination, and why? Hunter and I both picked the Macareo River, and you really can’t call it Venezuela. I love it that the Wareo Indians call the Spanish language ‘Venezuelan’: ‘Hablas Venezuela?’ We really enjoy the Wareo Indians and the interaction. We both really like rivers. I love not being seasick and having fresh (albeit muddy) water. You wake to monkeys and parrots, have dinner watching river dolphins, and spend the day exploring the side creeks in your dinghy.”

Michael Rosner adds, “As to the most beautiful islands I have seen, I must say that I like the Venezuelan islands the best, with Blanquilla being my personal paradise. We are presently visiting the San Blas in Panama and will be here for the next six months. These islands are beautiful, but at times of the year incredibly crowded, like the Tobago Cays in SVG. We have wanted to return to the French islands often but have not been able to do so.”

Ann Westergard, now cruising on the Valiant 40 Galivant and currently in Honduras, highlights a favorite among the best-known cruising destinations: “I like Martinique. It’s more ‘exotic’ than the others, has European flair, is easy to get around, big enough to have a culture of its own, cosmopolitan and reasonably well-run.”

Julia Bartlett weighs in: “A vote for a popular destination? Carriacou has to be up there for sheer charm and friendliness.”

Liesbet says, “Our favorite well-traveled Caribbean countries are the BVI and SVG for the same reasons: lots of sailing and anchoring possibilities with nice beaches and good snorkeling. If we have to pick one of these two, we choose SVG (Mayreau is our favorite island there) because of the smaller amount of mooring balls and charter boats, and the proximity of refuge during hurricane season. After being in the Eastern Caribbean for two years, I’d say my favorite countries to have guests visit us are St. Maarten and Grenada. The airports are within easy reach and they both have a lot of places to anchor and sights to see. Grenada has its wonderful interior and rice beaches, and snorkeling at Ile de Ronde and Carriacou. St. Maarten has its two cultures, and its close neighbors Anguilla and St. Barth’s to add to the stops on the French side.” She notes, “It is always hard to talk about favorites, because countries are favorites for different reasons.”

Devi Sharp agrees with Liesbet that it’s hard to choose. “Okay, I have to say this, so you understand Hunter and me, and why it is a bit difficult to pick favorites. Hunter grew up in a military family and when asked about her favorite place his mother always said, ‘Where I am, of course’. That might have been the best nugget of information a mother-in-law could give a daughter-in-law marrying a man who worked for the US National Parks Service. We moved to five parks after leaving Big Bend National Park, and I always made it a point to like where I was, to be present and not look back. Having said that, of course I do have favorite islands and favorite parks, but I do make a point to try to like each place for what it has to offer.”

Michelle sums up the cruisers’ dilemma: “I’m so terrible at declaring a ‘favorite’. What can I say? I just love the Caribbean and I just love traveling.”

Many thanks to the cruisers who contributed to this article.
KNOW-HOW.

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Savoring les Iles des Saintes

by Michelle Daniels

WHEN

people ask Dave and me, “Which island is your favorite?” invariably we respond, “That all depends.” How can we choose between so many beautiful tropical paradises?

Yet, in our travels north and south along the West Indies, there is one lat/long that we just can’t bring ourselves to pass by without making a turn and dropping Daniell Storey’s book: 16° 52’N 61° 57’W — les Iles des Saintes. If God were to scoop up a smudgeon of rural France and plop it in the Caribbean Sea, that would describe Terre-de-Haut. From the water, the view of the village Le Bourg is hocuspocus eye candy with its well-kept sea-side restaurants, a pretty church steepled in the town center, and clusters of crimson-, lemon-, and mango-colored tile roofs stretching up the flowering slopes of Terre-de-Haut. Awakening there I enjoy sitting in the cockpit while sipping my first cup of Santo Domingo coffee and enjoying the quietness. Most mornings, almost on cue, an isolated rain cloud parades through the channel between us and the big island six miles to our north, releasing thick sheets of rain that completely obscure that island. As I watch its progress, the rain cloud eventually empties itself and, like parting theatre curtains, reveals the verdant peaks of Guadeloupe.

The pace in the quintessentially French village of Le Bourg ranges from sleepy to lively. Early mornings, the streets fill with children, the youngest accompanied by their mothers as they walk to school. The local boulangerie fills the air with the aroma of freshly baked baguettes. The baguettes bake in a tiered trolley accommodated to make their purchases. There is a lot of laughter and chatter between the fishermen who come from Guadeloupe to sell fresh produce. The fishermen gather around the fort, the rain cloud eventually empties itself and, like parting theatre curtains, reveals the verdant peaks of Guadeloupe.
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At the museum entrance we were given a guide to the perimeter walk through a well-tended botanical garden featuring many exotic cacti and succulents. The views all around are spectacular. The museum houses a rich collection of maritime, military and cultural history, artifacts and artwork. Although no shots were ever fired from Fort Napoleon, it overlooks the site of the April 12th, 1782 Battle of the Saintes between the British and the French. One hall of the museum houses a detailed history of this decisive battle, complete with miniature replicas of some of the battleships.

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The road makes numerous switchbacks as it winds its way to the summit, providing many spectacular birds-eye views of Terre-de-Haut and the surrounding islands. Le Chameau is home to multitudinous roosters, hens and goats that run wild up and down the slopes, their bleats and cock-a-doodles interrupting an otherwise serene environment.

The tower at the peak is open to the public and ladders are installed so the brave of heart can climb each level of the watchtower to the roof. Names and dates from the 1800s are etched into the stone wall. On my first visit here, household ladders covered with yellow warning labels in French were mounted on such a vertical plane that I could not get past my fear to take the last few steps from the ladder to the rooftop. I stood below listening jealously as Dave “ooed” and “ahed” about the views. Later, when I saw his photos, I resolved to overcome my fear the next time we made the hike up Le Chameau.

Above: Follow any road and you will end up at some lovely spot, such as the hill above Grande Anse beach, with Guadeloupe visible in the background
Right: A model ship at Fort Napoleon
The following season we repeated the hike and this time, with gritted teeth and white knuckles, I made my way onto the rooftop where I, too, “oohed” and “aahed”. Stooping, I peered through the well-preserved musket slats which framed the imag- es below. From this vantage point, we could easily see the all points of Terre-de- Haut, its many beaches, bays, and the airstrip nestled in a narrow valley between two hills.

The most visited and picturesque beach on Terre-de-Haut is Plage de Pompierre on the windward side. A short distance before the beach, a local resident serves up a tasty daily barbecue along with cold beverages, something we’ve appreciated because the wind and sea; however, it’s a wonderful spot for those looking for solitude. We enjoy walking the stretch of beach to the dra- matic cliffs of the rugged inlets that wrap around the bay, protecting it. We’ve snor- ked here, as well as Baie de Martinol, but have been disappointed, as conditions can be unpredictable with swells stirring up the bottom, limiting visibility.

A quieter beach which we enjoy walking is Grande Anse, also located on the wind- ward side at the end of the airport runway. This sweeping beach is unprotected from wind and sea; however, it’s a wonderful spot for those looking for solitude. Two roads lead to this beach from town. You’ll find the first just past the police station. The second is just south of town and takes you on the high side of the airport. I’m partial to this second route because I enjoy watching the planes approach the airport through the narrow gap between hills. This upper road leads to a more obscure, quiet corner of the island beyond Grande Anse beach, which is worth checking out.

One other favorite walk of mine is along the waterfront road north out of Le Bourg. A recent piece of good news for cruisers is the clearing-in process on Iles des Saintes has been updated and computerized. No more waiting 45 to 60 minutes for your papers to get home. Welcome.’ He says to me, ‘You want rum, wine or coffee?’ ‘Rhum, mon- sieur, d’accord,’ I say. He makes a ‘1 punch, short for petit punch: a shot of white rum, cane syrup and lime with a special little spoon to stir it. I sip it and we talk. He tells me I can rent a studio for 20 Euro a day. I am tempted but will move on. He cooks a stew as we talk: plantains, onions, rice, peppers and more. Chickens strut about. ‘I’d have a chicken in this if Blackie (his cat) would get me one,’ he snickers. ‘I need to get my paintings on the Internet so I can get rich.’ I give him a pack of cigarettes. I buy a painting for 18 Euro. He gives me another one. I look at another painting of a Rasta. I ask, ‘Who is that?’ Maurice says. ‘He almost killed me one night.’ ‘But you painted him?’ ‘Yes,’ he says.

According to Maurice, not too many people venture up the steps to his studio, but if you’re one of the more adventurous, he will greet you with true island hospitality. The water on the lee side of Iles des Saintes is clear and offers a number of great snorkeling spots. We’ve seen a diverse selection of marine fish including Queen and French angels, puffers, porcupine fish, lobsters and eels on the small reef extending from shore adjacent to the local watersport club. We’ve also enjoyed snorkeling Pain de Sucre off Terre-de-Haut and Anse Sous le Vent off Ilet-à-Cabrit.

If your time in the Iles des Saintes is limited, you can rent a motor scooter and whisk your way to all points in a matter of a day. However, I think that would be like trying to see all of New York’s Metropolitan Art Museum in three hours: you get so little out of so much. My experience is that the Iles des Saintes are best savored like a fine wine in order to appreciate all they have to offer.
Part IV:

JAMAICA AS A STAGING POINT

From Jamaica, Going North, West or South

One of the most exciting areas to cruise is the island of Jamaica. It is that when it comes
time to depart, you find yourself well situated to continue on to so many more really
great cruising areas.

As Jimmy Cornell

points out in his indis-         pectable World

Cruising Routes, from

Jamaica you can eas-

ily go north through

the Windward Passage

to the Bahamas and

to the east coasts

of the United States

and Canada. Or you

can go northwest and

access Cuba.

If you sail west you

can go to the Cayman

islands and/or the

Bay Islands of

Honduras. Thereafter

one can easily make

Rio Dulce in Guatemala

and then head north

to Belize and Mexico.

To the south of Jamaica are Colombia, the San Blas Islands and the Colombian

islands of Providencia and San Andres off the east coast of Nicaragua.

Colombia is a safe area to cruise and Cartagena is an extraordinary stop and well

worth the visit. We can cruise the coast of Colombia, taking advantage of the

trade winds and the westerly current until we make the San Blas islands.

The San Blas Islands are the offshoot of the Purupe in the Caribbean Sea. This archi-
tipelago of islands, while part of Panama, is operated independently and its culture is

very different from the Caribbean cultures. The inhabitants are Native Americans. They have their own language and you will be hard pressed to believe you

are still cruising the Caribbean.

From the San Blas Islands to the west, off the coast of Nicaragua are the Colombian

islands of San Andres and Providencia; either is a safe and an exciting stop (see article on Providencia in the September 2010 issue of Caribbean Compass). The Western Caribbean is remote. You will find it different in many respects from

the Eastern Caribbean. Many of the countries you will visit have a larger landmass

than the Eastern Caribbean Islands. They are “mainland” countries and the cul-
tures—from music to food to manners—are markedly different from those of the

Eastern Caribbean.

From Jamaica, Going East

For those that do not want to continue west, north or south from Jamaica, the trip
east is against wind and current.

The best way to go east is by using the katabatic winds of Jamaica and Hispaniola

to make the trip between the two islands at night in what are usually very light winds

(except early in the tradewind season when the wind is above 20 knots during the
day, or when a “norder” is blowing). Once to the coast of Hispaniola, one can transit

the coast at night in the island’s lee from the west to the east and arrive at Isla Saona

at the east end of the Dominican Republic. This island is south of the Mona Passage

and, again, with the use of katabatic winds that come from the mountains of the DR

as well as the same winds from the mountains of Puerto Rico, one can make easting

along the south shore of Puerto Rico at night relatively easily all the way to the

Spanish Virgins and the Virgin Islands.

Getting Out of the Hole

The Caribbean Sea is not a small sea and should be taken seriously. Roughly mea-
sured it is 1,800 miles from east to west and 700 miles from north to south. The

fiercest seas are often found in the southwest corner, in the area of Colombia and

west of Colombia. Here seas can easily exceed ten feet in normal tradewind condi-
tions. This is because of the fetch — an open sea distance of more than 1,200 miles

from the Eastern Caribbean Islands to Panama.

Many mariners have simply given up while trying to beat eastward from any point

west of Colombia. The largest seas in the Caribbean will be on your nose, as well as

unabated tradewinds and an adverse current.

The greatest protection is afforded by Cuba and Hispaniola, off their respective

south coasts, which provide protection against the Atlantic Ocean as well as winds

from the north and northeast. Therefore, while it is not readily apparent, the best

strategy is to get out of the southwestern “hole” is to go north before heading east. If

you are headed to the southeastern part of the Lesser Antilles, such a strategy

requires double the sea miles. However, the difference in conditions is so significant

as to make the extra miles well worth the effort.

Depending on how far west you are, the best route is often to head for the eastern

tip of Jamaica, at Port Morant. The harbor is delightful and very safe. There is a coast

guard station there, as well as clearance facilities. Then proceed eastward using the

same strategy as noted above, utilizing the katabatic winds along the south coasts

of Hispaniola and Puerto Rico to your advantage.

In Conclusion

This series of articles started with a discussion of the definition of “the Caribbean”.

Hopefully, for those of us who have sailed or plan to sail only on the “beaten track”

from the Virgin Islands to Grenada, it is now apparent that “the Caribbean” is some-
ting much larger than originally thought. In an area of more than a million square

miles the Caribbean Sea has more than 7,000 islands, islets, reefs and cays. One

could cruise the Caribbean — the whole Caribbean — for an entire lifetime and per-
haps never cover it all.

Frank Virgintino is the author of Free Cruising Guides (www.freecruisingguide.com).
Cruising the Eastern Caribbean with Your Dog

PART TWO: THE WINDWARDS, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO AND BARBADOS

by Liesbet Collaert

With the following overview I will try to inform you about the check-in procedures for your dog in the Eastern Caribbean islands. Last month we looked at the Virgin Islands and the Leewards. This month we’ll continue southward. This information is based on correspondence with government officials and agriculture departments, on line regulations and our own experience. It will give you an idea about what cruising the Caribbean with your dog involves and hopefully will make things easier when checking in to the countries. Whether things go as planned or expected will always be a surprise. I cannot guarantee that you will receive the same treatment, fees or information as we did. This is the Caribbean after all!

Requirements:

Procedure: Fill out the application form for an import permit (available on-line) and e-mail or fax it to the Agriculture Department, together with the dog’s health records and an estimated date of arrival. Obtain a Government Issued Health Certificate from the rabies-free country you are coming from (St. Lucia is the obvious choice. There you will have to take your dog to the Department of Agriculture either by taxi, hitchhiking a ride or private transportation). Sail to the south coast of St. Vincent, and anchor or pick up a mooring at Young Island Cut.

—Continued on next page

Above: Cruisin’ and snoozin’ — boat dog Darwin aboard

Left: The author and Darwin beachcombing in the Tobago Cays

Remarks: The best place to arrive in St. Lucia is Rodney Bay, where the process has been done by other cruisers many times before. Customs can help with the phone number or a phone call, and the vet office is not too far away (towards Castries). Our experience in Soufriere was expensive and unprofessional. It is advisable to keep the permit with you each time you take your dog to shore. We have been asked for it by an Immigration official walking around the Rodney Bay Marina area. Allowing foreign dogs into the country is a relatively new development in St. Lucia, so locals might ask you whether your dog is cleared in or wrongly tell you that he/she is not allowed in their area.

St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Contact: Dr. Glasgow or Dr. Hackshaw
E-mail: animalhealthsvg@hotmail.com
Website: www.gov.vc
Phone: Government Vet Office: (784) 457-2452 or (784) 457-1688
Cell phone, Dr. Glasgow: (784) 493-0575
Fax: (784) 457-1688
Website: www.gov.vc
Website: www.quantumsails.com
Contact: Cell phone, Dr. Glasgow: (784) 493-0575
Email: kwrigley@quantumsails.com
Phone: www.quantumsails.com
VHF Channel 5

Trinidad & Tobago

Government Vet Office: (758) 468-5621 or 468-5623
Fax: (758) 450-4581
Website: www.shumalfe.org (Veterinary and Livestock link)

Requirements: Microchip, Rabies Certificate (<1 year), Titer Certificate (<2 years), DHCCP Certificate, treatment for parasites, Health Certificate

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—Continued on next page

Above: Cruisin’ and snoozin’ — boat dog Darwin aboard

Left: The author and Darwin beachcombing in the Tobago Cays

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St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Contact: Dr. Glasgow or Dr. Hackshaw
E-mail: animalhealthsvg@hotmail.com
Website: www.gov.vc
Phone: Government Vet Office: (784) 450-0326 or 457-2452
Cell phone, Dr. Glasgow: (784) 493-0575
Fax: (784) 457-1688
Website: www.gov.vc
Website: www.quantumsails.com
Contact: Cell phone, Dr. Glasgow: (784) 493-0575
Email: kwrigley@quantumsails.com
Phone: www.quantumsails.com
VHF Channel 5

Trinidad & Tobago

Government Vet Office: (758) 468-5621 or 468-5623
Fax: (758) 450-4581
Website: www.shumalfe.org (Veterinary and Livestock link)

Requirements: Microchip, Rabies Certificate (<1 year), Titer Certificate (<2 years), DHCCP Certificate, treatment for parasites, Health Certificate

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Experience: After trying to figure all this out for months and skipping the area twice, we were persistent and managed to visit SVG with our dog, which is possible but hard. We had everything in order to arrive from Martinique, only to learn (after toes of unanswered e-mail inquiries and one final phone call that got through) that this was impossible. The Government Health Certificate has to be issued in a rabies-free country, which basically only leaves St. Lucia as “previously visited country.” Dogs coming from Grenada with all the required documents have been denied entry. It’s no fun to have gone to all the trouble to import a pet and then be denied entry. At least we got to brag about the pet whose entry was denied.

It is Paradise — Paradise Beach on Carriacou

(Grenada is not rabies free). Once we got in touch with the department and got the procedure straight, all went smoothly from the moment we met the vet on shore. Dr. Liesbet Collaert is a freelance writer who lives and cruises on Bimini & Dodger, a crewed sailboat with her partner, Mark, and their dog, Darwin. For more stories and pictures, check out their website www.itsirie.com.

Declaring your dog the “right” way will, of course, require more effort, hassle, planning and money than just sneaking him/her ashore for some quick walks or confining him/her on board. If the respective island governments make it easy, straightforward and affordable for pet owners to abide by the rules, however, checking a pet into the country would be no issue and all cruising dogs could enjoy unlimited sniffs in the countryside and super long beach walks without questions asked or nervous looks over the shoulder. Here’s to happy sailing and exploring with our furry companions!

Liesbet Collaert is a freelance writer who lives and cruises on S/V Inte with her partner, Mark, and their dog, Darwin. For more stories and pictures, check out their website www.itsirie.com.
I don't know how many miles I have steered my various yachts but I do know that steering a boat, with either a tiller or a wheel, is a very tiring occupation.

Cup Horn was a 1933 Brittany cutter, six-and-a-half metres (21 feet four inches) long and one metre thirty (four feet three inches) across the beam. She was built with a Marconi rig, featuring a very high mast that needed a boormkin to hold the backstay owing to the length of the boom. Because of this, it was well-nigh impossible to fit any kind of self-steering device on the stern. It was also impractical to fit an electrical autopilot, since there was no engine to charge the batteries. When I bought the boat, she had no bowsprit — though, if I had had a little more experience, I would have realized that the little slot cut into the front of the Samson post, and the inverted U-shaped bracket on the stem, were intended for the support of that particular spar. She came equipped with a gigantic red genoa that swept the deck and reached back to the middle of the cabin. Tacking without winches was interesting; if you didn't pull fast enough, it was necessary to luff up to get more sail in.

The first trip my partner Flo and I took was from St. Tropez to Majorca. An amazing amount of weather helm was produced by that giant red genoa that ought to have been about three feet farther forward, but alas, there was no stick to put it out there. It was expedient to loop one leg over the tiller and firmly grip the ankle in order to keep from diving into the wind. 'Fool,' you say, and yes it's true, but then, isn't anyone who leaves their nice cozy life something of a fool?

It took us seven days to complete that trip, and we had to steer the whole way, two hours on, two off. Needless to say, we were very tired by the time we made landfall. It took a few more trips like that until we discovered that a boat steers easier when the sails are balanced. Reading the Hiscocks' books did a lot for my knowledge of the way to make a boat steer itself and as a consequence, I built a nice metre-long bowsprit out of Douglas fir and the results were spectacular. Flo hand-sewed a yankee and we already had a stays'l. We had to fit running backstays to cope with the stresses caused by the stays'l.

—Continued on next page
acquired skill, plus a welding machine, saves you 50 bucks or so an hour. If you have a steel boat, it seems to me to be a pretty good idea to learn to weld. This is because she has a wide transom.

Keel. We have plenty of space to put some kind of wind-powered self-steering device playing his trumpet and not a hand for the tiller.

Two years in Antigua was a whole new form of life for us and it was difficult to leave. By the time we reached Antigua we had pretty much mastered the foibles and nuances of using sails to steer a boat. The same rig allowed us to steer a little off the wind if we changed the angle of the pole in relation to the hull by lengthening the appropriate sheet. Unfortunately our two sails were too short and not high cut enough. The consequence of this was that, on one particularly large roll, we dipped the starboard sail in the water. This had the effect of wasting out two stanchions and snapping the pole in two.

In the end, we flew the yankee (spiffite jib) to port and the stays’l to starboard, utilizing the two halves of the broken pole. If I were to build a rig like that again, I would carry several twins without hands and of differing sizes. We found that, even with unmatched sails, the boat steered perfectly in all kinds of wave and wind conditions.

During the six months we spent in Tenerife, I learned celestial navigation from a real sailor and built a rudder out of pieces of our downwind trip to the Caribbean. In principle, the downwind rig performed miraculously. It moved two high cut jibs, flying from the base of the mast with a two-foot space between them at the foot. The two poles were rigged horizontally with uphauls. The sheets for the two jibs went through rings on the outer ends of the poles, then back to the tiller via snatch blocks on the rail. The poles were allowed to go forward until they were at about 45 degrees to each other before being attached to the tiller. It was very satisfying to see the tiller twitch when one of those giant Atlantic rollers pushed the stern over as she started to surf, and put her back on course for the palm trees, hummingbirds and iguanas.

Now, I am only writing this for those cruisers whose budget is limited and who rely on skills to solve problems, rather than reaching to the often-empty pockets. If you have a steel boat, it seems to me to be a pretty good idea to learn to weld. This acquired skill, plus a welding machine, saves you 50 bucks or so an hour.

Since it consumed enough electricity to power a small town while it worked, though for me, it never really did.

I decided to build my own system. There are several good solutions on the market, each one being perfect for a certain type of vessel. However, since I have a full-keel boat, my problems of designing an efficient steering system were greatly reduced. The long keel gives directional stability and the ketch rig is easy to balance by playing with the various bits of string. After studying various types of wind-powered autopilots, I decided that it would be best to add a secondary rudder to the transom. The primary rudder is very large and placed far enough forward. I figured a secondary rudder, at the transom, could be a lot smaller and have almost the same effect as the primary. If I added a trim tab to the back of the second rudder, I wouldn’t need much force from a wind vane to turn the boat. In other words, as the trim tab is very slim, it is easier to turn in the water, and then hydraulic action turns the secondary rudder in the desired direction. All this time, the primary rudder is used to give a little bit of weather helm, after the sails are pulled well and balanced. This allows the self-steering to do as little work as possible. If the boat should be almost steering herself.

In the device itself went through many modifications over several years of tinkering. Lots of mistakes were made in the earliest versions, most of them related to sloppy bearings and over-complicated linkages. By the time the message from the wind vane reached the rudder, it was too late and the boat was doing something else.

The breakthrough finally came when I used a Morse control cable to transfer the power from the wind vane to the trim tab. This has proved to be very sensitive and direct, since the only bearings involved are at each cable end. There are several advantages to this system. The secondary rudder allows the boat to be manually steered via a short tiller attached to the rudderpost, and the Morse cable linkage allows the wind vane to be mounted in an optimum position.

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I have found that it is often necessary, while in the Caribbean, to make do and improvise things that would normally be bought from a store, though more recently, it is possible to get things sent to anywhere in the world, thanks to the internet. I guess I have a hangover from the time we arrived here in 1983. The roads in St. Johns, Antigua were mud tracks, populated by chickens, goats and very few cars. Bequia had even fewer paved roads back then and workshops were mostly like blacksmith’s shops. It was necessary to be very inventive to keep a boat running.

Those same workshops are still in the Caribbean; some of them are a bit more sophisticated than others, having lathes and milling machines, etcetera, and if you cannot weld it is possible to get jobs done in most of the islands for very reasonable prices. Bequia in the Grenadines is a very surprising place in that you can get virtually anything that you need there that is related to boats. Bequia has a long history of boat-building and many of its inhabitants have a working knowledge of seamanship.

One way or another, it is feasible to construct a working steering device in the islands, without a huge layout of cash.
DECEMBER 2010

**ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)**
While boat business is in irons, pass the time with holiday projects or creative onboard repairs. This will free you up for a romantic blip on your radar.

**TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)**
Romance could be a rough beat for the next five weeks while Venus is opposite you in Scorpio. Keep a good lookout and you won’t get stung.

**GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)**
Spend time at the helm of your business or financial affairs, but sail on past creative projects as any attempts there will only foul your bottom and could ruin your holiday mood.

**CANCER**
Ho, ho, ho! A harbor romance will take up most of your mental energies over the holidays.

**LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)**
Bah, humbug! This month will be a good one for Leos to take a solo sail or concentrate on projects aboard that can be done alone.

**VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)**
Might as well turn off the radio, as you will feel unable to express yourself clearly until month’s end. Just hum a few Christmas carols and no one will notice you’re not talking.

**LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)**
Steer a course for boat business in the coming New Year and don’t let outside influences blow you off it.

**SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)**
Hello, sailor! Love and lust fill you with passion for the next five weeks. Enjoy.

**SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)**
Concentrate on projects aboard until the 20th, when you run out of steam and enthusiasm. Don’t worry, by then it will be time to get into the holiday spirit!

**CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)**
Communications will be garbled until month’s end, so if you’re breaking up, remember that propagation will improve in the New Year. Meanwhile, it wouldn’t hurt to just listen, as you might learn something new.

**AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)**
Steady as she goes. Keep your hand on the business helm while weathering minor squalls in your love life.

**PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)**
Don’t worry about a few setbacks in the creative areas of your selling life. Santa might be bringing you a new love interest.

---

**THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS**

’Twas the night before Christmas, I swung on the hook
Flaked out on the settee, asleep with my book
When up on the deck I heard footsteps and stuff
‘I’ve been boarded!’ I thought, and I tried to be tough.

Then down the companionway hatch came a dude:
He was dressed like a nut and I thought, ‘I’m so screwed.’
But he laughed and he hummed as he surveyed my junk
So I figured he must be the resident drunk.

His eyes were lit up like a junkie on speed
But he gave me a whole bunch of stuff that I need.
Like rum and cigars and new charts and a dinghy
And some kind of fancy electrical thingy.

I thought it was stolen but I wasn’t telling,
I hoped he was giving and wasn’t just selling
And I poured him a grog which he downed with a wink
Then I poured one for me (I sure needed a drink!).

Then he staggered above to the dark tropic night:
As I peeked I beheld an incredible sight—
Eight tiny dolphins and a beautiful sleigh
And the dude hopped aboard and prepared to make way.

The dolphins were ready to power the sled
But the guy raised a genny and maim’d instead.
With a burp and a chuckle he gathered the breeze
And called to the dolphins, now swimming with ease:

“On Fatty and Foxy and Old Barracuda!
On Teva and Mountgay, Antigua, Barbuda!
Or whatever your names are, you cute little fishes,
Here’s to every last sailor, my best Christmas wishes!”

As he sailed away leaving a wobbly wake
I hoped he had not many stops left to make.

He got close to shore and he soon was aground
But the dolphins proceeded to pull him around
And I heard him exclaim as he sailed out of sight
“Merry Christmas to all, and to all a goodnight!”

— Cruiser Claus

**Editor’s note:** We don’t know who originally wrote this poem that’s been doing the rounds anonymously for a while, but we’ve published it a couple of times by popular demand and it’s become a tradition.

---

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In honor of Parrot Heads, Pauline Dolinski has created this puzzle with a purpose, raising funds for various causes.

What’s a Parrot Head? Parrot Head is a commonly used nickname for a fan of sailing singer/songwriter Jimmy Buffett. Parrot Head clubs often hold ‘parties with a purpose’, raising funds for various causes.

In honor of Parrot Heads, Pauline Dolinski has created this puzzle.

CRUISING KIDS CORNER

THE CARIBBEAN CHRISTMAS TREE

by Lee Kessell

The Christmas season had arrived. The sun shone down with a yellow brightness on the small island in the Caribbean where little Petal lived with her old grandmother. Petal’s grandmother was too poor to buy Christmas presents and Petal understood that. But in her heart she longed for a Christmas tree like the one that Mistress Jones, who owned the big store on the main road of the village, assembled every Christmas season where it stood just inside the door. It was a plastic tree with branches that fitted together but it looked so real that all the children loved it, and they loved the decorations that went on it.

Petal’s grandmother was so bone weary that she didn’t go out much, so Petal had to amuse herself. She loved to wander about and poke her nose into strange places, and that is how she stumbled upon the old estate house. The “Great House” wasn’t exactly a ruin but it had been up for sale for a very long time. The tiled floors were cracked and broken and everywhere there was dust, dirt and thick cobwebs. It took a long time for Petal to screw up enough courage to push her way through the weeds and bushes in the garden and climb through a broken kitchen window. It was so dark and spooky that Petal almost turned back when something green caught her eye.

Petal hurried over and, sure enough, it was an old plastic Christmas tree! Dirty, bent, covered in cobwebs, it was a very sorry sight. Petal dragged it to the middle of the floor and gazed down upon her heart’s dream. In her mind’s eye she saw a wonderful new tree, fully decorated, and she determined that this is how it would be.

But first the tree had to be cleaned, and that was no small job for such a little girl. Petal ran home and the next day she returned with a bag of old rags, a small piece of kitchen soap and a bottle of water. Every day Petal crept through the broken kitchen window of the old house and cleaned and cleaned until the old plastic tree glowed like a fresh pine tree.

After that, Petal dragged the Christmas tree to the centre of the big sitting room and using all her might, pulled it upright until it stood on its own red painted stand. The next day, Petal looked about for the decorations that must be somewhere and she found the decorations in a box. Petal took them out one by one. They were so dirty she couldn’t tell what they were but when she had carefully cleaned each one, she sat back open-mouthed with wonder. Petal’s eyes saw how the crystal ice drops caught the light and danced like rainbows; real glass balls shone forest green, dark blue, crimson and yellow; six-pointed stars of silver twinkled like the stars in the night sky; porcelain figures of little children were delicately hand painted; songbirds with fine glass tails and shimmering wings looked ready for flight. Although Petal had never seen animals like these on her tropical island, she thought that little brown deer with white spots, shy hedgehogs, and brushy-tailed foxes looked ready to leap and play.

As well as all this there were crystal hearts, glass bows like silk ribbons, little lanterns you could light with a match, and the Christmas Angel dressed in white silk with a red velvet shawl around her shoulders and wings of pink and blue feathers. Petal managed to hang these pretty decorations on the branches of the tree and, by standing on a box, she put the Christmas Angel right on the top where the holy lady could smile down upon all the animals, birds and porcelain children. Petal wanted to sit forever and look at her tree, but as the tropical twilight rapidly faded she had to go home.

The next day was Christmas and after Petal and her grandmother had eaten a Christmas lunch of good things that the neighbours had delivered, Petal left the old lady to rest while she ran off to see her Christmas tree. Petal was almost too frightened to climb through the broken kitchen window in case it had all been a dream, but the Christmas tree was where she had left it. The little girl hurried towards it and then she saw, hanging on a branch, a package with her name written on it: PETAL. She quickly ripped off the gold paper and inside a box was an amethyst heart attached to a thin gold chain. Petal clipped the gold chain around her small neck and ran home to show her grandma.

“Look Grandma!” she cried, “The Christmas Angel has given me a present for Christmas!”

At first, Petal’s grandmother was doubtful, but Petal told her all about finding the Christmas tree and how hard she’d worked to make it beautiful again. Then her grandmother said, “Christmas is a time of miracles, child. You found your heart’s desire, and it looks like the Christmas Angel found you.”

THE END

PARROT HEAD WORD SEARCH PUZZLE


| ALBUM | DRINKS | PARROT |
| ATTITUDES | FAN | PARTY |
| BAND | FINS | REEFER |
| BAY | GUITAR | RIGHT |
| BEER | HEADS | RUM |
| BOAT | HUMOR | SAILOR |
| BOTTLE | JIMMY | SALTY |
| BUFFET | KEY WEST | SHARKS |
| CD | LATITUDES | SING |
| CHEESE | LEFT | SON |
| -BURGER | LIVE | SONGS |
| CHILL | MARGARITA | TOUR |
| CONCERT | VILLE | TROPICAL |
| CORAL | MUSIC | |
| CRUISE | PARADISE | VOLCANO |
During World War II, in January 1942, the High Command of the German Navy sent a group of U-boats (submarines) to the Caribbean region and off the Guianas and northeastern Brazil to start a front there. The aim was mainly to sink Allied ships bringing vital oil and aluminium ore from Venezuela, Trinidad and the Guianas (then British, Dutch and French Guiana).

By the middle of February, five subs were in the area. Others were to follow. In the first two months of Operation Neuland, dozens of Allied freighters and tankers were sent to the bottom. Hundreds of merchant mariners, including some from the Caribbean area, lost their lives. This was in the shipping lanes where the subs had better chance of getting away, perhaps by diving deep, from the attacking planes and patrol vessels that were stationed on Allied bases such as those in Puerto Rico, Antigua and Trinidad.

Four spectacular attacks on Caribbean harbours nevertheless took place. They were daring actions. The submarine commanders took their vessels into confined harbours or within range of coastal guns and patrol craft. There, they torched moored ships.

The first two actions were in the Dutch islands of Aruba and Curacao, which had important oil refineries. On the night of February 15th, 1942, the skipper of U-156, Werner Hartenstein, manoeuvred his vessel on the surface inside a reef in front of San Nicolas Harbour in Aruba. The town was brilliantly lit, aiding the attacker. The tankers Federaciones, Oranjestad and Arkansas were sitting ducks. Oil flowed out of their punctured sides. There was chaos and consternation ashore. Nobody expected a German submarine to be in the area, far less in the harbour.

Hartenstein cleverly hid near the fires' smoke. He seized the opportunity to shell the refinery ashore with the 105mm deck gun. He then remembered and left the barrel spayed out at its front. Unperturbed, Hartenstein ordered his engineer to hacksaw off 40 centimetres of the damaged muzzle. He managed to get off two rounds into the refinery compound before escaping with rounds whizzing over the conning tower from the shore batteries.

In neighbouring Curacao, Captain Gunther Muller-Stockheim in U-175 sank the 3,100-tonne tanker Rajfello in Willemstad Harbour before heading out to sea — fast. Following the attack in Aruba a couple hours earlier, the defenders in Curacao were more ready. One of the more important attacks took place in Port of Spain, harbour-bottom. This was on the night of February 18th. Albrecht Achilles, one of the German Navy's most wily and skilful submarine skippers, quietly steered U-161 through the Bocas channel. It was a daring raid. Achilles came in during the day — but submerged. He had to pass within sight, on his left, of the biggest Allied anti-submarine base in the Caribbean. This was Chaguarilla.

Achilles sneaked the sub into shallow water and let her sit on the mud bottom in 30 fathoms. This was midday. Then he waited until nightfall. Above, planes and surface craft were out searching for him after a detection device at the Bocas had indicated an unfriendly vessel. In the confined interior of the 1,200-tonne IXC-type U-161, the air was foul when it was backed off the mud. It surfaced and the hatches were opened. Achilles then eased up to the anchorage off Port of Spain at about midnight. Two torpedoes were out and the 7,400-tonne American-registered Mokhara and the tanker British Consul settled on the harbour bottom. (Both were later patched up.)

Achilles knew the area well. He had, like many German submarine commanders, served aboard German cruise ships visiting Caribbean ports before the war started in 1939. This intimate knowledge was to help in an attack a few days later in another Caribbean port.

The Allies had big 155mm guns at the Bocas entrance. They waited for the sub to exit. However, in the darkness and heavy boat traffic trying to locate him, Achilles boldly turned on his navigation lights and trimmed the sub so that only the conning tower was above the surface. The idea was to pretend that the sub was one of the searching craft. He worked. It was a really close run-off to the island of Chacachacare, on which the 155mm battery stood, that the watchers didn't see him.

Achilles was nearing the end of his patrol two weeks later. Fuel and torpedoes were running low. He had three torpedoes left. Why take them back to Germany? He was passing Castries Harbour on the island of St. Lucia. He decided to do the unthinkable: enter the harbour and sink what he could. This was more difficult than Trinidad.

---Continued on next page---

Mangroves have two different ways of managing their salt content. Red mangroves are salt excluders. Their root membranes allow only a tiny percentage of salt to enter the plant but they allow water to pass through easily. Any salt which does enter can be stored in cell vacuoles (empty spaces in the plant cells) or it accumulates in old leaves which eventually drop off the plant.

Black and white mangroves are salt excluders. Salt enters the plant but the amount is controlled by salt glands at the base of each leaf. The glands excrete salt on to the surface of the leaf so that, if you look carefully, you can see white salt crystals on the leaf. Rain will wash the salt away.

**EXPERIMENT**

Try this experiment to show how salt can affect cell structure. Cut two equal strips of raw potato. Rest one in a cup of fresh water and one in a cup of salt water. Leave them for an hour or so. Now observe them carefully. The strip in fresh water will be hard where water has entered and filled out the potato cells. The strip in salt water will be bendy where water has been drawn out of the potato cells because of the salt.

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**CARIBBEAN COMPASS**

**WHEN U-BOATS ATTACKED CARIBBEAN PORTS**

**by Norman Faria**

The U-Boat War in the Caribbean (to which I am grateful for most of the information for this article), the gun crew forgot to remove the tampon plug in the muzzle. The resulting explosion killed two crewmates and left the barrel spayed out at its front. Unperturbed, Hartenstein ordered his engineer to hacksaw off 40 centimetres of the damaged muzzle. He managed to get off two rounds into the refinery compound before escaping with rounds whizzing over the conning tower from the shore batteries.

In neighbouring Curacao, Captain Gunther Muller-Stockheim in U-175 sank the 3,100-tonne tanker Rajfello in Willemstad Harbour before heading out to sea — fast. Following the attack in Aruba a couple hours earlier, the defenders in Curacao were more ready. One of the more important attacks took place in Port of Spain, harbour-bottom. This was on the night of February 18th. Albrecht Achilles, one of the German Navy's most wily and skilful submarine skippers, quietly steered U-161 through the Bocas channel.

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---Continued on next page---
Giles Hall Survived the Torpedoing of Lady Nelson

It is the 10th of March, 1942. At about a quarter to midnight, the stevedores on the docks of Castries Harbour, St. Lucia are still busy offloading much needed cargo from the Canadian steam passenger ship Lady Nelson. Down below, 18 year-old, Norwegian crewmember Giles Hall was just about to climb a ladder with a pillow to get back on the alt deck to catch the cool breeze. Suddenly, he was knocked off his feet by an ear-splitting explosion. The 7,800-tonne liner shuddered as if hit by a giant hammer. Hall knew what it was, a torpedo from a German submarine that had somehow penetrated the defences of the harbour. A torpedo had slammed into the port quarter of the British-made steel vessel. Water was already gushing in. Fires had started in the engine room.

He had to get out. And fast!

Scrambling onto the deck, he heard the night watchman, a Barbadian named “Bizzy” Gall, shouting down the ladder. “Who down below, come up!” Hall saw that the force of the explosion had somehow shoved the stern away from the dock. Only the bow lines were holding. The ship was settling by the stern onto the shallow harbour bottom. Things looked desperate.

Mr. Hall, now 85 and still a handsome, articulate man looking 20 years younger, said he did not know how many people died in the attacks. One internet site says 14 passengers and three crewmembers died. Achilles and all hands on U-161 later perished when the sub was sunk off Brazil in September of the following year. Two weeks after the Castries Harbour attack, Hall and the rest of the Barbadian crew were taken by schooner back to Barbados. Among them was his father-in-law, Gordon Hall, who worked in the pantry area with him. The Lady Nelson was later salvaged. In 1943, it was back in service as a hospital ship. In 1953, after returning to the cruise liner business in the islands, it was sold to Egyptian owners and scrapped in 1968. During the war years (WWII) ended in August 1945, Hall signed onto other cargo boats. He served on such Harrison Line ships as the Governor, Comedian and Planter.

Many times while in convoy with ships in the Atlantic he feared his vessel would be torpedoed. He saw several being sunk that way. He witnessed the rescue of many merchant seamen. He and his comrades felt sorry for those, including from the then British colonies in the Caribbean and British Guiana, who lost their lives.

Of their sacrifice, he had this to say: “On the occasion of Remembrance Day (November 11th) once again, we must always remember the sacrifice of those in the Allied armed forces who gave their lives. But we must also remember, and I am not speaking about myself particularly but for all my comrades, the contribution of merchant marine seamen, those on the cargo boats. They assisted in the war effort immensely in the sense that they manned the ships that brought the necessary war materials, food and other necessities.”

The Attacks on Caribbean Ports

The attacks on Caribbean ports had both psychological/propaganda value and military value. They helped in the overall plan of destruction of shipping and the tying up of valuable Allied men (there were more than 30,000 US servicemen stationed in Trinidad at one time) and equipment in the area that would have been put to use by precisely 400 Allied ships were sunk and 56 damaged during Operation Neuland. But the submarine operation was to fail. Once the United States opened a front with other Allied nations in Europe and joined the mighty Soviet Union in the Allied cause against the German and Italian fascism and Japanese militarism, the plan was doomed. By July 1944, Operation Neuland was over. Overall, the German submarine service took appalling casualties. Of the total 400, 192 were sunk. When the war ended in 1945, only ten of the 97 were still afloat. Achilles, Auffermann and Muller-Stockheim went down with their vessels.

The subs early offensive took the Allies by surprise. But defences soon increased. More effective anti-submarine measures were put in place. Credit must go to the courageous Allied servicemen and women manning the planes, surface vessels and shore installations and doing maintenance. This contributed to the Allied victory. They were assisted by Caribbean citizens including those in the South Caribbean Forces, among whose members was my Guyanese-born father stationed in Trinidad. Members of the Home Guard in the various islands also helped.

The late Norman Paris was a former merchant sailor on the Geest Line, and served as Honorary Guyanese Consul in Barbados.
THE SKY IN DECEMBER

by Scott Welty

The Planets in December

MERCUORY - Slight chance of viewing during the first few days. Setting at about 1800 hours but moving west toward the sun.

VENUS - Rising between 0400 and 0430 hours all month. Highest toward the end of the month.

EARTH - Waiting in line for Super Bowl tickets.

MARS - Setting in the early evening at about 1800 hours. May be too light to see.

JUPITER - Up already after dark. Setting around 2300 hours.

SATURN - Rising after midnight all month.

Sky Events This Month

5th - New Moon

6th - Moon occults Mars

13th - Mercury and Mars set together 1800 hours

14th - Peak time for the Geminids meteor shower. Look for up to 100 meteors per hour radiating out from Gemini (see Figure 1).

21st - Full Moon, Winter Solstice, AND a lunar eclipse... WHAT? (See below.)

Lunar Eclipse

What a coincidence — an eclipse on the Winter Solstice! A lunar eclipse is when the moon passes through the Earth's shadow. It HAS to happen during a full moon, as that's when the moon is 'behind' the Earth, but it doesn't happen every full moon due to the tilt of the moon's orbit. To watch this lunar eclipse you're either going to have to close the tiki bar and then stay up, or hit the bunk early and set your alarm. The eclipse will start around 0130 hours and go into daylight. Lunar eclipses are slowly evolving events compared to their shiny counterparts. The moon will set around 0600 so you should be able to see the totality just fine.

Penumbral Eclipse Begins: 01:29:17 AST
Partial Eclipse Begins: 02:32:37 AST
Total Eclipse Begins: 03:40:47 AST
Greatest Eclipse: 04:16:57 AST
Total Eclipse Ends: 04:53:08 AST
Partial Eclipse Ends: 06:01:20 AST
Penumbral Eclipse Ends: 07:04:31 AST

Penumbral eclipse means the moon is going to be only a little dim because it has moved into the penumbral part of the shadow. As Figures 2 and 3 show, the sun is not a point source of light so the earth casts a 'fuzzy' shadow. The fuzzy part is called the penumbra where there is some light from the sun, while the true shadow or umbra is where there is almost no light from the sun. When the total eclipse begins you'll see a bite being taken out of the moon. That's the shadow of the Earth! Wave! See your hand? This is how observant people way before Columbus knew the Earth was a sphere as only a sphere casts a circular shadow from all angles.

Perhaps surprisingly, during total lunar eclipse the moon doesn't completely disappear and instead will look a dark red. This is because the Earth has an atmosphere - blue light tends to scatter in our atmosphere, which is why the sky is blue, while red light tends to bend and leak through the atmosphere, which is why the sunset is red.

Winter Solstice

The 21st is also the Winter Solstice. That's the day of the sun's most southerly passage through our skies and makes for the day with the least daytime. If you want to stand in the shade of your own sombrero on this day you'd have to be standing on the tropic of Capricorn. At the time of the creation of the Julian calendar the solstice occurred on December 25th. That early calendar had 365.25 days in a year and that’s close but not perfect. Since that time, the solstice has shifted to the 21st but the party still happens on the 25th. This time of year has always been a time of celebration in most civilizations — celebrating the return of the sun!

To Contemplate While Having a Glass of Wine on Deck

Time to celebrate indeed — solstice and eclipse! We’ve decided to have a party, decorate a tree somehow, and give each other presents. Hey, that kind of thing could catch on. Happy solstice everybody!

Scott Welty is the author of The Why Book of Sailing, Burford Books, ©2007

Got a question for “Captain Science”? E-mail Scott at weltysail@gmail.com.
A Caribbean Holiday Feast

by Shirley Hall

The Caribbean is known for beautiful weather, beaches with warm clear waters, friendly people — and an abundance of holidays. The end of a year has almost endless reasons to celebrate: Muslim Eid, Hindu Divali, Christian Christmas, Boxing Day, Old Year’s Eve, New Year’s Day, and my birthday. Individually different, most of these holidays celebrate time off from work, when government offices, businesses, and banks are closed to business, and encourage good will and positive thoughts for the upcoming year. Each celebration also signifies quality time spent with family and friends, with most of the day devoted to enjoying excellent food.

Although every island, ethnic culture, and religion has identifiable cuisine there is one universal Caribbean island holiday meal: chicken, macaroni pie, and beans ‘n’ rice. Most international travelers are familiar with the delicious recipes. It’s not difficult to transform the simple ingredients above into a traditional island holiday meal like the one below:

Island Beans ‘n’ Rice

- 1 Cup uncooked long grain rice
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped small
- 1 medium sweet green pepper, chopped small
- 1 Cup uncooked long grain rice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 3 tablespoons vinegar
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 1 Tablespoon all-purpose seasoning salt
- 2 Tablespoons melted butter
- 1/2 cup chicken stock dissolved in 1 Cup of water
- Powdered cheese

Holiday Slaw

- 1 medium cabbage, shredded
- 1/2 small onion, chopped small
- 1/4 pound Cheddar cheese
- 1 Tablespoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups powdered cheese
- 1/4 cup milk
- 4 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 Cup milk
- 1/4 pound Cheddar cheese
- 1 teaspoon salt

Baked Chicken

- 1 large roasting chicken (five to six pounds)
- Lemon or lime juice
- 1 Tablespoon all-purpose seasoning salt
- 2 Tablespoons melted butter
- 1 cube chicken stock dissolved in 1 Cup of water
- Wash chicken thoroughly with lemon or lime juice. Let dry before rubbing inside and out with seasoning salt. Place in a roasting pan breast up; add chicken stock to the pan. Brush chicken with melted butter. If no cover is available, seal the roasting pan with aluminum foil. Bake for 75 minutes at 325°F. Uncover and continue to bake for 15 more minutes. Let sit for ten minutes before serving.

West Indies Macaroni Pie

- 1 pack (12 ounces) long elbow macaroni
- 4 Tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 Cup milk
- 1/4 pound Cheddar cheese
- 1 teaspoon salt

Grate the cheese, and separate out a quarter of it to hold back for topping. Boil a large pot of salted water. Add the macaroni without stopping the boil and cook for five minutes. Drain, rinse in cold water and set aside. Melt butter in a small saucepan and slowly stir in the milk. Keep stirring and mix in the grated cheese. Cook for about two minutes or until cheese is fully melted and sauce is smooth. Combine sauce and macaroni in a suitable ovenproof dish. Sprinkle top with remaining cheese. Bake at 350°F for half an hour.

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Eating Like a Local in St. Lucia
by Jo-Anne Nina Sewlal

One of the things I love to do when I visit a new island is to sample the cuisine, because you cannot be a local until you have eaten like a local. Here are some of the foods and dining places I enjoyed during my stay in St. Lucia.

Getting true local food is a challenge in some islands that cater to tourists. This is especially true when it comes to getting the first meal of the day. On some islands, when you order breakfast you get a continental breakfast. But St. Lucia has made great efforts in maintaining the local cuisine, for example at the Villa des Pitons in Soufriere, where I stayed. A traditional St. Lucian breakfast is delicious, consisting of stewed saltfish (usually salted codfish), bakes, cucumber salad and cocoa tea.

St. Lucia may be known for its bananas but this island also produces cocoa and coffee. "Cocoa tea" is just the local slang for hot cocoa. The cocoa beans are dried, the shells removed and the pulp is pounded with spices to make a paste and formed into the desired shape and left to dry and harden. The different shapes in which cocoa paste is dried is one of the little details that make each island unique. For instance, in my homeland, Trinidad, the cocoa is traditionally shaped into an oval cake (like a small elongated football); however, when commercial production started, it changed to small bars. In St. Lucia you can get it rolled into thick logs or in some larger supermarkets already grated and ready for use. To brew cocoa tea, you grate the desired amount from the bar or log and boil with a stick of cinnamon and a bay leaf. This mixture is strained and then you add sugar and milk to your preference.

One thing St. Lucia prides itself on when it comes to food is stewed meats. In the West Indies we stew our meat by first burning sugar until it caramelizes; this is used to coat the meat. Water is added and the meat is left to simmer until cooked. However, while in St. Lucia I enjoyed some authentic Jamaican cuisine. It was at the P&G Real Jamaican Restaurant at Marigot Bay.

—Continued on next page
Basically a Sea Food Friday is a big street party. People set up stalls along the waterfront at Anse La Raye (you literally cannot miss it if you’re driving). It has great ambiance with intricate wooden sculptures and a small batik studio where you can browse and buy items. La Haut Plantation is another great place to dine. It is here I had my very first taste of flying fish in a succulent tartar sauce.

Another great location for local food in Soufriere is Feddoe’s, known to serve a good roti. They usually run out long before lunchtime so you have to get there early, usually before noon. They are also known for their Creole-style cuisine. But the best roti I tasted was at Angel’s Restaurant. This little establishment came highly recommended. If you ask anyone in Soufriere where is a good place to get a meal, they will direct you to Angel’s, named after one of the owners. [Editor’s note: the town of Soufriere received damage from the passage of Hurricane Tomas on October 30th. By the time you read this, businesses should be back in operation, but it might be wise to phone ahead first and confirm.]

Another unique place you must stop at is Plas Kassav in Anse-La-Verdure in Canaries. The specialty of this establishment is cassava bread. First the cassava is ground and dry-roasted in a large metal pot to make cassava flour, which is used to make cassava bread. Plas Kassav also makes farine, which is cassava flour ground to a finer texture. The cassava bread here comes in 12 flavours that were developed by owner Rosario Wilson’s mother. The flavours include coconut, ginger, cinnamon, peanut, chocolate and smoked herring. Some are big sellers like chocolate, which often “finishes” by early afternoon. Some flavours are also not made every day so you have to keep checking in if you want to sample them all. After buying you can sit and enjoy, or browse their small collection of souvenirs on sale.

As on most if not all islands in the Caribbean, barbecue is a staple on the weekends and from as early as 4:00am, you can see people setting up their stalls and pits around the town square or in one of the side streets in an effort to catch the people as they head to the square. Another big food here is pizza. St. Lucians love pizza, evident by the many food trucks that sell this. However, it seems that it is a popular nighttime snack, as you would find these trucks parked at the side of the road vacant and lifeless during the day but coming alive at dusk. But if you want a quick snack during the day there are numerous bakeries and, with tasty pastries ranging from 50¢ to EC$1.00, they are an affordable treat.

While I was in St. Lucia I was fortunate enough to visit the Sea Food Friday at Anse La Raye. You cannot miss this. It starts at around 6:00pm and goes on until 4:00am and even longer, as some bars might be open all night. The main road passes around the town of Anse La Raye (you literally cannot miss it if you’re driving). Basically a Sea Food Friday is a big street party. People set up stalls along the waterfront and sell various seafood and drinks, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic. Some of the items on sale include curried lobster, octopus, whelks, steamed snapper, johnny-cakes and fish cakes, just to name a few. You get healthy portions, so bring your appetite. During my visit I tried whelks for the first time. A portion usually consists of six whelks (like big snails) and a wedge of lime. You tease the whelks out of its shell with a toothpick and squeeze the lime juice all over it. All parts are edible except the shell and the hard part at the end (called the operculum), which is what the animal uses as a trap door to seal itself in its shell. Unfortunately I did not get a chance to sample octopus, but it is a good excuse to visit the island again.

There are also some snacks on sale at Anse La Raye, such as fish cakes (dough mixed with salted fish and fried to form fritters). Another type of cake at the party is johnnycakes, which are small, round, thick breads around the size of a saucer, baked on a hot griddle. These are usually ordered as a side dish, which you break and use to soak up the delicious sauce that comes with your fish.

Other towns have their own version of Sea Food Fridays, such as Gros Islet, near Rodney Bay, whose Jump Up is also held on Friday nights. The town of Dennery on the east coast has its festival on a Saturday night.

One thing I found very difficult to find was local homemade sweets. But when I did find them, they were unique. While at the fish festival, a lady with a wooden tray came around and one of her sweets was a nut brittle made from sea almonds. Another time I visited a small shop and a type of sweet on sale was shaved coconut that had been coated in sugar syrup and dried. So if you have a sweet tooth for the unusual and local, look for these at festivals and little shops.

In all, St. Lucia is an island that will keep you and your taste buds busy. If you are looking for a new island to taste, I encourage you to check it out!
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Dear Compass Readers,

Having read outpourings from Ron Llewellyn in the Compass and other places such as Facebook and the Trinidad Cruisers’ Forum, I feel it is time to put the record straight.

He has done more harm to the yachting industry in Trinidad than himself. To think that he is the answer to all security issues with an ego the size of Manhattan and a moral base that is non-existent as he can and has the audacity to try to inform the authorities how to do their job in the best way to get people’s backs up.

His latest rantings in the November Compass’s Readers’ Forum are full of inaccuracies and before he puts the proverbial cyber pen to paper he really should check his facts, rather than listen to alcoholic chat. Even his mathematics do not compute. A true and accurate version of events, see Niels Lund’s chat. Even his mathematics do not compute. His latest rantings in the November's Compass: Vigilante cowboy. What a kick in the teeth to those of you who moaned and groaned about the security situation, also not true. I speak for the majority of cruisers here when I say that the sooner he leaves Trinidad the happier we all shall be.

Perhaps he should make Venezuela, Jamaica or Cuba his next port of call and tell them how to sort out their problems (you only have to read his own blog). All he does is to stir up as much trouble as he can and has the audacity to try to inform the authorities how to do their job in the best way to get people’s backs up.

As far as calling us “vigilantes” is concerned, well, I am proud to have been able to help stem this spate of burglaries and I am also proud of the cruisers who also got off their backsides and volunteered. I also wish that the patrols were not necessary but in the event, we did what all CRGNEE cruisers do: stick together and help out. Ron Llewellyn sat on his backside and poured out his inaccurate rantings, which have had a negative effect on the situation and upset just about every cruiser in Trinidad as well as the authorities with whom the CBC are trying to negotiate to establish some form of policing here. He is a loose cannon firing off uncoordinated shots wherever he chooses to and disrupts the efforts of everyone else.

I have been coming to Trinidad, has shown me nothing but bitch, moan, groan and insult just about everyone. The Trinis we have met have been really fabulous, friendly, welcoming and helpful. If Mr. Llewellyn would get off his insular arse and get out into Trinidad he would see the island from a different angle and maybe, just maybe, he might just see why we and many others like us really want to help out when we can.

Yes, there has been a spate of thefts here, but the risk here is probably no worse than any other island in the Caribbean, and when you consider the volume of yachts here for the hurricane season then the percentage may not look as worse than any other civilized country. Don’t get me wrong, one theft is one too many, but unless you can see a new and better way of dealing with law enforcement here, then the flouting of wealth performed by some yachtsies is always going to be tempting to those who just love to be a little bit Taken advantage of and travel in these places if they were all totally civilized. For those of us who volunteered to go out at night to help prevent crime in the Chaguaramas anchorage. That comment comes from a fellow yachtsie who over the last few months while staying in Trinidad has done nothing but bitch, moan, grumble and insult just about everybody in Trinidad.

When I heard of the problem of the manning the patrols boat, I volunteered my services. Why? It gave me an opportunity to put something back into the local yachting community; a community that, over the years I have been coming to Trinidad, has shown me nothing but help, kindness, and lots of smiles.

On the appointed night of our first patrol, myself and fellow volunteer found ourselves being given a well-found boat with big powerful engines, VHF, nav lights, cell phone and a very well-defined remit. Both of us are highly competent and experienced yachtsies, in addition to our own personal and professional skills. We had to patrol the anchorage and in the event of observing a potential crime were to report to the Coastguard, but in no way to interfere. If we could identify and track the perpetrators, well and good, but we were not to put ourselves at risk. We manned the patrol boat on several nights when the local business community was unable to find crew. To all of those who manned the patrol boat, you did a great job and thanks were due to those of you who manned and grounded and remained in your snug little beds, don’t ever ask me for help.

But what of our resident, self-imposed yachtnic security expert? When asked to volunteer his reply was along the lines of “if they pay me, I’ll do it”. I think the term “mercenary” comes to mind here. So what were we, honest volunteers helping the community, or vigilante cowboys.

Alan Dunlop
Freya of Clyde

—Continued on next page
Dear Mr. Baker,

I found your response to the concerns raised by Jerry Stewart regarding the Sandy Island Oyster Bed Marine Protected Area inappropriate. Disagreeing with what he wrote does not give you the right to misrepresent his character or to suggest that he was not sincere (although the comments you attributed to Mr. Stewart when you called him disrespectful were actually made by another letter writer in the same issue of the Caribbean Compass). Your attempt to mislead Mr. Stewart was extremely out of line and I am sure that it does not represent the attitude of all of Carriacou. Rather than listening to and considering what was offered, you went off on a tangent and attempted to destroy anything said against you again. You say that Mr. Stewart’s accusations lack accuracy, but do not elaborate. Which of these are inaccurate?

• The biggest threat to Sandy Island is nature.
• The mangroves are as healthy as they were ten years ago.
• The biggest threat to the mangroves is the development on the side.
• Current water-based use seems to damage nothing.
• Moorings and their fees are not for the environment.
• Yachtmooring moorings will not encourage visitors.
• Tobago is not covered in sand (at Sandy Island). You then go off on another tangent and comment on white sand on the beach.
• The need for revitalization of the fish population is the result of overfishing.

You go on to say that the Tyrell Bay marina was selected to represent all local marinas and by extension the local yachtsmen. It has yet to be completed and does not have customer base or customer knowledge to represent the yachting community. Surely they were not selected in favor of beaching yachts for the environment.

In your response you do not reveal that when SIOBMPA was originally proposed, the area now occupied by the marina was within the boundaries of SIOBMPA. The marina developer was given an exception to dredge that part of the Bay and certainly that has done much more damage than all the yacht anchoring ever could.

You are correct in saying that the yachting community in Carriacou is not formally organized. However, there are a number of yacht tourists who have been coming to Carriacou for ten years or more. Although you misattributed the comment that SIOBMPA neglected to initiate discussions with the yachting community, it is true. The yachting community was never consulted.

No one from SIOBMPA made any effort to contact any of the yachts, so your statement that an effort was made in the media to contact the yachting community is bogus and not supported by any of us who were present. Any comments made by the yachtsmen were excluded from all discussions and planning until a series of town meetings was held in July 2008. After the meeting held in Harvey Vale, I do not know if you were in attendance, but do not elaborate. Which of these are inaccurate?

You say that Mr. Stewart’s accusations lack accuracy, destroy anything said against what you want to believe. If you were present, you went off on a tangent and attempted to destroy anything said against you again. You say that Mr. Stewart’s accusations lack accuracy, but do not elaborate. Which of these are inaccurate?

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Dear Mr. John Pompa and others who have writ-
ten on Carriacou’s SIOB MPA,

Thank you all for your comments and mostly for your concern for the Sandy Island Oyster Bed Marine Protected Area (SIOB MPA). I would like to use this heightened concern to restart the consultative process concerning the SIOB MPA. I have received many letters from the wardens and Board members that express concern at the present state of the SIOB MPA. I would like to invite all of you, along with the members of the present Board of SIOB MPA in discussions to resolve the present impasse and come up with some win-win situations for the most effective conservation practices for the SIOB MPA. I believe that the agencies involved in management are committed to continuing to balance multiple uses in the MPA while protecting the resources within it. In MPA management there should be ongoing stakeholder participation as the S/V Second Millennium

Carriacou continue to have clean blue unpolluted water, but the image is larger than the printable area and some clipping of the artwork will occur. I have shown the method to me, but I don’t expect that you will be able to print a serviceable courtesy flag that can serve as a new harbour. Most boats with computers aboard also have a printer that will print a serviceable courtesy flag that will last for a few weeks, even in the worst of the seas. There is no flag that I have seen that beats the quality of white sailcloth. Either a flag 18 by 17 inches, and a cheap can of hairspray or fixer spray for charcoal drawings. Go on line and "Google" your printer to "banner" mode and do a test print on any of the picture-processing software. Reduce or expand the photo to the required dimensions. Here I selected 8.5 inches wide and the length to constraint proportions - the same size as the sailcloth you wish to print on. Set your printer to “banner” mode and do a test print on the paper. Here your printer might instruct you that “image is larger than the printable area and some clipping may occur”. You are probably printing beyond preset borders. Select “print size” and continue. Your printer will now print to the edges of the paper. If the results are acceptable, insert the piece of sailcloth into the printer, ironing the settings are still on “banner”, and print.

You will only need to print on one side since the sailcloth is porous and the ink will soak through to the other side.

This is an optional step used by charcoal artists to fix drawings: lightly spray the sailcloth with the hair spray or artist’s fixative spray. This will waterproof the sailcloth and fix the ink so it won’t run in the rain.

Send a string to the side and hoist away.

Kathy and Ernie Martin

Stonecutter II

Dear Compass,

From the October 2010 Caribbean Compass:

Tom and Harriet Linskay report: Here’s how Hands Across the Sea is fighting light loss and piracy in the Caribbean: We ask school teachers, principals, and Peace Corps volunteers in the Caribbean to assemble a Wish List of books and materials they need and then we get what they need and then we ship it to them. This October, as part of our Caribbean Literacy and School Support program that will ship approximately 13,000 books and 92 boxes of teaching materials to 47 schools, 10,000 students, and eight community libraries/readership projects. Perhaps you’re thinking, “This seems like a worthy cause, but what can I do?” Here’s some awesome news: we’ve just received a US$25,000 “challenge grant” commitment from two generous Hands support- ers. What this means is that they will match help children in the Caribbean right now to make a cash donation to Hands Across the Sea, with the aim of matching the $25,000 grant and realizing our $50,000 goal, so Hands can fulfill all of the 2010 Wish Lists and bring positive change to Caribbean children. To make a donation, visit www.handsacrossthesea.net/Donate.htm.
Read sailors use Street's Guides for inter-island and harbor piloting directions, plus interesting anecdotes of people, places and history. Street's Guides are the only ones that describe all the anchorages in the Eastern Caribbean.

NEW! Street's video, first made in 1985, are now back as DVDs.

-Transatlantic with Street: a sailing passage from Ireland to Antigua via the Cape Verdes. 2 hours
-Hands Across the Sea: illustrates the story of the engines well-stocked racing round the buoys to celebrate her 60th birthday. 1 hour
-Street on Knots: demonstrates the essential knots and line-handling skills every sailor should know. 1 hour

HURRICANE TIPS! Visit www.street-iolaire.com for a wealth of information on tracking and securing for a storm.

Street's Guides and DVDs are available at all Island Waterworld stores and at Johnson's Hardware, or from www.Universe.com and www.seabooks.com.

Dear Paul Fulton,

Thank you for your thoughts. We are not able to comment on what the Global Literacy Project did or claimed. We know well that getting good books into the hands of Kenyan children is a tough and real literacy challenge, that it’s a community effort involving good parenting, trained teachers, dedicated school principals and committed volunteers to promote reading. That’s why we choose the schools that receive books and work with them. Thankfully, with learning support advisors within the island Ministries of Education, school principals whose strong leadership is making a difference, teachers who want to improve their classroom environments with existing classroom libraries and lending corners, and US Peace Corps volunteers who are working hand-in-hand with community reading initiatives as a big part of the effort. As a former English teacher in charge of the library at a rural secondary school in New Zealand, I witnessed the effect of getting interesting books into the hands of Maori children who were reluctant readers.

We have worked hard over the summer to choose our purchased, gently used books carefully from book sales in the USA. We also purchase books from Scholastic and our goal next year is to increase the amount of books with Caribbean content.

Since you are an experienced educator would you like to help us with a hands-on project? Last year we worked with a retired British master teacher and a first grade teacher in Dominica to plan a unit using The Very Hungry Caterpillar. The teacher saw improvement in her teaching methods and the students were more interested in learning and stayed in their seats. The next year she had first graders rushed to give us a group hug and show off the books they had read.

Now that secondary education is compulsory across the Caribbean and governments are requiring only trained teachers, Hands Across The Sea is helping to improve literacy and learning by giving students access to good reading books and teacher-requested. To that end we have shipped to the Caribbean this November, check out the Hands 2010 Wish Lists (www.handsacrossthesea.net/HandsWishLists.html); these are the books and teaching resources specifically requested by school principals and teachers, US Peace Corps Volunteers, and local librarians. You clearly have an interest in this topic, so please let us know if you’d like to help this winter season in the Eastern Caribbean.

Hariett Lindsay

Hands Across The Sea, Inc.

Dear Compass,

We all know that there are many cruisers who spend a high proportion of their time in marinas. For them, a marina is a natural destination at the end of a day’s sailing. Many other cruisers regard riding at anchor as the natural state of being. Hands Across The Sea is helping to improve literacy and learning by giving students access to good reading books and teacher-requested. To that end we have shipped to the Caribbean this November, check out the Hands 2010 Wish Lists (www.handsacrossthesea.net/HandsWishLists.html); these are the books and teaching resources specifically requested by school principals and teachers, US Peace Corps Volunteers, and local librarians. You clearly have an interest in this topic, so please let us know if you’d like to help this winter season in the Eastern Caribbean.

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Hands Across The Sea, Inc.

Read in Next Month’s Compass:

2011 Annual Calendar of Caribbean Events
Selected Shortwave Weather Reports
Destination Rio Dulce

...and much more!
I pointed out that, with no instruments, I had figured out that morning over my coffee that there would be an easterly current! They were very interested when I explained:

The rule of thumb I follow in the Eastern Caribbean is that high water comes about one and a half hours after the moon passes overhead (or underneath), i.e., the upper (and lower) passages of the moon as listed in the Nautical Almanac. An oversimplification that helps give a clearer view is that the tidal current tries to flow toward the moon, i.e., when the moon is east of you after rising, the current turns to the east (floods); after the moon has passed overhead and moves to the west, the tidal flow also changes and also runs to the west (ebb). On the day I sailed on Titus, it was a couple of days after new moon, the tradewinds had been light for almost a week, and moonrise was about two hours before our start. So, given that the strongest tides are three to five days after new and full moon, everything lined up for an eastward-flowing current.

They were amazed at my explanation as to how to try to predict the easterly set of the current. Note I say “try.” If I have been sailing every day, I figure I can predict with 75 to 80 percent accuracy whether or not there will be an easterly current and approximately how strong the flow will be. If I have not been sailing for a couple of weeks, my batting average goes down to 50 percent. Anyone who claims to be able to accurately predict the ebb and flow of the current in the Caribbean is either a liar or a fool.

Once observations have been made of the times of high and low tide at a location, it is possible to predict these times well into the future. Over the course of centuries, mariners have made observations for hundreds, if not thousands, of places worldwide. One of the most important data points, to use an in-vogue term, is the time of high water at full (full moon) and low tide on new moon. At full moon, the moon crosses the local meridian at approximately midnight and at new moon at noon. The interval between meridian passage of the full moon or the new moon and the time of the next high tide is called the time of high water on full (BWFCF) for that location.

In the 1986 Street’s Transatlantic Crossing Guide (a complete rewrite of this guide is in the process), I printed the table of HWFC that I copied from a 1912 edition of Bowditch I found in the Library of Congress. But the information in it for the Eastern Caribbean really does not make sense. From Martinique south, the time of high water (HW) varies from 2 hours and 30 minutes to 3 hours and 30 minutes after the meridian passage of the moon. Going from my description above in relation to the moon, which does work, this means the current is turning west well before high water. In the northern islands, HW is 7 hours 30 minutes to 9 hours after meridian passage, but the old rule of current running toward the moon still holds. I stand by the information that is found on the back of the Imray Iolaire charts. I have never heard from any experienced sailor who has sailed in the Caribbean for 15 or 20 years that felt the tidal information on the back of the Imray Iolaire charts was wrong.

Dear Compass,

I read with interest the Compass readers’ letters about Caribbean tides vis-à-vis the meridian passage of the moon (see current table on page 29 of this month’s issue), and the explanation thereof by Captain Science in the November issue. I am not very scientific, but I have sailed for 70 of my 80 years and since November 1956 have sailed the Caribbean in the engineless 46-foot Iolaire and the 28-foot engineless L1 Iolaire. Since both boats were engineless I have spent a lot of time figuring out how to make the tides help me rather than hinder me. My first piece of advice on the subject of tides is to not always trust what you read and to be wary about what you believe. For instance, the modern tide tables say there is only one high tide a day in the Virgin Islands. In 1959 or ’60 my father found in Forges in London a copy of the Smiling Directness to the West Indies published by Norie and Wilson in 1867. I have that book I found that Robert Schombergk, a Danish naturalist who lived in St. Croix, had worked out a complete analysis of the tides in the US and British Virgin Islands. He pointed out that there are two tides a day in the VI, with a major high tide and a minor high tide. At one point of the year the major high tide is during the day, at another other time of the year it’s during the night. Today, both the BA and NOAA claim there is only one high tide a day. The major high tide is during the day, at another other time of the year it’s during the night. Today, both the BA and NOAA claim there is only one high tide a day. The-
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WE SHIP AROUND THE WORLD!

Cruising Couples — Which One Are You?

by Nanette Eldridge

It is one thing to be a weekend cruiser and quite another to live 24/7 on a 42-foot boat with your mate. Some of the most successful couples see each other for a couple of hours at night and on weekends. Cruising couples are forced to learn lessons on how to get along for prolonged periods of time in small spaces. The couples that learn these lessons cruise for years and don’t split up. Luckily, most couples that take the long-term cruising plunge have already sailed and lived together for quite some time — that helps in most cases. But there are still many adjustments that come with cruising that even the closest couples have to make.

As an active cruiser, I would like to share my insights on two of the many cruising couples my boyfriend, Bruno, and I have known and how they cope. Read the following observations and decide if you fit into either category.

Nervous Nelly: We have close friends from the US who dream of cruising the Caribbean. The husband is a retired airline pilot and living at the seashores to sail as far as the boat will take him. The wife, on the other hand, is anxious to sail the Caribbean — as long as there will be no circumstances under which land is out of her sight. The couple is very happily married, but they seem to have different expectations on how and where they will cruise together. The wife is perfectly happy on the boat in a marina, while the husband dreams of adventures at sea. Well, to say the least, this turned into some heated discussions when the couple was scheduled to sail from Florida to St. Croix. What happened in their case probably happens to many cruising couples: the reluctant partner came up with numerous excuses as to why they could not leave the marina in Florida. This went on for months, to the great consternation of the other partner. The bottom line is this — both partners need to be on the same page when planning to cruise. If not, there will be disappointments on both sides. By the way, Nervous Nelly got as far as the Bahamas and left the boat there until next winter. Hopefully, by next year they will cruise a bit farther south. They are taking baby steps, so to speak, but at least they are still together.

The Bickersons: We all know this couple and we all have other ideas.

For instance, we women over 40 do not get our hormone medications treated like the Bickersons: We all know this couple and we all have other ideas.

For instance, we women over 40 do not get our hormone medications the same way at least 50 percent of the time, I figure we are ahead of the game. And it is a small price to pay for having the privilege of visiting all of the Caribbean islands and living a lifestyle that others only dream about.

By Nanette Eldridge and Bruno Bruchhof are cruising the Caribbean aboard Geronimo, a 42-foot custom-built Denhamor, Peterson-designed ocean racer. Geronimo is a classic two-ton racer that was never designed as a cruiser and Bruno bought the vessel. Nanette says, "Believe me, there have been a lot of adjustments made so that we can live on one boat, although I have never quite adjusted to not having much in the way of a galley."
DECEMBER 2010

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JANUARY 2011

1 New Year’s Day. Public holiday or “recovery day” in many places.
Junkanoo parade in Abaco, Bahamas; Grand Carnival Parade in St. Kitts
2 Public holidays in Cuba (Victory of Armed Forces Day), Haiti (Founding Fathers Day), and St. Lucia and Grenada (Second New Year’s Day)
3 Carnival Last Lap, St. Kitts. www.stkittscarnival.com
6 Three Kings Day. Public holiday in many places
7 – 8 Crucian Christmas Festival Parades, St. Croix. www.shfestival.com
10 – 16 18th Annual Barbados Jazz Festival. www.barbadosjazzfestival.com
11 – 12 Yacht Industry Security Conference, St. Thomas, USVI. www.maritimesecurity.org
17 Martin Luther King Day; Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI
19 FULL MOON
21 Mount Grey Rum Round Barbados Race. See ad on page 16
21 Emil Barrow Day; public holiday in Barbados. Our Lady of Altaragia; public holiday in the Dominican Republic
23 – 27 42nd Spice Island Sailing Tournament, Grenada. www.sibtgrenada.com
24 Duarte’s Day; public holiday in the Dominican Republic
26 – 29 Antigua Superyacht Cup. AYC
26 – 9 Feb Mustique Blues Festival. www.basilsbar.com
27 – 30 Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest. See ad on page 53
28 – 6 Feb Grenada Sailing Festival. See ad on page 18
29 – 5 Feb Manhattan Sailing Club’s BVI Cruise. www.myc.org
TBA St. Barts Music Festival. www.stbartsmusicfestival.org
TBA Caribou Sailing Series. www.sailingcaribou.com
TBA Budget Marine Women’s Caribbean Championships, St. Maarten. SMYC

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 monthly calendar, please send the name and date(s) of the event and the name and contact information of the organizing body to sally@caribbeancompass.com.
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continued on next page
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Removes rust and "surface iron" that causes rust
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Less Time, Less Effort, Super Results!
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- **OPEN 45 BUILT 2000** USD 189,999 (e-mail: venus46@live.com)

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For more information about securing a berth at Port Louis Marina, please contact Danny Donelan on +1 (473) 415 0837 or email danny@cnportlouismarina.com

New Season Rates – 1 December to 31 May

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<th>6 mths $/ft/day</th>
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<td>up to 32</td>
<td>$0.80</td>
<td>$0.68</td>
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<td>up to 40</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$0.85</td>
<td>$0.70</td>
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<td>up to 50</td>
<td>$1.10</td>
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<td>up to 60</td>
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<td>up to 65</td>
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<td>up to 75</td>
<td>$1.40</td>
<td>$1.19</td>
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<td>up to 80</td>
<td>$1.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>up to 100</td>
<td>$1.75</td>
<td>$1.49</td>
<td>$1.23</td>
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For yachts above 100 feet LOA, and for bookings of longer periods, please contact us for a personalised quote.

www.cnmarinas.com/plm
WHAT’S NEW?

SPRECO “SILENT WIND”
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